



Forensic intelligence for those who act.

READER EDITION

March 5, 2026

ISRAEL BRIEF

Thursday, March 5

Several days of war compressed into one brief — the regime loses its command architecture, the Gulf fractures, and the Western left mourns the dictator Iranians didn't want.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE Three continents, one week, one pattern. A kippah on a Brooklyn train is enough to trigger a beating. A kippah at a Milan supermarket is enough to trigger a mob. A Jewish identity at a Buenos Aires market is enough to trigger expulsion.

CLASSIFICATION

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Probabilities

- `iran_ballistic_capacity_24h` — “military assessments give roughly 24 hours before Iran’s ability to strike Israel with ballistic missiles is even more dramatically reduced” — directional/strongly stated. First log.
- `hezbollah_escalation_48h` — “the next 48 hours will show whether Hezbollah commits to escalation or holds at this calibrated level” — directional. First log.
- `hormuz_escalation` — labeled “LIKELY TO ESCALATE” in Developments to Watch re: Strait of Hormuz becoming an active combat zone. First log.

Proposed JSONL entries:

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{ "date": "2026-03-05", "claim": "iran_ballistic_capacity_24h", "value": "~24h before b
{ "date": "2026-03-05", "claim": "hezbollah_escalation_48h", "value": "likely to escala
{ "date": "2026-03-05", "claim": "hormuz_escalation", "value": "likely to escalate", "t
```

Canonical-line candidates

1. `irgc_suicide_run_verdict` — “The IRGC sent manned bombers on what was functionally a suicide run against the largest US military installation in the Middle East. Two minutes from target. Eighty feet off the deck. Carrying live munitions. That is an act of desperation from an organization that has lost its supreme leader, its senior command, and its air defenses in well under a week — and decided to spend two irreplaceable airframes and their crews to prove it can still reach the Gulf.” (section: The War Today / Iran’s War Crosses Into Europe and the Gulf Fractures)
2. `qatar_old_map_line` — “Qatar went from hosting Hamas to shooting down Iranian bombers in eighteen months — if someone in your life is still working from the old map, this is the update they need.” (section: The War Today / Iran’s War Crosses Into Europe and the Gulf Fractures)
3. `permission_structure_beats` — “Every ‘anti-Zionist’ protest, every faculty letter, every UN resolution that treats Jewish self-defense as criminal creates operational cover for the people who beat Jews in the street.” (section: Israel and the World / Jew-Hate Surges from Brooklyn to Buenos Aires to Milan)

Candidate new vocabulary

- **Actor:** `newsom` — Gavin Newsom, California governor and likely 2028 Democratic presidential frontrunner; piece characterizes him analytically as

the diagnostic signal for where Democratic presidential politics on Israel has landed

- **Actor:** `van_hollen` — Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD); piece treats his J Street plenary speech as diagnostic for Democratic Party positioning
- **Glossary term:** `permission_structure` — used analytically to describe the mechanism by which institutional anti-Israel discourse creates operational cover for street-level violence against Jews; candidate for glossary stub
- **Glossary term:** `iron_beam` — Israel’s laser air defense system; first combat use documented in this piece; candidate for glossary stub as a named system
- **Glossary term:** `operation_roaring_lion` — named Israeli military operation; first appeared in earlier pieces but this edition provides the most analytical treatment of its origins and acceleration

Editorial-baseline flags

NONE. Checked: - “West Bank” — not found - “settlements” (pejorative) — not found - “apartheid” — appears only in attribution of Newsom’s framing (correct usage per baseline) - “assassination” — appears only as Polanski’s characterization, in quotes (correct usage) - “controversial” — not found - Editorial endorsement language — not found - Forbidden constructions (It’s not X / Not only X) — not found - z"l check: two soldiers wounded (not killed) — no honorific needed

Thread engagement notes

- `iran` — **heavy:** dominant thread; command architecture strikes, Mojtaba succession, Cyprus/Turkey/Gulf fracture, Kurdish incursion, Witkoff nuclear disclosure, CENTCOM 100-day surge, Hormuz, ballistic capacity degradation
- `lebanon_hezbollah` — **heavy:** Hezbollah northern front entry, Iron Beam debut, IDF 320+ targets, “strategic ambush” framing, 48h escalation question
- `coalition_dynamics` — **heavy:** AG vs. Ben-Gvir mid-war; Malinovsky (Yisrael Beiteinu) breaks from opposition; coalition wall statement; Urich investigation note
- `diaspora_security` — **heavy:** Brooklyn/Milan/Buenos Aires attacks; Italy acceleration curve (241→963); Newsom “apartheid” as 2028 presidential positioning; NC primary diagnostic; FJP campus network
- `western_institutions` — **heavy:** WashPost/NYT/Sky News Khamenei obituary euphemism; Van Hollen at J Street; FJP solidarity statements; Utah BDS legislative test; Newsom positioning

- **gaza_hamas** — **not tagged**: Gaza does not appear as a material subject in this edition; the focus is entirely on the Iran-Israel-Lebanon-Gulf theater
- **judea_samaria** — **not tagged**: al-Azariya raid is one sentence in Briefly Noted without analytical development

Body

Flash Brief

- **5,000+ Munitions**: IAF strikes dismantle Tehran's leadership compound, IRGC headquarters, and security command infrastructure across twelve waves.
