



Forensic intelligence for those who act.

READER EDITION

March 22, 2026

ISRAEL BRIEF

Sunday, March 22

The campaign supposedly reaches its halfway mark. The home front absorbs what halfway costs — some 123 casualties in one night, two interception failures, and a five-year-old in the ICU.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE The security environment for Jews in Europe has shifted from elevated threat to active operational targeting. Belgium putting soldiers on the street, Britain charging Iranian intelligence operatives, the Netherlands increasing security for dissidents, France intercepting a jihadist cell — four countries, one week, and the common thread is that existing law enforcement was insufficient. The UK charges are particularly important. The surveillance took place before the current war, which means Iran's targeting of Jewish community infrastructure in London is a standing capability, not a wartime improvisation. The Harvard lawsuit moves the fight from negotiation to litigation. Whether the lawsuit survives judicial review is an open question, but the filing itself changes Harvard's calculation. The university has been betting that it can outlast the political pressure.

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Shavua tov, friends.

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THREE weeks into this war, the strategic picture and the human picture have split apart and each demands to be seen. The IDF has destroyed Iran's capacity to enrich uranium and manufacture ballistic missiles, eliminated the regime's operational chain of command below a supreme leader who cannot show his face, and systematically dismantled the Quds Force franchise infrastructure that took four decades to build. That is the strategic picture.

The human picture is a 450-kilogram warhead that came through a gap in the air defense system Saturday night and collapsed four apartment buildings in Arad — a five-year-old girl pulled from rubble, a twelve-year-old boy in intensive care in Dimona, and 123 people who should let you know that a 92% interception rate means something very different when you are the 8%. In the diaspora, Belgian soldiers now patrol synagogues, two Iranian agents have been charged with surveilling Jewish sites in London, and the photographs from Temple Israel in Michigan show a preschool frozen mid-evacuation.

This war is brutal. It is also necessary — because a nuclear Iran with genocidal ambitions and a 46-year body count does not become tolerable with time. It becomes North Korea with an empire of proxies and a constitution that mandates your destruction. North Korea is endurable because it is, in practice, content to torment its own people behind closed borders. Iran has never been content with its own borders. That is the premise of the regime, and it is the reason the regime must be broken.

For those who want the full architecture of how we got here — 46 years of ideology, proxy-building, Western subsidy, and the war that was always coming — last week's Dossier, *The Promised War*, is available without a paywall.

Flash Brief

- **Energy war escalates:** Israel struck South Pars; Iran hit Haifa's Bazan refineries and Qatar's Ras Laffan; Trump publicly distanced Washington from the Israeli strike; oil at \$113 per barrel.
- **Worst night for home front:** Iranian ballistic missiles struck Dimona and Arad after separate interception failures — 123 wounded, four buildings collapsed, children in ICU; education closed nationwide.
- **Campaign at halfway:** Netanyahu declares Iran can no longer enrich uranium or produce ballistic missiles; IDF chief sets Passover as operational target; 16,000 U.S.-Israeli strikes to date.
- **Nuclear R&D site destroyed:** IAF struck Malek Ashtar University weapons development facility in Tehran; U.S. separately hit Natanz enrichment complex.
- **Senior commanders eliminated:** IRGC spokesman, Basij intelligence chief, MOIS terror director, Hamas intelligence officer, and Hamas financial operative all killed in the past 72 hours.
- **Lebanon ground operation deepens:** Ofer Moskowitz killed in

Misgav Am by Hezbollah rockets; Litani bridges ordered destroyed; 570 Hezbollah operatives eliminated since ground entry.

- **Budget deadline in 9 days:** Coalition shelved Haredi draft bill; AG flagged funding demands as illegal; Ben Gvir demands death penalty for terrorists before supporting the budget.
- **Qatar blames Israel for Iran's attacks:** Doha directs anger at

Jerusalem, not Tehran; UAE says Iran's strikes will push Gulf states closer to Israel; Hamas offered gradual disarmament framework it will almost certainly reject.

- **Diaspora under fire:** Belgium deploys army to Jewish sites; UK charges two Iranians for spying on London's Jewish community; DOJ sues Harvard for deliberate indifference to Jew-hate.

THE WAR TODAY

Energy War Widens

The war's energy front opened wide in both directions. As discussed Thursday, the IAF struck Iran's South Pars gas infrastructure in Bushehr Province — the first Israeli hit on Iranian economic targets — halting gas exports and sending oil above \$113 per barrel. Iran retaliated against Qatar's Ras Laffan LNG complex, knocking out 17% of Qatari export capacity and an estimated \$20 billion in annual revenue over three to five years, according to QatarEnergy CEO Saad al-Kaabi.

