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READER EDITION

May 7, 2026

ISRAEL BRIEF

Thursday, May 7

Trump's one-week deadline meets Tehran's forty-eight-hour silence. Beirut answers linkage clause before the framework can write it in.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE The boycott circuit operates on its own physics — UEFA matches, art biennials, awards-show acceptance speeches — and does not require a state actor to ratify the move. Ireland's 93 percent FAI vote is the base. The celebrity letter is the activation. Khan at the Oxford Union with Albanese's blessing is the same laundering pipeline we've been tracking running on schedule — the indicted prosecutor with the FBI-flagged Qatari-payments problem keeps the lectern.

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Israel Brief: Thursday, May 7

Shalom, friends.

T EHRAN is sitting on a fourteen-point memorandum Witkoff and Kushner put on the table — forty-eight hours into a response window with a Trump bombing threat and an oil blockade Rubio prices at \$500 million a day. The Lebanon story runs separately. The IDF killed Malek Balout in Dahiyeh last night, the Radwan Force commander who was issuing the explosive-drone orders that wounded seven IDF soldiers yesterday — the first Israeli strike in Beirut in a month. Tehran's linkage clause — Lebanon frozen as part of the Iran deal — was the move designed to protect that front at the negotiating table. The Beirut strike was Israel's answer on the ground.

Flash Brief

- **Beirut:** IDF kills Radwan commander Malek Balout at Dahiyeh headquarters issuing ceasefire-violation orders. *See The War Today.*
- **Iran framework:** Trump's fourteen-point MoU sets a 48-hour Iranian response window inside a one-week bombing deadline. *See The War Today.*
- **Hormuz:** Project Freedom suspended after Saudi airspace refusal; blockade holds, Hasna disabled by F/A-18 cannon fire. *See The War Today.*
- **Gaza:** Hayya's fifth son killed in IDF strike adjacent to a Nukhba target; cabinet defers renewal vote again. *See The War Today.*
- **Haredi draft:** Hirsch reverses Degel HaTorah opposition; cabinet meets tonight as April induction lands at 362. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Election sorting:** Likud Eilat conclave openly maps a no-decisive-Iran-result loss; Liberman, Golan, Erdan run three different theories. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Ridgeline:** First families move onto Bezek and Tamun this summer to lock the Samaria high ground before October. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Trump CT strategy:** Iran named greatest Mideast threat; Brotherhood designated root of modern Islamist terror. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Belgium:** Antwerp prosecutor indicts two mohels; Margolin tells Jews to prepare to leave Belgium. *See Israel and the World.*
- **DTW:** Levin's judicial-selection deadline arrives today. *See Developments to Watch.*

The framework Tehran is reviewing freezes the picture exactly where Iran's storage capacity, the SNSC's six-to-eight-week ceiling, and Iraq's al-Zaidi run-way are converging against the regime. The haredi-draft bill is the coalition's legislative cover for what 362 inducted soldiers say about a year of attention, and Bezek and Tamun are sovereignty by accumulation.

The War Today

IDF Eliminates the Radwan Commander in Beirut as Tehran Buys Lebanon Into the Framework

