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READER EDITION

May 24, 2026

ISRAEL BRIEF

Sunday, May 24

The war Israel fought is being settled in a room Israel was kept out of, while the enforcement nobody else will do still gets done by hand.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE We have been tracking this sort at the level of vocabulary — “is Israel committing genocide” arriving as a Democratic primary-test question. Galindo is what comes next: a contender running on rounding Jews into camps and gelding them, polling well enough to force a runoff. The internment-and-castration fantasy is Jew-hate wearing a Zionist alibi, and her “fake Jews versus real Semites” gloss is the same definitional inversion the convention-weaponizers run, pointed at American Jews this time. The condemnation is genuine, but a 29 percent primary win means the constituency is genuine too.

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Shavua tov, friends.

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BEGIN'S doctrine was that Israel would never entrust the security of the Jewish people to anyone else, and the read of this weekend is that principle running into its hardest test in years. Washington and Tehran are closing a sixty-day deal that ends the war, reopens Hormuz, sells the oil, and leaves the centrifuges turning. It was negotiated across eight Gulf capitals with Israel, the country that fought the war, told to track the peace through intermediaries and its own surveillance. The regime Netanyahu went to war to topple is still standing, still enriching, and now negotiating its oil revenue back. Another soldier dead in the north, the national security minister handing the delegitimization campaign a free advertisement, Europe splitting over settlement trade — every thread these four days carry sits under the same fact. The terms are being set where Israel is not, and the work nobody else will do still falls to the IDF.

Flash Brief

- **The Iran deal, Israel locked out:** Washington and Tehran close on a 60-day MOU reopening Hormuz and the oil; Israel sidelined to Gulf intermediaries. *See The War Today.*
- **Trump puts his own odds at “50/50”:** Sign and freeze the kinetic picture, or strike and own it, pending a security-cabinet call within 48 hours. *See The War Today.*
- **The nuclear question deferred:** Tehran denies the New York Times report it would surrender enriched uranium; the file routes to the SNSC and Khamenei. *See The War Today.*
- **Lebanon's ninth soldier falls:** Staff Sgt. Noam Hamburger ז"ל, a month from discharge, killed by an FPV drone at Biranit as sirens ran across the north all weekend. *See The War Today.*
- **Ben-Gvir films the holding pen:** His flotilla video draws 15 million views and 24 governments' condemnations; Netanyahu rebukes him, France bans him. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Netanyahu reverses on the draft bill:** Days after his own coalition filed dissolution, he works the holdouts as fresh Tzav-8 orders reach reservists for yet another round of service. *See Inside Israel.*
- **The coalition slots the Comptroller:** A lawyer who defended Netanyahu in court advances for the upcoming secret ballot as the AG moves to freeze election-period appointments. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Europe splits over settlement trade:** The Netherlands and Ireland advance import bans while the Czechs pledge to veto EU sanctions single-handed. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Washington sanctions sitting Lebanese officers:** Treasury hits General Security and military intelligence personnel for the first time over Hezbollah's disarmament. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Germany indicts a Quds Force cell:** Prosecutors charge an IRGC-directed team that surveilled the heads of Germany's Jewish community for assassination. *See Israel and the World.*
- **The Times defends the Kristof blood libel:** The opinion desk's “no errors” finding certifies the laundering, citing the same Hamas-linked scaffolding one layer higher. *See Israel and the World.*
- **A Texas Democrat polls into a runoff on imprisoning “Zionists” in camps:** Disgustingly, Maureen Galindo ran on camps and castration, won 29 percent, and forced a second round. *See Israel and the World.*

The Iran arc has reached the only outcome the regime's survival ever pointed to: a deal that trades the war for oil and defers the bomb, written in a language Jerusalem does not get a vote in. The domestic picture is its own contest, with Netanyahu reversing on a draft bill he does not want because the alternative costs the bloc more, and the coalition fighting to staff the Comptroller's office against an AG timing her objections to the election period. The diaspora thread runs colder still: a German prosecutor naming the Quds Force in a courtroom, a Texas primary advancing a candidate who campaigned on internment, a paper of record defending a blood libel in its own voice. These threads do not converge on a single headline. What they share is an audience reading Israel as a country that can be made to settle for less than it won.