Trump moved immediately to create distance, posting that Israel “out of anger” had “violently lashed out” at South Pars and that “the United States knew nothing about this particular attack” — a claim contradicted by a U.S. defense official who told Axios the strike was coordinated with the White House. Netanyahu said at his Thursday press conference that Israel “acted alone” and would respect Trump's request not to hit the gas field again. Trump simultaneously threatened to “massively blow up the entirety of the South Pars Gas Field” if Iran struck Qatar again, and issued a 48-hour ultimatum demanding Iran fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz or face strikes on Iranian power plants “starting with the biggest one first.” The U.S. Treasury on Friday temporarily lifted sanctions on Iranian crude already loaded onto vessels — approximately 140 million barrels — through April 19, in an effort to ease a supply crisis Treasury Secretary Bessent described as stemming from Chinese hoarding. Tehran denied having surplus crude to offer.

Iran responded to the energy escalation by hitting Israeli infrastructure directly. An Iranian ballistic missile struck the Bazan oil refineries in Haifa Bay on Thursday afternoon after a cluster warhead dispersed impacts across the city. Fifteen firefighting teams deployed to the refinery. The strike wasn't limited to the refinery; a vehicle in Yokneam was hit by shrapnel, wounding one. Energy Minister Cohen said northern grid damage was “localized and not significant.” Cluster munition strikes continued on central Israel: bomblets

hit a highway, a Rehovot home, and multiple sites in the Tel Aviv metropolitan area on Friday and Saturday, wounding 15 — including a 53-year-old man in serious condition with blast injuries. Since the war began, five ballistic missiles carrying conventional warheads of several hundred kilograms have struck populated areas in Israel, and more than two dozen cluster warheads have generated over 100 separate impact sites.

The worst night of the conflict for Israel's civilian front came last night. An Iranian ballistic missile struck Dimona at approximately 7:00 p.m., wounding 39 — including a 12-year-old boy in serious condition at Soroka Hospital — and causing extensive damage to homes. Roughly three hours later, a 450-kilogram missile hit Arad directly, collapsing four buildings, trapping civilians, and wounding at least 84 — including a five-year-old girl in serious condition and ten adults in serious condition. A Home Front Command investigation found that most casualties in both strikes were not inside shelters. The IAF confirmed both interceptions failed due to separate, unrelated system errors — not a systemic failure — and noted a 92% interception rate for the more than 400 ballistic missiles launched from Iran since February 28. Both missiles were assessed as Ghadr-family weapons, known to Israeli air defenses.

The IDF Chief of Staff convened an emergency assessment and approved strikes “across all fronts” through the night. Netanyahu called the Arad mayor and pledged assistance. The Ministry of Education canceled all in-person learning nationwide Sunday and Monday. The Home Front Command shifted Lachish, the Western Negev, Central and Southern Negev, and the Dead Sea to limited-activity status through Tuesday evening — gatherings capped at 50, workplaces restricted to locations with accessible shelters. Iran's Air and Space Force commander claimed a “new tactic” that “surprised the commanders of Israel and the USA,” and Parliament Speaker Ghalibaf said Israel was “entering a new phase” with “undefended” skies.

ASSESSMENT

The energy escalation creates the first structural constraint on Israeli freedom of action that originates from Washington rather than Tehran. Trump's public distancing from the South Pars strike — “the United States knew nothing” — is a political fiction designed to protect Qatar and manage oil markets, not a statement of fact. A U.S. defense official confirmed coordination. But the fiction is now policy: Netanyahu acknowledged he will not hit South Pars again, and Trump's 48-hour Hormuz ultimatum shifts the escalation decision to Washington's timetable, not Jerusalem's.

The Bazan refinery hit is strategically marginal — localized grid damage, no major structural consequence — but symbolically corrosive. Iran can now claim it reached Israeli energy infrastructure, and the cluster munitions on central Israel serve the same function they have since day one: indiscriminate terror designed to erode Israeli public confidence rather than degrade Israeli military capacity.

The Dimona and Arad strikes are, however, a real cost. Two interception failures in the same geographic zone in three hours produced 123 casualties, collapsed buildings, and a five-year-old in the ICU. The IAF says the failures

were unrelated. That may be true. It is also irrelevant to the family in Arad that was told they had seconds between the siren and impact. The Home Front Command data — most wounded were not in shelters — is both the critical finding and the hardest to fix. People stop sheltering when they believe the system will protect them.

Campaign Reaches Halfway Mark as Israel Destroys Nuclear Research Site, Eliminates Senior Commanders, and Exposes Regime's Command Vacuum

Netanyahu held a press conference on Thursday. "After 20 days, I can tell you — Iran today has no ability to enrich uranium, and no ability to produce ballistic missiles," he said, adding that Israel was "wiping out their industrial base in a way that we didn't do before." He described the difference between Operation Rising Lion in June, which destroyed existing missiles and some nuclear infrastructure, and the current campaign, which targets the factories producing components. "I'm not sure who is running Iran right now," Netanyahu said. "Mojtaba, the replacement ayatollah, has not shown his face." He added: "It does not matter who replaces them — we are making sure that the shifts in the Revolutionary Guards will be very short."

