



Forensic intelligence for those who act.

READER EDITION

March 1, 2026

ISRAEL BRIEF

Sunday, March 1

Supreme leader dead, regime in succession crisis — Iran fires what remains, one drip at a time.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE The UNSC session will produce nothing of consequence. What it produces is record — the US and Israel have defended preemptive self-defense under international law, put the arguments on tape, and declined to let the session become the predicate for sanctions. Guterres's position — that both the strikes and Iran's retaliation violate the UN Charter — is the institutional reflex of an organization that treats sovereign aggression and self-defense as symmetrical infractions. MBS ran a textbook dual-track operation: public neutrality, private green light, emergency GCC meeting after the fact. His calculation — that a degraded Iran is safer than an intact Iran — may be correct. It may also be the case that if the IRGC consolidates power in Tehran and remembers who privately enabled the strike that killed their supreme leader, the Washington Post's reporting will become expensive for Riyadh. MBS presumably assessed that risk. Whether he assessed it correctly is a question for the next six months.

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Reader Edition

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A note before we begin: this is a fast-moving news environment. I've made dozens of edits this morning alone. What you're reading is accurate as of publication — treat anything Iran-related as potentially superseded by the time you finish your coffee.

IN THIS EDITION

Now: where things stand.

Purim is nearly upon us and the news seems an echo of the story. In the Megillah, a Persian official with genocidal ambitions issued a royal decree to annihilate every Jew in the kingdom. The decree was reversed. The architect of the destruction did not survive. Haman's name we blot out. The book says his ten sons were hanged.

Forty-seven years after Khomeini established the Islamic Republic on a foundation of Jewish annihilation, the Supreme Leader of the modern Persian state is dead — killed by the nation he swore to destroy. The question now is what the second chapter of this Megillah looks like: whether the regime collapses, consolidates under hardliners, or fractures in ways no intelligence service fully models.

☒ Flash Brief: The Day in 90 Seconds or Less

- **Khamenei Dead:** Iran confirms supreme leader killed in Operation Roaring Lion; 40-day mourning declared, interim council formed. *See The War Today.*
- **Beit Shemesh Hit:** 8 killed in Beit Shemesh; 10-year-old girl critically wounded; Home Front Command search and rescue, medical teams, and evacuation helicopter operating at the scene. IDF confirms early warning system activated as planned. *See The War Today.*
- **Nonstop Strikes Ordered:** Defense Minister Katz declares air superiority achieved and announces continuous IDF strikes on Iran for operation duration. *See The War Today.*
- **Hormuz Closes:** Hapag-Lloyd suspends all Strait of Hormuz transit; Iranian forces attack tanker Sky Light near the strait. *See The War Today.*
- **Attrition Doctrine:** Iran launches missiles in sustained drips rather than volleys — a deliberate strategy to conserve roughly 2,500 remaining missiles over a longer campaign. *See Developments to Watch.*
- **Erbil Consulate Hit:** Suicide drone strikes US consulate in Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan — Iran-aligned militia network activating without central command authorization. *See Developments to Watch.*
- **Modi in Jerusalem:** Indian PM addresses Knesset, calls Israel “protective wall against barbarism,” signs bilateral agreements — \$20.5B in arms purchases over five years behind the rhetoric. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Hezbollah Stays Out — For Now:** IDF strikes Radwan Force compounds in Bekaa Valley; current assessment has Hezbollah watching its patron's succession crisis before deciding. *See Developments to Watch.*
- **Coalition Holds:** Israeli opposition closes ranks; FADC convenes Monday; Haredi activists in Modiin Illit erect “hostage” iconography to protest the draft on the day IDF executes its largest operation in history. *See Inside Israel.*

The supreme leader is dead, the regime is headless, and Iran is still shooting. A decapitated military apparatus with 2,500 ballistic missiles and pre-delegated proxy networks does not stop firing when the commander dies — it fires on autopilot while the succession fight plays out in the background.