The War Today

Trump Walks Iran to a 60-Day Deal With Israel Locked Out

Washington and Tehran are closing on a memorandum of understanding that extends the ceasefire sixty days, reopens the Strait of Hormuz with no tolls, and obligates Iran to clear the mines it laid there, in exchange for a lifted port blockade and sanctions waivers that let the regime sell oil again. Trump called the agreement "largely negotiated" across Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, and Bahrain, said he had a "very good" call with Netanyahu, and put his own odds of signing versus striking at "a solid 50/50" pending a security-cabinet decision expected within 48 hours. The draft moving through Pakistani and Qatari mediators stages in three steps — formally ending the war, settling Hormuz, then a 30-day window for broader talks — and leaves the nuclear question for later. The New York Times reported Tehran signaled willingness to surrender part of its enriched-uranium stockpile. An Iranian source denied it within hours, insisting the nuclear file "is not part of the preliminary agreement" and that any deal still routes through the SNSC and then to Khamenei, who days earlier ordered the highly enriched material stay in the country. Qalibaf told Pakistani army chief Asim Munir that Iran "will not compromise on the nation's rights," claimed its forces had "rebuilt themselves" during the ceasefire, and warned a renewed war would bring "harsher and more bitter" consequences. Israel was kept almost entirely out of the talks. Defense officials describe being "completely sidelined," forced to track the negotiations through Gulf intermediaries and their own surveillance inside Iran, even as the IDF holds the rebuilt joint target deck, the Gerald Ford sits back in theater, and a five-hour security session with the chief of staff, the air force chief, and military intelligence kept the strike option live.

ASSESSMENT

The deal on the table ends the war that decapitated Iran's command and collapsed ninety percent of its defense industry without ending the program the war was launched to end — Hormuz reopens, the oil sells, the sanctions lift, and the centrifuges keep spinning while the nuclear question is deferred into a thirty-day window the regime has every incentive to run out. The "more than 50-50" conventional-escalation read we have been tracking inside the regime's own ceiling does not soften here so much as fork: Trump can sign and freeze the kinetic picture, or strike and own it. What is new is the seat Israel is no longer in [the partner in the war, told to read the peace off a Gulf diplomat's phone]. Netanyahu went to war on the assessment the regime would fall under a joint strike, and the regime is still standing, still enriching, and now negotiating its own oil revenue back — which is why the loudest objection this weekend came from inside his own coalition, with Liberman calling any agreement that leaves the ayatollahs in power "a catastrophe."

The Lebanon "Ceasefire" Kills Its Ninth Soldier as Hezbollah Ranges the Galilee

Staff Sgt. Noam Hamburger ז"ל, 23, of Atlit, a month from his discharge, was killed Friday afternoon when an explosive FPV drone detonated at the Biranit post near Netu'a — the ninth IDF soldier killed since the U.S.-brokered Lebanon ceasefire took effect April 16. A second soldier was seriously wounded and a noncommissioned officer lightly hurt in the same strike. A second FPV fell in the area 25 minutes later. The drone that killed Noam came days after a separate attack in Hadatha, where two drones wounded seven soldiers of the 401st "Iron Tracks" Brigade, including the company commander and the brigade commander, Col. Meir Biderman, severely. Sirens ran without pause across the north through the Shavuot weekend, from Metula to Rosh Hanikra, where an explosive drone detonated at the tourist site with no warning at all — eleven alerts since Thursday, roughly ten drones launched in a single day, contact lost with several before they crossed. The IDF kept clearing by hand: troops in the Mount Dov sector located and dismantled a hundred-meter Hezbollah tunnel with four hideout rooms, struck more than two dozen sites overnight including an underground weapons-production compound in the Beqaa and infrastructure in Tyre, killed five operatives, and issued evacuation warnings for ten villages on both banks of the Litani ahead of more.

ASSESSMENT

The forty-five-day extension is doing exactly what its text was always going to do — fire control for the IDF, a reconstitution window for Hezbollah, and the clearing operation paid for in soldiers like Hamburger because the framework said Beirut would disarm the south and Beirut cannot. The FPV that killed a maintenance soldier a month from home is the rung the SAM threshold marked earlier this month, now the standing budget every cycle north of the Litani carries [the "ceasefire" that issues evacuation warnings for ten villages]. Sixty percent of the southern infrastructure destroyed is the cost of the talks "extending" while the arsenal does not, still roughly fifteen thousand rockets with domestic production running. The next Washington round lands May 29 on the same split political-and-security tracks, which buys Hezbollah's stockpile north of the Litani another stretch of the same runway the diplomatic frame gives Tehran.