- **Mojtaba Khamenei Selected**: Assembly of Experts reportedly picks the late supreme leader's son as successor — during a vote the IAF struck mid-count.
- **F-35 Air-to-Air Kill**: IAF Adir shoots down Iranian YAK-130 over Tehran — first F-35 combat kill of a manned aircraft in history.
- **Gulf States at War**: Qatari F-15s down two Iranian bombers two minutes from Al Udeid; Doha arrests IRGC cells and strikes inside Iran.
- **Hezbollah Opens Fire**: Rockets and drones launched at Haifa; IDF strikes 320+ targets in Lebanon and describes Hezbollah's entry as a "strategic ambush."
- **Iron Beam Debut**: Footage appears to show first combat use of Israel's laser air defense system intercepting a drone on the northern border.
- **AG vs. Ben-Gvir — Mid-War**: Attorney general demands High Court order to fire Ben-Gvir; coalition rallies, opposition MK Malinovsky breaks ranks to call timing unreasonable.
- **TASE Hits Record**: Tel Aviv Stock Exchange closes at all-time high; shekel near 30-year high against the dollar; 82% of Israelis back the war.
- **Jew-Hate Surges Globally**: Attacks on visibly Jewish people in Brooklyn, Milan, and Buenos Aires — three continents, one week, one permission structure.

The War Today

IAF Dismantles Tehran's Command Architecture as Mojtaba Khamenei Surfaces

The Israeli Air Force has struck Iran with over 5,000 munitions across more than 600 targets since Operation Roaring Lion opened Saturday. Since the March 1 brief, the IAF completed at least twelve additional waves of strikes across Tehran and western Iran, targeting progressively deeper layers of the regime's command infrastructure. Israeli jets dropped munitions on the regime's central leadership compound in the heart of Tehran — described by the IDF as "one of the most heavily secured assets in Iran" and spanning several

streets — dismantling the Presidential Office, the Supreme National Security Council building, and the gathering site of the regime's most senior security forum. Separately, the IAF struck the General Staff headquarters for Internal Security, the Tharallah defense command center, IRGC headquarters, Intelligence Directorate headquarters, Basij headquarters, Quds Force headquarters, Cyber Warfare headquarters, and the Internal Security unit responsible for suppressing protests.

Col. "Aleph," commander of Ramat David Airbase, stated that Israeli strikes had killed thousands of Iranian forces in the preceding two days. An IAF F-35 "Adir" shot down an Iranian YAK-130 warplane over Tehran yesterday — the first air-to-air kill by an F-35 in combat and Israel's first engagement with a manned enemy aircraft since 1985, when F-15s downed two Syrian MiG-23s over Lebanon.

On Tuesday, the IAF struck a building in Qom where the Assembly of Experts had gathered to elect a new supreme leader — the strike occurred during the vote count while members were holding ballots. Iranian opposition media subsequently reported that the Assembly selected Mojtaba Khamenei, the late supreme leader's son, as successor. Mojtaba survived the Saturday strikes that killed his father, though his wife and a son were reportedly killed. The Islamic Republic — born in an anti-monarchical revolution — will have built a hereditary succession line of ayatollahs, if it sticks.

