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READER EDITION

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ISRAEL BRIEF

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◇ URIEL ZEHAVER

THE BOTTOM LINE The LA Title VI finding gives Jewish parents the legal lever the institutional path has spent two years not building. The CRA route is the regulatory weapon — the chilling effect arrives whether or not the complaint succeeds. Just Peace Advocates' Kuttab connection routes the operation through the Al-Haq lawfare network funding the ICC's Netanyahu warrants. Hesse's Staatsräson commitment is the affirmative side. Berlin shuttering Shani's restaurant is what the affirmative side has to overcome. The diaspora's question is which institutional environment its Jews live in five years from now.

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Iran names its collapse as Smotrich restores Sa-Nur and the diaspora environment splits in both directions.

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SHALOM, friends.

Tehran admitted yesterday what its security council concluded two weeks ago: the regime is in “a state of collapse.” The architecture that was supposed to underwrite Iranian leverage is unbuilding itself one announcement at a time. Inside Israel, the institutions that have spent two years studying their problems are taking their own audits. The diaspora finds Hesse criminalizing denial of Israel’s right to exist on the same day Berlin shutteres one of its more recognizable Israelis. The architecture is moving.

Flash Brief

- **Iran:** Trump posts “state of collapse”; UAE exits OPEC May 1, Aramco suspends gas, blockade compounds. See The War Today.
- **Lebanon:** IDF demolishes Kantara Iranian-built tunnel network with 450 tons of explosives; Israel sets two-week deadline. See The War Today.
- **Judea & Samaria:** Two soldiers stabbed in Silwad; PA medical staff strike as Smotrich freeze holds. See The War Today.
- **Haredi enforcement:** Extremists storm Military Police commander’s home with family inside; IDF resumes draft-dodger arrests. See Inside Israel.
- **IDF discipline:** Zamir convenes senior commanders; half of 400 Lebanon casualties came from accidents or friendly fire. See Inside Israel.
- **Sa-Nur restored:** Smotrich approves 643 units in northern Samaria and the Jordan Valley; Sa’ar defers sovereignty pending Trump. See Inside Israel.
- **US-Israel aid talks:** May negotiations to phase aid into joint partnership; 40 of 47 Senate Democrats block weapons sales. See Israel and the World.
- **Ukraine grain:** Zelensky threatens sanctions over second ship; Sa’ar refuses Twitter diplomacy as EU signals readiness. See Israel and the World.
- **Diaspora split:** LA finds Title VI violation; Toronto doxes 11 Jewish schools; Berlin shutteres Shani; Hesse criminalizes denial. See Israel and the World.

BELOW: how Smotrich moves Sa-Nur around Trump, what put Eyal Shani out of Berlin in the same week as the Hesse bill, and the single number from Zamir’s commanders’ meeting nobody in the IDF wants public.

Two arcs are running this week: Iran’s institutions unbuild while Israel’s finally execute. Iran’s losses compound: OPEC, Doha, the Khamenei discipline that disciplined the rest. Israel restores Sa-Nur, lands a Title VI lever in Los Angeles, and gets a chief of staff finally auditing what the war’s middle stretch produced. The diaspora’s question is sharper: Hesse criminalizes denial of Israel’s right to exist in the same Germany whose mob drove Eyal Shani off Berlin’s restaurant scene. Five months from elections, the coalition is executing in the way it spent two years claiming to study.

The War Today

Iran Names Its Collapse as the Blockade Compounds and Gulf Rules Shift

Trump posted yesterday that Tehran told Washington it is in “a state of collapse” and wants Hormuz reopened. He signaled he will continue the economic campaign rather than return to kinetic action. Iran is stockpiling crude in junk containers and disused tanks at Kharg Island. Ninety percent of Iranian oil shipments process there. [The regime that was going to bury the West is currently cataloguing barrels.] The 13-day onshore storage ceiling is closer than the negotiating calendar. Past it, wells shut in permanently. Treasury Secretary Bessent warned foreign governments against servicing sanctioned Iranian airlines under the “Economic Fury” campaign. Jet fuel, catering, and landing fees all carry secondary exposure. Trump publicly accused Chancellor Merz of treating an Iranian nuclear weapon as tolerable. The UAE will withdraw from OPEC and OPEC+ on May 1, freeing Abu Dhabi to pump independently. Saudi Aramco will suspend gas shipments next month after damage to its main export facilities.