The Negev Smuggling Line and the Gaza Depots Feed One War

Six Negev residents were arrested and indicted in Beersheba district court after a Shin Bet and police investigation exposed a weapons-trafficking network that moved roughly 200 firearms — pistols, dozens of M16s, and three MAG machine guns — by drone and vehicle across the border over 2024 to 2026, alongside drug runs. The Shin Bet called it “a significant disruption of an infrastructure whose activity harmed state security,” naming the link between cross-border arms smuggling and terror attacks aimed at Israeli civilians. Across the same window the IDF struck and dismantled three Hamas weapons-storage facilities in the central Gaza Strip holding anti-tank missiles, long-range weapons, RPGs, and tactical vests, and hit a fourth depot midweek in the same area, all of it staged, the military said, for attacks across the ceasefire-demarcated Yellow Line. Troops under Southern Command killed several armed operatives in separate Gaza incidents while holding their lines inside the agreement.

ASSESSMENT

The Negev roll-up and the Gaza depot clearances are the same enforcement campaign read at two ranges. The arms that cross the southern border by drone and the arms staged a few kilometers away behind the Yellow Line feed one attack system, and the part of it running through Israeli citizens is the part that gets a courtroom instead of a strike. The depots full of anti-tank missiles “for use across the Yellow Line” are the ceasefire stated plainly from the other side of the line, the same thing the captured training document and the kidnapping letter said in words. Israel is working both inside the framework’s text — picking the hour, leaving the agreement intact — which is the only register Hamas’s reconstitution actually answers to. The line still holds at sixty-four percent and slowly rising.

Inside Israel

Ben-Gvir’s Flotilla Video Hands Israel’s Critics the Image They Wanted

The video Ben-Gvir posted Wednesday — waving an Israeli flag over bound, kneeling flotilla detainees as the anthem played over loudspeakers, telling them “summer camp is over” and “welcome to Israel, we are the masters” — drew 15 million views inside a day and condemnations from at least 24 governments. Israel had intercepted roughly 50 ships and 430 activists in international waters on Tuesday. The navy carried them to Ashdod, and the Foreign Ministry deported all 430 by Thursday, with Turkey sending charter flights to Ramon. One Israeli citizen, Zohar Regev, was held for a hearing at the Ashkelon Magistrate’s Court. Netanyahu issued a rare public rebuke, Sa’ar called it a “disgraceful display,” and Leiter, the ambassador in Washington, called it “reckless grandstanding” that “is not representative of government policy.” France banned Ben-Gvir from its territory and demanded EU sanctions, Poland banned him for five years as “a threat to public order,” the Netherlands and a half-dozen other capitals summoned Israeli envoys, the

EU's Costa declared himself "appalled," Ireland reopened its push for an EU-Israel trade review, and the Chief Rabbi called the clip an "affront to God." Some freed activists later falsely alleged abuse and sexual assault in custody — claims Israel denies and which no corroboration supports.

ASSESSMENT

Love him or hate him, most correctly see this move as, at best, ill advised. Ben-Gvir handed the global delegitimization campaign a free 15-million-view advertisement, and the reservists fighting the war will pay for it in coordination lost, sanctions exposure, and the next ICC filing. The flotilla carried no aid and arrived under a fresh US terror-financing designation, so the lawful interception was the entire story — until the national security minister turned the holding pen into a campaign set and gave Le Monde its homepage. Netanyahu will not fire him, because the joint slate that cleared Otzma Yehudit's threshold in 2021 is the same arithmetic that protects Ben-Gvir now, and Ben-Gvir knows it.

Netanyahu Peels Off Draft-Bill Holdouts as Fresh Tzav-8 Orders Reach Reservists

Days after his own coalition filed the dissolution bill over the haredi exemption, Netanyahu spent the week in marathon meetings reversing himself, working draft-bill opponents inside the coalition one by one, with the Government Secretary now predicting the bill will secure a majority after months stalled. The reversal runs against his own party. At a meeting with Likud mayors he backed a proposal granting him ten reserved slots on the Knesset slate and a list expanded to the 35th spot, paired with use of the Norwegian Law, triggering a revolt among lawmakers who saw the move as protecting his loyalists at their expense. Bennett, on his first Knesset visit since leaving politics, told Netanyahu "it's over, let go," and put conscription at the center of the coming campaign: "our covenant of those who serve will smash your covenant of those who evade." A new Maariv poll showed Likud sliding and Shas down a seat, even as the Religious Zionist Party crossed the threshold for the first time in six months. And with no law on the books, reservists received fresh Tzav-8 orders for 60- and 90-day summer rotations — July, August, September — while the men reading them watched the exemption bill return to committee on the same day.

