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READER EDITION

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ISRAEL BRIEF

Sunday, March 15

Iran's regime is bleeding out — and lashing at anything within reach, from Gulf tankers to Michigan synagogues to its own citizens.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE The pro-Israel Democrats are not necessarily against the war. They are claiming to be against the war's management and the political exposure it creates. Schneider's Yom Kippur War analogy is the one that should keep AIPAC strategists up at night: rising energy prices plus a war associated with Israel plus a president who did not build bipartisan cover equals scapegoating. That equation is predictable, and the Trump administration built no firewall against it.

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THE WAR TODAY

Iran Fires on Zarzir, IDF Strikes Taleghan Nuclear Compound Again, and Hormuz Closes to All but the Desperate

A ballistic missile struck the northern Bedouin town of Zarzir near Nazareth early Friday, injuring 58 people with one moderate injury and the remainder light injuries, while damaging approximately 300 homes. Many Iranian missiles carry cluster munitions that scatter sub-munitions across wider areas. Mayor Ataf Grifat reported total destruction of one residence and blast damage affecting rooftops and windows throughout the town. Since February 28, Magen David Adom has treated 854 people with physical injuries from missile fire, including 14 fatalities and 628 injured en route to shelter.

Trump responded on Truth Social, saying “Watch what happens to these deranged scumbags today.” New Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei—reportedly injured on the first day of the war and yet to appear on camera—released a written statement via state television vowing to avenge “the blood of the martyrs” and insisting the Hormuz blockade continue.

Netanyahu stated that Mojtaba “cannot show his face in public” and declared that Israel and the U.S. “are crushing the nuclear infrastructure, the missile and launcher array, the headquarters of oppression, the regime’s power centers.” He emphasized timing’s criticality: “If we had not acted immediately, within a few months Iran’s death industry would have been immune to any strike.”

The IDF confirmed it struck the Taleghan compound near Tehran—a nuclear weapons development site linked to the AMAD program—for the second time. Simultaneously, IAF jets struck IRGC command centers in Tehran, including a compound inside the IRGC’s central military university. Over 24 hours, 20 large-scale Israeli strike waves hit more than 200 targets across western and central Iran: ballistic missile launchers, air defense systems, weapons production sites, and an underground missile facility in Shiraz.

In the Strait of Hormuz, at least two tankers were struck near Iraqi waters, killing one crew member, with Iraqi authorities halting all oil terminal operations. Drones struck fuel tanks at Oman’s Salalah port. A container ship off Ras Al Khaimah was hit by an “unknown projectile.” Brent crude crossed \$100 per barrel. The IEA confirmed the largest supply disruption in global oil market history, surpassing the 1970s.

Despite that, a handful of Greek shipowners—at least 10 ships, plus two Chinese-operated vessels—have been running the strait since February 28, lured by charter rates of \$500,000 per day. Tactics include switching off AIS transponders and transiting at night. The International Transport Workers’ Federation called the voyages “gambling with seafarers’ lives.”

Iran's parliament speaker, Ghalibaf, threatened to "make the Persian Gulf run with the blood of invaders" if the U.S. strikes Iranian islands. Iran's Tasnim news agency published a target list including Amazon, Google, Microsoft, and Nvidia offices in Gulf countries and Israel.

ASSESSMENT

The Taleghan compound strike shows Iran's nuclear weapons infrastructure remains a continuing—not completed—target set. The compound was hit in October 2024, Iran rebuilt it, and Israel hit it again. Netanyahu's press conference framing reflects the administration's post-hoc justification for the war's timing, which is probably correct: Iran's weapons program was accelerating, and the window for kinetic action was narrowing. Whether strikes have pushed breakout timelines back months or years remains an unanswered intelligence question.

Regarding Hormuz: The dynamic has inverted. Iran now loses more from its own blockade than from any sanctions regime—Bandar Abbas is functionally shut, oil revenue is zero, and the Revolutionary Guards burn naval assets faster than they inflict economic damage on transit states. The real Hormuz question concerns how long the IEA's 400-million-barrel drawdown buys before prices force political decisions in Washington. Iran's regime races to make global pain intolerable before its military capacity reaches zero. That race has a finish line.