Hours after Netanyahu spoke, Iran fired a series of missiles at Israel — the regime's answer delivered in the only language it still commands.

IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir says the campaign is at the halfway mark. "We are halfway through, but the direction is clear. In about a week, on Passover, the holiday of freedom, we will continue to fight for our freedom and our future," he said. Zamir described "extensive damage" accumulating into a "systemic-strategic, military, economic, and governmental achievement," adding that regime leaders are "battered and confused." He noted Iran's launch of a two-stage intercontinental ballistic missile with a 4,000-kilometer range toward the U.S.-British base at Diego Garcia — *placing Berlin, Paris, and Rome within direct threat range.*

The IAF struck a nuclear weapons research and development facility at Malek Ashtar University in Tehran — subordinate to Iran's Defense Ministry and under Western sanctions for nuclear and ballistic missile activity. Separately, Iranian media reported a U.S. strike on the Natanz enrichment complex. The IDF denied involvement, and technical experts found no radioactive leaks. Iran's stockpile of approximately 450 kilograms of 60%-enriched uranium — enough for some 10 or 11 nuclear devices — is believed buried under rubble at sites bombed near Isfahan and Natanz. Securing that material remains an identified war objective requiring a complex ground-level operation.

Over the course of the week, U.S. and Israeli forces carried out more than 16,000 strikes on Iranian targets — approximately 8,500 Israeli using some 12,000 munitions, and at least 7,800 American — destroying or damaging more than 120 Iranian vessels. Between 10 and 20 Israeli drones have been shot down over Iran. No fighter jets have been lost, though one pilot came "close to being hit" by a surface-to-air missile.

Overnight Saturday, the IAF struck dozens of targets in Tehran including IRGC compounds producing ballistic missile components, a Ministry of Defense fuel production facility, and missile launcher storage sites east of Tehran — where the IDF identified operatives preparing launches from central Iran after western launch capability was degraded.

Eliminations continued at pace. The IDF confirmed the killing of Ali Mohammad Naini, IRGC spokesman and head of its public relations array — described as the regime’s main propagandist coordinating messaging to proxies across the region. Esmail Ahmadi Moghaddam, head of Basij Force intelligence — described by Tasnim as “one of the most important pillars of the Basij organization” — was killed alongside Basij commander Gholamreza Soleimani. Mehdi Rastami Sh’mastan, a senior commander in Iran’s Ministry of Intelligence responsible for directing terror operations against Israeli and Jewish targets worldwide, was eliminated in a joint IDF-Mossad-Shin Bet strike in Tehran. In Gaza, the IDF killed Muhammed Abu Shahla, intelligence officer of Hamas’s Khan Younis Brigade and an October 7 planner who had been operating in violation of the ceasefire to rebuild the organization’s capabilities. In Lebanon, Walid Muhammad Dib, a senior Hamas financial operative responsible for transferring funds to Hamas cells in Judea and Samaria, Lebanon, and elsewhere, was eliminated.

In a separate security development, Raz Cohen, a 26-year-old IDF reservist serving in an Iron Dome battery, was arrested and charged with spying for Iran. Cohen communicated with an Iranian intelligence agent via Telegram beginning last December, sharing sensitive information about Iron Dome systems, IAF base locations, and Iron Dome battery deployments, as well as personal details of potential recruitment targets — all while knowing his handler was Iranian intelligence.

ASSESSMENT

Netanyahu’s “no enrichment, no missiles” declaration is the clearest statement of strategic achievement since the war began — and Iran’s missile barrage hours later was a fairly clear rebuttal. Both are true simultaneously. The production base is being destroyed. The existing stockpile is not yet exhausted. The campaign’s logic rests on a simple asymmetry: Israel can eliminate factories faster than Iran can rebuild them, but Iran can launch existing missiles faster than Israel can destroy them in flight.

The halfway mark and Zamir’s Passover reference set a public timeline the IDF will either meet or explain away — and the gap between the three-week plan and the reality of continued Iranian missile fire on Israeli cities correctly suggests the operational conclusion will be defined by facts on the ground rather than calendar dates. The 450 kilograms of buried enriched uranium is the unresolved core of the nuclear objective. Air power cannot verify its status. Securing it requires boots on rubble in a denied area — a mission nobody has publicly claimed responsibility for planning.

The Raz Cohen arrest is the intelligence failure buried inside the operational success. An active-duty Iron Dome operator was passing battery locations and system data to Tehran for months. If Iranian targeting has improved —

and the Dimona and Arad strikes suggest at minimum a willingness to probe specific zones — one avenue of investigation writes itself.