Israel also eliminated IRGC special operations chief Rahman Mokadam, described as the architect of the assassination attempt on President Trump ahead of the 2024 election. Defense Minister Katz disclosed that Operation Roaring Lion was originally planned for later this year but was advanced to February due to developments inside Iran, Trump's posture, and a major expansion in Israeli intelligence capabilities since Operation Rising Lion.

ASSESSMENT

The IAF is now performing stand-in munitions delivery over Tehran — bombs dropped directly over targets, not standoff missiles — which means Israeli jets are operating inside Iranian airspace with the confidence of a country that has already destroyed the air defenses that were supposed to prevent exactly this. The Assembly of Experts strike is a different category of target. Striking a religious-constitutional body during a succession vote signals that the architecture of political continuity is a legitimate military objective. Mojtaba's reported selection — if it holds — hands the regime a leader with IRGC security ties and no independent clerical authority. The operational math favors Israel and the US on every axis except time — the longer the campaign runs, the more political friction accumulates in Washington. Katz's admission that Roaring Lion was accelerated by months confirms what the operational tempo implies: this was an intelligence-driven window, not a crisis-driven response.

Iran's War Crosses Into Europe and the Gulf Fractures

Iran struck a European country for the first time when an Iranian drone hit RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus overnight Monday, hours after two Iranian missiles were fired toward the island and fell into the sea. The base houses approximately 2,000 British personnel and their families. Damage was limited and

no casualties were reported. The strike followed PM Starmer's authorization for US defensive strikes against Iranian missile sites from British bases on the island.

NATO air defense systems intercepted and destroyed a ballistic missile launched from Iran toward Turkish airspace — the first time NATO has acted operationally against an Iranian missile targeting a member state. Turkish authorities said debris fell in Hatay province. A Turkish source told AFP the missile was aimed at a base in Cyprus but deviated. Turkey summoned the Iranian ambassador.

In the Gulf, Qatari F-15s shot down two Iranian Su-24 tactical bombers that were two minutes from reaching Al Udeid Air Base — home to approximately 10,000 US service members — and the Ras Laffan gas facility. The Iranian jets, carrying bombs and guided munitions, had descended to 80 feet to evade radar. It was the first time the Qatari air force engaged in air-to-air combat.

Qatar also arrested 10 IRGC-linked operatives in two cells — seven conducting espionage on military and critical sites, three preparing sabotage with drone training — the first time Doha has publicly accused the IRGC of directing operations on its soil. Qatar's PM rejected Iranian claims that attacks were aimed only at "American interests," calling the strikes a "flagrant violation" of Qatari sovereignty that targeted Hamad International Airport, civilian areas, and industrial zones.

Iran attacked Saudi Arabia's Ras Tanura refinery by drone for the second consecutive day. Qatar carried out retaliatory strikes inside Iran. Hundreds of Kurdish fighters launched ground operations inside Iran from the Iraq border, with Israeli and American officials confirming the activity. Kurdish sources described a "major opportunity" to pressure Iranian security forces across multiple fronts. The White House denied arming Kurdish forces while confirming Trump spoke with Kurdish leaders. Iran's intelligence ministry claimed it struck "separatist" border posts and that forces suffered heavy losses.

Steve Witkoff revealed that Iranian negotiators had boasted of possessing 460 kilograms of 60% enriched uranium — enough for 11 nuclear bombs — as their opening negotiating position, and that Tehran rejected a US offer of ten years of zero enrichment with American-funded fuel supply.

ASSESSMENT

The IRGC sent manned bombers on what was functionally a suicide run against the largest US military installation in the Middle East. Two minutes from target. Eighty feet off the deck. Carrying live munitions. That is an act of desperation from an organization that has lost its supreme leader, its senior command, and its air defenses in well under a week — and decided to spend two irreplaceable airframes and their crews to prove it can still reach the Gulf.

Qatar's response — shooting them down, arresting IRGC cells, striking inside Iran, and publicly rejecting Tehran's denials — represents the most dramatic realignment in Gulf security posture since the Abraham Accords. Doha was Hamas's diplomatic host. Now it is in air-to-air combat with Iran.