Israel Expands Lebanon Campaign as Hezbollah's Shiite Base Fractures

Defense Minister Katz warned Lebanon that if Beirut cannot stop Hezbollah from firing, Israel will "take control of the territory and do it ourselves." Netanyahu and Katz have instructed the IDF to prepare expanded operations in Lebanon. Chief of Staff Zamir ordered additional troops—including a full division, brigades, and engineering battalions—reinforced under Northern Command. The 98th Division with two brigade-level combat teams is deploying north, with the 252nd Division (reserves) backfilling in Gaza.

The IDF struck the Zrarieh Bridge over the Litani River—a key Hezbollah crossing for moving operatives between northern and southern Lebanon—and expanded its evacuation warning to all civilians south of the Zahrani River, significantly widening the zone ahead of potential intensified operations.

The IAF eliminated Murtada Hussein Srour, a weapons manufacturing expert and chemistry lecturer at Lebanese University in Beirut—and brother of Mohammad Hussein Srour, commander of Hezbollah's aerial unit killed during Operation Northern Arrows. The IDF noted that "many other operatives who, in addition to their roles in Hezbollah as experts in manufacturing, are simultaneously employed as lecturers at various universities in Lebanon."

IAF leaflets dropped over Beirut included the Military Intelligence Directorate's Unit 504 logo and called on Lebanese civilians: "If you want to be part of real change and contribute to the prosperity and defense of your country, we are here to listen."

Hezbollah continued firing—two people lightly injured in a rocket strike on a Western Galilee home, additional barrages triggering sirens from Haifa to the Golan. Since March 2, Hezbollah has launched approximately 100 rockets per day, with two-thirds aimed at Israeli forces in southern Lebanon and one-third at Israel proper. The IDF has carried out more than 1,100 strikes across Lebanon since this escalation began: 190 Radwan Force sites, 200 launchers, 35 command centers, and 80 multi-story buildings.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah's own Shiite base is turning. Social media in Lebanon flooded with criticism from former supporters. A woman who fled Dahieh said on video: "For a year and a half the Zionist enemy has been striking the south and all areas in Lebanon, Dahiyeh, Baalbek, and you were silent, you did not respond. But when Iran was attacked, you broke your silence to tell the world that Iran is not alone."

A January 2026 poll showed 73% support for disarming Hezbollah. Lebanon's Amal party—Hezbollah's essential political partner—allowed the cabinet to outlaw Hezbollah's armed activities without opposing the measure. Reports in Arab media indicate Amal leader Nabih Berri felt betrayed by Hezbollah's decision to enter the war.

Israel has declined Lebanon's offer of direct talks—including President Aoun's reported willingness to move toward normalization—deeming Beirut's credibility exhausted after a year of failing to enforce the ceasefire. When Lebanese officials reached out to Washington this week, they were rebuffed: "They said that 2025 was our window to confront Hezbollah, and we didn't, so there's nothing they can do now." Washington has little bandwidth for Lebanon and is allowing Israel to deal with it as it sees fit.

Smotrich said the 2024 ceasefire was signed due to Biden administration threats of a weapons embargo and a hostile UNSC resolution, and that Hezbollah was "not defeated" at the time. He called for implementing IDF operational plans to defeat Hezbollah militarily: "There is no outsourcing the elimination of terrorism."

ASSESSMENT

The fracture inside Hezbollah's Shiite base represents the most consequential development on the northern front—more consequential than any individual airstrike. A displaced Shiite woman calling Hezbollah out on live television for sitting silent through 18 months of Israeli strikes and then breaking the ceasefire to defend Iran demonstrates the collapse of the organization's foundational narrative. Hezbollah has always claimed it exists to protect Lebanon. Its own community now sees it as Iran's expeditionary insurance policy—which it is.

