



Forensic intelligence for those who act.

READER EDITION

May 17, 2026

ISRAEL BRIEF

Sunday, May 17

The Ghost is dead, the Iran deck is being rebuilt, and the coalition files its own dissolution while the army runs on a check that has not cleared.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE Toronto is the cleanest natural experiment Western law enforcement will get this year. Citywide hate-crime volume falls by half, the Jewish share climbs to 82%, and the force discovers the problem is also internal. Antizionism is antisemitism, and the data keeps proving the proposition the same institutions keep refusing to write into policy. UCLA's task force is the standard product universities ship while the Trump administration is litigating them — 42 pages and a recommendation. The recommendation is on paper. Whether Jewish students transfer out before the fall semester is the grade.

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Israel Brief: Sunday, May 17

Shavua tov, friends.

Izz al-Din al-Haddad ran Hamas's hostage line. He kept Damari and Albag and Gonen nearby because they were the only thing keeping Israeli munitions out of his bedroom. That defense ran for thirty-five months and ended Friday afternoon. The last October 7 architect came off the deck the same week the New York Times and the Israeli press jointly previewed the Iran reopen, the cabinet filed its own dissolution bill, and the Times ran a Kristof column the Foreign Ministry has called one of the worst blood libels in modern press.

Flash Brief

- **Haddad eliminated:** The IAF and Shin Bet kill the last October 7 architect in Gaza City; Damari's note lands the cycle. *See The War Today.*
- **Iran reopen prepped:** Joint US-Israel target deck rebuilt, the Gerald Ford routed back, Trump prices "75 percent done" into the diplomatic line. *See The War Today.*
- **Hormuz protection racket:** Iran's "Project Freedom" rolls out this week; UAE doubles pipeline capacity; the shadow fleet keeps exporting. *See The War Today.*
- **Two more Golani soldiers fall:** Capt. Maoz Recanati ז"ל and SSgt. Negev Dagan ז"ל lost north of the Litani to drone and mortar fire. *See The War Today.*
- **Lebanon ceasefire extended 45 days:** Talks split into political and security tracks; Hezbollah's stockpile sits unfinished six more weeks. *See The War Today.*
- **Lando's letter:** Degel HaTorah laughably names Netanyahu the sole party at fault on exemption and prices the next coalition without him. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Knesset dissolution Wednesday:** Coalition fast-tracks the haredi five-year plan as Baharav-Miara stays the Filber indictment. *See Inside Israel.*
- **IDF runs out of money:** General Staff heads into emergency meeting with the prime minister on a 34-billion-shekel gap. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Saadi indictment:** Justice Department charges a Kataib Hezbollah and IRGC operator with twenty plots across the US, Europe and Canada. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Times sued, four lanes open:** Israel hits back on the Kristof blood libel through legal, diplomatic, prison-system and historical-press channels. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Eurovision Bettan second:** Jury moved Israel to eighth; the European public moved Israel to second; five broadcasters boycotted into irrelevance. *See Israel and the World.*

The Iran arc is sharpening the predicate the cabinet has been using to keep the Gaza renewal on hold, and every week the Washington ceasefire sits unfinished is another week the Litani-north stockpile hardens. The dissolution bill is the coalition refusing to hand the opposition a vote-of-no-confidence image, and the five-year haredi plan is the policy the bloc cannot afford to let the next Knesset decide.

The War Today

Israel Kills Izz al-Din al-Haddad in Northern Gaza

The IAF and Shin Bet eliminated Izz al-Din al-Haddad in a precision strike in Gaza City on Friday — the chief of Hamas’s military wing, the most senior surviving October 7 architect, and the man Hamas put in charge of the hostage portfolio. Haddad, known inside the organization as “the Ghost,” took over Hamas’s Gaza command after Yahya Sinwar was eliminated and ran the tunnel network around himself, sheltering hostages where he slept. Romi Gonen, Liri Albag, and Emily Damari were all held in his complex. Damari’s note Saturday was the single most efficient summary the cycle has produced: “Every dog has its day, and you were a real bitch.” Hamas confirmed the death through its own channels.

ASSESSMENT

Every name on the Nahal Oz roster the IDF has been working since October 7 was put there because Haddad signed off on the operation. The ceasefire-as-fire-control reading we have been running since November is what made this strike possible. The IDF is still operating inside the Trump framework’s text, which means the target deck inherited from the war can be worked on the intelligence calendar, with the IDF picking the hour. The Hamas internal vote between Mashaal and al-Hayya now runs without the field-commander the Gaza wing was going to vote with. Cairo remains deadlocked, the Yellow Line still holds at 64% (and slowly rising), and the man who kept Gaza on hold by holding the hostages no longer holds anyone.

✠ **Dossier:** *Field Dossier: The Jihadist Continuum* — The argument this Dossier develops — that Hamas, Kataib Hezbollah, Hezbollah, PIJ and the IRGC’s external-operations machinery are one ideological ecosystem rather than discrete national franchises — is what makes the Haddad elimination in Gaza City and the Saadi indictment in Manhattan readable as the same operation: the Nahal Oz architect and the Kataib Hezbollah commander running plots against New York synagogues are the same network.