The War Today

Operation Roaring Lion Opens a New Epoch: Khamenei Killed, IRGC Leadership Decapitated

Yesterday, approximately 200 Israeli Air Force jets — the largest combat sortie in IDF history — struck more than 500 targets across western and central Iran in Operation Roaring Lion, running concurrent with the American-designated Operation Epic Fury. US warships launched Tomahawk cruise missiles. Army HIMARS batteries and Task Force Scorpion Strike drones, deployed in combat for the first time, joined undisclosed long-range stand-off weapons in a combined assault that opened around 9:45 a.m. local time. The opening wave targeted Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's compound in Tehran's Pasteur district — also home to the presidential palace and National Security Council — with at least seven confirmed missile impacts. Israeli intelligence had detected that Khamenei's scheduled evening meeting with advisers Ali Larijani and Ali Shamkhani had been moved forward to Saturday morning—and the strikes were moved accordingly. Iranian state media confirmed Khamenei's death earlier today (after it was confirmed in Israel Media and by President Trump). Iran declared 40 days of national mourning. The IDF confirmed the deaths of Defense Council head Ali Shamkhani, Defense Minister Aziz Nasirzadeh, IRGC commander Mohammad Pakpour, intelligence chief Salah Asadi, military office head Mohammad Shirazi, and two additional senior officials — seven in total. A senior Israeli security official told Fox News that 40 regime and security figures were killed in the opening wave. Simultaneous with the air campaign, a cyberattack reduced Iran's nationwide internet connectivity to 4% of normal traffic; IRNA was taken offline for an extended period; IRGC-linked Tasnim was hacked and displayed messages against Khamenei; energy and aviation data infrastructure was penetrated. IDF strikes continued today, targeting missile arrays and air defense systems in the heart of Tehran. Netanyahu confirmed Khamenei's death in a Saturday night video statement, called on "Persians, Kurds, Azeris, Ahwazis, and Baloch" to take to the streets, and framed the operation as the continuation of a promise he made on the second day of the War of Revival to "change the face of the Middle East." Cabinet ministers were briefed that the operation is designed to last approximately one week. Netanyahu told reporters that if Iranians rise up, the timeline could shorten.

Assessment: Forty-seven years. That is how long the Islamic Republic promised death to Israel and America, funded proxies to execute it, and built the nuclear program to guarantee it. Now its ideological author is dead, killed at a meeting the IDF watched in advance, by jets that flew from Israeli air bases into Iranian airspace on Shabbat morning and hit 500 targets. The intelligence work — tracking three simultaneous senior leadership gatherings and

adjusting the strike window when the meetings changed — is the most consequential operational achievement since the targeted killing of Qasem Soleimani, and probably since 1973. The cyber campaign — taking Iran to 4% internet connectivity at the moment of maximum leadership disruption prevents IRGC regional commanders from coordinating, blocks internal regime communication during the succession crisis, and physically complicates any organized response. The CIA had assessed that hardline IRGC elements were most likely to inherit the regime. That may yet happen. It may also be true that a leadership vacuum, a population that cheered in Tehran streets when state media confirmed the death, and a communications infrastructure in active collapse do not produce a government capable of executing a decades-long nuclear program on schedule. The answer to what comes next is genuinely unknown — including to the intelligence services that built the target bank. That is worth saying plainly. It is also true that the alternative — allowing Khamenei to complete that program — was not a manageable risk.

