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READER EDITION

June 22, 2026

ISRAEL BRIEF

Monday, June 22

The IDF holds every dominant point in southern Lebanon and is cleared to fire on none of them.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE Two countries, one instruction set — Jews made unwelcome by atmosphere in Berlin and by a mailed bullet in Italy, and the trigger no longer needs a movement behind it, only a permission slip the surrounding culture keeps signing. In France the same libel runs at the top of a parliamentary party, with Melenchon claiming Jewish organizations issue orders the state obeys — Jew-hate with a civics-class alibi. The diaspora cannot lean on Western institutions to defend Jews, only to constrain them once the round is already in the envelope.

CLASSIFICATION

Reader Edition

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THE war this morning — total capability, no permission, the decision to fire held in Washington while Tehran sits in Switzerland and names southern Lebanon the price of opening the nuclear talks at all. At home the families who buried those five sons yesterday watched a yeshiva evader carried through Beitar Illit on shoulders. And a senior rabbi told his public the soldiers are dying because the state arrested draft-dodgers.

IN THIS EDITION

Flash Brief	3
The War Today	4
Five Fall in Lebanon as Katz Claims a Freedom His Soldiers Lack . . .	4
Geneva Closes by Building Tehran a Standing Veto Over Lebanon Front	4
Targeting Cell Keeps Shortening the October 7 Bench	5
Inside Israel	6
The Knesset Refuses Revote and the Court Reaches for the Seat . . .	6
Haredi Boycott Collapses and Netanyahu Picks the Dissolution Date .	6
Israel and the World	7
Washington and Jerusalem Move to Shrink the Palestinian Authority's Combat Arm	7
Vance Reframes the Antisemitism Line While Britain Debates an "Israel Lobby" Inquiry	8
A Bullet in Italy and a Father Spat On in Berlin	8
Briefly Noted	9
Frontline & Security	9
Diplomacy & Geopolitics	9
Public Diplomacy & Media	10
Domestic & Law	10
Economy, Tech & Infrastructure	10
Developments to Watch	11
Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)	11
Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)	11
Home Front & Politics	11

Flash Brief

- **Five buried in seven hours:** Lt. Col. Dor Ben Simhon ז"ל and four of his men fall in southern Lebanon as the army takes a decade-old Hezbollah tunnel and is then ordered to hold its fire. *See The War Today.*
- **Katz's "no restrictions":** The minister tells the country nothing constrains the IDF in Lebanon while the men on the Yellow Line need a colonel's signature to fire on the drone overhead. *See The War Today.*
- **Geneva institutionalizes the halt:** The second round closes after eighteen hours and produces a High-Level Committee plus a joint de-confliction cell, Lebanon at the table, to monitor and freeze operations on the northern front. *See The War Today.*
- **Trump, on his own page:** "I can do whatever I want after 60 days" — the memorandum that binds Jerusalem's border is rewritten at his mood. *See The War Today.*
- **The targeting cell keeps cutting:** Israel eliminates the PIJ commander who helped abduct 12-year-old Yagil Yaakov and a half-billion-shekel Hamas money network run through Turkey. *See The War Today.*
- **The boycott collapses:** UTJ thinks it got nothing — "we followed him like a blind goat" — and hands Netanyahu the dissolution date. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Burden answered in the open:** Beitar Illit stages a procession for a released evader as five soldiers are buried, and Porush says the AG must be driven out "with sticks and stones." *See Inside Israel.*
- **The Court reaches for the Comptroller:** Ohana refuses the revote on the tainted ballot, and an expanded five-justice panel orders the Knesset to defend the result. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Shrinking Ramallah's army:** Washington and Jerusalem demand Force 101 and eight battalions stand down; the PA offers to rename them and move the operations room. *See Israel and the World.*
- **A bullet in the mail:** The mayor of an Italian valley town where Israeli families resettled opens an envelope with a live round and a "this is the only warning." *See Israel and the World.*
- **Vance sets the terms on Jew-hatred:** "If everything is Jew hatred, then nothing is" — and a Westminster petition forces a debate on "pro-Israel influence." *See Israel and the World.*

KATZ told the country there are "no restrictions on IDF soldiers in Lebanon" the same weekend a colonel needed a signature to fire on the drone overhead. We read the gap between those two sentences for a living. Read it with us.

Read the memorandum from Tehran's side and the delegation it flew to Geneva makes perfect sense. Every clause Washington must deliver before the nuclear talks even begin is an economic one — a ceasefire on all fronts including Lebanon, the naval blockade lifted, Hormuz reopened, oil-sanctions waivers issued, frozen assets released — which means Iran collects the oil waivers and the frozen billions precisely by keeping southern Lebanon unresolved. The front, rather than an obstacle, is a meter that runs the payout up. That

is why the regime sent only its money men and not the ones in control of military operations or its proxies.