ASSESSMENT

Tehran’s “state of collapse” is the regime telling Washington what its security council already concluded. Trump’s choice — kinetic or blockade — is settled by the storage cliff. The UAE leaving OPEC and Aramco suspending gas shipments are not coordinated moves, though they share a logic. The Gulf cartel architecture that was supposed to underwrite Iranian leverage is unbuilding itself. Pakistani mediators cannot bind a team Khamenei’s office no longer disciplines.

Kantara Falls as Hezbollah’s Drone Tempo Continues and Beirut Stalls

The IDF demolished a Hezbollah tunnel network in Kantara yesterday using more than 450 tons of explosives. The structure ran roughly two kilometers and reached depths above 25 meters. It was built over roughly a decade with direct Iranian funding and planning. The IDF’s Yahalom tunnel-location unit required over a week to map every entrance. Hezbollah had hidden it beneath civilian structures. Inside, soldiers found weapons caches, living quarters, water tanks, and roughly 30 operational shafts. The Radwan Force had recently used the tunnel to plan attacks against Israeli civilians. A Hezbollah drone killed a civilian contractor in southern Lebanon yesterday. Two IDF soldiers were wounded in a separate drone strike, one seriously. Israel has given Lebanon a two-week window to reach a negotiated arrangement before a potential return to hostilities. Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, Hezbollah’s parliamentary proxy, is working to paralyze state operations from inside the leadership. [Aoun’s disarmament order is being undone from his own parliament.]

ASSESSMENT

The Kantara network was Hezbollah's standing infrastructure for the "conquer the Galilee" operation October 7 was supposed to trigger. Demolishing it closes that contingency. It does not close the workshop war the FPV drones are still winning at \$200 a unit. The two-week window runs against a Lebanese government whose speaker is paralyzing the institutions needed to enforce anything. Beirut cannot deliver. Trump is buying time the ground situation will not let him keep buying.

IDF Pressure Compounds in Judea and Samaria as the PA Cannot Pay

Two IDF soldiers were stabbed in Silwad overnight. Both were evacuated to hospital. Soldiers killed one attacker and arrested the other. Yesterday's IDF and Border Police operation searched roughly 100 structures across A-Ram, Kafr Akab, and Kalandiya. Forces questioned over 40 suspects and arrested six. They seized over 2,100 rounds of ammunition, M16 and M4 rifles, pistols, and improvised pipe bombs. Defense Minister Israel Katz designated five Hamas "media" platforms as terror organizations. Quds Plus, Maydan Alquds, Alquds Albawsala, Maraj, and Al Asima News had operated as incitement infrastructure under journalistic cover. Shin Bet intelligence traced their direction to Hamas headquarters in Gaza, Turkey, and other locations. Palestinian medical staff are striking across Judea and Samaria after the PA paid doctors \$650 in April salaries. The PA's pay-for-slay budget remains active.

ASSESSMENT

Israel is closing on Hamas's information infrastructure the same week it closes on Hamas's tunnel network. Yesterday's sweep produced 2,100 rounds, M16s, and pipe bombs. The PA does not govern the territory the IDF is patrolling on its behalf. The medical strike is the institutional bill arriving for the pay-for-slay budget Ramallah continues to defend.

Inside Israel

Haredi Extremists Storm a Commander's Home as Enforcement Crisis Sharpens

Ultra-Orthodox demonstrators forced their way into the IDF Military Police commander's home last night. His family was inside. They occupied the residence for a period before leaving. [The protests have crossed from street disruption to home invasion.] The incident drew broad condemnation across the political spectrum. The IDF resumed proactive arrests of draft dodgers earlier this week. The pause had begun when the war with Iran broke out. Police arrested a yeshiva student in Jerusalem and a young Haredi man near a Herzliya yeshiva. The Jerusalem Faction called a "stormy protest" Monday with traffic disruptions in Bnei Brak and Jerusalem. Police arrested three suspects in Beit Shemesh this week for assaulting a Haredi soldier who serves as a police volunteer. One of the suspects is a yeshiva rabbi. The attackers had come to the soldier's home to protest his Zionist activity and threatened

to burn down the house. Ben-Gvir condemned the assault and cited a 300 percent increase in Haredi police enlistment as the answer.

ASSESSMENT

Storming the IDF Military Police commander's home while his family was inside is a different category of action from blocking streets in Bnei Brak. The faction is now targeting the state's officials at home and the Haredim who break ranks at theirs. The IDF resumed arrests after the war pause, which is the operational test the previous standoff failed. Sohlberg's sanctions are the next institutional test the coalition has been studying instead of executing.