Iran Strikes Back: Tel Aviv Hit, the Gulf Burns, and the IRGC Promises More

Iran's IRGC launched ballistic missiles and attack drones against Israel, US military installations in Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Iraq, and Jordan, and Gulf Arab civilian infrastructure. One woman was killed in Tel Aviv Saturday evening when an Iranian ballistic missile made a direct impact on a residential building—22 others were wounded, including one seriously. IDF sirens failed to provide the standard warning before the impact — the IDF has not yet explained the delay, which left residents less time than required to reach shelters. A second wave struck Sunday afternoon, with an impact in Beit Shemesh near Jerusalem — killing at least 8 people and critically wounding a 10-year-old girl among multiple casualties. Home Front Command search and rescue forces, medical teams, and a helicopter for casualty evacuation are operating at the impact site; the Commander of Home Front Command is en route. The IDF clarified that the early warning system functioned as planned and was activated in the Beit Shemesh area; the circumstances of the impact itself remain under review. A ballistic missile struck Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar. The US Fifth Fleet service center in Bahrain was hit. At Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest international hub, a concourse sustained damage and four staff were injured—Dubai Airports suspended operations indefinitely. Debris from interceptions ignited a minor fire on the outer facade of the Burj Al Arab and caused a fire at Jebel Ali Port. A fire also broke out near a hotel on the Palm Jumeirah. Abu Dhabi reported one fatality before the media office deleted the post. UAE air defenses shot down 132 missiles and 195 drones. Jordan downed two Iranian ballistic missiles. Kuwait reported 12 hospitalized following strikes. Qatar suspended all public events and gatherings. More than 1,400 regional flights were canceled. The IRGC announced Saturday evening that its “most-intense offensive operation in the history of the armed forces of the Islamic Republic” would begin “in moments.” Iran's interim Leadership Council, with Ayatollah Alireza Arafii appointed to lead it alongside President Pezeshkian, convened Sunday while security chief Ali

Larijani warned that “secessionist groups” attempting to exploit the crisis would face a “harsh response.”

Assessment: Iran launched its retaliation knowing it had already lost the battle of command continuity. The IRGC’s seven senior most leaders are dead. Its supreme leader is dead. Its national internet runs at 4%. Its state media was hacked before the first missile even landed. The retaliatory strikes are real and the damage is real — and will drive international pressure for a ceasefire from every capital whose airline traffic through Dubai is now grounded. But the IRGC’s announcement that the “most intense offensive in history” is about to begin is a military organization projecting force from a position of acute structural weakness — the leadership that would have authorized and coordinated a sophisticated multi-front offensive no longer exists. What Iran can launch is a salvo campaign, attrition strikes, proxy activation. What it cannot launch is a strategic operation. Saudi Arabia’s position — privately urging Trump to act while publicly assuring Tehran of neutrality — is now exposed by the *Washington Post*’s reporting. MBS calculated that an Iran degraded by US-Israeli force was safer than an Iran intact. He is watching missiles fly over his Gulf neighbors as evidence of whether he was right.

Hezbollah Watches, Judges, and Rebuilds As They Look Away

Even as the Iran operation opened Saturday, the IDF struck Hezbollah launch positions and subterranean shafts across southern Lebanon — more than 10 strikes in the al-Qatrani and Wadi Barghuz areas — targeting infrastructure Hezbollah has used to rebuild in direct violation of the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire understandings. Current IDF assessments rate Hezbollah as likely to remain outside the immediate fighting, at least initially, citing the organization’s unrecovered losses from 2025 and its decision calculus without Khamenei’s operational authority behind it. In Gaza, IDF Yahalom engineering units in the Beit Hanoun area demolished five kilometers of Hamas tunnel routes, operating east of the Yellow Line in the area under Israeli security control. IDF forces in the separation zone also struck and eliminated multiple terrorists who approached Israeli personnel under an immediate threat assessment.

Assessment: Hezbollah is watching, rebuilding, and waiting for clarity about whether the patron that funded it will have a functional government in six months. Remaining outside a US-Israeli operation that has just killed Iran’s supreme leader and its senior security leaders is the calculation of an organization that is not ready and knows it. Hezbollah continues uses southern Lebanon infrastructure without consequence and the ceasefire is no longer anything but a name for this operation. The IDF is striking, but the rate of strike and the rate of rebuild are not in Israel’s favor if Hezbollah can operate freely. Gaza’s tunnel demolition and the NCAG problem are two halves of the same issue: Israel is systematically dismantling Hamas’s physical infrastructure in the north while Hamas maneuvers to embed itself in the political infrastructure being built to replace it. All of this festers as the world’s attention has been diverted to Tehran.