ASSESSMENT

Netanyahu did not want this bill — Likud's own estimate is that it costs the party a seat — and he is moving it now because the alternative the polls keep surfacing. A government leaning on the Arab parties, costs the bloc far more than one seat. The reversal is the haredi alliance reasserting its price, and the price is a statute legalizing exemption while a reserve armor battalion commander tells his soldiers there is no one left to talk to. Tayeb read 12,000 missing soldiers into the committee record; the answer arriving this week is a summer of Tzav-8 for the men already carrying the gap, and a law to make sure the gap is permanent. Bennett is running on the one issue Netanyahu cannot answer with a coalition vote, which is why the dissolution math and the draft math are the same campaign.

Coalition Slots the Comptroller as the AG Moves to Freeze Appointments

The coalition nominated Michael Rabilio, a lawyer who has represented Netanyahu before the High Court, including against petitions demanding an October 7 commission of inquiry, for state comptroller — thirty signatures behind him and the prime minister personally pushing the June 3 secret ballot against the legal guild's standard pick, retired justice Yosef Elron. Baharav-Miara, meanwhile, is preparing guidelines that could freeze senior diplomatic appointments for the election period, putting ambassadorial and consul-general postings under her sign-off precisely as the embassy-relocation push runs hot. Levin's representative told Bagatz the way out of the eighteen-month standoff over Court President Amit is to transfer the president's powers to his deputy, Justice Sohlberg. The judicial ombudsman separately upheld complaints that Amit and two colleagues erred by issuing substantive protest rulings on Shabbat. Gofman's move to head the Mossad lands June 2, with the contest over his replacement as Netanyahu's military secretary now a three-way pull between Netanyahu, Zamir, and Katz.

ASSESSMENT

Two of these are the same fight — an office the coalition was elected to staff being contested by an office that was not — and the comptroller race is the clearest version of it. Rabilio breaks the convention that hands the seat to a retired justice, which is why the guild's allies are reaching for the conflict-of-interest framing they never apply when the pick is one of their own. Baharav-Miara timing appointment-freeze guidelines to the election window is the move she has run all term: the legal-procedural objection that arrives exactly when an elected government tries to act, dressed as neutral caretaker doctrine [the AG discovering restraint the week it happens to bind the coalition]. The secret June 3 ballot is the real variable, because the curtain is where coalition MKs who signed for Rabilio can still hand the seat back to Elron.

✠ **Dossier: Field Dossier: The Unfinished State** — The contest this entry names — an office the coalition was elected to staff being decided by an Attorney General and a Court that were not — is the constitutional-incompleteness argument this Dossier develops, where the absence of a written constitution lets the legal establishment claim powers no elected body assigned it.

Israel and the World

Europe Splits Over Israel as the Settlement-Trade Bloc and Its Blockers Both Move

The Netherlands tabled a cabinet decree Friday barring Dutch nationals and firms, at home and abroad, from importing, selling, or brokering goods produced in Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria, routing it to the Council of State for an expedited ruling. The same day Ireland told its parliament the long-drafted anti-settlement trade bill arrives “in the coming weeks,” with Foreign Minister McEntee naming Belgium, the Netherlands, and Slovenia as intended co-movers and pledging to proceed alone if they balk; Spain has

already legislated. Britain, Italy, Germany, France, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand issued a joint statement calling the E1 project a “serious violation” that would “divide” the territory, warning businesses of “legal and reputational consequences” for bidding on the 3,400 units. The counter-flank moved the same week: Czech Foreign Minister Macinka pledged in Prague, alongside Sa’ar, to block any EU sanctions or association-agreement suspension as a single state if needed, and Slovenia’s parliament returned Janez Jansa, a Trump admirer and Israel supporter, to the premiership — the same Slovenia Ireland just listed as a co-mover.