If Berri's party formally breaks the parliamentary alliance, Hezbollah loses its political shield in one move. That hasn't happened yet, but Amal's silent acquiescence to the cabinet's disarmament vote represents the preliminary step. The U.S. rebuff—"2025 was your window"—is harsh and honest. Washington tells Beirut that credibility is a non-renewable resource, and Lebanon spent its.

Whether Israel uses the Litani bridge strike and the Zahrani evacuation expansion to establish a deeper buffer zone or as leverage for future negotiation depends on what the IDF's operational plan actually is—and whether political leadership lets it run this time.

INSIDE ISRAEL

Sde Teiman Indictment Dropped—and the Damage Is Already Done

Military Advocate General Maj. Gen. Itai Ofir ordered withdrawal of the indictment against five IDF reserve soldiers accused of abusing a Gazan detainee at the Sde Teiman detention facility. The official rationale cited lack of evidence, the release of the alleged victim to Gaza without his testimony being taken, and—critically—“the conduct of senior figures in the Military Prosecution and in the IDF law enforcement system.”

That conduct centers on former MAG Yifat Tomer-Yerushalmi, who admitted authorizing the leak of a video from the case and was dismissed in November 2025. She is now behind bars. Investigators are examining whether false reports about the leak's source were submitted to the Supreme Court and the attorney general. The video itself—the most salacious piece of evidence—was far from conclusive. Indeed, medical opinions indicated that it was self-inflicted.

Netanyahu previously called the PR damage from the leak “perhaps the most severe public relations attack the State of Israel has experienced since its establishment.” Diaspora Affairs Minister Chikli said the affair caused “unprecedented damage to the State of Israel in world public opinion” and that the leak established “an equation of moral symmetry between the IDF and Hamas” in global media. He congratulated the new MAG for having “the backbone and courage” to acknowledge the injustice.

Defense Minister Katz said justice had been done. The anti-Israel NGO complex, the UN, and Hamas had all seized on the original allegations as evidence of systematic Israeli abuse of prisoners.

ASSESSMENT

The prosecution was compromised from the top—by a senior legal official who leaked classified evidence, resigned in disgrace, and is now a criminal suspect—yet the reputational damage is permanent. Every headline from the original story was filed, cited, and archived. The cancellation will travel at a fraction of the speed. That asymmetry is not unique to Israel, but Israel pays a heavier price for it because every accusation is laundered through the delegitimization pipeline within hours.

Tomer-Yerushalmi's behavior represents a real scandal, extending beyond one case. A military legal establishment that authorizes leaks from active investigations to shape public narrative—and then allegedly submits false reports about those leaks to the Supreme Court—is not a system protecting the rule of law. The soldiers who were arrested, indicted, and dragged through

months of legal limbo during a war—for a case that never had a sound evidentiary foundation—deserved better.

Israel's legal institutions are capable of investigating genuine misconduct. What they cannot afford is officials who confuse institutional vanity with institutional integrity. Right now, there is no evidence that the culture has changed.

Northern Communities Protest Rehabilitation Cuts as Coalition Distributes NIS 5 Billion

The government's decision to slash approximately NIS 150 million (\$48 million) from rehabilitation budgets for frontline communities—as part of a broader 3% cut across non-defense ministries—drew opposition from across the political spectrum, including from within Netanyahu's own coalition.

The Confrontation Line Forum, Sdot Negev Regional Council, and other local bodies urged Netanyahu and Smotrich to exempt the frontline funding. Otzma Yehudit MK Yitzhak Kroizer circulated a letter signed by nine coalition and opposition lawmakers demanding the exemption. The cuts affect programs embedded in broader budget categories—regional development, infrastructure, coalition allocations—none of which are exempt.

Local officials said the funds are not for ordinary development but for a “long-term rehabilitation process” after “unprecedented” devastation. Former PM Bennett posted the letter on X and said cuts occurred on the same day the government approved “NIS 5 billion of coalition funds for the draft dodgers.” Democrats leader Golan called it “sheer cruelty.”