Inside Israel

The Coalition Holds — for the Duration, With One Productive Caveat

Israel's Jewish political spectrum closed ranks within hours of the Iran strikes. Yair Lapid — who had boycotted Netanyahu's Knesset session for the Modi address days earlier, insisting it violated democratic norms — declared in a video statement that “we are all united on the operation” and it had “no political implications.” Former PM Naftali Bennett posted “full support for the IDF, the Israeli government and the prime minister” and called Khamenei's death “a historic opportunity for the Iranian people to free themselves.” Benny Gantz declared “we are all standing together.” Gadi Eisenkot aligned similarly. Yair Golan gave “full backing” to security services while inserting the operation's one substantive political condition: it “must culminate in the removal of the Iranian threat in a manner that bolsters Israel's security over the long term” through “precise, coherent and actionable war goals.” Knesset Speaker Ohana suspended all parliamentary activities Sunday. The Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee convenes Monday for a closed intelligence briefing and a vote declaring a “special situation” on the home front. Hadash-Ta'al condemned the strikes as Israeli participation in “global American imperialism.” MK Ofer Cassif called it “a war of choice” with “no connection to the interests or security of any people” — prompting Avigdor Liberman to demand a treason charge, which Cassif rejected as “racist populism.” Ra'am's MK Alhawashla warned that 150,000 Bedouin citizens in the Negev lack access to protected spaces and cannot comply with Home Front Command shelter instructions.

Assessment: Netanyahu now has opposition cover for the duration of the operation, which removes the most immediate domestic pressure point. Golan's caveat — actionable, defined war goals — is the only thing worth listening to in the first 24 hours of political reaction. Everything else is a flag rally. The Bedouin shelter gap is a genuine home front failure and not a new one: 150,000 citizens without protected spaces in a country that has a long history of needing bomb shelters and which conducted detailed pre-operational planning for this strike over months... an institutional lapse with a direct human cost. Cassif's statements will also be litigated — the argument that a member of the Knesset who actively opposes his country's war against the regime that ordered October 7 has crossed from dissent to treason is not without legal content, but the practical outcome of pursuing it will be noise rather than consequence.

Haredi Protest Appropriates the Dead

Activists erected a display in Modiin Illit — a predominantly ultra-Orthodox city in Judea and Samaria — labeled “Hostages Square,” placing empty yeshiva study stands in a traffic roundabout alongside black and yellow ribbons, explicitly equating ultra-Orthodox draft evaders held in military custody to Israeli hostages held in Gaza. The installation mirrors the iconography of Hostages Square in Tel Aviv. The “Code Black” hotline network, which mobilizes “spontaneous protests” when military police operate in ultra-Orthodox areas, issued advance Purim guidance warning of heightened police presence and

cautioning that “routine questioning” should not escalate into conduct that results in arrests or the opening of criminal files.

Assessment: Borrowing the iconography of the murdered and kidnapped to defend the decision not to serve the military defending them is a specific kind of moral perversion. At Purim’s eve, it’s especially sickening. The community that produced this installation is the same community whose political leverage has blocked a functioning conscription law through multiple governments. On the day the IDF is executing the largest military operation in its history (with pilots who did not attend yeshiva) the statement embedded in that roundabout in Modiin Illit is worth reading plainly: our draft exemption is more important than your dead or your security. The Haredi political leadership has either endorsed this framing or failed to adequately repudiate it. Both are choices.

