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READER EDITION

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ISRAEL BRIEF

Thursday, June 4

A fourth Washington round signs a Lebanon text Hezbollah answers with rockets and a drone at a general, while Iran fires on a Gulf airport and argues with itself about whether it fired.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE Street crime fell to a historic floor in the same month Jew-hate climbed to three-fifths of every confirmed bias attack in the city, which makes the surge its own targeted phenomenon riding a falling tide rather than rising with one. Commissioner Tisch can credit a focused, strategic department for the record-low murder count [though the strategy has a blind spot shaped like a shtreimel]. The city is safer than it has been in living memory unless you are visibly Jewish, in which case it is the most dangerous it has been in a decade. The mayor-elect campaigned on the vocabulary that licenses exactly this — once the man who runs the NYPD treats “Zionist” as a status that forfeits an institution’s protection, the distance between the rhetoric and the woman on the subway floor is measured in months, and we are watching it closely.

CLASSIFICATION

Reader Edition

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“You cannot make peace with someone who has come to kill you,” Yitzhak Rabin said before a Washington lawn taught him the rest of the sentence. The ceasefire text out of the State Department obligates Hezbollah to disarm north of the Litani, and Hezbollah answered inside the hour with rockets and an explosive drone aimed at the general who commands the front. Tehran is firing on a Gulf monarchy’s airport while three of its own spokesmen argue over whether it fired at all. The enforcement is still sitting where it has sat all spring, on the IDF.

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Flash Brief

- **Lebanon text:** A fourth Washington round signs a ceasefire contingent on Hezbollah disarming north of the Litani. *See The War Today.*
- **Hezbollah answers:** Rockets at the north within the hour, and an explosive drone flown at Northern Command's Maj. Gen. Rafi Milo. *See The War Today.*
- **Kuwait airport:** Iran's drone kills one at the passenger terminal, then offers three incompatible accounts of whether it fired. *See The War Today.*
- **Gulf expels Tehran:** Kuwait declares two Iranian diplomats persona non grata as CENTCOM strikes near Hormuz. *See The War Today.*
- **Araghchi's threshold:** Iran's foreign minister warns that an Israeli strike on Beirut means Tehran returns to the war. *See Developments to Watch.*
- **Strike room tonight:** Netanyahu convenes a limited security discussion on a targeted Israeli answer if Hezbollah's fire holds. *See Developments to Watch.*
- **Nukhba docket:** The Cabinet approves a NIS 1 billion plan to try October 7's perpetrators in an Israeli court, not at The Hague. *See The War Today.*
- **Comptroller seated:** The coalition elects Netanyahu's lawyer 61 to 57 after ordering members to photograph their ballots. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Mob at a judge's home:** A haredi crowd attacks Justice Sohlberg over a draft-enforcement order, and the coalition condemns it within the hour. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Aid-to-trade:** Netanyahu puts his own name on retiring the \$3.8 billion in US military assistance for procurement freedom. *See Israel and the World.*
- **41 in May:** Jews absorbed 60 percent of New York's confirmed hate crimes the same month street crime hit a record low. *See Israel and the World.*

THE Lebanon text obligates a Lebanese state to confiscate weapons it has never once confiscated, and the rockets that answered the signing are the standing argument against the premise. Tehran is testing how far its own ceiling gives before any memorandum exists — drones at the bases, missiles at the monarchies, nothing yet at the Americans, because Trump's "only if you kill our troops" line is the floor the regime has learned to fire two feet under. At home, in an amazingly tone deaf move, the coalition won a fight it was entitled to win and seated the one appointee whose independence problem the press did not have to invent.

The War Today

THE FOURTH WASHINGTON ROUND SIGNS A DEAL HEZBOLLAH ANSWERS WITH ROCKETS

After eight and a half hours at the State Department, the fourth round produced a text: a ceasefire extension contingent on Hezbollah disarming and withdrawing north of the Litani, with jointly designated "pilot zones" where

the Lebanese Armed Forces take exclusive control, and a stated path toward a comprehensive deal. Hezbollah fired rockets at the north within hours of the announcement — the IDF intercepted the launches, struck vehicles near Beirut and across the south. And Rubio told a Senate committee the group had violated the arrangement within hours while defending Israel's right to answer. Hezbollah flew an explosive drone at the southern Lebanon position of Northern Command chief Maj. Gen. Rafi Milo in an assassination attempt the IDF intercepted. The 146th Division closed three months of operations crediting 550-plus Hezbollah operatives killed and 2,700 infrastructure sites dismantled, the new Golani brigade commander took his post in a ceremony on Beaufort Ridge three days after the 36th Division seized it, and Zamir told the Cabinet the Navy is now a long-range strike arm built to reach Iran and carry the Lebanon fight.