The IDF struck Dahiyeh yesterday evening and confirmed this morning that Malek Balout — the Radwan Force commander since the January 2024 elimination of Wissam al-Tawil — was killed in the strike, the first Israeli operation in the Lebanese capital in roughly a month. Netanyahu and Katz ordered the operation. An Israeli official confirmed it was coordinated with Washington, and another source said the US had advance knowledge, though without an overt green-light request. The Radwan deputy commander and several other operatives were initially reported killed alongside Balout. Hezbollah operated the targeted Dahiyeh headquarters as the issue point for ceasefire-violation orders against IDF forces in southern Lebanon — including the explosive-drone strike yesterday that seriously wounded one IDF soldier and lightly wounded three others, bringing yesterday's drone-wounded total to seven (two seriously, one moderately). The IAF struck more than fifteen Hezbollah sites across southern Lebanon during the day — launchers, weapons-storage and production facilities, command nodes. Home Front Command extended shelter-time alerts in forty-nine northern communities, forty-six moving from thirty to forty-five seconds and three to a full minute. Tehran's late move, surfaced by Berri to Al Jazeera and confirmed to Israel by other channels, is to demand the framework agreement under negotiation include "linkage of fronts" — a clause halting fighting in Lebanon as part of the Iran deal. Washington has reportedly accepted the clause. Salam told reporters Lebanon is heading toward "peace not normalization," and a third round of Israel-Lebanon talks is set for the State Department next week. Zamir, in Khiam to tour Hezbollah underground infrastructure beneath a children's clothing store, told the Northern Command that more than 2,000 Hezbollah operatives have been eliminated since Roaring Lion and that Iran targets remain ready for "a powerful and broad operation."

ASSESSMENT

Iran wrote the clause to do what Hezbollah cannot do on the ground — extend Qassem's Iranian-protected immunity from his own person to the entire Lebanese arena, and freeze the Yellow Line where it sits before the IDF can finish what perishability requires. The Beirut strike was an answer. Balout's headquarters was issuing the orders that wounded seven IDF soldiers in a single day. IDF officials saying troops will hold current lines until disarmament is staged is the operational read [this is what the foreclosed two-week window looks like once it has actually closed]. The framework's Lebanon clause, if implemented, will give Hezbollah enough time to make their stockpile north of the Litani irretrievable.

Iran Stalls on the One-Page Memorandum as Trump Pulls the Hormuz Escort and Keeps the Blockade

The White House is closing on a fourteen-point, one-page memorandum of understanding with Tehran — uranium-enrichment moratorium, removal of the highly enriched stockpile to the United States, sanctions relief, release of frozen Iranian funds, mutual reopening of Hormuz, and a "linkage" clause

halting fighting across the region including Lebanon, with a thirty-day window for detailed talks on the program — drafted by Witkoff and Kushner with several Iranian officials. Pakistani mediators told Reuters they expect to “close this very soon”; the US expects an Iranian response within forty-eight hours. Trump set a one-week deadline and warned that if Tehran refuses, “the bombing starts, and it will be, sadly, at a much higher level and intensity than it was before.” Tehran is still reviewing — Tasnim, the IRGC’s outlet, claimed the proposal “contains unacceptable clauses.” Trump tempered his own line in a New York Post call, telling the reporter not to “start packing your bags for negotiations in Pakistan — it’s too early.” Trump suspended Project Freedom — the convoy regime escorting trapped tankers through Hormuz — after Riyadh refused American aircraft access to Saudi airspace and other Gulf states signaled they had been surprised by Sunday’s announcement. CENTCOM disabled the Iranian-flagged tanker M/T Hasna in international waters with 20mm cannon fire from an F/A-18 off the Abraham Lincoln after the vessel ignored repeated warnings. Rubio put the blockade’s daily cost to Tehran at \$500 million, with 90% of Iranian trade halted and oil wells being forced to shut in. Netanyahu said he speaks with Trump “almost daily” and that coordination is full — while Israeli officials say Jerusalem is concerned about last-minute American sanctions concessions and is working to preserve IDF operational freedom under any future arrangement. Zamir said an additional series of Iran targets are ready and the IDF is on high alert for a return to “powerful and broad” operations.

ASSESSMENT

The blockade is the lever. The convoy was the courtesy. Trump pulled the courtesy when Riyadh’s airspace refusal made the convoy operationally awkward, kept the lever, and called a deadline. Which is what the Pakistani-mediator track is being asked to translate to a regime whose IRGC has already monopolized the channels, such as they are or may be, to Mojtaba Khamenei. Pezeshkian is not part of this conversation.