The Kurdish ground incursion adds a land dimension the air campaign lacked. Kurdish forces cannot topple the regime alone — they lack the numbers, the internal cohesion, and the logistics — but they force the IRGC to divert ground security resources to the western border at precisely the moment its command infrastructure is in collapse.

Iran striking a NATO ally's base in Cyprus and firing a missile that crossed Turkish airspace means the IRGC is now at war with the military alliance it spent decades avoiding. NATO's Rutte said Article 5 activation is not currently needed — which is the alliance's way of keeping the door open while hoping it doesn't have to walk through it. Witkoff's disclosure that Iran boasted of what amounts to be 11 bombs and rejected zero enrichment shows that Iran chose nuclear capability over a deal, and said so to the American envoy's face.

Hezbollah Opens the Northern Front; Iron Beam Fires for the First Time

Hezbollah, in an attempt to commit Israel-assisted suicide, launched rockets and drones from southern Lebanon, triggering sirens in Haifa and the Krayot towns in the Haifa Bay area. Rockets were intercepted; others fell in open areas. Hezbollah claimed it targeted a “military site” south of Haifa with precision missiles and drone swarms, calling the attack a response to Khamenei's assassination and Israeli violations against Lebanon.

Footage circulating appears to show the first operational use of the Iron Beam laser air defense system, intercepting a drone along the northern border — the first combat use of a high-energy laser defense system in an active conflict. The system was delivered to the IAF's air defense array in December. A separate drone interception caused damage to two homes in the Upper Galilee and a fire ignited near the border community of Shlomi. No injuries were reported.

Two IDF soldiers from the 401st Brigade were moderately wounded by anti-tank fire while operating in southern Lebanon yesterday. The IDF has assumed forward defensive positions to establish an additional defensive layer for northern residents.

The IDF struck more than 320 Hezbollah targets across Lebanon since Hezbollah joined the conflict, including at least 80 in the past 24 hours alone — command centers in Beirut, weapons depots, and terrorist infrastructure. Northern Command chief Maj. Gen. Rafi Milo warned that strikes would intensify across Lebanon including Beirut, Tyre, and Sidon, and said approximately 300,000 residents have been evacuated from southern Lebanon. The IDF described Hezbollah's entry as walking into “a strategic ambush.”

Iranian ballistic missile fire on Israel has continued but at a declining rate — all overnight projectiles were intercepted. Since the war began, 13 Iranian missile impacts have been recorded in Israeli residential areas, with large warhead impacts in Beit Shemesh, Tel Aviv, and Beersheba, alongside fragments and cluster submunitions in other locations.

The Home Front Command partially eased restrictions Wednesday, permitting gatherings of up to 50 people near shelters and allowing workplaces

to operate under the same conditions. A weekend assessment may permit schools to reopen next week.

ASSESSMENT

Hezbollah resolved its public-versus-private contradiction from the previous brief. It chose the public channel. The rockets at Haifa and the Krayot are not a full-scale opening — they were a calibrated entry designed to demonstrate solidarity with Iran without inviting the kind of ground operation that destroyed the organization's infrastructure in 2025. The IDF will determine if they miscalculated. Northern Command had prepared for this scenario as part of Roaring Lion planning, and 320 targets struck in three days suggests the target bank was pre-built and waiting. The question is whether Hezbollah escalates or maintains a demonstrative tempo — and the answer depends on whether the new supreme leader (whoever it functionally is) can issue credible orders to an organization that lost its own senior leadership less than a year ago.

Iron Beam's combat debut is a strategic milestone that will not receive the attention it deserves because it happened during a week when everything else also happened. A laser interceptor that kills drones at the cost of running a dishwasher changes the economic equation of asymmetric warfare. Every drone Iran and Hezbollah send becomes a net loss with no corresponding depletion of Israeli interceptor stocks. The declining rate of Iranian ballistic missile fire and the partial easing of Home Front Command restrictions are two data points that reinforce each other — the operational pressure on Israeli civilians is diminishing as the IAF degrades Iran's launch infrastructure.

Qatar went from hosting Hamas to shooting down Iranian bombers in eighteen months — if someone in your life is still working from the old map, this is the update they need.