Zamir Resets Discipline as Half of Lebanon Casualties Came From Accidents

IDF Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir convened the army's senior commanders Monday — every officer from full colonel and above. He sharply criticized the erosion of discipline that has taken hold during the war. He cited the destruction of a Jesus statue, soldiers photographing themselves inside private homes, and political patches worn on uniforms. Zamir demanded every senior commander submit a full accounting of every improper incident under their command. The deadline is next week. Of the roughly 400 IDF soldiers wounded or killed in the Lebanon campaign, approximately half were reportedly harmed in accidents or friendly-fire incidents. [A figure no peer military would consider tolerable.] The full figure across the war as a whole has not been publicly released.

ASSESSMENT

Zamir is doing what the institution should have done six months ago. The discipline erosion he names is real, and the 50 percent figure is its product. The political patches on uniforms reflect the political climate seeping into the chain of command. The IDF spent the middle of the war not confronting it. The test next week is whether the senior commander accounting produces consequences or paperwork.

Sa'ar Defers Sovereignty as Smotrich Restores 643 Units in Samaria

Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar told American Friends of Likud that Israel will not apply sovereignty over Judea and Samaria “in the coming months.” He cited Trump's opposition and the cost of alienating allies. Sa'ar reiterated Jerusalem's opposition to a Palestinian state and its commitment to expanding Jewish communities. Settlement policy remains a tension point with the EU. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich just approved 643 new housing units across northern Samaria and the Jordan Valley. Sa-Nur received 126 units with full regularization, Neve Gedid 349 with full regularization, and Mesoah 168 in expansion. Smotrich called the approval a “historic moment” and said it removed “the disgrace of the Disengagement Law from northern Samaria.” Sa-Nur was one of the four northern Samaria communities Sharon's 2005 Disengagement uprooted. The Netanyahu government has approved tens of thousands of units in Judea and Samaria in the last three and a half years.

ASSESSMENT

Sa'ar holds the diplomatic line Washington wants. Smotrich approves 643 housing units in northern Samaria and the Jordan Valley. The split is deliberate. Sa'ar buys diplomatic framing for normalization while Smotrich rebuilds what 2005 took down — and adds units before October's election locks the policy in. The next government, in whichever combinations the October math produces, inherits the buildings.

Israel and the World

US-Israel Talks Open in May to Replace Aid With Joint Partnership

US-Israel military relations talks open in May to transform the existing aid memorandum. The discussions will phase out direct US military aid and replace it with joint-partnership funding tied to specific technology programs. Israeli sources expect negotiations to last roughly four months. The talks should conclude before October's Knesset elections and the November US midterms. The current memorandum runs from January 2019 to 2029. Joint program candidates include laser air defense, hypersonic-missile defense, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and space technologies. The Israeli team is led by Defense Ministry Director-General Amir Baram and Ambassador Michael Leiter. Marco Rubio leads the US side with senior adviser Michael Needham and Ambassador Mike Huckabee. This is happening in the climate that allowed forty of 47 Senate Democrats voted to block weapons sales to Israel earlier this month. Netanyahu has announced a parallel plan to add NIS 35 billion per year to the defense budget for self-production. Israel does not produce its own fighter aircraft, and the F-35 supply question remains unresolved.

ASSESSMENT

Netanyahu initiated this framing in anticipation of harsher US political winds. The 40 Senate Democrats who blocked sales this month told Israel what the next Democratic administration will inherit. Heritage's December 2025 proposal to zero out aid by 2047 told it what the next Republican one would. The signal arrives from opposite directions and points to the same conclusion. The F-35 question is the load-bearing one. Israel can self-produce a great deal. Unfortunately, it cannot self-produce a fifth-generation fighter on this calendar. What the talks lock in also matters to the average American. Iron Dome protects US deployments. Trophy systems sit on Abrams tanks. Israeli cyber, medical, and battlefield-tested systems have saved US lives and US dollars. The partnership pays back in both directions. The talks are designed to preserve it before the supply line fully unwinds.

Zelensky Escalates Sanctions Threat as Sa'ar Demands Evidence on Grain Origin

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky threatened Israel with sanctions yesterday over a second cargo ship preparing to unload at Haifa. Haaretz identified the vessel as the Panormitis. Ukraine claims the grain originated in

Russian-occupied territory and was stolen. Zelensky said Ukraine was “preparing a relevant sanctions package” covering transporters and entities profiting from the trade. Ukraine will coordinate with European partners on inclusion in EU sanctions regimes. Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar accused Zelensky of “Twitter diplomacy.” He noted Ukraine had not submitted a formal request for legal assistance through proper channels. Sa’ar said Israel will examine the matter through independent law enforcement. The EU said it had “taken note” and confirmed readiness to list individuals and entities in third countries if necessary. Russia’s Peskov declined to comment, telling Kyiv to “deal with Israel on its own.”