The State Comptroller's January audit found the Home Front Command froze the “Northern Shield” program—launched in 2018 to address bomb shelter shortages—after the government transferred only 52% of the NIS 3 billion allocated. The comptroller visited Kibbutz Manara, where 75% of buildings and infrastructure were destroyed by Hezbollah, and said: “There is no justification for the rehabilitation of homes in Kibbutz Manara to take years.”

This comes as the IDF acknowledged on Thursday that it failed to notify the public ahead of Wednesday night's large-scale Hezbollah barrage—an attack it had indications was coming but assessed as not exceptionally major. Local councils warned residents before the military did. The IDF said it will investigate.

Meanwhile, northern farmers are racing to replant an estimated 550,000 fruit trees and 32,000 grapevines before the planting season closes. About 1,250 acres of orchards and vineyards were destroyed during 18 months of rocket fire. The nonprofit ReGrow Israel launched an initiative to accelerate replanting with improved trellis systems and protective netting.

ASSESSMENT

The optics are indefensible and the substance is worse. Cutting NIS 150 million from frontline rehabilitation on the same day NIS 5 billion in coalition sweeteners were approved—with NIS 1.269 billion earmarked for Torah institutions while the Haredi draft bill sits shelved “for unity”—is flatly a betrayal.

The northern communities are living in shelters for the second time in two years, burying soldiers from their own towns, and being told to reopen businesses by a Home Front Command whose guidelines are driven by fiscal calculations, not threat assessments. The Northern Shield audit provides the institutional backdrop: a program designed precisely for this scenario, defunded before it was half-complete, now invisible while the communities it was supposed to protect absorb another war.

The planting season deadline deserves attention. The agriculture will take seven to nine years to recover from replanting. Every week of delay costs a year of lost production. The coalition's priorities are legible in the budget. The question is whether northern voters remember them when the election comes.

Iran War Barely Moves Israeli Polls; Netanyahu Trust Climbs Slightly

A Maariv poll conducted after the second week of Operation Roaring Lion found the war has had negligible impact on the political map. After an initial symbolic boost, the coalition fell back to 50 Knesset seats—opposition at 60, Arab parties at 10. Likud held steady at 27 seats; Otzma Yehudit lost one. In the opposition, Bennett 2026 and Yesh Atid each gained one seat, while Yashar! dropped by one. The Religious Zionist Party remains below the electoral threshold at 3%.

Public confidence in Netanyahu's handling of the war ticked up from 60% to 62%. Israelis remained doubtful about regime change in Iran: 36% said it would not happen, 28% said it would, 36% said they didn't know. A majority (53%) support reopening workplaces immediately; most oppose reopening events (66%) or schools (67%).

ASSESSMENT

The political stasis is itself the story. A war against Iran—the scenario Israeli strategic culture has anticipated for decades—is generating less electoral movement than a dairy reform fight. Netanyahu's trust numbers are solid but not surging, telling you the public is neither panicking nor rallying. The 62% figure is what competent wartime performance looks like when the opposition offers no credible alternative policy—only procedural critique.

Bennett at 22 seats and Smotrich's party below threshold in the same poll represents the coalition's long-term structural problem: the security-first group is consolidating around Bennett, not around the religious-nationalist bloc. That won't matter during the war. It will matter the day after.

ISRAEL AND THE WORLD

U.S. Tells ICJ Israel Is Not Genocidal; Fiji and Hungary Defend the Convention's Integrity

The United States filed an intervention at the International Court of Justice defending Israel against South Africa's genocide charges "in the strongest terms possible." State Department Legal Adviser Reed Rubinstein wrote that the allegations "are false" and "unfortunately nothing new," situating them within a decades-long campaign—dating to at least 1976 and including UNGA Resolution 3379—"to delegitimize the State of Israel and the Jewish people and to justify or encourage terrorism against them."

Rubinstein urged the court to maintain its established standard for inferring genocidal intent, warning that lowering the bar "risks broadening the application of the term 'genocide' such that it no longer carries its original weight."