Ofer Moskowitz z"l Killed as IDF Orders Expanded Ground Operation

Hezbollah rocket fire struck two vehicles in the border community of Misgav Am on Saturday, killing Ofer Moskowitz z"l — a civilian — in his vehicle. The IDF initially investigated whether the attack involved an anti-tank missile before confirming it was a rocket barrage. Hezbollah claimed responsibility, saying it targeted “a gathering of Israeli enemy army soldiers.” A separate Hezbollah drone crashed in the Western Galilee without casualties.

Defense Minister Katz, with Netanyahu’s authorization, ordered the IDF to “immediately destroy all the bridges over the Litani River that are used for terror activity, to prevent the passage of Hezbollah terrorists and weapons southward.” Katz also ordered “the acceleration of the demolition of Lebanese houses in the contact villages to thwart threats against Israeli communities — following the Beit Hanoun and Rafah model in Gaza.” The IDF warned it would strike the Qasmiya Bridge on the coastal highway — then hit the bridge area twice, injuring two RT journalists who were reporting from the area despite the advance warning.

Russia condemned the strike; its foreign ministry cited the “killing of 200 journalists in Gaza” — a tally that includes verified Hamas-affiliated operatives presenting as press. Putin, absurdly, seems to be under the impression that a press pass is a license to commit terror.

IDF ground forces continued expanding across southern Lebanon. A Lebanese military source said that Israeli troops were “advancing one or two kilometers a day” and “bulldozing what is not destroyed by airstrikes or artillery” while engaging Hezbollah fighters operating in small groups. The IDF said more than 2,000 terror targets have been struck since the ground operation began, including approximately 120 command posts, over 100 weapons storage facilities, and more than 130 missile launchers. More than 570 Hezbollah operatives have been eliminated — including approximately 220 Radwan Force fighters, 150 surface-to-surface missile operatives, two operatives holding equivalent rank of major general, four of brigadier general, eight of colonel, and 22 battalion-level commanders. Hezbollah maintained its tempo of roughly 150 rockets per day, with two-thirds targeting IDF forces in southern Lebanon and one-third aimed at Israeli territory. Four people were wounded by Hezbollah rockets in Kiryat Shmona. Zamir approved new battle plans for Lebanon, saying forces “will stand as a buffer between the enemy and the communities.”

ASSESSMENT

The bridge-destruction order is the operational follow-through on a strategic decision made weeks ago. Cutting the Litani crossings isolates the zone between the border and the river — denying Hezbollah the ability to rotate fighters, resupply launchers, or reinforce cells from the north. The “Beit Hanoun and Rafah model” language from Katz tells you what the ground operation is becoming: systematic clearance of built-up areas used as Hezbollah forward positions, with demolition of structures that provide concealment.

The 570 Hezbollah fighters killed and the command-structure losses — 36 senior commanders — are substantial, but the organization has adapted to exactly what was described in Thursday's assessment. Namely that small-cell guerrilla operations which reduce exposure to airstrikes while degrading Israel's technological advantage. Moskowitz's death in Misgav Am — a civilian killed by rockets — is the cost of the northern front's unresolved status. The residents who stay do so because the last evacuation destroyed their communities. They are sheltering in place against a threat that the ground operation is designed to address but has not yet removed.

INSIDE ISRAEL

Coalition Faces Budget Cliff in Nine Days as Haredi Draft Is Shelved and Ben Gvir Demands Death Penalty

The amended 2026 budget must survive procedural hurdles and be approved by March 31 or the Knesset dissolves automatically — triggering elections roughly 90 days later. The Knesset is scheduled to recess March 24, but will almost certainly stay in session, with final votes expected in the hours before Passover begins on the evening of April 1. Netanyahu and Finance Minister Smotrich announced last week that all controversial legislation — including the Haredi draft bill — would be shelved in the name of wartime unity. The Haredi parties agreed after Smotrich and Netanyahu met their “budgetary” demands. Attorney General Baharav-Miara, however, flagged some of those demands as illegal, prompting Shas and UTJ to threaten to vote against the budget unless equivalent funding is redirected to legally defensible channels — a dispute that already delayed a vote on increasing the wartime defense budget.

The draft exemption bill's shelving means the status quo persists: the IDF is legally required to send draft notices to all Haredi men aged 18–26, but the government told the High Court it will not enforce the law while the Iran war is ongoing. The government must also stop funding yeshivas for draft-eligible men — a requirement it is likewise not enforcing. National Security Minister Ben Gvir's Otzma Yehudit party continues to demand passage of a death penalty for terrorists before supporting the budget — and Ben Gvir has a track record of following through on such threats. He posted a video Wednesday standing in front of a gallows memorial to Jewish underground fighters hanged by the British, saying “I am dying to execute terrorists.”

If the budget passes, elections are expected in October. If it fails, elections hit in late June — potentially while the Iran war is still ongoing. Israeli media report Netanyahu would prefer an election before the Jewish holidays in September; analysts note he would want to avoid a campaign after October 7's anniversary.