Inside Israel

AG Demands Ben-Gvir's Ouster in the Middle of a War

Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara submitted a legal opinion to the High Court on Wednesday demanding that it order Netanyahu to dismiss National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir if there is no “meaningful change” in his alleged interference in police operations — while Israeli pilots are flying sorties over Tehran and millions of citizens are in and out of shelters. The Prime Minister's Office called the action “inconceivable,” stated that Ben-Gvir would continue serving, and noted that no criminal investigation has been opened against him.

Ben-Gvir responded on X that “a dismissed criminal official is trying to promote a coup d'état” — referencing the Knesset's unanimous August 4 vote to remove Baharav-Miara, which the High Court elects to ignore. Justice Minister Yariv Levin called the High Court hearing “illegal” and said no AG has the authority to determine who serves as a minister.

MK Yulia Malinovsky, of opposition Yisrael Beiteinu, also condemned the timing as “detached and clearly unreasonable.” Coalition members issued a

joint statement calling the effort “a coup against democracy” and pledging to “stand as a wall against the baseless dismissal of a government minister.”

Ben-Gvir had submitted a written response to the Court in January noting the absence of any conviction, indictment, investigation, or public report justifying the petitions — which were brought by radical left-wing organizations including Ima Era and Tag Meir.

Separately, a court extended the restrictive conditions of Netanyahu’s close aide Yonatan Urich in the Bild leak affair but clarified that he is not barred from speaking with the prime minister — rejecting police efforts to read a contact prohibition into an earlier ruling. The investigation has not yet questioned Netanyahu — investigators told the court there is no foreseeable date for doing so under wartime conditions. Urich has been under restrictions since last March and defense counsel secured an acknowledgment that he made no attempt to obstruct the investigation.

ASSESSMENT

The AG filed a petition to fire an elected minister — without an indictment, without a criminal investigation, without a public finding — during the most intense military operation in Israeli history. Baharav-Miara’s defenders cite procedural deadlines. The coalition sees a judicial establishment that has never accepted the electoral legitimacy of the current government to advance a removal the ballot box did not deliver. The practical outcome is that Ben-Gvir stays, the constitutional confrontation deepens, and the AG’s credibility as a neutral arbiter (not that that facade had much depth left) erodes further with every wartime filing. Malinovsky’s break from the opposition is worth watching — when a Liberman MK calls the AG’s timing unreasonable, the political alignment against judicial overreach has grown beyond the coalition.

Markets Rally, Museums Evacuate, and Israel Marks Purim in Shelters

The Tel Aviv Stock Exchange closed at an all-time high Monday, rising 890 points to 16,150, with the TA-35 and TA-125 indices both gaining over 4.5%. The shekel strengthened 1.5% against the dollar (approaching a 30-year high) as investors bet that the campaign would reduce long-term regional instability. A successful campaign could trigger a credit rating upgrade and that the Israeli market is currently more attractive than the US market.

Meanwhile, supermarket chains reported purchasing volumes 300% above normal, with Carrefour branches open from 6 a.m. to midnight and online orders doubling. Schools and nonessential businesses remained closed under Home Front Command guidelines.

Israel’s museums packed up treasures for the fourth time since October 7 — the Israel Museum relocated the Great Isaiah Scroll and other ancient manuscripts to secure storage, the National Library moved its permanent exhibitions underground, and the Tel Aviv Museum stored works including a Van Gogh that hasn’t been rehung since 2023.

Purim was observed under a ban on public gatherings, including synagogue megillah readings. Some of those readings happened in bomb shelters. The

IDF spokesperson confirmed gatherings are prohibited “regardless of purpose or location” — but that doesn’t stop Israelis from living while forced underground. Leading rabbis, including Israel’s chief Sephardic and Ashkenazic rabbis, endorsed live virtual readings via Zoom as sufficient to fulfill the mitzvah.

The Israel Democracy Institute found 82% of Israelis — 93% of Jewish Israelis and 26% of Israeli Arabs — support the war. Among Jewish Israelis, support spans the political spectrum: 76% on the left, 93% center, 97% right. Three-quarters of Jewish Israelis support continuing the war until the regime falls; only 3% chose immediate cessation.

American opinion diverges sharply: a CNN poll found 41% approve of US military action, with 77% of Republicans in favor versus 18% of Democrats. A Reuters/Ipsos poll put overall US approval at just 27%.