Hungary intervened in Israel's defense, arguing that the court has "never been called upon" to apply the Genocide Convention in the context of urban warfare against a non-state actor using civilians as shields.

Fiji filed a remarkable intervention arguing that combatants and armed groups cannot qualify as "protected groups" under the Convention—directly naming Hamas, PIJ, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, and al-Quds Brigades as unprotected—and warned that a lenient interpretation could deter future peacekeeping operations. Fiji also cautioned the court against accepting NGO reports at face value, singling out Amnesty International's "holistic approach" to inferring genocidal intent as "cherry-picked" and based on "a selection of statements made by a small number of public figures."

Namibia intervened in South Africa's favor. The Netherlands and Iceland also joined in support of South Africa's case—the Netherlands argued that forced displacement from Gaza could constitute a genocidal act, while Iceland suggested that the existence of alternative motivations should not preclude a finding of genocidal intent. Dutch politician Geert Wilders called his country's filing "unacceptable" and immediately introduced a motion of censure in parliament.

ASSESSMENT

Rubinstein's framing—that the genocide charge is itself an instrument of delegitimization, not a legal finding—resets the terms. But the real analytical interest lies in Fiji's filing. A small Pacific island state just told the world court that armed combatants embedded within civilian populations cannot claim protected status under the Genocide Convention, that NGO reports should be treated with caution, and that expanding the definition of genocide could deter states from participating in peacekeeping operations.

That argument—from a country with no strategic relationship with Israel—lands because it cannot be dismissed as alliance politics. The Netherlands-Iceland interventions on South Africa's side are concerning as they attempt to lower the intent threshold. The case remains years from a ruling.

Temple Israel Attack, European Synagogue Campaign, and Al Quds Day in Times Square: the War Comes Home

Ayman Ghazali, a 41-year-old Lebanese immigrant and naturalized U.S. citizen, rammed a truck through the front doors of Temple Israel in West Bloomfield, Michigan—one of the largest synagogues in the United States, with a preschool in session—and opened fire on security guards on Thursday. One guard was struck by the vehicle and hospitalized with non-life-threatening injuries. The synagogue's security team engaged and killed Ghazali. No congregants, children, or staff were seriously harmed.

Dearborn Heights Mayor Mo Baydoun said Ghazali had lost family members, including a sibling, niece, and nephew, in an IDF airstrike in Lebanon earlier this month. His brothers have been confirmed as Hezbollah operatives. The FBI had trained Temple Israel's clergy and staff in active-shooter response just six weeks earlier.

In Europe, a previously unknown group calling itself Ashab Al Yamin claimed responsibility for three attacks on Jewish institutions this week: a synagogue bombing in Liège on Monday, an attack in Greece on Wednesday, and an arson attack on a Rotterdam synagogue on Friday. The group's videos appeared first on Shiite axis Telegram channels associated with Hezbollah and the IRGC. Its logo—an upstretched arm holding a Dragunov rifle superimposed on a globe—matches the design template of Iranian proxy organizations. The pattern is consistent with Iran's established practice of using front groups that “appear out of nowhere and then seemingly disappear after the act of terrorism has been committed.”

In New York, several hundred demonstrators at an Al Quds Day rally in Times Square chanted for Hamas and Hezbollah, shouted “death to America, death to Israel” in Farsi, invoked the blood libel by chanting offensive slurs at a counter-protest of about a dozen Jews and allies, waved Hezbollah and Palestinian Islamic Jihad flags, and described “Zionists” as “parasites that have taken over the host's body.” A child on the stage held a photo of the late Ali Khamenei. A speaker praised “the heroic Al-Aqsa Flood” and honored “martyr Yahya Sinwar, the lion of Gaza.” The rally was backed by Pal-Awda, the Bronx Anti-War Coalition, and the Workers World Party.