ASSESSMENT

The budget deadline is the structural constraint that turns every coalition grievance into an existential lever. The Haredi draft shelving bought coalition silence, not coalition loyalty. And the AG's legal objections to the funding package reopened the wound within days. UTJ has already demonstrated it will defect on critical votes when its demands are unmet. Ben Gvir has done the same. The coalition's arithmetic is built on the assumption that no partner will actually pull the trigger during a war, but that assumption gets tested every time a new demand surfaces. Nine days is not enough time to resolve the legal issues with the Haredi funding package and is barely enough time to draft workarounds — which means the final vote will come down to whether each faction believes the political cost of triggering elections during a war is higher than the cost of voting for a budget that doesn't give them everything they want. Netanyahu has managed this calculus before. Of course, he is managing it now with a smaller margin. A more fractured coalition. And a home front absorbing ballistic missiles.

Zamir and Ben Gvir Clash Over Judea and Samaria Enforcement as Eighteen-Year-Old Killed on Land Patrol

IDF Chief of Staff Zamir and National Security Minister Ben Gvir confronted each other in a security cabinet meeting Thursday night over enforcement policy in Judea and Samaria. Zamir presented ministers with what participants described as an alarming operational picture. “There is a major rise in nationalist crime,” he claimed. “Stones were thrown at Arabs, and an IDF soldier was also hurt by a stone thrown at him.” Ben Gvir responded that anyone who attacks soldiers “should be crushed” — then turned the argument toward the regional commander's conduct: “The prime minister decided that only outposts involving violence should be evacuated, so why is the commander evacuating an outpost of Daniella Weiss, who only blesses soldiers and loves them?”

Ben Gvir accused the military of applying an overly broad enforcement brush in a sector where more than half a million Jewish civilians live under persistent threat — a community that absorbed 6,828 Palestinian terror attacks in 2024 alone, according to Shin Bet, including shootings, stabbings, car-rammings, firebombings, and IEDs. The IDF responded that the issue must be measured by cumulative burden on forces operating across multiple fronts simultaneously.

The term “settler violence” — deployed reflexively by the UN, EU, and legacy media — deserves the scrutiny it never receives. Regavim's audit of some 8,300 incidents the UN tagged under that label found that roughly 90% were misclassified: traffic accidents, mutual confrontations, cases where Jews were the victims, and — in one case — a dog bite. Stripped of the padding, approximately 110 genuine incidents of Jewish-initiated violence per year emerge from a population of over 500,000. Set against the 6,828 Palestinian attacks recorded in the same period, the asymmetry is roughly 30 to 1. That does not excuse the genuine offenders — vandals, arsonists, and the tiny fringe who have committed acts that are criminal and should be prosecuted. But it does mean the phrase “settler violence” functions as narrative infrastructure, not a description of reality. It exists to invert the threat picture: transform

a besieged Jewish population into the aggressor and tens of thousands of organized Palestinian attacks into background noise.

Separately, Yehudah Sherman, 18, a resident of the Shuva Yisrael Farms outpost in northern Judea and Samaria, was killed Saturday afternoon when a Palestinian vehicle struck the ATV he was riding during a land patrol with his brother Daniel, who was lightly injured. The Samaria District Council revealed the vehicle accelerated before impact and explicitly named it a terror attack. Finance Minister Smotrich — whose Religious Zionism party counts Sherman's parents as longtime supporters — described it as “murder.” The only one who will get anything out of this is the terrorist the Palestinian Authority will now give a lifetime salary to.

ASSESSMENT

Zamir's warning is operationally valid — incidents in Judea and Samaria, whatever their source, divert forces from active fronts at a moment the IDF cannot afford the distraction. That is a real cost and the chief of staff is right to name it. But the framing matters. The international narrative treats Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria as the source of instability rather than its target — as though half a million civilians living on the strategic ridge that overlooks Ben Gurion Airport and 80% of Israel's population are the provocation, and the thousands of annual terror attacks against them are the response. That inversion is the foundation of every diplomatic pressure campaign, every EU-funded illegal construction project in Area C, and every Human Rights Council session that treats “settler violence” as a standalone crisis while filing Palestinian terror under “context.”

Ben Gvir's political positioning is self-serving — but his underlying objection — that the military is applying a framework shaped by international pressure rather than by the actual threat picture — is correct. The settlers are not the strategic problem in Judea and Samaria. Iranian-funded terror cells in Jenin and Nablus are. PA stipends that reward murder are. A governance vacuum in Areas A and B that the Palestinian Authority cannot or will not fill is. The marginal criminality of a tiny fringe within the Jewish population is a law-enforcement problem. Treating it as the moral equivalent of an organized terror campaign — or worse, as the cause of one — is analytically dishonest and strategically corrosive.