ASSESSMENT

The pilot zones hand the Lebanese Army exclusive control of ground a Lebanese state has never once disarmed, and the rockets that answered the signing inside the hour are the standing argument against the premise — a Lebanese institution will confiscate Hezbollah's weapons only after the IDF has already cleared them. We have watched a fire-control arrangement run for months and months where the text obligates Israel and the shooting never stops. A fourth Washington round closing on more text moves the negotiation to a new venue while leaving the enforcement exactly where it was — on the IDF.

IRAN KILLS AT KUWAIT AIRPORT, LOSES TWO DIPLOMATS, TELLS THREE STORIES

Iran's drone strike on the passenger terminal at Kuwait International killed one person and wounded others, and Kuwait answered by declaring two Iranian diplomats persona non grata with 24 hours to leave and summoning Tehran's charge d'affaires. CENTCOM struck near the Strait of Hormuz, downed drones aimed at US personnel, and called the airport hit a "deliberate, calculated, and unjustified attack" on a civilian target — directly contradicting the IRGC, which first blamed Kuwait and Bahrain for bearing "direct and clear responsibility," then denied firing at all and claimed a failed US Patriot interceptor had struck the terminal. Foreign Minister Araghchi defended the strikes and warned of a "decisive response" to further hostile acts. Trump told aides he will not rejoin the war unless Iran kills American troops, said he expects to meet Mojtaba Khamenei, and dismissed reports that Tehran had walked from the talks.

ASSESSMENT

Trump's "only if you kill our troops" line is the floor Tehran has been probing for, which is why the drones go at the bases and the missiles go at the monarchies and nothing yet goes at the Americans.

Inside Israel

THE COALITION SEATS NETANYAHU'S LAWYER AS COMPTROLLER AFTER FORCING ITS MEMBERS TO PHOTOGRAPH THE CURTAIN

The Knesset elected Michael Rabilio — Netanyahu's personal lawyer, who handled the political agreements that brought Gantz and later Sa'ar into the government — as Israel's tenth State Comptroller, 61 to 57 over retired Justice Yosef Elron in a second round. Elron took 60 in the first round, one short of the 61 needed, with the coalition's whip operation run by coalition chair Ofir Katz, who spent weeks pairing Rabilio with wavering members. When a defector cost the first round, Likud ordered its members behind the curtain to photograph their ballots with Rabilio's slip and show the result to coalition managers. Ministers May Golan and Shlomo Karhi and Finance Committee chair Hanoch Milwidsky did exactly that, over a ruling from the Knesset's own legal adviser Sagit Afik that the photographing breached the rules. The first round was voided and rerun. Deri was called in to hold the haredi votes, a bloc Goldknopf had been working to deny Netanyahu out of grievance over the draft. Lapid is petitioning the High Court to void the result for the breach of ballot secrecy.

ASSESSMENT

The merits and the method point in opposite directions here, and both are real. Breaking the convention that hands the Comptroller's chair to a retired justice is legitimate. That convention is the legal guild's standard claim on an office the elected branch is entitled to staff, and the opposition's outrage is the guild describing its own loss of a seat it expected to keep. But seating the man who argued Netanyahu's own cases in the office built to audit him is the one appointment in the coalition's package where the independence problem is not manufactured by the press. And forcing members to photograph a secret ballot to prove loyalty is the kind of own-goal that hands Lapid his petition pre-drafted. Rabilio can run the office, but the coalition spent its strongest argument — that this was a normal exercise of an elected majority — to win it the ugliest way available.

A HAREDI MOB ATTACKS A JUSTICE'S HOME OVER THE DRAFT ORDER, AND THE COALITION CONDEMNS IT

A crowd of haredi men attacked the Jerusalem home of Supreme Court Justice Noam Sohlberg last night, smashing windows, wrecking his car, and trying to force entry before police arrived and arrested more than fifty for disorderly conduct. The attack answered Sohlberg's order tightening enforcement against draft evaders. Magen David Adom treated Sohlberg, who was unwell afterward. His wife Meira, a daughter of Holocaust survivors, called it a pogrom and a Kristallnacht to reporters at the scene. Hours later demonstrators blocked Kikar HaShabbat in protest of the arrests. Netanyahu condemned the riot and called Sohlberg to ask whether he would press charges. Justice Minister Levin condemned it and pressed for full enforcement. Court President Yitzhak Amit wrote to the judiciary this morning calling the attack a crossing of a red line and an assault on the rule of law.

ASSESSMENT

A mob of “Torah scholars” [i.e., people who have no idea what either of those words mean independently or together] attacked a judge at his home because he ordered the law enforced, and the coalition figures the foreign press files as the threat to Israeli democracy were condemning it within the hour. The whole thing is truly despicable. The riot is the same arithmetic the haredi parties are reading at the ballot — an army 12,000 short, an evader roll past 39,000, first-half haredi enlistment under 2,000 — registering on the street as the exemption’s expiry draws closer with no statute to replace it. The harder fact sits under the condemnations. A police force that last week cancelled the joint operation to detain evaders and then volunteered that most targets were secular has already told this mob what enforcement costs it, and a dispersal-and-release on the night with fifty arrests for disorderly conduct tells it again. The condemnation is real — at least from the non-haredi bloc. But, so is the gap between the condemnation and what the street has learned to expect.