ASSESSMENT

Three continents, one week, one vile, disgusting pattern. A Lebanese man drives a truck into America's largest Reform synagogue. A Shiite front group bombs synagogues across Europe in a coordinated campaign with Iranian proxy hallmarks. And in Times Square, crowds wave Hezbollah flags and chant medieval blood libels at Jews—in Farsi, in Arabic, and in English—while celebrating the organization currently firing rockets at Israeli civilians.

The Michigan attack is being laundered as an individual with a personal grievance—namely family killed in the war. However, you don't have to be a chicken to know what an egg is. At least two brothers in Hezbollah? Perhaps he was just a Jew-hating jihadist and the compromised media is peddling an excuse.

Ghazali did not attack a military target or a government building. He attacked a synagogue with a preschool teeming with toddlers.

The Ashab Al Yamin campaign is more concerning in structure: three countries, three attacks, no prior footprint, and immediate distribution through Iranian axis channels. Iran has a documented history of activating front groups for deniable operations against Jewish targets abroad. Whether Ashab Al Yamin is an IRGC operation, a freelance cell seeking Iranian patronage, or a copycat exploiting the war's cover does not change what it accomplished: European Jews now face an active, coordinated threat specifically linked to the Iran war. European governments are characteristically not doing much about it.

Pro-Israel Democrats Walk a Fine Line on the Iran War

Reps. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL) and Brad Schneider (D-IL)—two of the Democratic caucus's most reliable pro-Israel voices—outlined their position on a JDCA webinar. Both voted for a war powers resolution to halt the conflict.

Wasserman Schultz said she likely would have voted for an Authorization for Use of Military Force if the administration had properly briefed Congress and presented a clear plan: "I am someone on our side of the aisle that likely would have voted for an AUMF if all of those things were in place." She called Trump's decision to bypass Congress "colossally stupid."

Schneider said he supports confronting Iran and helping "the people of Iran free themselves" but fears the administration will "declare victory and go home" with the regime still in place and the nuclear program not fully defeated. Both criticized Secretary of State Rubio's suggestion that Israel dragged the U.S. into the war—Schneider predicted a "similar rise in antisemitism as occurred around the 1973 Yom Kippur War" over rising gas prices. Wasserman Schultz called Rubio's framing "incredibly dangerous for Jews worldwide."

Separately, the Trump administration intervened to water down a broadly bipartisan Iran oil sanctions bill before its House vote next week—softening mandatory sanctions to discretionary, eliminating an interagency coordination working group, and widening the presidential waiver provision—reportedly to protect ongoing trade talks with Beijing. The original bill had nearly 300 cosponsors and passed committee by voice vote.

ASSESSMENT

The pro-Israel Democrats are not necessarily against the war. They are claiming to be against the war's management and the political exposure it creates. Schneider's Yom Kippur War analogy is the one that should keep AIPAC strategists up at night: rising energy prices plus a war associated with Israel plus a president who did not build bipartisan cover equals scapegoating. That equation is predictable, and the Trump administration built no firewall against it.

Though I will quibble with his framing of a rise in antisemitism. There is no rise. It's always been here. We are just seeing it coming out from behind

the mask. The feelings haven't changed. Just the calculation about social cost has.

The Iran sanctions bill story is the quieter and more revealing development. An administration fighting a shooting war against Iran simultaneously watered down the strongest sanctions tool Congress was offering—because it didn't want to upset Beijing.

BRIEFLY NOTED

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

Lord Walney, the UK government's former extremism adviser, called for Russia-style sanctions on Iran's leadership and the IRGC after reports that new Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei owns more than a dozen luxury London properties—Kensington, Bayswater, worth roughly £100 million—purchased through an individual already under UK sanctions for IRGC financing. Britain froze £28.7 billion in Russian assets after Ukraine; Iran's regime oligarchs still hold real estate in the capital. The proscription of the IRGC would help, but Labour keeps finding reasons not to.

Note: The red-green alliance represents the operational partnership between radical leftists and Islamists—two movements that disagree on virtually everything except the enemy: the United States, Israel, and the Western order. The reds supply campus infrastructure and ideological vocabulary. The greens supply religious compulsion and funding. Iran 1979 was the template: they allied to topple the Shah, and Khomeini executed his leftist partners the moment he had power. The alliance survived. The lesson didn't.