Israel and the US Prep the Iran Reopen for Next Week

The New York Times and the Israeli press, in synchronized release, describe intensive joint US-Israel preparation to resume strikes on Iran, possibly inside the next week, with the target deck being rebuilt jointly and the USS Gerald Ford routed back into theater. CENTCOM has redirected 75 commercial vessels around the Hormuz blockade. Trump publicly walked his own ceiling down on enrichment from “zero” to a “20-year suspension if there’s a real guarantee,” called himself “75 percent done in Iran,” and said the remainder would be “perhaps another minor cleanup” — language that reads as the President pricing the next round into his diplomatic line. Trump-administration figures reportedly urged the UAE to seize Lavan Island in the Persian Gulf. Iran has prepared a “Project Freedom” mechanism to manage Hormuz traffic on its own terms, with Pakistan’s Naqvi in Tehran trying to broker understandings to relay to Washington. Zamir made a secret wartime visit to MBZ, joining Barnea and Zini on the page and closing the deniable middle the regime was using to claim Hormuz as a bilateral US-Iran affair. The Tehran

Stock Exchange reopens Tuesday after a six-week closure. The regime is announcing what it thinks the calendar looks like.

ASSESSMENT

Trump's "75 percent done" is the kind of pricing we read at Beijing — public language calibrated to keep the diplomatic line alive while the operational deck is rebuilt. The "20-year suspension if there's a real guarantee" costs Trump nothing because Tehran is structurally incapable of offering a guarantee — Vahidi's military council still bypasses Pezeshkian, and the SNSC's internal six-to-eight-week ceiling is the variable Beijing was supposed to relax and didn't. The Iran escalation claim we have been sharpening upward continues to tilt that way [a "20-year suspension if there's a real guarantee" from a regime whose military council blocks its own president from convening an emergency cabinet is an offer Tehran cannot accept]. The Lavan proposal is the test of whether the Gulf will carry the next round at the same density it carried Roaring Lion, or whether Riyadh's hesitation on Fujairah translates into a slower second arc. The question we are now writing on is how the next round opens, on what trigger, and with which Gulf partner on the page.

Hormuz Pressure: UAE Pipeline, Tanker Seizures, and the Iranian "Shadow Fleet"

The UAE is fast-tracking an oil pipeline that bypasses Hormuz to double its export capacity. CENTCOM's Adm. Cooper told Senate Armed Services Iran's ability to threaten its neighbors is "significantly degraded" and its proxies "cut off" — language the regime registers. A commercial tanker was seized and diverted into Iranian waters this weekend. A second tanker was reportedly sunk in the strait, though attribution is still unsettled. Iran "reopened" partial Hormuz transit for vessels coordinating with the Iranian navy — the protection-racket.

ASSESSMENT

The shadow fleet is the structural answer to the question of why Tehran can still externalize after Kharg stopped exporting — the regime kept enough capacity off the books to absorb the legitimate-channel shutdown for weeks, and it built that capacity over a decade explicitly anticipating this moment. The UAE pipeline doubling on the Gulf side is the parallel structural answer running the opposite direction: the Gulf is putting the Hormuz dependency on the wrong side of the ledger before the second round. Cooper's "significantly degraded, still able to strike" is the honest read — capability collapsed faster than the regime's appetite for theatrics. The tanker seizures are what's left.

☒ **Dossier:** *Field Dossier: Axis in the Shadows* — The shadow-fleet doctrine is the structural answer this Dossier develops in depth — the Iran-Russia-China sanctions-resistant network of relabeled tankers, transshipment points and Hong Kong shells the regime built explicitly so it would not need the legitimate lane to survive, which is why Kharg stopping exports has not yet broken the regime's external revenue line and why the Russian envoy's open warning against strike resumption matches the diplomatic cover the brief mapped last November.

Capt. Maoz Israel Recanati and SSgt. Negev Dagan ז"ל Fall in South Lebanon

Capt. Maoz Israel Recanati ז"ל, 24, of Itamar in Samaria, a Golani 12th Battalion platoon commander, was killed by a Hezbollah drone in southern Lebanon on Friday — the 20th IDF soldier killed in Lebanon since Roaring Lion and the seventh since the ceasefire. He was to be married within the month. SSgt. Negev Dagan ז"ל, 20, of Dekel, also Golani 12th, was killed Sunday morning by Hezbollah mortar fire north of the Litani. The IDF struck 440 Hezbollah targets across southern Lebanon and the Bekaa over the weekend, killing 220 operatives by IDF count. The Northern Command extended the closed military zone at Rosh HaNikra and pushed evacuation orders deep into the Tyre suburbs. The IDF has shifted operational doctrine on the fiber-optic-drone problem — moving from defensive intercept posture toward dictating the engagement on the IDF's terms, which Ynet's defense correspondents have begun describing as the "Rubble Doctrine" along the line.

ASSESSMENT

The 12th Battalion has lost two platoon-level Golani soldiers inside a single week to two distinct Hezbollah weapons systems — the drone Recanati was answering and the mortar that took Dagan from the same brigade three days later. The SAM threshold the IAF crossed last week is now part of a multi-system reality: drones for personnel, mortars for the line, and SAMs the IAF budgets for on every northern cycle. The "Rubble Doctrine" framing is operational shorthand for what we have been calling perishability — Hezbollah's reconstitution sits inside the Litani-north stockpile, and every week the framework keeps the IDF on the southern side of the operational question is a week the stockpile irrecoverably hardens. Recanati was supposed to be married in a month. The cost of buying time on the deeper maneuver is being paid by the soldiers, their families, the north, and the public.

Lebanon Ceasefire Extended 45 Days as Washington Talks Open the Two-Track Path

Israel and Lebanon agreed to extend the ceasefire by 45 days at the close of the third round of Washington talks at the State Department, with IDF Brig.-Gen. Amichai Levin joining the Israeli delegation for the first military-to-military session. The talks will split into a political track and a security track on parallel rails. The next round is scheduled for May 29. The State Department's own characterization that the round was "highly productive" sits awkwardly next to Israeli officials saying that "Beirut has little to offer." Ambassador Leiter publicly laid out the Israeli disarmament plan — IDF enforcement. The Al-Akhbar leak claims an "comprehensive peace + Hezbollah disarmament" framework is on the table — Al-Akhbar is the Hezbollah-aligned outlet, the framing is theirs, and the leak's purpose is to set expectations for what Beirut intends to walk back from.