ASSESSMENT

The TASE rally at the onset of a regional war is the market’s verdict on the strategic environment, and it reads the operation as net positive for Israel’s long-term risk profile. Investors are pricing in a reduced Iranian threat overhang — the same overhang that depressed Israeli valuations and complicated credit assessments for a decade. If the campaign ends well, the credit upgrade path is real.

The 82% domestic support figure is the political bedrock the coalition needs — and the 76% support among Jewish leftists means the opposition cannot credibly argue the war is unpopular even among its own voters.

The American numbers tell a different story: a partisan divide so deep that the same military operation polls at 77% among Republicans and 18% among Democrats, meaning US domestic support is hostage to a political environment that treats Iran policy as a proxy for Trump approval.

The Purim-in-shelters image — megillah by Zoom, museums emptied for the fourth time, the Isaiah Scroll back underground — is the texture of a country that has learned to function under fire.

Israel and the World

The Western Left Rallies for the Regime That Just Died

UK Green Party leader Zack Polanski called for Britain to sever ties with the US and Israel, described the killing of Khamenei as an “assassination” of a foreign leader, and called the US and Israel “rogue states.” His deputy, Mothini Ali, attended a London rally where demonstrators chanted “Death to Israel” and “Khamenei you make us proud,” burned an American flag, and displayed Islamic Republic flags. Ali was filmed standing among the regime banners.

Former security minister MP Tom Tugendhat accused the Greens of standing “with those who murder young Iranians seeking a better life” and “murder gay and lesbian men and women by hanging them from cranes.” Ali had

previously described Gaza as “the biggest concentration camp the world has ever seen” on October 7, 2023.

In Washington, Sen. Chris Van Hollen told J Street’s opening plenary, to applause, that AIPAC is “neither pro-American nor pro-Israel,” accused Israel of violating American and international law, and called the Iran strikes “a gross violation of your constitution.” Van Hollen cited unverified Iranian claims of over 140 schoolchildren killed, though the IDF said it was “not aware” of operations in that area and CENTCOM said it was investigating.

Faculty for Justice in Palestine chapters across US campuses — including at Sarah Lawrence, NYU, Bowdoin, and Bryn Mawr — issued statements proclaiming solidarity with Iran’s regime, calling for “de-platforming Zionists,” and urging tax resistance to defund the war effort. The UC Ethnic Studies Council shared content from a group that defended terrorism against Israel, declaring US military bases, not Iran, as the true intruders in the region.

UCL’s Ahlul-Bayt Islamic Society mourned Khamenei’s “martyrdom” and urged Shia Muslims in the West to “remain aware and ready.”

California governor Gavin Newsom — widely regarded as the 2028 Democratic presidential frontrunner — said Israel’s leadership was walking the US toward reconsidering military support, described Israel as an “apartheid state,” and accused Trump of dragging the US into “an illegal, dangerous war” while acknowledging the Iranian regime “must go.”

In North Carolina, a Democratic primary contest between Rep. Valerie Foushee and challenger Nida Allam devolved into a competition over who could be more critical of Israel, with Allam citing unverified Iranian claims of school bombings and Foushee — once backed by AIPAC — now emphasizing her break with the group and her record opposing arms sales.

ASSESSMENT

The Iranian regime murdered tens of thousands of protesters in January. It hangs gay men from cranes. It funded and armed the organization that carried out October 7. And the Western progressive ecosystem — from a British party leader to an American senator to tenured faculty at elite universities to the likely 2028 Democratic nominee — responded to its supreme leader’s death by mourning him, defending his sovereignty, and attacking the countries that killed him.

Van Hollen spoke at J Street’s main plenary. J Street claims to support Israel. Anyone with more than two functioning neurons knows that claim is absurd. Newsom is positioning for a presidential campaign. The Faculty for Justice in Palestine network operates across dozens of campuses with institutional support from ethnic studies departments. UCL’s Islamic society told Shia Muslims to “remain ready” — on a British campus, in English, without consequence!

The North Carolina primary is a diagnostic: when both candidates in a Democratic district compete to distance themselves from Israel, the party’s center of gravity on the issue is no longer in dispute. Iranians danced in the streets

of Los Angeles, London, Berlin, and Tehran when Khamenei died. American “progressives” told them they were wrong to celebrate.