ASSESSMENT

The bloc legislating against settlement goods is voting on a framework October 7 already killed, and the brief has tracked the European recognition campaign as the residue of a “solution” that no longer has a Palestinian counterparty to deliver it to. McEntee’s list naming Slovenia as a co-mover the day Slovenia elects Jansa is the fracture in miniature [she will need a new fourth name]. The trade decrees are the enforcement instrument the recognition votes never were — and the EU’s qualified-majority math is precisely what the Czechs are now positioned to deny, which is why Sa’ar spent the week collecting single-state vetoes rather than arguing the merits in Brussels.

Washington Sanctions Sitting Lebanese State Officials for the First Time

The US Treasury sanctioned eight Lebanese nationals and an Iranian diplomat Thursday for obstructing Hezbollah’s disarmament, the first time Washington has hit serving Lebanese state-security officials — one from General Security, one from military intelligence — accusing them of feeding the group intelligence and “illicit support” during the war. The list reaches into parliament and the security services: former minister and senior Hezbollah figure Mohammed Fneish, parliamentarians Hassan Fadlallah and Ibrahim al-Moussawi among them. The action lands as US-mediated Israel-Lebanon talks on disarmament run inside their extension window. The Lebanese army answered that its loyalty is “solely to the nation,” rejecting the designation of its own officers.

ASSESSMENT

Sanctioning the uniformed officers, not just the politicians, is Washington naming what the disarmament talks keep papering over: Hezbollah is embedded inside Lebanon’s General Security and military intelligence, the very institutions the negotiations treat as the state that will do the disarming. The army’s “loyalty to the nation” rebuttal is the tell — an institution genuinely loyal to Beirut would not need to announce it after two of its own are caught feeding intelligence to the group it is nominally being asked to disarm. The talks “extend” while the IDF does the actual enforcement [the disarmament Beirut promises on paper, Israel collects in Baalbek].

The Times Defends the Kristof Blood Libel in Its Own Voice

The New York Times opinion section published an extensive answer to reader questions over the weekend defending Nicholas Kristof’s column alleging a systematic Israeli policy of training attack dogs to rape Palestinian detainees. Opinion head Kathleen Kingsbury wrote that the piece “underwent rigorous

review,” that a post-publication check “found no errors,” and that the allegations rest on “a growing body of evidence.” The defense conceded that subscribers cancelled over the column while noting that some Jewish readers wrote in grateful it ran. It arrived with Israel’s defamation suit already filed, the Foreign Ministry’s “one of the worst blood libels ever to appear in the modern press” already on the record, and the embassy in Washington telling the paper to “leave our dogs alone.”

ASSESSMENT

The Times spent the week defending a column whose author conceded in his own text that no evidence supports the central allegation, and the opinion desk’s “no errors” finding is the institution certifying the laundering it performed [the fact-check standard for charging an entire state with canine rape is apparently looser than the one the paper applies to a restaurant review]. The “growing body of evidence” is the same Euro-Med and UN scaffolding the column cited going in — a Hamas-affiliated monitor’s affidavit dressed as independent corroboration, now cited back to itself one prestige layer higher. A paper confident in its reporting publishes the documentation when sued. This one published a press release about its own standards.

Germany Indicts a Quds Force Cell That Mapped Its Jewish Leaders for Murder

German federal prosecutors filed charges in Hamburg state court against Danish national Ali S. and Afghan national Tawab M. for an IRGC-directed plot to assassinate Josef Schuster, president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, and Volker Beck, chairman of the German-Israeli Society. Ali S., who prosecutors say worked for the IRGC’s intelligence service in close contact with the Quds Force, was tasked early last year with surveilling Schuster and Beck for assassination and casing two Berlin Jewish shops for arson. He was charged with espionage, sabotage, and attempted participation in murder. Both men were arrested in Denmark, Ali S. in June and Tawab M. in November, the same cross-border recruitment the al-Saadi file already exposed. That conduit ran in parallel against the Trump family: al-Saadi, the Iraqi national extradited from Turkey, held a blueprint of Ivanka Trump’s Florida home and a pledge to kill her in revenge for Soleimani.