ASSESSMENT

Sa’ar is right that Ukraine is conducting Twitter diplomacy. What he is not addressing publicly is why three Israeli prime ministers have maintained calculated neutrality on Russia. The reasons tie to Russian air defenses in Syria and Russian forbearance on IAF deconfliction. The wheat trade is not the lever Ukraine wants it to be. Israel will eventually have to choose what Russian provocation ends the calculated neutrality. Grain from territories Russia does not legally hold is not currently that provocation.

LA Title VI Win as Toronto Doxes Schools, Berlin Shuts Shani, and Hesse Criminalizes Denial

The Los Angeles Unified School District found a Downtown Magnets High School teacher violated Title VI. She displayed Palestinian flags and ran “scavenger hunts” to count them. Her slides addressed “how many Palestinian kids were killed randomly.” The district has until June 10 to review displays and teaching materials. It must create a process for students to report discriminatory content. Civil rights lawyer Ilana Cohen called the finding “monumental.” Pro-Palestinian groups in Canada filed a Canada Revenue Agency complaint against 11 Jewish schools in Toronto. The complaint accuses them of “promoting the Israeli military” and targets donors above \$5 million. The filing leaned on data from GTA to IDF, a doxing project tracking Canadian institutional connections to IDF soldiers. One of the filing groups, Just Peace Advocates, includes Al-Haq co-founder Jonathan Kuttub on its board. The German state of Hesse announced legislation to criminalize denial of Israel’s right to exist. Penalties run up to five years’ imprisonment. The bill would also make “from the river to the sea” illegal. Minister-President Boris Rhein called the protection of Jewish life “Germany’s Staatsräson.” Israeli chef Eyal Shani’s Berlin restaurant “Gila and Nancy” closed permanently this week after BDS protests and death threats. Shani opposed Israel’s judicial reform; his partner Shahar Segal ran the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation that distributed 163 million meals.

ASSESSMENT

The LA Title VI finding gives Jewish parents the legal lever the institutional path has spent two years not building. The CRA route is the regulatory weapon — the chilling effect arrives whether or not the complaint succeeds. Just Peace Advocates' Kuttab connection routes the operation through the Al-Haq lawfare network funding the ICC's Netanyahu warrants. Hesse's Staatsräson commitment is the affirmative side. Berlin shuttering Shani's restaurant is what the affirmative side has to overcome. The diaspora's question is which institutional environment its Jews live in five years from now.

Briefly Noted

Frontline & Security

Ynet: A 13-year-old Beirut schoolgirl contacted IDF Arabic spokesman Avichay Adraee about Hezbollah weapons at her school. Hezbollah's use of schools is no longer a contested claim. Lebanese children now use Adraee as ombudsman (or to get out of exams).

Jerusalem Post: Hanin Ghaddar told the Post that Beirut's disarmament law is "only ink on paper" while Hezbollah's political and financial embedment stays intact.

Jerusalem Post: Israel kept shipping Arrow interceptors to Germany during the Iran war; critics tie five Dimona-Arad deaths to substituted David's Sling. The \$6.7 billion German contract funds production capacity now seven to ten times Israel's prior limit.

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

Jerusalem Post: Iranian embassies in the UK, Germany, Australia, and Sri Lanka launched "Jan Fada" campaigns recruiting Iranians abroad. The regime is using Vienna Convention cover as recruitment infrastructure; the question is whether Western governments continue extending the courtesy.

JNS: Herzog's Kazakhstan visit advances Israel's eastward pivot: AI cooperation, defense talks, direct-flight discussions on the agenda. Kazakhstan supplied 42 percent of Israel's crude in 2023; Iran's deputy defense minister was working smuggling routes in neighboring Kyrgyzstan.

Domestic & Law

Jerusalem Post: AG Baharav-Miara is indicting IPS Commissioner Kobi Yaakobi, Ben-Gvir's former security secretary, for leaks compromising a police investigation. Ben-Gvir called the AG "criminal," "ousted," and "anti-democratic" — Baharav-Miara remains the lawfare front's center of gravity.

Israel National News: Likud's new AI campaign image shows Mansour Abbas at the wheel with Bennett and Lapid in the back seat. Abbas's "incitement" complaint does not change the underlying question of whether voters tolerate another Islamic-Movement-dependent coalition.