Sherman's death will accelerate the cycle because the cycle is self-reinforcing: a Jewish teenager is killed, the community reacts, the IDF deploys to contain the reaction, and the next day's headline reads “settler violence” — not “Palestinian terror kills 18-year-old on patrol.” The 867 incidents of so-called nationalist crime recorded in 2025 draw resources from a military that just asked for 450,000 reservists. So do the 6,828 attacks those 867 incidents are a reaction to. Only one of those numbers makes the international press.

ISRAEL AND THE WORLD

Qatar Blames Israel for Iran's Strikes as Gulf Checkbook Diplomacy Hits Its Ceiling

Qatar's leadership responded to Iran's strikes on its gas infrastructure by directing its anger at Israel — not at the country that launched the missiles. Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said the “aggression needs to stop immediately” because “everyone knows who the main beneficiary of this war is.” Turkish Foreign Minister Fidan, standing beside him, was more direct: “The primary responsible party for this war, which has drawn our region into an unprecedented crisis, is Israel.”

Former Qatari PM Hamad bin Jassim — known to float positions the government cannot say publicly — posted on X that Iran is “misguided” but Israel is the enemy: “What you are doing now does not deter the enemy; rather, it serves him.” Qatar expelled Iran's military and security attachés but left the ambassador in place; hours later, a senior IRGC official received a favorable interview on Al Jazeera. Israel's embassy spokesman told the BBC there is “no daylight between Israel and the United States” on the war. UAE adviser Anwar Gargash said Iran's attacks “will actually strengthen the Israeli role in the Gulf” and predicted that countries without Israeli relations would see “more channels open.” Ariel Admoni of the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security assessed that Qatar's anger at Israel reflects “great anger” at Trump expressed through a demand that the president “clarify that he wasn't part of this, in order not to hurt their image” of White House access.

ASSESSMENT

Qatar spent years building influence through philanthropy, real estate, Al Jazeera, and direct financial relationships with figures now in the Trump administration. That strategy bought access. It did not buy a veto. Doha's response — blame Israel, half-expel Iran, keep Al Jazeera's door open to the IRGC — is the reflex of a state that wants maximum damage to its adversary but refuses to accept the cost of being associated with the war that delivers it. Gargash's comment from the other side of the Gulf is more revealing than anything Qatar said: Iran's attacks on Gulf states are accelerating, not decelerating, normalization. The states that already have relations with Israel will deepen them. The states that don't are running out of reasons not to. Qatar is trying to remain in both camps. The \$20 billion in lost LNG revenue over three to five years is the tuition for that lesson.

Hamas Offered Gradual Disarmament Framework; Terror Group Insists on Keeping Light Weapons

As Iran takes most of the public bandwidth, Gaza still boils. Ceasefire mediators presented Hamas in Cairo with a disarmament proposal envisioning all armed groups in Gaza gradually surrendering weapons over coming months. The framework requires Hamas to hand over heavy weaponry — missiles, rocket launchers — within 90 days, along with maps of its tunnel network. A buyback program would offer jobs and funding to fighters who surrender personal weapons on a longer timeline. Hamas negotiators expressed willingness to hand over heavy weapons but insisted on retaining lighter arms for “self-defense.” The weapons would be transferred to a new Palestinian police force under the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza,

which began recruitment earlier this year — with former Hamas civil servants formally eligible. The handover would proceed geographically, starting in southern Gaza, with the Palestinian police and the International Stabilization Force replacing IDF forces in cleared areas.

Israel was aware of the proposal and did not object, believing Hamas would reject it anyway. An Arab diplomat expressed reasonable skepticism that Israel would ultimately agree to further troop withdrawals. Mladenov, the Board of Peace's High Representative for Gaza, said the mediating countries agreed on a "framework" but insisted it "requires one clear choice: full decommissioning by Hamas and every armed group, with no exceptions and no carve-outs" — a statement that directly contradicts reality. Mediators expect Hamas to respond with a counteroffer that will "further drag out the process."

ASSESSMENT

The framework is a diplomatic instrument designed to fail productively — each side gets to claim reasonableness while the gap between "gradual handover of heavy weapons" and "full decommissioning with no exceptions" remains unbridgeable. Hamas's insistence on keeping light weapons is a declaration of intent to remain an armed organization under any governance arrangement. The buyback program assumes fighters will trade AK-47s for paychecks — an assumption that ignores the ideological infrastructure that produced them.

Jerusalem believes Hamas will reject the framework and wants the rejection on the record. The real audience for this proposal is not Hamas. It is the Arab mediators, the Board of Peace, and the international community that needs a documented sequence of reasonable offers and unreasonable refusals before anyone can credibly say the diplomatic track is exhausted. The "secret letter" to Mojtaba Khamenei — in which Hamas declared it would never surrender its weapons under any circumstances — was sent the same week these negotiations were underway. So it is pretty clear what Hamas's actual policy is — delivered to its patron in private while its negotiators perform flexibility in Cairo.