Israel and the World

Modi in Jerusalem: 1.4 Billion People, on the Record

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered the first address by an Indian head of government to the Knesset on February 25, receiving a standing ovation and extended chants of “Modi! Modi!” from the packed plenum. He called Israel “a protective wall against barbarism,” condemned October 7 as “barbaric” terrorism, and named the civilizational stakes directly: “The massacre of October 7 made it absolutely clear: either the jihadist axis of evil will break us, or we will break it. And we are breaking it — and will break it.” He concluded with “Am Yisrael Chai” followed by “Jai Hind.” The visit included bilateral agreements on innovation, agriculture, and investment, a joint tour of Yad Vashem with Netanyahu, and a Knesset Medal presentation by Speaker Ohana — what he described as the highest honor the Knesset can bestow. India is Israel’s largest arms buyer, spending \$20.5 billion on Israeli weapons between 2020 and 2024; 2024 bilateral trade reached \$3.9 billion. Netanyahu called Modi “more than a friend — a brother.” India formally formalizing relations with Somaliland this week — with Israel accrediting Dr. Mohamed Haji as Somaliland’s fully accredited Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, with Israel’s reciprocal ambassador designation to follow and Somaliland’s president scheduled to visit Jerusalem in late March — adds a Horn of Africa strategic dimension to the week’s diplomatic picture.

Assessment: 1.4 billion people, the world’s largest democracy, \$20.5 billion in Israeli arms purchases over five years, and now the formal public record of a civilizational ally standing in the Knesset to say it. India’s institutional alignment has shifted materially under Modi — from reflexive postcolonial solidarity with the Palestinian cause to strategic partnership with Israel and the United States on counterterrorism, defense, and regional order. That shift is embedded in procurement contracts, intelligence-sharing frameworks, and treaty structures—and thus is engineered to survive elections. Every European foreign minister who cites Israeli isolation as leverage is working with a map that is missing 1.4 billion people and a country that spends \$4 billion a year on Israeli defense systems. The Somaliland normalization is a strategic add-on with Horn of Africa consequences. A partner positioned on the Gulf

of Aden near Bab el-Mandeb, with lithium deposits and an interest in US recognition, whose president visits Jerusalem in March. That is not a small thing in the week the IDF assassinated Iran's supreme leader.

UN Security Council: Danon and Waltz Make the Record; MBS Makes His Bet

Israel's Ambassador Danny Danon and US Ambassador Mike Waltz defended the strikes at an emergency UN Security Council session Saturday as lawful preemptive actions — “stopping extremism before it becomes unstoppable,” in Danon's formulation. Waltz enumerated US objectives. Dismantling Iran's missile capabilities. Degrading its naval assets. Disrupting proxy militia supply lines. Ensuring Iran never obtains a nuclear weapon. Notably, regime change was absent from Waltz's official list even as Trump publicly called for Iranians to topple their government. UN Secretary-General Guterres declared both the US-Israeli strikes and Iran's retaliatory attacks violations of the UN Charter. Iran's UN Ambassador called the strikes war crimes and crimes against humanity. Russia requested a special IAEA Board of Governors session on the strikes. The Washington Post reported separately that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman privately pressed Trump to launch the attack in multiple conversations, warned that Iran would emerge “stronger and more dangerous” if left intact, and dispatched his brother Khalid bin Salman to Washington in January to deliver the same message to US officials directly — while publicly calling for diplomacy and personally assuring Iranian President Pezeshkian that Saudi soil and airspace would not be used against Iran. The Saudis called an emergency Gulf Cooperation Council meeting to align member states.

Assessment: The UNSC session will produce nothing of consequence. What it produces is record — the US and Israel have defended preemptive self-defense under international law, put the arguments on tape, and declined to let the session become the predicate for sanctions. Guterres's position — that both the strikes and Iran's retaliation violate the UN Charter — is the institutional reflex of an organization that treats sovereign aggression and self-defense as symmetrical infractions. MBS ran a textbook dual-track operation: public neutrality, private green light, emergency GCC meeting after the fact. His calculation — that a degraded Iran is safer than an intact Iran — may be correct. It may also be the case that if the IRGC consolidates power in Tehran and remembers who privately enabled the strike that killed their supreme leader, the Washington Post's reporting will become expensive for Riyadh. MBS presumably assessed that risk. Whether he assessed it correctly is a question for the next six months.