ASSESSMENT

The 45-day extension is the framework buying time that Hezbollah needs and the IDF cannot afford to give, dressed as Washington's procedural patience. Not surprising, but also not particularly helpful. Splitting the talks into two tracks is an admission that the political track cannot deliver disarmament and the security track is what would have to — which is what Leiter and Huckabee have been saying since November. Qassem's break-the-talks order to operatives in writing last week was the field's own admission that the Washington track is producing the disarmament floor Hezbollah cannot accept [the Washington calendar that gives the Litani-north stockpile another six weeks also gives Tehran another six weeks of the SNSC's internal ceiling].

IDF Confirms Sharabasi and al-Hayya Killed in Earlier Strike

The IDF retroactively confirmed that a May 6 strike eliminated Hamza Sharabasi, a Shejaiya Battalion commander who walked through the Nahal Oz wire on October 7, alongside Azzam al-Hayya, a senior Nukhba operative — both confirmed dead this weekend. The Southern Command continues to rebuild the Gaza fighting plan. Division 98 has transferred south. Col. Omri Mashiah of the Gaza Division's Northern Brigade told envelope-kibbutz security coordinators that “the final word has not yet been said.” Hamas's monthly domestic production runs at hundreds of explosive devices, mortars, and anti-tank rockets, with intelligence tracking aspirations to FPV tier inside the diplomatic window. Hamas operatives turned back Gazan contractors trying to begin construction on Kushner's “New Rafah” project the day after CMCC-IDF coordination cleared the work.

ASSESSMENT

The question now is whether the cabinet authorizes the renewal before Hamas's internal Mashaal-vs-al-Hayya vote produces a successor who can claim the field-commander position Haddad's elimination has just vacated. The predicate for keeping the Gaza renewal on hold continues to weaken as the Iran arc sharpens upward — the gating condition we named in March is now operating against itself. Mashiah's “the final word has not yet been said” is the Southern Command on record.

Hostile-Aircraft Threat Belt: Drones from Yemen, Lebanon, and the New Northern Pattern

Multiple drone infiltrations from southern Lebanon triggered IAF intercepts near Rosh HaNikra and along the northern coast across the weekend. A drone from Yemen reached deep into Israeli airspace before interception. Hezbollah's drone activity has reached operational density and the threat is the dominant Northern Command problem — replacing the anti-tank missile threat that defined the early phase. The IDF eliminated two terrorists at a rocket launch site near a strike in southern Lebanon. Interception patterns show Hezbollah's fiber-optic drone iteration moving inside the Defense Ministry's emergency procurement timeline. The FPV countermeasure claim we have been tracking medium-low is being tested on the line.

ASSESSMENT

The IDF's procurement timeline for FPV countermeasure is two years late — Defense Ministry's R&D solicitation went out in April, after Hezbollah had been iterating the doctrine for fifteen months. Recanati was killed by exactly the system the procurement bypass is supposed to answer. The "Rubble Doctrine" framing along the line is the IDF's tactical answer to a strategic procurement gap, and Recanati's brigade is paying the difference.

Inside Israel

Rabbi Lando's Letter Locks UTJ Out of Netanyahu's Bloc Before the Dissolution Vote

Rabbi Dov Lando's letter naming Netanyahu as the sole party at fault for the failure of the draft-exemption bill is the cleanest break in the haredi-Likud alliance since the 2022 Lapid-Gafni overtures. The letter opens by absolving the Degel HaTorah Knesset members ("you have done everything and more") and shifts the political cost of the broken coalition promise to the prime minister. Degel HaTorah MKs have stayed glued to that line — "we are weary of futile efforts ... acting under the direction of the leader of the generation." Yitzhak Shapira is the architect (again). The same hand behind the 2022 attempt to swing the haredi vote toward Lapid. Netanyahu reversed Friday afternoon, sending updated messages to Gafni and instructing his people to recount whether the votes exist to pass the conscription bill before Wednesday's preliminary-reading dissolution vote. Inside Likud, the September-versus-October calculation is the school-calendar question: September 1 lets the bloc work the summer-yeshiva organizing window. October 27 hands the campaign to October 7's second anniversary, which Netanyahu's people read as the field where Bennett, Lapid, and Eisenkot run their strongest.

ASSESSMENT

The haredi leadership is pricing the next coalition, and the price is no commitment to Netanyahu. Lando's letter is the public version of the conversation the Gerrer Hasidim were already having about intervening in the Likud primary, and it lands on the haredi voter rather than the negotiating room. The message is that the representation worked, the prime minister did not, and Wednesday's vote is not a referendum on the bloc. Whichever date the House Committee picks, the haredi parties enter the next Knesset with Degel HaTorah's continuity-law refusal already foreclosing the exemption math. Netanyahu in 2014 said the coalition should have legislated this when it had it. Twelve years late, that is what the bloc is now charging him for.

The Coalition Fast-Tracks the Five-Year Plan as Baharav-Miara Stays the Filiber Indictment

The coalition scheduled fast-track readings on the October 7 inquiry bill, the AG-role-split, and a five-year haredi-sector plan that transfers billions of shekels and locks 25% of the Education Ministry's construction budget plus 44 million shekels annually for an explicit anti-enlistment "dropout prevention" program to the haredi community — the policy fastened down before the dissolution clock runs out the ability to approve it. Baharav-Miara informed

the court of a “stay of proceedings” in the seven-and-a-half-year prosecution of Yonatan Urich, Ofer Golan, and Israel Einhorn for allegedly harassing state witness Shlomo Filber. The case proceeds to closure within the year. The state prosecution had internal objections to filing the indictment from the start. The Shin Bet, separately, reversed its position on the Qatargate suspects and cleared them to return to operational work inside the prime minister’s offices. The High Court reserved decision on the Roman Gofman Mossad appointment after a hearing at which the AG’s office filed sealed envelopes against the government’s own nominee.