Diaspora Security Escalates: Belgium Deploys Army, Britain Charges Iranian Spies, DOJ Sues Harvard

Belgium deployed its army to patrol approximately 20 Jewish sites across the country after a blast at a synagogue in Liège. Interior Minister Bernard Quintin said the deployment would "provide direct support to the police services" amid what he described as a "very real" threat to the Jewish community.

In Britain, Nematollah Shahsavani, 40, and Alireza Farasati, 22 — both Iranian nationals — were charged under the National Security Act with assisting a foreign intelligence service by conducting surveillance on Jewish community sites in London between July and August 2025. The Community Security Trust said the charges "indicate the seriousness of the threat faced by the Jewish community."

The Netherlands stepped up security for Iranian dissidents after a 36-year-old police official of Iranian descent and known critic of the Tehran regime was shot and seriously injured. Authorities are investigating whether Iran is connected. In France, anti-terror prosecutors arrested two brothers — Italian-Moroccan nationals, ages 20 and 22 — in possession of a loaded weapon, hydrochloric acid, bomb-making materials, and an ISIS flag. They both admitted planning a jihadist attack and aspiring to martyrdom.

The U.S. Justice Department filed a new lawsuit against Harvard, accusing the university of deliberate indifference to antisemitism and intentional refusal to enforce campus rules when victims are Jewish or Israeli — grounds to freeze existing grants and recover “billions of dollars of taxpayer subsidies.” Harvard called the lawsuit “pretextual and retaliatory.” The battle has escalated through more than a year of negotiations, \$2.6 billion in frozen research funding, and Trump’s demand for \$1 billion in payment — up from a reported \$500 million near-agreement last year. A federal judge in December reversed some funding cuts, calling the antisemitism argument a “smokescreen,” but the administration’s civil rights finding that Harvard was a “willful participant” in antisemitic harassment provided the legal basis for Friday’s filing.

Germany reported 211 antisemitic incidents at Holocaust memorial sites in 2024 — nearly double the prior year — with the organization tracking them warning the 2025 figures show no slowing. Total antisemitic offenses in Germany reached a record 2,267 in 2025, up from 1,825 in 2024 and fewer than 500 in 2022.

ASSESSMENT

The security environment for Jews in Europe has shifted from elevated threat to active operational targeting. Belgium putting soldiers on the street, Britain charging Iranian intelligence operatives, the Netherlands increasing security for dissidents, France intercepting a jihadist cell — four countries, one week, and the common thread is that existing law enforcement was insufficient. The UK charges are particularly important. The surveillance took place before the current war, which means Iran’s targeting of Jewish community infrastructure in London is a standing capability, not a wartime improvisation. The Harvard lawsuit moves the fight from negotiation to litigation. Whether the lawsuit survives judicial review is an open question, but the filing itself changes Harvard’s calculation. The university has been betting that it can outlast the political pressure.

BRIEFLY NOTED

Frontline & Security

- **Jerusalem Post:** The IDF struck Syrian government command centers and weapons in military bases in southern Syria overnight Thursday in response to attacks on Druze civilians in the Sweida area, where a Druze militia reported nine killed, 12 detained, and seven abducted. Defense Minister Katz warned that if Damascus exploits the Iran war to target its Druze population, “we’ll attack with more force.”

- **Jerusalem Post:** The IDF moved forward with its March–April 2026 recruitment cycle during Operation Roaring Lion, drafting thousands into combat roles — including 562 new immigrants and 616 lone soldiers from countries ranging from the United States and Russia to Monaco, Sri Lanka, and Uganda. The youngest recruit was just under 18; the oldest over 33 — and the queue to serve during a live war is the answer to every question about Israeli morale that headlines cannot adequately capture.

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- **Jerusalem Post:** Six countries — Iceland, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Liechtenstein — designated the IRGC a terrorist organization following direct engagement from Foreign Minister Sa’ar. The EU placed the IRGC on its terror list in January.
- **JNS:** Serbia formally condemned UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese for “unacceptable interference in internal affairs” after she accused Belgrade of collaborating “without shame” with Israel during a visit this week. Albanese — sanctioned by the Trump administration, investigated for antisemitic rhetoric, and retained by the Human Rights Council despite bipartisan calls for removal — continues to demonstrate that the UN’s institutional tolerance for bigotry far exceeds its capacity for self-correction.
- **JNS:** USAID’s deputy inspector general told the House Foreign Affairs Committee that the United Nations “puts up every excuse in the book” to obstruct investigations into misuse of U.S. funds — with response times ranging from six months to two years and no forum-selection clause allowing fraud cases against overseas NGOs in U.S. courts. One case against a British NGO that falsified its disclosure of ties to Hezbollah and Iran was dismissed for jurisdictional reasons; the loophole that allows it remains open.