Briefly Noted

Frontline & Security

- **Jerusalem Post:** IDF forces coordinated with the Air Force to strike armed Hamas terrorists surfacing from underground tunnels in eastern Rafah on Thursday and overnight into Friday, eliminating operatives who had

emerged from the tunnel network into Israeli-controlled areas. Hamas's tunnel infrastructure in Rafah has not been neutralized by the ceasefire — it is still in use, and the personnel operating it are still testing whether Israeli forces will respond. They are.

- **JNS:** On Thursday, the IDF struck eight Radwan Force compounds in the Baalbek area of Lebanon's Bekaa Valley — sites used to store weapons, train terrorists, and plan attacks against Israeli forces and civilians — while warning Beirut via intermediaries that heavy strikes on civilian infrastructure, including the international airport, would follow if Hezbollah enters the Iran war. The Radwan Force is the same elite unit whose cross-border invasion blueprint Hamas copied for October 7—its continued reconstruction under IRGC officer command, in direct violation of the November 2024 ceasefire, is not a technicality.
- **Israel National News:** During a Border Police operation in the Arab-Israeli city of Tayibe, five suspects were arrested and seized weapons included Kalashnikov and M16-type rifles, pistols, and ammunition in both 5.56mm and 9mm calibers. This is a snapshot of a problem that doesn't get smaller — illegal weapons flooding Arab-Israeli cities, a treaty-violating arms corridor from Egypt.

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- **Israel National News:** Egypt's intelligence chief, Hamas negotiator Khalil al-Hayya, and Board of Peace coordinator Nickolay Mladenov met to review Israel's Day After demands, which include full disarmament of all Palestinian terror organizations, Hamas handover of tunnel maps covering an estimated 350 kilometers, exclusion of Hamas from authority over NCAG police personnel, and integration of anti-Hamas militia members into the Gaza police force. Hamas has agreed to "hand over governance" but simultaneously moved its commanders into the governance structure. The demands on the table are designed to prevent exactly that, and the odds of Qatar and Turkey enforcing them remain, as of this writing, exactly zero.
- **Jewish Insider:** Illinois state Sen. Robert Peters — who has made attacking AIPAC the centerpiece of his Chicago-area Democratic House primary campaign, calling anyone who takes AIPAC support "a yes-man to commit unspeakable horrors" — privately filed a pro-Israel policy paper with AIPAC after meeting with its Midwest director last year, writing that Israel is "a vital partner to the United States" and supporting continued military aid. The position paper has now been obtained by JI; Peters confirmed the meeting happened, claims AIPAC initiated the call, and continues to denounce AIPAC in every public appearance.
- **JNS:** Washington, D.C.'s Metro DSA chapter issued a candidate questionnaire demanding applicants pledge to boycott Israel, refuse to meet with Zionists, and support "Palestinian liberation" — which the DC JCRC's Ron

Halber called a “revolting anti-Jewish loyalty oath” that codifies “the systematic erasure of Jewish and pro-Israel Americans from public life.” Ward 4 Councilmember Janeese Lewis George, the only elected Democrat in the mayoral race, signed it, called Israel’s actions genocide, said she would divest public funds from Israel, and pledged to rescind her 2022 vote affirming that antizionism is Jew-hate.