ASSESSMENT

Tehran is running a continental targeting program against named Jewish community heads, with surveillance packages assembled on specific men by name and arson teams briefed on specific Berlin shops. Every European Jewish community already knows what the Quds Force does on its streets; the German indictment is one of the rare moments a Western prosecutor says it in a courtroom instead of filing it under counter-extremism. The question is whether the proscription debate moves before the next cell finishes its surveillance phase, because the only thing that has stopped these plots so far is an arrest in Denmark.

A Texas Democrat Runs on Interning and Castrating “Zionists” — and Polls Into a Runoff

Maureen Galindo, a candidate in Tuesday’s Democratic runoff for Texas’s 35th district around San Antonio, pledged to convert the Karnes ICE detention center into “a prison for American Zionists” and a “castration processing center,” asserting that most Zionists are pedophiles and that her legislation would define support for Israel as antisemitism. She won the March primary’s top spot with 29 percent. Democrats in Congress signed a statement calling her views “vile, bigoted and antisemitic.” Gottheimer and Moskowitz vowed to force a daily expulsion vote if she wins. Even AOC condemned her. The same window since our last brief just before the chag carried the San Diego manifesto naming Jews the “universal enemy” and a Dublin councillor posting a call for a “real final solution.”

ASSESSMENT

We have been tracking this sort at the level of vocabulary — “is Israel committing genocide” arriving as a Democratic primary-test question. Galindo is what comes next: a contender running on rounding Jews into camps and gelding them, polling well enough to force a runoff. The internment-and-castration fantasy is Jew-hate wearing a Zionist alibi, and her “fake Jews versus real Semites” gloss is the same definitional inversion the convention-weaponizers run, pointed at American Jews this time. The condemnation is genuine, but a 29 percent primary win means the constituency is genuine too.

Briefly Noted

Frontline & Security

- *JNS*: Cypriot police arrested two Palestinian men near Governor’s Beach after an intelligence-led search turned up chemical mixtures capable of building explosives, holding both eight days on suspicion of planning an attack on the island.
- *Jerusalem Post*: An operative who ran the exploding-beeper sabotage against Hezbollah broke cover in a new Hebrew book, detailing how the Mossad lured a Hezbollah man into an ambush to keep the plot from being exposed before the devices detonated.

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- *JNS*: Washington threatened to revoke the Palestinian delegation’s US visas unless Riyadh Mansour dropped his run for a UN General Assembly vice presidency, and the delegation reportedly relayed through an Arab intermediary that he would sit out the next two years. The sit-out runs conveniently to the end of Trump’s term.
- *Times of Israel*: Treasury quietly pulled UN rapporteur Francesca Albanese off its sanctions list after a federal judge ruled the designation likely violated her speech rights, with State insisting the removal is temporary and the appeal is live.

- *Jerusalem Post*: Syria will sit at next month's G7 in France as a guest nation, represented by Ahmed al-Sharaa, the former al-Qaeda commander the G7 now wants at the table as a supply-chain hub while Hormuz stays closed.

Public Diplomacy & Media

- *Algemeiner*: Sally Rooney, who withholds her novels from mainstream Israeli publishers as a BDS gesture, will release a Hebrew "Intermezzo" through November Books, a fringe house that openly calls for ending Israel as a Jewish state. Her boycott, it turns out, spares only the Israelis who want Israel gone.

Economy, Tech & Infrastructure

- *Times of Israel*: Israeli arms sales more than doubled over five years to a record near \$15 billion in 2024 — including to states that publicly swear they boycott the Jewish state.
- *Globes*: Dalia Energy signed a 20-year, \$6.7 billion gas deal to fuel two new power plants, the first under the framework that forces Leviathan to sell cheap at home as the price of exporting abroad. Chevron, the reservoir's operator, is conspicuously absent from the signatures.
- *Israel Hayom*: The cabinet approved a Smotrich-initiated 2.6 billion shekel national AI program, funding scholarships, 5,000 GPUs a year from 2027, and a state-backed Cyber AI lab.
- *JNS*: Israel's dairy herd leads the world at 12,125 kilograms of milk per cow a year, ahead of Estonia and Denmark — a fun statistic to release around Shavuot.