ASSESSMENT

Two patterns. The five-year plan is the coalition spending its remaining legislative oxygen on the policy the bloc cannot afford to let the next Knesset decide. The Filber stay is the prosecution conceding seven and a half years on, that the case it filed against objection never had the evidence to close. Pair that with the AG fighting her own government’s Mossad and the picture is the AG’s office at maximum political tempo in the dissolution window — the legal instrument running fast precisely because the political window is closing. The Filber case that should not have been filed—so don’t treat this development as a coalition victory.

IDF Budget Crunch — 34 Billion Shekel Gap, Treasury Blames the Reservists

The General Staff is heading into a Tuesday emergency meeting with the prime minister over a 34-billion-shekel gap with the Finance Ministry. Tank-restoration funding is frozen. Elbit Systems is signaling its production lines may halt in August absent a contract resolution. Treasury officials are publicly blaming reservist compensation for the budget squeeze. The same reservists have absorbed the manpower load the coalition refused to share, and the message Treasury wants in the public conversation before the dissolution vote: the soldiers are why the army cannot pay its bills. Sure.

ASSESSMENT

The Treasury position blaming the reservists is the burden-not-shared thesis stated in public by the ministry whose budget the burden falls on. The army needs the money because the coalition refused to enforce the law that would have grown the pool of soldiers. Elbit’s August signal is the production schedule the IAF is still operating inside Iran and Lebanon against, and the General Staff has been asked to plan the next campaign while the suppliers wait for a coalition that has just filed its own dissolution bill to find them a check.

Hadash Picks Jabareen as Liberman and Eisenkot Probe a Merger That Boxes the Bloc

Yousef Jabareen took 82% of the Hadash internal primary and replaced Ayman Odeh, who is leaving politics, plus Aida Touma-Sliman, who is stepping down. Jabareen, the academic who in 2017 led Hadash’s position to condemn the Gulf states’ designation of Hezbollah as a terror organization, and who visited convicted Tanzim murderer Marwan Barghouti in prison during his Knesset term, opened with a call to re-establish the Joint List. Liberman is publicly warning that Netanyahu — “the prime minister of October 7,” in

Liberman's framing — will launch a military operation for election timing, and is in active merger talks with Eisenkot's Yashar! party. Eisenkot answered from the Carmel Market in Tel Aviv: he would sit in a coalition with the haredi parties. Liberman has held the inverse line for a decade. The Tel Aviv 2022 turnout data showed a six-point gap with the rest of the country, which the anti-Netanyahu bloc reads as the participation reservoir it cannot afford to miss.

ASSESSMENT

Hadash's opening demand is the structural cap on the bloc that would replace Netanyahu. The moment the unity government's math requires Joint List support, Smotrich's "Ra'am is a disqualifier" framing collects the religious-Zionist base Bennett needs to keep. Jabareen's record makes Smotrich's job easier than it had to be. Eisenkot agreeing to sit with the haredi parties in the same week Liberman accuses Netanyahu of staging a war for the polls is the opposition discovering again that the price of unseating Netanyahu is a bit too difficult for the bloc to agree on. Liberman's "military operation for election purposes" warning is the framing the foreign press will run uncorrected. The IDF budget gap, the tank-restoration freeze, and the Elbit August deadline say the General Staff is fighting the next campaign on a check that has not yet cleared.

Israel and the World

Ramallah Court Reinstates Pay-for-Slay as Washington Lines Up the Tax Lever

A Ramallah administrative court ordered the Palestinian Authority to resume stipend payments to the family of an imprisoned terrorist, a precedent the PMW says reaches the 1,600 inmates whose payments stopped in May 2025 under Abbas's "needs-based" rebrand. The State Department report to Congress confirmed the PA paid \$156 million to terrorists and their families in the past year — \$126 million to convicted terrorists, \$30 million to families of those killed committing attacks — under the same compensation system Ramallah promised Washington it had ended. The Foreign Ministry posted the court ruling alongside the State Department finding the same day. The administration is now considering asking Jerusalem to redirect frozen PA tax revenue into Trump's Board of Peace Gaza fund, and Tom Cotton introduced the No Safe Haven for Terrorist Families Act extending visa inadmissibility to spouses, parents, children, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, nieces and nephews of designated terrorists and senior officials of state sponsors.

ASSESSMENT

The PA's "reform" was always a renaming exercise — the State Department audit and the Ramallah court read the same fact from the auditor's side and the claimant's side [at some point can we lose the fiction that the PA is anything other than a terror outfit with a compensation pipeline for the murder of Jews?]. Cotton's bill closes the diaspora loophole the Soleimani-family scandal exposed and extends Taylor Force from the budget line to the visa line.

Saudi Helsinki Pact and Failed UAE Strike Bid Open the Gulf Rift Wider

Riyadh has floated a non-aggression pact modeled on the 1975 Helsinki Accords between Iran and the Gulf states, with European capitals and EU institutions backing the framework and Israel's and Washington's positions unresolved. The proposal arrives the same week Bloomberg confirmed MBZ's failed campaign to get MBS and Qatar to join a coordinated Gulf strike on Iran during the February kinetic phase — a request both rebuffed. Saudi Arabia struck Iran independently and pivoted quickly to Pakistani mediation. The UAE hit Lavan Island in early April, lobbied for a UN authorization of force, exited OPEC in May, and absorbed roughly 3,000 Iranian missiles and drones — the worst of any Gulf state.