Economy, Tech & Infrastructure

- **Globes:** The Treasury’s draft economic aid plan for Operation Roaring Lion extends unpaid leave eligibility through the end of April — six weeks out — with relaxed unemployment benefit rules, a significant expansion from the one-week model used in Operation Rising Lion last June. The Finance Ministry’s working assumption is pessimistic enough that sources admit the entitlement period may need to be shortened by emergency legislation if the war ends sooner than expected.

Culture, Religion & Society

- **JTA:** Temple Israel in West Bloomfield, Michigan, released the first official photographs of the car-bomb aftermath one week after the attack — ash-caked hallways, shrapnel-littered floors, a preschool frozen in mid-evacuation, photos burned beyond recognition. The synagogue said it wanted “to take back control of our narrative” after leaked images caused further harm to survivors — and the images accomplish exactly that: this is what Jew-hate looks like when it reaches the parking lot.

DEVELOPMENTS TO WATCH

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Trump's 48-hour Hormuz ultimatum expires Monday** — Trump demanded Iran fully reopen the Strait “without threat” or face strikes on power plants “starting with the biggest one first.” **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**
- **Kharg Island seizure under active planning** — Axios reports Trump is drawn to seizing Iran's main crude export terminal outright; three Marine Expeditionary Units totaling roughly 7,500 Marines are deploying to the region. A senior U.S. official told Axios: “If Trump has to take Kharg Island to make it happen, that's going to happen.” **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**
- **Houthi “zero hour” still operative** — No new Houthi strikes reported, but the Political Council's declaration of military solidarity and confirmation of joint operations rooms with Iran remain in effect. A Tasnim-quoted military official said destabilizing the Bab al-Mandab and Red Sea “is one of the options being considered by the Axis of Resistance.”
- **Iran's ICBM reaches Diego Garcia — European capitals now in range** — Iran fired a two-stage intercontinental ballistic missile with a 4,000-kilometer range at the U.S.-British base in the Indian Ocean. Zamir named Berlin, Paris, and Rome as within direct threat range — a capability demonstration aimed less at the island than at the NATO capitals that have so far declined to participate.
- **Iran threatens UK over base access** — Iran's foreign minister warned London that allowing Americans to use British bases constitutes “an act of aggression.” Britain has signaled vague willingness to support Hormuz escort operations; this warning is designed to freeze that willingness before it hardens into commitment.
- **UAE dismantles Hezbollah-Iran cell operating under commercial cover** — The UAE State Security Department arrested members of a cell funded and directed by Hezbollah and Iran, operating under a fictitious commercial front to infiltrate the national economy.
- **Iran's internal crackdown accelerates** — Chief of Police Radan announced 500 citizens arrested on spying and public-order charges, including some 250 accused of providing intelligence on target locations to hostile groups. Shoot-on-sight orders remain in effect.

Diplomatic & Legal

- **Hormuz escort coalition: who's in, who's out** — The Trump administration plans to announce a multinational naval escort mission for commercial shipping through the strait. Japan flatly refused. Germany ruled out NATO involvement. South Korea is deliberating. Estonia was the sole European state to unequivocally offer support.

- **Iran sets maximalist war-ending demands** — An Iranian official told al-Mayadeen that Tehran's conditions include guarantees the war will not be repeated, closure of all U.S. military bases in the Middle East, full compensation from the United States and Israel, a new legal regime for the Strait of Hormuz, and the handover of individuals associated with "hostile media."
- **Iran's false-flag LUCAS drone accusation** — Araghchi claimed the U.S. is using a drone "identical" to Iran's Shahed — called LUCAS — to strike Gulf states and blame Tehran. CENTCOM called it false. The accusation is an information operation aimed at fracturing Gulf-U.S. trust; it will circulate on Al Jazeera and Al Mayadeen regardless of whether any government believes it.

Closing

TWENTY-TWO days. Fifteen Israeli civilians dead from missile fire. Three shelter-related fatalities. A five-year-old in Arad and a twelve-year-old in Dimona in hospital beds tonight. In Tehran, a supreme leader who cannot appear on camera presides — if that is the word — over a regime that has lost its enrichment capacity, its missile production base, its Caspian supply corridor, and every senior commander who sits still long enough to be found. The regime fires what it has left at apartment buildings, schools, shopping centers, commuter train stations, and hospitals.

The cost of this war is not abstract for anyone — not for the family in Arad that heard the siren and the impact, not for the parents in Michigan staring at photographs of a preschool caked in ash, not for the Belgian Jews who now walk past soldiers on the way to shul. The cost is real and it is accumulating. But the alternative — a nuclear-armed theocracy with a constitutional mandate to destroy you, an arsenal rebuilt in five years, and a proxy network regenerated in ten — is not an alternative. It is a death sentence on layaway. Israel is halfway through collecting on a debt the regime has owed since 1979.

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