Economy, Tech & Infrastructure

Times of Israel: Israeli apartment prices rose 130 percent over 2000–2022 against 45 percent income growth, per the Shoresh Institution. Construction has tracked population growth, leaving a 272,141-unit deficit nobody has shown the political will to close.

Globes: Aaron Institute research found Israeli cost of living exceeds wealthy Europe by 21 percent and lower-GDP Europe by 68 percent. Housing and food lead the gap, with Smotrich's blocked dairy reform illustrating the political-economy ceiling on structural fixes.

Culture, Religion & Society

Israel National News: A proposed Lag B'Omer Meron framework would allow 4,500 participants in three 1,500-person sections, pending Home Front Command sign-off. The compromise scales the cancelled mass hillula down to what Hezbollah's drone tempo allows.

Israel National News: The viral photo of WHCD shooter Cole Allen wearing an IDF t-shirt is an AI forgery, per a New York Post and Storyful investigation. Allen's manifesto attacked Trump over "children blown up" in the Iran war; the forgery built the conspiracy it "confirmed."

JTA: A Sydney benefit for Bondi Beach massacre victims was canceled after the Australian Hellenic Choir refused to sing with Jews. The cancelled piece, "The Ballad of Mauthausen," commemorates Greek-Jewish romance inside a Nazi camp.

Times of Israel: Newly surfaced 1951 letters show J.D. Salinger asked his publisher to keep Jewish heritage off the *Catcher in the Rye* jacket. The mid-century reflex of quiet self-erasure is not the diaspora register October 7 produced.

Developments to Watch

Judea & Samaria

PA fiscal collapse cascades — Palestinian medical staff are striking; public hospitals are rationing referrals as the PA's \$1 billion debt to pharmacies compounds. The cascade approaches the threshold where security cooperation also fails.

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

Hezbollah civil-war preparation — Hezbollah officials have repeatedly threatened civil war against Beirut and other Lebanese communities, with active preparation reported. The threat is the tool keeping disarmament on paper while Israel's two-week window runs.

Gaza & Southern Theater

Hamas disarmament deadline arrives — Hamas's early-May weapons handover deadline lands within days; Doha's eviction and al-Hayya's rejection closed the compliance window. The Israeli cabinet decision on Gaza maneuver follows immediately. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

Iran's revised proposal due — Tehran is expected to submit a revised proposal to Pakistani mediators within days. The test is whether IRGC commanders now in charge can produce a coherent offer or only buy more days.

IRGC Western response window — UK Starmer pledged IRGC proscription legislation in the next parliamentary session; AFP is investigating Tehran's embassy Telegram. The window for Western expulsion of Iranian diplomats and formal IRGC designation opens this parliamentary session.

UAE-led realignment continues — UAE OPEC withdrawal takes effect May 1; MBZ adviser Amjad Taha teased "another historical day is imminent" from Abu Dhabi. Saudi competitive moves within days signal whether Riyadh accepts the divergence or counters.

Diplomatic & Legal

Hesse criminalization vote (May 8) — Hesse targets VE Day passage of legislation criminalizing denial of Israel's right to exist, with up to five years' imprisonment. The vote is the first European jurisdictional test of legal protection against post-October 7 anti-Israel framings.

Ukraine sanctions package timing — Zelensky said Kyiv is preparing a sanctions package against Israeli transporters and beneficiaries of Russian-occupied-territory grain. The package's arrival within 1-2 weeks sets whether Israel-Ukraine relations break or recalibrate.

Home Front & Politics

Lag B'Omer Meron framework — A 4,500-participant framework awaits Home Front Command approval for May 6, after Netanyahu cancelled the mass event. Hezbollah drone tempo over the next ten days determines whether even the partial framework holds.

Yaakobi indictment fallout — AG Baharav-Miara is indicting Ben-Gvir's IPS commissioner; Ben-Gvir called the AG "criminal" and "anti-democratic." With elections five months out, Otzma Yehudit will run on this fight either way.

The week was full of audits. Zamir's commanders, Smotrich's Disengagement reversal, the LA district's Title VI compliance, Iran's own ledger. All accountings somebody had been deferring. The country that audits itself is the country that gets to keep moving.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Uriel Zehavi

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR · MITZPE INSTITUTE

Uriel Zehavi is the executive director of Mitzpe Institute, where he writes the daily Israel Brief and co-directs its Institutional Intelligence practice with Modi Zehavi. He is the author of four books from Mitzpe Press and advises Israeli and allied clients on strategic communications for Western audiences.



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