Domestic & Law

- **Times of Israel:** As expected, Israel’s High Court of Justice issued a temporary injunction on Friday blocking the government’s March 1 deadline to shutter 37 NGOs — including multiple branches of Doctors Without Borders and Oxfam — that refused to comply with registration requirements mandating staff names, passport numbers, and funding disclosures designed to screen out Hamas-linked workers. The government’s position — that organizations whose employees participated in October 7 should not be entitled to operational licenses — is factually grounded; the court will now decide how long it wants to take to say so.
- **Jewish Chronicle:** UK Attorney General Lord Hermer defended the Starmer government’s September 2025 recognition of a Palestinian state while more than 20 Israeli hostages were still alive in Hamas captivity, declined to say whether he personally advised the decision, and said it is “not for the government to make any consideration about genocide — that’s for the court to make.” Hermer is Jewish, credits Starmer with “rooting out the evil of antisemitism” from Labour, and has consistently advocated Palestinian statehood “for years” — context that does not make the timing of the recognition any less a reward for the worst hostage-taking in Israeli history.
- **Israel National News:** A Maariv/Lazar poll found that only 24% of Israelis supported the opposition’s boycott of Netanyahu’s Knesset session during Modi’s visit. In current electoral scenarios, including a joint Bennett-Eisenkot run, the opposition bloc holds at 60 seats, the coalition at 50, and Arab parties at 10 — meaning Netanyahu’s opponents cannot form a government without Arab party support, which none of the opposition leaders will accept publicly or politically.

Economy, Tech & Infrastructure

- **Times of Israel:** The Defense Ministry, Treasury, and Israel Land Authority signed a deal Thursday to relocate 11 military bases from central Israel to the south, freeing 2.3 square kilometers for approximately 19,000 housing units and a commercial-industrial corridor. Operational C4I, intelligence, and Air Force units will begin moving to a new technology campus in Beersheba in the coming weeks, with the Intelligence Directorate’s full consolidation — including Unit 8200 — expected by 2028. Concentrating the IDF’s most sensitive technology and intelligence capabilities in a single

Negev campus, adjacent to Ben-Gurion University, is a choice—even if it is partially considered to address the housing crisis.

- **JNS:** Israel's Supreme Planning Council approved 1,338 housing units in Kedumim's new Nahalat Esther neighborhood — more than doubling the size of the western Samaria community, which currently holds 4,850 residents in roughly 1,050 households — as part of a broader plan for 3,000 homes across four neighborhoods.

Culture, Religion & Society

- **JTA:** At a Skirball Cultural Center forum organized by major Jewish groups, five leading California gubernatorial candidates competed to present the strongest Jewish safety credentials — pledging to enforce AB 715, denouncing BDS, and affirming Israel's right to exist — in the same week three antisemitism lawsuits were filed against California educational institutions, including a DOJ suit against UCLA and a Title VII case by an Israeli researcher at UC Berkeley against UAW Local 4811 alleging systematic exclusion based on national origin. California has 1.2 million Jews and the governing coalition of institutions — public universities, public sector unions, the Democratic Party — is now legally and electorally exposed on the question of whether it will protect them.
- **Jewish Insider:** New polls in Maine and Florida show Gen Z voters across party lines gravitating toward candidates with alarming records on Jew-hate. In Maine, Graham Platner leads among Democratic voters under 35 by a 73-point margin over sitting Governor Janet Mills. In Florida, Israel-bashing investor James Fishback, who uses antisemitic tropes in social media posts, leads among Republican voters aged 18-34 by 23 points over front-runner Byron Donalds despite receiving just 6% overall. The polling is consistent across parties, which rules out ideology as the explanatory variable and leaves algorithmic radicalization as the more durable answer.
- **JNS:** Sheba Medical Center at Tel HaShomer ranked seventh globally in Newsweek's World's Best Hospitals 2026 list — its eighth consecutive year in the top 10 and the highest-ever position for an Israeli institution — climbing past Johns Hopkins, which ranked sixth last year. Sheba attributes the rise to its full integration of AI into clinical, research, and administrative operations.
- **JTA:** Dariusz Stola, the founding director of Warsaw's Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews, was reinstated on March 1 after being forced out in 2019 by Law and Justice culture minister Piotr Gliński, who objected to Stola's exhibit documenting Poland's 1968 state-sponsored antisemitic purge, which expelled 13,000 Jews from their workplaces. His reinstatement by Prime Minister Tusk's centrist coalition is a rebuke of Poland's largest opposition party — though Law and Justice's newly elected president Karol Nawrocki, a right-wing historian with a documented interest in rewriting the country's Holocaust record, will not accept the rebuke gracefully.