ASSESSMENT

Riyadh is trying to convert a treaty Tehran can live inside into the regional order, and Israel cannot live inside that order [the moderate channel does not exist, but the Saudis would like Brussels to fund the pretense]. The Helsinki model recognizes the IRGC's territorial wins as facts on the ground and asks every signatory to call them stability. Abu Dhabi's exit from OPEC, the Iron Dome batteries on its soil, and the public denial of a visit Netanyahu confirmed put the UAE inside the Israeli security perimeter while Saudi diplomacy walks the other way. The Gulf has split, and the split has hardened past the war that produced it.

Al-Saadi Extradition Names Kataib Hezbollah as Iran's Multi-Theater Hit Squad

The Justice Department charged Mohammad Baqer Saad Dawood Al-Saadi, a Kataib Hezbollah commander and IRGC operative, with plotting roughly twenty attacks across the US, Europe and Canada since late February under the banner of Harakat Ashab al-Yamin al-Islamiya. The events include the arson of a North Macedonia synagogue, the stabbing of two Jewish men in London last month, the bombing of the Bank of New York Mellon building in Amsterdam, the thwarted bombing of a Bank of America office in Paris on March 28, and attempted attacks on a New York synagogue and Jewish institutions in California and Arizona. Al-Saadi paid an undercover officer a \$3,000 down payment for the New York attack and shared photographs of the targets. He was extradited to a Manhattan federal court and faces six counts including material support to Kataib Hezbollah and the IRGC. Conviction carries a life sentence.

ASSESSMENT

The teenage suspects already in custody in Amsterdam, Paris, and London were the tip — the Justice Department now has one of the operators. The Kataib Hezbollah command structure is the Iraqi face of the same IRGC external-operations machinery Hezbollah used to run out of Beirut, and the Iraqi face is the one the US can move on without crossing a border that mattered.

Honduras Joins the IRGC Designation Map as the Senate Holds the War Powers Line

Honduras designated Hamas and the IRGC as terror organizations, becoming the 46th state on the IRGC list. The US Senate voted 50-49 not to advance the Merkley war-powers resolution, the seventh Senate block this year, with Rand Paul, Susan Collins and Lisa Murkowski joining every Democrat but John Fetterman in backing it. The House had already rejected its companion resolution 212-212 the night before — a tied vote on Iran war authorization four months past the 60-day deadline Trump declared inapplicable on the basis of a ceasefire neither the IRGC nor the Senate Democrats accept.

ASSESSMENT

The Latin American flank of the designation map closes the IRGC's hemispheric operating space — the same hemisphere through which the Brooklyn smuggling case showed IRGC operatives moving via Turkey and Mexico into the US. Three Republican defections on a war-powers vote against a sitting Republican president marks directional Senate movement against the war's open-endedness without threatening Trump's authority to keep waging it. The House tied 212-212 the night before, which is both the constitutional fact and the political non-event in the same number.

The Times Prints a Blood Libel and Israel Opens Four Pushback Lanes

The Prime Minister's Office announced legal action against the New York Times over Nicholas Kristof's May 12 column alleging a "pattern of widespread Israeli sexual violence" against Palestinian prisoners, including the claim that specially trained dogs raped detainees. The Foreign Ministry called the piece "one of the worst blood libels ever to appear in the modern press." Roughly three hundred Jews demonstrated outside the Times building in Manhattan on Friday. The Times responded that the threat is "part of a well-worn political playbook" and that "any such legal claim would be without merit." Four other Israeli pushback lanes opened. The Diaspora Affairs Ministry under Amichai Chikli released a forty-page report on the Geneva-based Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, one of Kristof's primary sources, documenting its chairman Ramy Abdu's administrative detention under Israel's Counter-Terrorism Law for affiliation with the Hamas-designated IPalestine, board chair Richard Falk's record of antisemitic statements, and the organization's "evidentiary infrastructure" role in South Africa's ICJ filing. Israel's UN mission under Ambassador Danny Danon is fighting to keep Israel off the UN Special Representative's annual blacklist on conflict-related sexual violence, where Pramila Patten's draft is circulating with the Kristof column as one of its scaffolding citations. Col. Dakar Eilat, who ran two Israeli prison facilities, walked Lazar Berman through IPS oversight on the record (cameras, independent medical chain-of-command, 130 inspecting bodies, animal-rights supervision of dog units) and charitably called the Kristof allegations "bullshit." [The term is insulting to manure—which has legitimate uses. Unlike the New York Times.] And the Jewish Chronicle ran Ashley Rindsberg's century-long pattern essay tracing the Times's pre-war Hitler coverage, its 1939 Operation Himmler "semi-official news agency" credit, and its current Tasnim

laundering practice as the same operation under different masthead conditions.

ASSESSMENT

The Times put fourteen low-credibility detainee claims sourced through a Hamas-affiliated NGO on the front of the opinion section the same week Pramila Patten's UN blacklist draft was being finalized [that was the deadline the publication date served]. The hostile pipeline runs as Euro-Med produces the affidavit, Kristof launders it into the Times, Patten's office cites the Times in the UN report, foreign ministries cite the UN report in sanctions packages. Every layer tells itself it is citing the prior layer's independence. Chikli's Diaspora report cuts the first link, Danon's UN mission contests the third, Eilat closes the prison-system backstop, and Rindsberg names the Sulzberger paper for what it has always been. The Times is now spending its credibility budget defending Kristof while the Diaspora Ministry, the UN mission, the IPS, and the remaining reputable press all pull on different threads of the same fabric. The "stifle journalism" reply is an unambiguous giveaway: a newspaper genuinely confident in its reporting publishes the documentation.