Jew-Hate Surges from Brooklyn to Buenos Aires to Milan

A masked attacker on a Brooklyn N train punched a 54-year-old Jewish man repeatedly while shouting antisemitic slurs, then snatched his yarmulke and fled. The victim was hospitalized (in stable condition). The NYPD Hate Crime Task Force is investigating. Anti-Jewish hate crimes accounted for more than half of all bias incidents reported to the NYPD in January and February.

In Milan, two 19-year-old Argentine Jewish tourists were attacked outside a supermarket late Sunday night by a group of approximately ten North African migrants who spotted their kippahs and began shouting “f*cking Jews” before beating them, leaving one with a broken nose. Italian authorities opened a criminal investigation. The European Jewish Congress called the attack a sign of rising antisemitic hostility. Milan Jewish community president Walker Meghnagi requested increased security at Jewish schools and synagogues.

Italian antisemitic incidents nearly reached four digits for the first time in 2025 — 963 classified cases, up from 877 in 2024, 453 in 2023, and 241 in 2022.

In Buenos Aires, a Jewish artist was expelled from the San Telmo street fair after asking a vendor to remove a Palestinian flag — fellow vendors chanted “Zionists out,” “Free Palestine,” and “Leave and never return.” The Buenos Aires city government condemned the incident as an antisemitic attack. Jewish Argentine lawmaker Waldo Wolff filed a criminal complaint under anti-discrimination laws.

ASSESSMENT

Three continents, one week, one pattern. A kippah on a Brooklyn train is enough to trigger a beating. A kippah at a Milan supermarket is enough to trigger a mob. A Jewish identity at a Buenos Aires market is enough to trigger expulsion.

The acceleration curve in Italy — from 241 incidents in 2022 to 963 in 2025 — maps directly onto the post-October 7 permission structure. Every “anti-Zionist” protest, every faculty letter, every UN resolution that treats Jewish self-defense as criminal creates operational cover for the people who beat Jews in the street. Argentina under Milei has responded with prosecutions and permit revocations — a model that produces consequences. Italy is investigating. The NYPD is investigating. The question in each case is whether investigation produces deterrence or simply documents the trend line. The answer, so far, is the trend line.

Briefly Noted

Frontline & Security

Israeli police, Border Police, and IDF forces raided al-Azariya overnight, seizing a Trijicon long-gun sight from a 25-year-old suspect's home; a separate operation in Beit Ula recovered an airsoft pistol, ammunition, fireworks materials, and a face covering. Investigators are also examining whether the al-Azariya suspect has been collecting Israeli National Insurance benefits while residing in Judea and Samaria — a fraud angle that adds a welfare-exploitation layer to the weapons case.

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

Iranian diaspora communities celebrated Khamenei's death in the streets of Los Angeles, London, Berlin, Paris, Sydney, and Toronto — with verified footage of celebrations inside Iran as well, including the toppling of a Khomeini monument in the south — while the DSA, Faculty for Justice in Palestine, and Democratic lawmakers condemned the strikes as an attack on “an entire people.” When so-called progressives tell Iranians who danced on the grave of a dictator who murdered tens of thousands that they are wrong about their own oppression, they are defending the sovereignty of the ayatollahs, not the people.

The Washington Post described Khamenei as known for his “bushy white beard and easy smile” and fondness for Victor Hugo; the New York Times summarized him as a “hardline cleric” who made Iran “a regional power”; Sky News called him Trump's “arch foe” — across outlets, aesthetic detail and euphemism replaced the record of a man who executed dissidents, crushed protests, and funded proxy armies for decades. Headlines shape historical memory, and Western obituary conventions just gave a theocratic dictator the treatment normally reserved for retired statesmen.

Industrial-scale fabrications — Netanyahu assassination claims, recycled destruction footage passed off as Tel Aviv devastation, viral lies that Muslims are barred from Israeli shelters, and Tucker Carlson amplifying false Mossad-cells-in-Qatar narrative that Qatar itself denied — have spread faster than corrections in the first few days of the war.