Culture, Religion & Society

CNN issued three separate corrections after repeatedly claiming that ISIS-inspired bombs thrown at anti-Muslim protesters outside Gracie Mansion targeted Mayor Zohran Mamdani personally. Anchor Abby Phillip, senior reporter Edward-Isaac Dove, and a since-deleted social media post all got it wrong, all in the same direction.

Outgoing BBC Director General Tim Davie denied the corporation has a Gaza bias, said he is “very proud” of its record, and acknowledged that editorial mistakes—including not cutting the feed when a rapper chanted offensive lyrics on live Glastonbury coverage—have been “weaponised” by critics. Davie called the incident “completely unacceptable” and then spent the rest of the interview explaining why no one should hold it against the institution that broadcast it.

DEVELOPMENTS TO WATCH

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Houthi “Zero Hour” Declaration** — Houthi Political Council member Al-Bukhaiti said Yemen has “decided to stand militarily with Iran” and will announce zero hour “at the appropriate time”; a deputy military commander confirmed joint operations rooms across the resistance axis. Israeli security officials report detecting movement of launch systems in Yemen.
LIKELY TO ESCALATE
- **Iran Threatens Regional Banks and Economic Centers** — Iran’s General Staff declared U.S. and Israeli banks and economic centers across the region “legitimate targets” after an Israeli strike on an Iranian bank, warning civilians to stay one kilometer away.
- **U.S. Intel: Iranian Government Not at Risk of Collapse** — Reuters reports a US source believes the regime is not currently at risk of collapse; Israeli officials told Yedioth Ahronoth the opposite—that the government will fall, but only after the war ends. The gap between the two assessments will shape whether Washington pushes for an off-ramp or lets the campaign run.
- **Mojtaba Khamenei Injured, Invisible** — Israeli officials confirmed the new Supreme Leader was injured on the first day of the war. He has issued one written statement, no audio, no video. Whether his absence reflects medical incapacity or security protocol changes the succession calculus.

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Turkey’s Patience with Iranian Missiles Thinning** — NATO defenses intercepted a third Iranian ballistic missile entering Turkish airspace; an explosion was heard near Incirlik Air Base. Turkish officials said their restraint “does not mean endless tolerance” and demanded Tehran identify those responsible. A fourth incident could force Ankara’s hand—and Turkey is NATO’s second-largest army.

Home Front & Politics

- **Trump Says He’s Been Briefed on Iranian Sleeper Cells in U.S.** — Trump told reporters: “We know where most of them are. We have got our eye on all of them, I think.” The Michigan synagogue attack the same day—by a Lebanese immigrant with ties to Hezbollah—puts the domestic threat vector in concrete terms. The gap between “most” and “all” is where the next incident lives.

CLOSING ASSESSMENT

THE regime in Tehran is issuing shoot-on-sight orders against its own citizens, firing cluster munitions at civilians, and threatening to bomb Amazon offices. Its new supreme leader cannot show his face. Its navy is missing entire classes in its fleet. And its most important franchise—the one

in Lebanon—is being denounced, on camera, by those who had been giving it legitimacy.

To be clear, none of that means the war is over—or even soon to be over. It means the war has reached the phase where the regime’s survival instincts are indistinguishable from its destruction. What Israel and the United States do with the next few weeks will determine whether that distinction ever returns.

— Uri Zehavi · Intelligence Editor With Modi Zehavi · Data + Research Analyst

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ABOUT MITZPE INSTITUTE

Mitzpe Institute is an intelligence and strategy organization focused on Israeli security, diaspora threat assessment, and the strategic challenges confronting the Jewish people and the West. We produce daily intelligence, forensic analyses, strategic assessments, and tactical briefings read by policymakers, military leaders, and institutional decision-makers across more than 90 countries and all 50 US states — from the Knesset and the US Congress to allied governments, major policy institutions, and Jewish organizational leadership worldwide.

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