Strike on Khalil al-Hayya’s Son and a Hamas Police Colonel as Cabinet Holds the Renewal Vote

Azzam al-Hayya, son of Hamas Gaza-leader Khalil al-Hayya and a member of Hamas’s Nukhba force, was killed in an IDF strike on the Daraj Tuffah area of Gaza City. Israeli officials said al-Hayya’s death “is of no interest to us” and that he was hit because he was “somewhere he should not have been” — adjacent to one of the Nukhba operatives the strike was actually targeting. Khalil al-Hayya was selected leader of Hamas in Gaza in internal elections in recent days, with the political-bureau chief vote between him and Mashaal still pending. He met directly with Witkoff, Kushner, and Boehler during the talks which produced the Gaza ceasefire. Separately, an IDF airstrike near al-Mawasi in western Khan Younis killed Naseem al-Kalazani, a colonel in Hamas’s Interior Ministry police force. The strike fits the pattern of intensifying IDF operations against the so-called Hamas police, the instrument by which Hamas re-imposes territorial control. The cabinet again deferred the Gaza renewal vote pending Washington’s signal. Senior IDF officers continue to push for resumption and Southern Command’s plan is approved.

ASSESSMENT

The Hamas Gaza leader who walked into a US-mediated room and walked back out as the favorite for the political-bureau chair lost a son this week, in an operation Israeli officials are at pains to describe as collateral. The war Hamas started on October 7 is still grinding through the Hamas family registers, and the man Witkoff and Kushner now call a counterparty has also been a Hamas operative since long before he became one. The Kalazani strike runs the same logic at a lower altitude — the Hamas-run police are how Hamas converts ceasefire space into governance. Cabinet deferral is now a weekly fact. Cairo is deadlocked. When the Cairo collapse arrives, the operational decision moves from the cabinet table to the Southern Command plan.

Inside Israel

The Haredi Draft Bill Returns to the Cabinet as April Enlistment Lands at 362

The cabinet meets tonight on the conscription bill with Foreign Affairs and Defense chair Boaz Bismuth summoned in — an irregular addition signaling the coalition is moving the issue. Lithuanian *gadol* Rabbi Moshe Hillel Hirsch, who had frozen Degel HaTorah's support after legal advisors warned the amendments could harden sanctions on draft evaders, has now withdrawn his opposition. Degel MKs argued in private that without a bill the haredi public faces arrests, funding cuts, and a base that stays home on election day. Netanyahu asked the Haredi factions to shelve the bill until after the vote. Underneath the legislative theater, the IDF published the April-May haredi induction numbers: 231 to combat slots, 131 to combat-support roles, across Netzach Yehuda, the Hasmonean Brigade, the Negev's Defenders Company, paratroop heitz, and the air force's *datak* track. The army called the figures a disappointment. Meanwhile *Am Kadosh* circulated a warning to yeshiva students after Military Police started arresting evaders by posing as delivery couriers — the technique worked enough times in the past two weeks to be worth a public advisory.

ASSESSMENT

The bill is the coalition's escape hatch from the Sohlberg deadline and the haredi public's escape hatch from the Court — which is why Hirsch had to be brought back. Netanyahu's "shelve until after the election" move and Hirsch's reversal are the same calculation. Whichever side controls the legislative timing controls whether June 1 arrives with a fresh statute, an enforcement crisis, or a coalition that has already dissolved itself out of the consequence. 362-soldier inducted matters more than the bill text — it is what a year of legislative attention plus the Court's pressure plus a manpower crunch the IDF will not stop describing produced. [The community whose leadership is now negotiating sanctions language is the same community whose institutions just promoted pepper-spray and stun-gun against the police.] The courier-impersonation tactic is what sustained enforcement actually looks like when the political cover for raids has not been built — improvised, episodic, one yeshiva student at a time, briefable to the Court and deniable to the coalition partners on the same afternoon.