Developments to Watch

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Iran Attrition Strategy Taking Shape** — Iran is launching ballistic missiles in sustained drips rather than concentrated volleys, a deliberate conservation approach in the hopes of wearing down Israeli and US interceptor stocks over a longer campaign. With approximately 2,500 ballistic missiles remaining — and production facilities now taking strikes, Tehran is rationing what it has while betting the toll on Israeli civilians forces a ceiling on the operation.
- **Strait of Hormuz: Hapag-Lloyd Suspends Transit** — Hapag-Lloyd, the world's fifth-largest container carrier, has suspended all Hormuz transit indefinitely; the oil tanker Sky Light was attacked by Iran near the strait. If the suspension holds and spreads to other carriers, roughly 20–21% of global seaborne oil trade faces an active chokepoint crisis — the pressure mechanism that matters most to Washington's economic calculus and to the Gulf states hosting US forces.
- **Iraq Militia Activation — Erbil Consulate Hit** — A suicide drone struck the US consulate in Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan, causing damage. This is the Iran-aligned militia network executing the pre-delegated authorization structure Al-Nujaba described before the strikes — attacks on US targets without leadership sign-off. The Erbil hit is a proof-of-concept for how the next 72 hours of proxy activity looks if the IRGC's interim council cannot establish central command.
- **Iran Missile Production Rate vs. Strike Tempo** — The IDF assesses Iran was producing ballistic missiles at a rising rate in recent months, having attempted to rebuild from ~500 launched in June 2025 toward an 8,000-unit target.
- **Iran Succession and Command Continuity** — Ayatollah Alireza Arafati leads an interim Leadership Council alongside Pezeshkian and Chief Justice; Ali Larijani has posted publicly and may have survived. Security chief Larijani's warning against "secessionist groups" and the UAE's shift to remote schooling suggest the Gulf-regional assumption is that the next 72 hours remain acute. Whether the IRGC accepts the interim council's authority — or whether the military command structure operates independently of it — is the most consequential unanswered question in the region right now.

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Hezbollah's Decision Window** — Hezbollah has not entered the fight; current IDF assessments give it a preference to stay out, at least initially. With Khamenei dead, IRGC command fractured, and the patron that provided operational authorization and funding now in an acute succession crisis, Hezbollah's calculus depends on what emerges from Tehran in the next

48–72 hours. An IRGC that consolidates and demands activation is a different variable than a Leadership Council that wants to avoid further catastrophe.

Gaza & Southern Theater

- **Hamas Day After Infiltration — Window Closing** — With the NCAG moving toward operational status and the Board of Peace summit framework in play, Hamas's effort to embed military-wing commanders in the proposed Gaza police force and steer the technocratic government structure is the live governance battle. Israel's stated demands — full disarmament, tunnel maps, exclusion of Hamas from police authority — are on the table in Egypt-mediated talks; Qatar and Turkey are the enforcement mechanism, and neither has any incentive to use it. The operational window to contest Hamas's structural embedding is quickly closing.

Home Front & Politics

- **Bedouin Shelter Gap — Active Liability** — Ra'am MK Alhawashla's warning that 150,000 Bedouin citizens in the Negev lack access to protected spaces has moved from a political complaint to an active home front failure. Home Front Command instructions to shelter are operationally meaningless for a population with no shelters to reach.

The Megillah opens with a Persian court drunk on its own power and ends with that power turned against itself. The mechanism is not divine intervention rendered in fire from the sky — it is intelligence, timing, and the willingness of one people to act when everyone counseled patience. Khamenei spent decades telling anyone who asked that Israel would not exist by 2040. He ran out of time on Saturday morning when Israeli intelligence tracked three leadership meetings converging in Tehran and adjusted the strike window accordingly. The Iranians celebrating around the globe are not confused about what happened. The current operation is not over. But the promise to wipe Israel off the map is.

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