Israel and the World

NETANYAHU PUTS HIS OWN NAME ON THE AID-TO-TRADE WIND-DOWN

Netanyahu endorsed the Republican plan to retire the \$3.8 billion in annual US military assistance and rebuild the relationship around defense trade and strategic cooperation, telling CNBC he wants to begin the wind-down inside the final two years of the Trump administration while both governments draft the successor memorandum. The congressional vehicle now has a name and a number: Marlin Stutzman’s resolution lays out the aid-to-trade shift, carrying a letter of support from Netanyahu himself. The prime minister downplayed the Truth Social blowup with Trump over Lebanon in the same appearance.

ASSESSMENT

The ambassador confirmed the shift yesterday. Today, Netanyahu signs his own name to it on American television, taking the one lever his loudest American critics reach for first and handing it back before a 2029 Democratic White House can inherit it. It isn’t going to slow down the partisan sort, but at least it’s a path to traction. The \$3.8 billion is mostly a buy-American subsidy that cycles through US defense contractors anyway, and trading it for procurement freedom is a structural win Israel has wanted for years. Whether the successor memorandum clears before the October election is the variable, and Netanyahu is moving now because the authority to sign it expires with this Knesset.

NYPD LOGS 41 ANTI-JEWISH HATE CRIMES IN MAY AS OVERALL CITY CRIME HITS A RECORD LOW

Jews absorbed 41 of New York’s 68 confirmed hate crimes in May, 60% of the city’s total and a 71% jump over May 2025, even as the NYPD posted the fewest murders and shootings in the recorded history of the first five months of a year. The year-to-date count stands at 152 confirmed anti-Jewish hate crimes against 17 for Muslims, nine for Asians, and 18 for Black New Yorkers. Jews comprise some 10% of the city. The month’s catalog reportedly included a Jewish nurse choked, thrown to the subway floor, and beaten on a Manhattan train by an assailant screaming a blood-libel line about Jews eating children.

ASSESSMENT

Street crime fell to a historic floor in the same month Jew-hate climbed to three-fifths of every confirmed bias attack in the city, which makes the surge its own targeted phenomenon riding a falling tide rather than rising with one. Commissioner Tisch can credit a focused, strategic department for the record-low murder count [though the strategy has a blind spot shaped like a shtreimel]. The city is safer than it has been in living memory unless you are visibly Jewish, in which case it is the most dangerous it has been in a decade. The mayor-elect campaigned on the vocabulary that licenses exactly this — once the man who runs the NYPD treats “Zionist” as a status that forfeits an institution’s protection, the distance between the rhetoric and the woman on the subway floor is measured in months, and we are watching it closely.

Briefly Noted

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- *The JC*: Britain’s Foreign Office took Israel off its no-travel list, downgrading the warning to a routine advice-before-you-go note.
- *Times of Israel*: British prosecutors told a London court that a Norwegian teenager flew to the UK to carry out a contract killing for the Foxtrot Network, the Swedish crime syndicate Tehran rents for jobs abroad. Mossad ties the same ring to the grenade attack on Israel’s Stockholm embassy, putting another indicator of Iran’s murder-for-hire export on British soil.
- *JNS*: Slovenia’s air traffic control denied an Israir passenger flight permission to land, forcing a diversion to Zagreb. The outgoing Golob government’s parting shot.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Several Iran-aligned militias in Iraq — Asaib Ahl al-Haq, Kataib Hezbollah, the Imam Ali Brigades — announced they would break from the Popular Mobilization Forces and hand their weapons to the state under US pressure. The disengagement reads as a change in the paperwork while the guns stay where they are.

Public Diplomacy & Media

- *JNS*: Brad Sherman advanced out of his California primary over a J Street-backed challenger.
- *Times of Israel*: North Carolina Democrats voted down a resolution branding Gaza a genocide and calling to prosecute those who “enabled” it, 163 to 130, after the state party’s Jewish caucus whipped against it — 130 of them voted yes anyway.
- *JNS*: American Priorities, a new PAC built to counter pro-Israel efforts, is spending \$2 million on three New York House candidates Mamdani endorsed, all three explicitly running against Israel’s interests.

Domestic & Law

- *Jerusalem Post*: Four Arab MKs and former Balad chief Sami Abu Shehadeh moved to join Adalah’s High Court petition against the death-penalty-for-terrorists law Ben-Gvir carried, after Justice Kasher declined to freeze it —

the collision we've tracked now gathering the parties whose constituents the law reaches.