Culture, Religion & Society

- *Jerusalem Post*: Yitzhak Ben-Hebron, the last surviving eyewitness to the 1929 Hebron massacre, died at 100, four years old when Arab rioters murdered 67 of the city's Jews and ended a community that had lived there for centuries — he took the city's name and helped rebuild its Jewish presence after 1967.
- *JNS*: The first mikveh on an Israeli military base was dedicated at a Border Police installation before Shavuot, a small marker of the turn toward faith and tradition the surveys keep registering among younger Israelis since October 7.
- *Israel Hayom*: Israel's girls' team took three medals at the European Girls' Olympiad in Informatics in Italy, including the country's first-ever gold in the competition, out of 218 competitors from 58 nations.
- *Times of Israel*: The National Library acquired an original 1846 copy of the first known kosher cookbook, compiled by Lady Judith Montefiore and published anonymously under the byline "A Lady," carrying some of the earliest documented cheesecake recipes in Jewish culinary writing.

Developments to Watch

Judea & Samaria

- **A Hebron shooting cell, caught a step early** — The IDF arrested three Hamas operatives in Hebron preparing a shooting attack “in the near future.” Duvdevan took two more wanted men in Samaria the same window, with ramming suspects detained near Nablus and Ofra. The acutely-deteriorating picture the Shin Bet briefed last week is now producing near-term cells faster than the arrests reach them, and the one not caught is the next attack.

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Lebanon sends its disarmament case to the Pentagon** — Beirut is dispatching a security delegation to Washington to present its weapons-collection plan for the south. The officers are expected to argue that Israeli operations are what obstructs Hezbollah’s disarmament. They arrive ahead of the May 29 round, turning the next Washington session into a contest over who is blamed for a disarmament Beirut cannot perform and the IDF is performing by hand.
- **Israeli strikes reach Deraa as Beirut’s track strains Damascus** — Israeli forces shelled the Yarmouk Basin in Syria’s Deraa province, on the approach axis south of the Hermon. Lebanon’s separate negotiating track with Israel raises Syrian concern over the precedent it sets. The Damascus channel sits over a live kinetic envelope, and an al-Sharaa government that protests the strikes while Lebanon negotiates alone is the partner Jerusalem weighs the Syria approach against.

Gaza & Southern Theater

- **Mladenov asks the Security Council to force the disarmament** — The Board of Peace published its Gaza roadmap, and its envoy urged the UNSC “to use every means at its disposal” to disarm Hamas. Mladenov warned that if the ceasefire falls apart, the current division of the Strip becomes permanent. The “every means” language moves the disarmament onto the Council’s docket, where a Russian or Chinese hand decides whether the mechanism arrives at all.

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **The Gulf builds around the choke point it is brokering** — Abu Dhabi is pushing its West-East pipeline, which bypasses Hormuz entirely, toward completion in 2027, the same week Iran’s and Saudi Arabia’s foreign ministers held a de-escalation call. The states Trump named as the deal’s brokers are hedging against it failing, pouring concrete around the strait while they negotiate over it.
- **A tanker reports an incident off Socotra** — UK maritime authorities logged a security incident involving a petroleum tanker roughly 200 nautical miles west of Socotra after a small craft approached, on the Bab-el-Mandeb approaches rather than Hormuz. Al-Houthi conditioned a wide attack on

a failed Washington-Tehran deal, and the incident is the first data point under that threat while every eye is on the strait to the north.

Diplomatic & Legal

- **France readies a UN Hormuz resolution after the US text stalls** — Paris is preparing its own Security Council resolution on the blocked strait after China and Russia vetoed the US-backed text in April as biased against Tehran. The reopening clause in Trump's draft has no enforcement floor at the Council, which leaves any near-term move to reopen Hormuz with Washington and Jerusalem alone.
- **The House pulls its Iran war-powers vote as the Senate advances one** — House Republican leaders abruptly canceled Thursday's vote on a resolution to end US involvement in hostilities with Iran. The Senate is advancing a similar measure, with a separate push building to end the US role in the Lebanon war. The congressional brake on the strike option is live this week, and a Senate vote that clears narrows Trump's "50-50" before the security cabinet decides.

The deal on the table ends the war that decapitated Iran's command and collapsed its defense industry without ending the program the war was launched to end. Israel can read that as a defeat or as the unfinished half of an operation that did most of what it set out to do and now waits on a cabinet decision and a fifty-fifty coin in Washington. The harder read is that the only enforcement anyone in this picture is actually performing is the IDF clearing tunnels north of the Litani and depots behind the Yellow Line, while every other actor negotiates a settlement Hezbollah and Hamas have already declined in everything but signature.

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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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