Eurovision Vienna — Bettan Second, Bulgaria First, the Jury-Public Split Made Visible

Israel's Noam Bettan finished second at the seventieth Eurovision in Vienna with "Michelle," a trilingual ballad closing on *Am Yisrael Chai* before scattered boos and "Free Palestine" heckles from the arena. Bulgaria's DARA won with "Bangaranga." Australia's Delta Goodrem finished third. Spain, Ireland, Iceland, Slovenia, and the Netherlands boycotted the contest over Israel's participation. Israel jumped from eighth on the jury vote to second on the public vote — the audible boos when the public tally landed name the structural fact European broadcasters spent the week trying to manage. Vienna police mounted a 1,500-officer operation around the venue against a Pro-Palestine march estimated at twelve to fifteen thousand outside. Israeli President Herzog and Prime Minister Netanyahu both phoned Bettan after the result. Gal Gadot called the singer pre-show.

ASSESSMENT

The jury-public gap is the news. The professional juries — the layer the boycotting broadcasters actually control — moved Israel to eighth. The European public moved Israel to second. The boos when the public score lit the board were an admission that the institutional layer no longer speaks for the audience it is supposed to curate for, which is precisely the legitimacy problem boycotters were trying to solve by pulling their delegations [the Iranian exile inside the arena who told Israel Hayom "Israel is our partner" is the conversation the broadcasters' boycott was supposed to prevent and instead amplified]. Five boycotting broadcasters in a contest defined by its post-1956 mission of cultural cohesion should give you more than a little pause for European culture in the coming years. The Bulgarian win at the top of the scoreboard and the Israeli second-place public surge underneath are the same data point read twice. The European street has decoupled from the European cultural class that claims to speak for it, and the booing is the institutional class hearing the decoupling in real time. Good.

Academic BDS Reaches the Horizon Europe Layer

Israel's Association of University Heads (VERA) published its Task Force report on May 14 documenting a 150 percent increase in efforts to exclude Israel from Horizon Europe, the EU's flagship multi-billion-euro research program, over the period October 2025 through April 2026. Israeli researchers received 5.4 percent of Horizon grants in 2022. By 2025 the share had fallen to 2.5 percent, a decline of more than half. Nearly a quarter of all academic-boycott reports VERA tracked in the period attached to Horizon Europe specifically. Ben-Gurion University president Daniel Chamovitz logged roughly one thousand academic-boycott incidents against Israeli universities since October 7. Ghent University banned partnerships with Israeli institutions outright in May 2024. The report described Brussels' BDS posture as "closer to establishing itself as an official foreign policy." VERA paired the findings with the January survey of two thousand EU teachers reporting daily classroom antisemitic incidents. At Cannes, juror Paul Laverty used a press conference to claim Sarandon, Bardem, and Ruffalo had been "blacklisted" for criticizing Israel — a claim Israeli filmmakers, who could not get their actual films into the festival this year, were not present to contest.

ASSESSMENT

Horizon Europe is the Israeli research economy's circulatory system into the European scientific class, and a 5.4-to-2.5 percent compression is a decoupling already executed at the grant-review layer while the EU's foreign-policy machinery is still drafting the political language to describe what its own machinery did. The boycotters are winning the institutional capture, which travels further than winning the argument [the 1,000-boycott count post-October-7 is the count of new boycotts, on top of the half-year baseline VERA already documented at roughly five hundred]. Cannes is the same operation in cultural register. No Israeli films in the festival this year, and a jury member at the podium claims the people criticizing Israel are the ones being blacklisted. The Laverty inversion is what legitimacy laundering looks like when the institutional capture is complete enough that the speakers do not even bother to mask it. The Horizon decline is the harder problem because it is technical and quiet. The Cannes line is the louder problem because it tells the senior staff who is allowed to speak in the room.

DOJ Seeks the Death Penalty for the DC Embassy Murders

The Justice Department filed notice it will seek the death penalty against Elias Rodriguez for the murder of Yaron Lischinsky ז"ל and Sarah Milgrim ז"ל outside the Capital Jewish Museum. US Attorney Jeanine Pirro's filing names the killings as a premeditated terrorist attack motivated by "political, ideological, national, and religious bias, contempt, and hatred." Rodriguez approached the couple after a young-professionals event, shot them at close range, and shouted "Free Palestine" as he was detained. Lischinsky was an Israeli embassy aide. Milgrim was his American girlfriend.

ASSESSMENT

It took a year and a change at Main Justice to put the motive in the indictment. Two young people were murdered outside a Jewish museum for being attached to Israel. Antizionism is antisemitism, and the federal filing now says so in the language of capital sentencing. The universities, NGOs, and progressive caucuses that spent the year explaining the killer's framing now have to decide whether to revisit any of it [we are not holding our breath].

The British Jewish Floor Holds as the Ceiling Keeps Cracking

Saturday's London stress test ran as advertised. The Met deployed 4,000 officers, helicopters, and dog units across the Nakba Day march, the Tommy Robinson "Unite the Kingdom" rally, and the FA Cup final, with 31 arrests, mostly at the Robinson rally. The Archbishop of Canterbury visited Finchley in solidarity. The new 100-officer Jewish Community Protection Unit, CST, and Hatzola stood alongside. Around 1,200 British Jews walked through StoneX Stadium for the Jewish Agency's aliyah fair last weekend. UK aliyah for 2025 hit 742, the highest number since the mid-1980s.