- *Israel Hayom*: The High Court ordered the state to resume Red Cross visits to jailed terrorists, Justice Barak-Erez ruling the two-and-a-half-year wartime ban unlawful and faulting the state's conduct — the guild reaching for an international-law instrument on behalf of the men it would not order the Court to rule on by name.

Economy, Tech & Infrastructure

- *JNS*: The OECD projects the war-hit Israeli economy grows 3.3% this year and 5.6% in 2027, while warning on defense spending and the deficit — the macro line to watch when the next budget fight reaches cabinet.
- *Times of Israel*: Smotrich ordered the Finance Ministry to stand up a task force for tech firms squeezed by the shekel's surge, as the sector absorbs a fresh wave of layoffs.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Omer-based Esh-Tech unveiled Dronelight, a portable 4-kilowatt laser that fires multiple beams to down 30 drones a minute — built for the swarm problem Rafael's serial-firing Iron Beam struggles with, at a tenth of a shekel per minute.
- *Jerusalem Post*: British Airways extended its Tel Aviv suspension through October 25. Etihad runs the other way, tripling Abu Dhabi–Ben Gurion service to six daily flights from June 15.

Culture, Religion & Society

- *Jerusalem Post*: Roman Gofman, gravely wounded fighting Hamas at the Tzeelim base on October 7, was inaugurated as Mossad chief yesterday alongside the two United Hatzalah medics who kept him alive in the ambulance to Barzilai.
- *Forward*: Mutra, a Jerusalem-cuisine restaurant in Miami, became the first kosher restaurant anywhere to earn a Michelin star.
- *Israel Hayom*: DocAviv closed in Tel Aviv with “The Woman in White” taking best Israeli film, and three of the festival's winners now qualify to submit for the Oscars.
- *Times of Israel*: German restitution-law citizenship for Nazi victims' descendants jumped 61 percent in 2025, to roughly 12,000 — grandchildren reclaiming the passport the Reich stripped from their families, though Berlin cannot say how many of the new citizens are Jews.

Developments to Watch

Judea & Samaria

- **Fires set near Har Bracha** — In an arson attack against Jews, three blazes broke out simultaneously at Har Bracha, one advancing on the village's tahini plant, with a fourth near Ein Sukkot in the Jordan Valley.

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Araghchi ties Beirut to Iran's re-entry** — Iran's foreign minister drew a line the same day IDF strikes hit near the capital: an Israeli attack on Beirut means Iran returns to the war. The threshold arrives while Netanyahu's own Beirut-strike intent is what triggered the Trump blowup, which puts an Iranian war-resumption trigger on the exact decision Jerusalem is weighing this week. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**
- **Netanyahu convenes a strike decision** — The prime minister called a limited security discussion with senior defense officials on Hezbollah's continued fire and a targeted Israeli answer if it holds. The room is meeting on the response the rockets demand within hours of a Washington text that obligates only the other side.

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Tehran widens the target set to every US partner** — After the Kuwait airport strike and the Bahrain hits, the IRGC put every state that assists the Americans on notice as a legitimate target. The threat reads as the rung above the monarchies the regime already fired on, and it is the cheapest way Tehran answers the Hormuz strikes without going at US troops directly.
- **The Hormuz blockade keeps leaking** — Dozens of oil and gas tankers are still crossing the Strait despite the threats, and the US is grinding down the chokehold Tehran built its leverage on. A blockade that cannot actually close stops being a threat and starts being a bluff the Gulf states call by sailing through it, which is why the IRGC is reaching for airports instead.
- **Mojtaba surfaces as the public successor** — The younger Khamenei issued his first address, warning against internal division after what he called the enemy's battlefield defeat.

Diplomatic & Legal

- **The House votes to fence Trump on Iran** — The House passed an Iran War Powers resolution directing the removal of US forces from hostilities, with four Republicans crossing over, though it dies without the Senate. The vote does not bind today. It pre-loads the constraint on the one trigger that pulls America back in, Iran killing American troops, and narrows the room Trump told aides he was holding in reserve.

Home Front & Politics

- **Likud reads a dissolution inside two weeks** — Party figures expect Netanyahu to move on ending the Knesset's term now that the Comptroller seat is filled, freeing him for the security-political arena. Seating Rabilio was the last appointment worth holding the coalition together for, and clearing it lets him set the election date before the draft-enforcement fight runs its full course.

Rabin learned that a handshake does not bind the hand still holding the knife, and the enforcement on every front this week ran on the only thing that has ever cleared the ground first. When will we learn? Tehran fires on monarchies and argues with itself about whether it fired. Jerusalem answers the unsigned clause with terrain, because the only version of that clause its enemies will ever honor is the one taken from them.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Uriel Zehavi

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR · MITZPE INSTITUTE

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



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