The Opposition Searches for a Shape While Likud Searches for an Iran Result

The pre-election field continued sorting itself. Liberman launched Yisrael Beiteinu's campaign in Tel Aviv with a pledge not to sit in a Netanyahu government "even if the world turns upside down" and a call for a decisive military outcome on every front — the second proposition cutting against the first, given who is running the war. Yair Golan, fresh off his weekend Ra'am demand, told Eisenkot publicly to pick a lane: *Yashar!* merges with Bennett-Lapid or with the Democrats, but the bloc cannot keep splintering. Gilad Erdan floated a unifying right-wing party so the next coalition's only option is not "haredim or Arabs." And inside Likud, ministers and MKs at the party's Eilat conclave are circulating the scenario the foreign press has not yet caught up to: if the Iran war ends without a decisive result against Tehran's nuclear program — which is the trajectory the Trump track is now pointing toward — Netanyahu can lose. Layered underneath, the legal-guild continued at its usual pace. AG Baharav-Miara agreed to meet the defense team for Prison Service Commissioner Yaakovi after his lawyer produced what he calls evidence of an improper relationship between the central state witness, Police Spokesman Lior Avudraham, and the *Mahash* investigator who built the Ben-Gvir-associates file. Election Committee CEO Orly Adas resigned after Sohlberg quietly extended her term following a Herzog intervention Likud only learned about after the fact. Judge Mizrahi ordered Netanyahu's medical file submitted to court in the libel suit over the 2024 reports of pancreatic cancer, after Netanyahu's April public disclosure of an early-stage prostate diagnosis omitted the date the disease was found. And the Case 4000 cross-examination spent Wednesday on the 2015 Walla interview Netanyahu's office allegedly pressured for editing.

ASSESSMENT

The opposition is moving in three directions because there are three theories of Netanyahu's defeat — Liberman's "win the war and the man falls," Golan's "consolidate the bloc and out-vote him," Erdan's "build a right-wing alternative he doesn't sit atop." None of them yet has a coalition arithmetic that adds to 61. The Likud ministers' "we can lose" scenario is what the polls have been saying for weeks — what is new is that Likud is now admitting it inside its own conclave. On the legal track, the Yaakovi maneuver is worth watching closely: if Baharav-Miara takes the AG-must-recuse path on a politically loaded indictment after going hard on every other coalition-adjacent file, the asymmetry makes the case the coalition has been making about her tenure for two years. [The Adas resignation tells the same story in miniature — a Bagatz Vice President quietly extending a tenure for the President of the State, then quietly cutting it short, then quietly being asked to explain.] The medical-file order and the Case 4000 cross-exam are running on a separate track the campaign now has to share airtime with.

Bezek and Tamun Move from Cabinet Decision to Families on the Ground

Yesha Council leadership confirmed that the first families will move onto the high ground above the Jordan Valley this summer to establish Bezek and Tamun — two communities authorized in the December cabinet decision

and now executing against the next-government clock. The two sites overlook the IDF's "five-village cluster" and lock in some of northern Samaria's strategic ridgeline before October's vote can rearrange the political map. Separately, Jonathan Pollard announced he is joining Orot HaShachar — the new far-right list co-founded by Nissim Louk, father of Shani Louk ז"ל — campaigning for Gaza annexation, repopulation by Israelis, and forcible relocation of the strip's current residents, while training his criticism on Bennett. The two moves are coordinate but distinct. One is sovereignty by accumulation through buildings going up where the families arrive. The other is sovereignty by political declaration through a new list that wants to turn the Gaza question into a Likud-flank pressure point.

ASSESSMENT

Bezek and Tamun are the operational follow-through to last week's Sa-Nur regularization — same architecture, same calendar logic, same race to lock the next government into facts before the political composition that built them changes. Pollard's entry is a different instrument — a list whose policy ceiling is somewhere left of its rhetoric, designed to pull the conversation rightward on Gaza and to give the Likud right-flank a destination it is now allowed to consider. Whether Orot HaShachar clears threshold matters less than whether it forces Likud's list-builders to take its voters seriously when the slate is finalized.