ASSESSMENT

Britain has decided banning the Nakba march carries higher political cost than policing it. So the policing bill keeps climbing instead. Identity-suppression is now the default coping mechanism in Europe's largest Jewish communities. 742 olim from the UK in one year is the lagging answer the data is giving while institutional commitments to recognize antizionism as Jew-hate continue to stall. [The Met can drill all year. It cannot deport an ideology.]

Toronto Data Confirms What Every Diaspora Police Department Is Mapping

Toronto Police released 2025 data showing hate-crime reports fell 50% city-wide. However, Jews remained the most-targeted group — 82% of religiously-motivated incidents, against a population share well under five percent. Toronto's 2026 numbers are already trending 40% above 2025. The Toronto Police Service Board opened a separate investigation into allegations of antisemitism inside the force, prompted by retired Inspector Hank Idsinga's new book describing encounters with antisemitic senior managers. The Community Antisemitism Monitor reported a 30% week-over-week jump in global incidents. The US Commission on Civil Rights documented antisemitic conduct at Denver's Auraria campus during the 2024 encampment. UCLA's Chancellor-Frenk task force urged the University of California system to adopt IHRA and intensify enforcement against anti-Jewish harassment.

ASSESSMENT

Toronto is the cleanest natural experiment Western law enforcement will get this year. Citywide hate-crime volume falls by half, the Jewish share climbs to 82%, and the force discovers the problem is also internal. Antizionism is antisemitism, and the data keeps proving the proposition the same institutions keep refusing to write into policy. UCLA's task force is the standard product universities ship while the Trump administration is litigating them — 42 pages and a recommendation. The recommendation is on paper. Whether Jewish students transfer out before the fall semester is the grade.

Briefly Noted

Frontline & Security

- *Jerusalem Post*: Military prosecutors indicted two IDF sergeants for a two-year cigarette-smuggling pipeline into Gaza. The same indictment names theft of hundreds of rounds and magazines from military stockpiles sold on for cash.
- *Jerusalem Post*: A controlled test at Tomer's Beit Shemesh rocket-engine plant rattled residents this weekend with no prior notice. Tomer produces motors for the Arrow interceptor family.
- *Jerusalem Post*: The IDF ran the "Sulfur and Fire" drill this past week along the Jordan Valley. The 96th and 80th Divisions exercised eastern-border surprise-attack scenarios with fighter and special-forces support.

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- *Times of Israel*: US and Nigerian forces killed Abu Bakr al-Mainuki, ISIS's second-in-command and the West Africa branch's financier, in a strike on his compound in the Lake Chad Basin. Trump announced the operation overnight — al-Mainuki had been US-sanctioned since 2023.
- *Times of Israel*: Abbas held the eighth Fatah congress in Ramallah this week without the Dahlan faction, after Cairo pressed him to widen the tent and got a non-committal answer. Dahlan stays exiled in Abu Dhabi under MBZ's protection — the push for PA reform closes without a deliverable.
- *Jerusalem Post*: The FBI raised the bounty on Monica Witt — the former USAF counterintelligence specialist who defected to Tehran in 2013 — to \$200,000, framing the appeal around "this critical moment in Iran's history."
- *Jerusalem Post*: The Russian Duma passed legislation expanding Putin's authority to commit Russian forces abroad, formalizing in statute what Moscow has been doing in practice across Ukraine and the Sahel.
- *Jewish Insider*: Cory Booker rallies for Sharif Street ahead of the Pennsylvania primary against challenger Chris Rabb — a pro-Israel Senate Democrat spending political capital to defend a pro-Israel state senator from his own party's flank.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Pope Leo XIV bestowed a special Vatican honor on the Iranian ambassador to the Holy See — a regime that hanged Christians for converting. And we were worried about his predecessor who served in The Hitler Youth. Ugh. Marziyeh Amirizadeh, the convert whose execution Pope Benedict XVI's intervention reversed, called it shame brought on the Christian world. She's not wrong.
- *Israel Hayom*: FIFA secretary-general Mattias Grafstrom met the Iranian football federation in Istanbul to "guarantee" Iran's participation in the 2026 World Cup, with US visa approvals still unresolved for Tehran's delegation. The tournament opens in less than a month and Iran's group games are scheduled in Los Angeles.

Public Diplomacy & Media

- *Israel Hayom*: Meta took down a video by Yoseph Haddad, the Israeli Arab pro-Israel commentator, citing “support for dangerous organizations.” Haddad named jihadist networks; the platform read that as the violation.
- *Algemeiner*: Thirty-two antisemitism envoys signed a unified Geneva declaration — the US, EU states, Israel, Canada, Australia, the OSCE. Axel Springer’s Doepfner told the WJC board anti-Zionism is the modern vehicle for antisemitism.
- *Algemeiner*: CAMERA’s Shay Khatiri dismantled a CNN photo feature on “everyday Iranians” that quoted no one supporting the strikes. Sixty-nine percent of Iranians want the regime to stop calling for Israel’s destruction.

Domestic & Law

- *Israel Hayom*: Former finance minister Moshe Kahlon signed a plea deal in the Unit Credit affair, conceding the securities-reporting charge for a suspended sentence, an NIS 180,000 fine, and an 18-month bar from public-company officer roles.
- *Walla*: The Kiryat Shmona magistrate refused police a week’s remand for a Galilee resident who fired warning shots from a licensed pistol to drive off gunmen targeting his home, ruling the suspicion “very low intensity.”
- *Jerusalem Post*: An IDF colonel was suspended after a subordinate female officer’s sexual-harassment complaint opened a Military Police investigation, with findings headed to the Military Prosecutor.
- *Israel Hayom*: Simcha Rothman and Yulia Malinovsky gave a joint interview on the Nukhba-prosecution law they shepherded to a 93-MK passage with no opposition, the coalition-opposition pairing each warning that the bureaucratic tier can still hollow out a statute the Knesset wrote. Baharav-Miara, Rothman noted, was not the one who signed on — Malinovsky was the one who brought the AG’s office along.