Domestic & Law

Utah state senator Nate Blouin introduced SB 329 to repeal the state's anti-boycott law, which restricts government contracts with companies that boycott Israel — calling the statute “idiotic” and writing that “Trump is starting yet another war in the Middle East on the behest of Israel.” Thirty-eight states have anti-BDS laws; Blouin's bill is a test case for whether the war creates legislative openings that didn't exist a week ago.

Culture, Religion & Society

Roughly one million Russian-speaking olim who arrived in the 1990s achieved high functional integration — economic participation, military service, professional mobility — while remaining symbolically peripheral, never securing a place in Israel's national narrative commensurate with their contribution.

Hundreds of US-based volunteers staff Israel's SAHAR overnight emotional support lines during the war, leveraging the time-zone gap so that when it is 4 a.m. in Israel and the sirens have stopped but the fear hasn't, an American volunteer is on the other end of the screen.

Developments to Watch

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **IRGC Claims Ben Gurion Airport Strike** — Iran says it launched Khorramshahr-4 missiles with 1-ton warheads at Ben Gurion, citing a “27th Squadron” that hasn't existed since 2010. Fragments landed near the airport with no injuries; the targeting claim is fabricated but the reach is real.
- **Iran's Ballistic Missile Capacity Degrading Fast** — IDF and US forces are hunting mobile launchers across western Iran; military assessments give roughly 24 hours before Iran's ability to strike Israel with ballistic missiles is even more dramatically reduced. Tehran will likely shift to short-range fire against Gulf states and proxy activation as the long-range arsenal empties.
- **Strait of Hormuz Becomes Active Combat Zone** — The IRGC threatened to target American, European, and Israeli ships transiting Hormuz, claimed a hit on a US oil tanker, and South Korea confirmed seven tankers carrying vital supplies are stuck. The US says it is working on plans to secure the strait; a 20%-of-global-oil chokepoint under active fire reprises the war for every economy on earth. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**
- **Houthis Threaten Gulf Arab Infrastructure** — The Houthis warned Arab countries they will attack “sensitive infrastructure” if any Gulf state strikes Iran.
- **CENTCOM Requests 100-Day Intelligence Surge** — CENTCOM asked the Pentagon for additional military intelligence officers to support operations against Iran for at least 100 days. The timeline tells you what the US military thinks this campaign looks like: not a week, not a month — a quarter.

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Hezbollah Rocket Tempo Holds Steady** — More than 10 rockets from Lebanon targeted northern Israel Wednesday; some intercepted, others struck open areas (by protocol), no injuries. The IDF assesses Hezbollah attacks may intensify — the current tempo is demonstrative, not saturating, and the

next 48 hours will show whether Hezbollah commits to escalation or holds at this calibrated level.

- **Iran Threatens Israeli Embassies Over Lebanon** — Iran warned it will attack Israeli embassies worldwide if Israel strikes the Iranian embassy in Lebanon. As if they weren't already targeting them. The threat converts diplomatic premises into hostage leverage — a tool of last resort from a regime running out of conventional options.

Home Front & Politics

- **Home Front Command Weekend Assessment on Schools** — The HFC is scheduled to conduct another assessment over the weekend and may decide to allow educational institutions to reopen next week.

Diplomatic & Legal

- **European Military Footprint Expanding** — Italy plans to deploy anti-aircraft missiles to Gulf countries and a multi-domain force to the Middle East with Spain and France; Spain is sending a frigate to Cyprus; Australia announced military deployments to the region; France authorized US aircraft on French bases in the Middle East.
- **Turkey Monitors Kurdish Fighters While Warning Iran** — Ankara said Kurdish actions “threaten the security of Iran and the stability of the region” while simultaneously reserving the right to respond to Iranian hostile acts and coordinating with NATO. Turkey is threading a needle between Kurdish containment and Iranian deterrence — a position that becomes untenable if either front demands a choice.

Closing Reflection

In Ki Tisa, the people build a golden calf while Moses is on the mountain — because forty days felt like too long to wait without certainty. The Islamic Republic is building its own idol now. A hereditary supreme leader with no clerical authority, installed under bombardment, in a regime founded on the rejection of hereditary rule. The IAF is on the mountain. The regime is melting down its gold. Whether the idol survives depends on how many days Washington is willing to wait.

Shabbat shalom!

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