Israel and the World

Trump's 2026 Counter-Terror Strategy Names Iran the Greatest Threat and Hormuz the Hard Line

The text calls Iran "the greatest threat to the United States emanating from the Middle East" and authorizes continued kinetic, intelligence, and cyber operations against Tehran's proxies, regime officials plotting attacks inside the United States, and Iranian dissidents and Israelis on US soil targeted by those networks. Operation Midnight Hammer and Operation Epic Fury are written into the founding rationale. The strategy commits to action "until the regime in Tehran is no longer a threat." Hormuz and Bab al-Mandeb are named as strategic waterways the United States will not allow non-state or state actors to hold hostage, with explicit notice to the Houthis that Washington "is prepared to take decisive military action again." The Muslim Brotherhood is designated "the root of all modern Islamist terrorism," with branches across the Middle East and beyond targeted for FTO designation. NATO partners are told their counterterrorism underinvestment is "unacceptable." US officials are slated to meet allied counterparts on Friday to ask for assistance specifically on Iran and the Strait of Hormuz.

ASSESSMENT

Friday's allied meeting is the ask: contribute now, on Iran, while the leverage is live [the Maritime Freedom Construct already does the operational work while the strategy puts a name on the politics around it]. The Brotherhood designation is the long fuse — it converts the European intra-state debate over Hamas's parent network into an American foreign-policy instrument with FTO consequences for any Western jurisdiction still hosting branch offices. [Somehow, the Brotherhood operations domestically will conveniently be ignored.] NATO members "serving as financial, logistical, and recruitment hubs for terrorists" is not abstract language.

Berlin Operational, Brussels Defensive, London Volatile — Europe on Three Different Calendars

Foreign Minister Sa'ar wrapped a three-day Germany visit with a Wednesday meeting with Bundestag President Julia Klöckner, after engagements with Chancellor Merz and Foreign Minister Wadephul. Sa'ar's readout named the IDF mission in southern Lebanon as denial of Hezbollah anti-tank fire and invasion plans, and pointed to Israel as the only regional state with a growing Christian population — the Bundestag-floor framing of bilateral operational work. The same day in Brussels, Pedro Sanchez asked the European Commission to activate the EU Blocking Statute to shield the ICC from US sanctions, including the Trump administration's measures against Karim Khan, two deputy prosecutors, eight judges, and Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese. Belgium indicted three Jewish mohels for unlicensed circumcision. Sa'ar called the prosecution "a scarlet letter on Belgian society," joining "a short and shameful list with Ireland." US Ambassador Bill White called it "a shameful stain on Belgium." The UK votes today in local elections in which Zack Polanski's Greens — under investigation for over thirty council candidates' antisemitism, Polanski himself accusing Starmer of being on a "Zionist payroll" and calling for Netanyahu's arrest — and Farage's Reform are set to feast on Labour's collapse.

ASSESSMENT

Germany is doing the bilateral operational work — Sa'ar in the Bundestag describing Hezbollah's invasion plans is exactly the conversation Berlin is willing to host, and the Hesse right-to-exist vote lands tomorrow as the same week's procedural confirmation. Spain is asking Brussels to use a Cuba-and-Iran-extraterritoriality statute to insulate the ICC prosecutor whose office took Qatari money. Belgium criminalizing brit milah. And the UK's vote is in the political environment that produces Mohammed al-Mutawaq Pulitzers and Polanski candidacies — the "Zionist payroll" line and the cartoon-page response from the Board of Deputies are not separate stories, they are the same sorting on different rails.