Economy, Tech & Infrastructure

- *Globes*: Elbit America won the US Army development contract for the BiNOD binocular night-vision system replacing the AN/PVS-14 monocular in service for nearly three decades, with the next phase valued at up to \$450.6 million.
- *Jerusalem Post*: IAI’s board recommended absorbing Elta Systems — the Ashdod subsidiary behind the Green Pine radar, Arrow, and David’s Sling — as a single legal entity, with more than seventy percent of Elta’s transactions already running to foreign clients.
- *Globes*: Israel’s April Consumer Price Index jumped, the first macro print landing into the defense-budget fight already underway in cabinet.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Haifa Port opened a new NIS 16 million cruise terminal sized for two ships and a million passengers a year, with Mano Maritime sailing this summer and the international lines expected back gradually.

Culture, Religion & Society

- *Times of Israel*: New radiocarbon dating of Ein Hatzeva fortress in the Arava places its construction roughly 2,800 years ago under the Kingdom of Israel, lining up with the biblical record of southern trade routes the academic consensus has spent decades dismissing.

Developments to Watch

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Drone strike near Sasa orchard workers** — A Hezbollah explosive drone detonated alongside agricultural workers near Kibbutz Sasa over the weekend, with the kibbutz security team narrowly extracting the crew before a second device arrived. The fiber-optic tier is now ranging civilians inside the green line at the same density it ranges Recanati's brigade north of it.
- **Maaleh Yosef cancels school transport** — The Maaleh Yosef regional council instructed parents on the confrontation line that morning school buses are cancelled until further notice over the drone threat.
- **ITIC flags Aoun-Salam assassination risk** — The Meir Amit Center named Hezbollah's Unit 121 as the operational unit Beirut should expect to see deployed against Aoun and Salam between rounds, citing direct intelligence assessments. The May 29 round is the next deliverable Qassem has ordered operatives to break. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**
- **Northern 5B-shekel rehab plan pulled from cabinet** — Netanyahu removed the northern rehabilitation package from Sunday's cabinet after ministers failed to agree on the wording, pushing it to next week's ceremonial northern cabinet meeting. The package the line residents have been promised since the ceasefire has now slipped past the dissolution vote.

Gaza & Southern Theater

- **Hamas Mashaal-al-Hayya succession runs without the field deck** — The Doha political bureau's internal vote on Haddad's replacement opens this week with the Gaza military command Haddad ran no longer voting alongside Mashaal. Whichever successor lands will arrive without the field-commander faction the Gaza wing was always going to elect through.
- **Egypt's Fatah-reform push closes empty** — Abbas held the eighth Fatah congress in Ramallah without the Dahlan faction after Cairo's pressure for inclusivity got a non-committal answer. Egypt's mediating capital is heading into the next ceasefire round with no leverage it managed to extract from Ramallah.

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Iran's "Project Freedom" Hormuz mechanism rolls out this week** — Tehran is rolling out its declared "Project Freedom" mechanism to coordinate Hormuz transit on Iranian terms, with parliament approval already through and operational paperwork landing this week. Every vessel that registers is a documented contribution to the protection-racket framework the Trump line says is unacceptable.

- **Iranian cyber intrusion into US fuel systems** — US officials told CNN they suspect Iran behind a cyberattack that altered fuel-monitoring displays at petrol stations across several states, exploiting unpassworded online systems. The intrusion arrived the same week the joint US-Israeli target deck went public — Tehran is rehearsing the asymmetric vector the kinetic round will trigger first.
- **Iraq's al-Zaidi pledges weapons monopoly on day one** — Iraq's new prime minister, voted in Thursday, opened with a pledge to restrict weapons to state control and dismantle the Iran-backed militias. The pledge meets the al-Saadi indictment in the same news cycle, and Treasury's \$10 million al-Kabi bounty is already on the desk waiting for him to deliver something.
- **Russian envoy issues open warning against strike resumption** — Russia's ambassador to international organizations Ulyanov publicly warned that resumed US-Israeli strikes on Iran would mean Washington and Jerusalem have “no interest in diplomacy,” reacting to the New York Times reporting on the joint target deck. Moscow is signalling it intends to defend Tehran's diplomatic line into the second round.

Diplomatic & Legal

- **Sumud flotilla holds in Greek waters before Israeli interception** — The 53-vessel Global Sumud Flotilla organized by IHH — the same Turkish outfit that ran the 2010 Mavi Marmara — has paused in Greek waters after Washington asked Ankara to stop the launch and was refused. The Israeli Navy is staging the interception two weeks after the Spring 2026 flotilla off Crete, and Erdogan's parallel Aegean maritime claim sits underneath.

Home Front & Politics

- **Netanyahu signals exemption-bill tabling Monday before dissolution vote** — Haredi factions received messages from the PMO that Netanyahu will try to table the conscription-exemption bill Monday, ahead of Wednesday's preliminary dissolution reading, to recover ground after Rabbi Lando's “no bloc” pronouncement. The vote count has not changed since the coalition pulled the bill last week, and Degel HaTorah has already committed to backing dissolution either way.

Two and a half years after the wire was breached, the man who signed the operation off no longer has the capacity to fantasize about snatching and holding Jews again. The framework is still mere text, the cabinet has not yet authorized the Gaza renewal, and the Hezbollah stockpile north of the Litani is six weeks larger than it was last round. Tehran is announcing what it thinks the calendar looks like by planning to reopen its stock exchange Tuesday.

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ABOUT MITZPE INSTITUTE

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

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