Riyadh and Ankara Build Around Hormuz While Tehran Hits the Kurds

Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan met Hakan Fidan in Ankara Wednesday for the third Turkish-Saudi Coordination Council session, focused on Hormuz and "regional ownership" of security architecture. The Saudis signed a visa-exemption agreement, expanded a \$8.5 billion bilateral trade base, and are advancing on KAAAN fifth-generation fighter participation. The visit followed last month's Turkey-Saudi-Egypt-Pakistan FM session — the third

such meeting without producing a formal alliance. In Iraq, the IRGC kept hitting Iranian Kurdish opposition camps inside the Kurdistan Region. PDKI's Girde Chal was hit Wednesday morning, Komala's Sourdash struck the night before, more than seventy strikes on Komala positions and 114 on PDKI since the war began February 28 — over 800 Iran-and-proxy attacks on the Region total, and Rubio confirmed more than 600 attacks on US forces and diplomatic sites.

ASSESSMENT

The Gulf is reorganizing publicly around the Hormuz dramatics. Ankara-Riyadh adding a defense-industrial spine — KAAN, Baykar, joint helicopter production — is the practical answer to Fidan's "regional ownership" line. If Washington is doing the kinetic work on Hormuz, the regional framework that holds afterwards has to be built now, while Riyadh has reasons to take Turkey's calls. Tehran answering Ankara's table by hammering Iraqi Kurdistan with a thousand-plus attacks in nine weeks is the regime telling al-Zaidi what his sovereignty is worth: the near abroad doctrine in operational form, with the Kurdish parties absorbing the cost the Iraqi state cannot impose [the cabinet runway is half consumed].

Boycott Circuit and the Counter-Move That Costs One Billboard

The Football Association of Ireland faces an open letter from Irish Sport for Palestine — signed by League of Ireland players, former men's coach Brian Kerr, twice women's player of the year Louise Quinn, the band Fontaines D.C., the trio Kneecap, and Christy Moore — demanding cancellation of the UEFA Nations League fall fixture against Israel, citing the November 2025 FAI vote in which 93 percent of members backed pressing UEFA to suspend Israel under federation statutes regarding matches on "occupied territory." The Venice Biennale opened with roughly one hundred protesters at Israel's pavilion holding "No artwashing genocide" banners — the world's largest contemporary art exhibition continuing the pattern of resignations and funding threats over Israeli participation. Israel's Foreign Ministry projected a US-Israel "common values" billboard campaign in Times Square. ICC prosecutor Karim Khan delivered his first post-charges public address at the Oxford Union after a feminist society protest, with Francesca Albanese supplying the framing endorsement.

ASSESSMENT

The boycott circuit operates on its own physics — UEFA matches, art biennials, awards-show acceptance speeches — and does not require a state actor to ratify the move. Ireland's 93 percent FAI vote is the base. The celebrity letter is the activation. Khan at the Oxford Union with Albanese's blessing is the same laundering pipeline we've been tracking running on schedule — the indicted prosecutor with the FBI-flagged Qatari-payments problem keeps the lectern.

Briefly Noted

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- *Jerusalem Post*: The French Senate adopted Bruno Retailleau's bill creating a criminal offense for undermining the principles of the Republic — Paris naming Islamist infiltration as a category the state will prosecute.
- *JNS*: DHS concluded that the US-Israeli war with Iran “may have contributed” to Cole Allen's April 25 attempt on Trump at the White House Correspondents' Dinner, citing his social-media posts criticizing the war.
- *Arutz Sheva*: Herzog became the first Israeli president to visit Panama, framing Iran's terror reach in Latin America against the 1994 Hezbollah attack that murdered twenty civilians on Panamanian soil.

Domestic & Law

- *Jerusalem Post*: Police arrested Rabbi Yosef Shoveli, 54, of Meron overnight Thursday on suspicion of serious sex offenses, with the Israeli Center for Cult Victims reporting sixteen testimonies since 2011 describing dependence patterns, family estrangement, and “spiritual process” framings around alleged abuse.
- *Israel Hayom*: The Israel Medical Association's ethics bureau formally demanded MK Ahmad Tibi retract his on-air remark that National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and his family “need a psychiatrist urgently” and “are two psychopaths,” citing the 2022 IMA rule barring physicians from media-diagnosing public figures. Tibi answered that the ethics committee “stays silent on real violations” — the IMA's response is that the rule applies regardless of the politics of the target.
- *Walla*: Health Minister Chaim Katz froze implementation of the special committee's recommendations to phase out smokable medical cannabis and restrict prescriptions for combat-trauma patients, instructing the ministry's director-general to halt the rollout. The reversal lands as PTSD demand from Iron Swords veterans climbs and disabled-veterans groups had publicly opposed the recommendations — a policy fight where the political and clinical lines do not run parallel.

Economy, Tech & Infrastructure

- *Globes*: Sakal entered a \$4.5 billion counter-bid for ZIM, against the standing Hapag-Lloyd / FIMI deal.
- *Globes*: Wizz Air's Ben Gurion hub talks collapsed as EASA extended its no-fly advisory — the Transport Ministry had been counting on a gradual return.
- *Walla*: Sderot reported a 227% jump in property values and 61% population growth over the decade — 94% of purchases for residence, not investment. The Western Negev city the foreign press files under “rocket-stricken border town” is being repriced.

Culture, Religion & Society

- *Walla News*: Rabbanit Sara Segal-Katz, leading the women's fight to sit the Chief Rabbinate's official ordination exams, said the system moved the

exam venue and “dried out” the three women who showed up — seven registered — and that senior rabbis are now demanding the exams be frozen entirely rather than implement the High Court ruling.

- *Israel Hayom*: Israel’s Eurovision representative Noam Batan completed his second Vienna rehearsal ahead of the May 12 first semi-final, where he performs tenth.

Developments to Watch

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Hezbollah reprisal pipeline post-Dahiyeh** — The Beirut strike on Malek Balout took out the Radwan headquarters that was issuing the explosive-drone orders that wounded seven IDF soldiers in a single day, and Hezbollah has not yet rebuilt the chain.
- **Syrian air-defense interdiction window** — IAF officers continue to assess gradual Syrian radar and SAM rebuilds, and the next Iran round will require that airspace whether the framework’s linkage clause closes around Lebanon or not.
- **Lebanese political layer pre-State Department** — Salam told reporters Lebanon is heading toward “peace not normalization” the same morning Berri surfaced the linkage demand to Al Jazeera, and the third round of Israel-Lebanon talks lands at State next week.

Gaza & Southern Theater

- **Hayya political-bureau chief vote pending** — Khalil al-Hayya was just elected Hamas’s Gaza leader in internal voting, and the political-bureau chair race between him and Mashaal sits inside the next 24-72 hours. If Hayya takes the chair, Witkoff and Kushner’s counterparty in any resumed Cairo round becomes the man who walked out of their last room and into a fifth funeral, and the deadlocked disarmament track inherits the personal calculus on top of the operational one.

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Houthi posture window post Trump CT strategy** — Trump’s signed counter-terror strategy named Bab al-Mandeb a hard line and put the Houthis on explicit notice that Washington “is prepared to take decisive military action again.”

Home Front & Politics

- **Levin’s Judicial Selection Committee deadline arrives today** — The High Court’s deadline for Levin to state when he will convene the committee falls today, with Knesset dissolution by July 27 making any post-Thursday refusal mathematically permanent for this government’s purposes.
- **Mahash Qatargate softening** — Channel 13 reports the *Mahash* opinion in Qatargate is softening from state-security charges to integrity-only offenses. If the AG signs off on the downgrade, the months of state-security

framing the office has run on this file collapses in the same week the Yaakovi defense produces its central-witness misconduct evidence.

The forty-eight-hour Iranian response window is the live variable. The absence of an organized regime answer to it is the structural one. Pezeshkian is not in the room. The IRGC has already seized the channels to Mojtaba. Whether Tehran answers, walks, or stalls into the bombing threshold decides the next week — but the leverage that produced the page in the first place was built before any of it.

Shabbat shalom!

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