The War Today

FIVE FALL IN LEBANON AS KATZ CLAIMS A FREEDOM HIS SOLDIERS LACK

Five soldiers were laid to rest yesterday in seven hours, all killed in southern Lebanon over the weekend. Sgt. Maj. Liav Kababia ז"ל, 20, Sgt. Maj. Yoav Klein ז"ל, 21, and Sgt. Maj. Nave Habshoosh ז"ל, 20, died with their battalion commander, Lt. Col. Dor Ben Simhon ז"ל, when an external strike hit their Givati tank near Tebnine, an explosive drone or anti-tank missile with accident ruled out. Staff Sgt. Maj. Alexander Filin ז"ל, 29, was killed by a charge at al-Taybe, and Staff Sgt. Maj. Nir Ben Ari ז"ל, 21, a Maglan commando, by rocket fire and drones near the Taha ridge. The army answered with the operational record it keeps building. The 91st Division's 551st Brigade took a 200-meter Hezbollah tunnel 25 meters deep at Majdal Zoun, four rocket-firing shafts and an underground drone factory built over a decade with Iranian funding, killing 20 Hezbollah operatives including ten from the Radwan Force. Then the fire halted midday Saturday on an order from the political echelon to "hold its fire," and Katz told the country there "are currently no restrictions on IDF soldiers in Lebanon from acting to remove threats" — while the soldiers on the Yellow Line describe needing approval from the highest levels to act against terrorists watching them or against suspicious movement. Home Front Command lifts every northern restriction to full activity this morning, and Zamir spent yesterday in the sector calling the ceasefire "fragile" and the readiness to renew combat high.

ASSESSMENT

Katz's "no restrictions" and the testimony from the Yellow Line cannot both be true, and the gap between them is where the next casualty event is being prepared — a force ordered to hold fire, told from the top that nothing constrains it while the men in the tank need a colonel's signature to fire on the drone circling overhead. The army holds its dominant points and pulls Radwan tunnels out of the ground, and the political echelon halts it midday under American pressure to spare talks in Switzerland Israel isn't even a party to.

GENEVA CLOSES BY BUILDING TEHRAN A STANDING VETO OVER LEBANON FRONT

The second round of US-Iran talks in Geneva closed after roughly eighteen hours, Qatar and Pakistan mediating, with Vance calling the direct engagement historic and Araghchi claiming major progress against a Washington posture that supplied upbeat phrasing in place of evident enthusiasm. The walkout Iranian state media advertised over the weekend — triggered by Trump's threat to hit Iran "harder" unless it reined in Hezbollah, and by Tehran's demand for an apology and a full Israeli pullback from southern Lebanon

— was papered over by the mediators, who stood up a High-Level Committee to run further technical talks and a joint de-confliction cell, Lebanon included, to monitor and halt military operations on the northern front. Under the memorandum, talks on a final nuclear deal begin only after Washington delivers the ceasefire on all fronts including Lebanon, lifts the naval blockade, reopens Hormuz, issues oil-sanctions waivers, and releases frozen assets. The drafted relief runs to temporary waivers on oil and petroleum derivatives, and Iran reportedly still expects Washington to release some \$12 billion in frozen funds imminently, said to include a planned \$500 million “test purchase” drawn from Iranian assets parked in Qatar. The two sides agreed a sixty-day roadmap to a final deal and then spent the round demonstrating they read the existing text in flatly different ways. Tehran’s nuclear committee did not travel at all, and the delegation worked only the economic and ceasefire clauses. In a Fox interview Trump voiced disappointment that Israel cannot finish Hezbollah without “knocking buildings down,” praised the Syrians as more precise, and said he was close to handing the file to Damascus — an offer al-Sharaa declined, politely and firmly, insisting the remarks were misunderstood and meant Syria’s place in a peaceful settlement, not a Syrian march into Lebanon.

ASSESSMENT

The de-confliction cell is the freeze on the IDF made permanent — the ad-hoc midday phone call that halted the army, now a standing multilateral body with Tehran’s client state seated at the table to call the next halt. It guards exactly the lever Iran came to Geneva to work, which is why the regime negotiated the front and not the program. The sixty-day roadmap papers over an interpretation gap rather than closing one, and the Hormuz drafts let commercial shipping through the interim without barring Tehran from levying transit tolls later. Trump, in his surrender, offering the Lebanon file to a man whose forces brokered the 1989 disarmament of every Lebanese militia except Hezbollah, and calling that regime “precise,” is the measure of how badly Washington wants someone else to hold the front it has frozen — al-Sharaa was right to hand it back.

TARGETING CELL KEEPS SHORTENING THE OCTOBER 7 BENCH

The IDF and Shin Bet eliminated Zaki Abu Mustafa, the Khan Younis Brigade elite-forces commander of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, in a precision strike Friday — a man the army holds documented inside Israel during the abduction of 12-year-old Yagil Yaakov from Kibbutz Nir Oz on October 7, and who was rebuilding PIJ in violation of the ceasefire, including by training operatives inside Nasser Hospital to shield them from strikes. A separate strike killed Hussein Qadra and Mohammed Farra, who ran a courier-and-money-changer network that moved more than half a billion shekels to Hamas’s military wing through Turkey and Gaza, plus a Nukhba operative recruiting and training fighters. The same morning the Shin Bet named five Turkey-based Hamas operatives in the group’s West Bank Headquarters, Salam Yaish, Walid Abu Nasser, Majed Ja’aba, Muhammad Mallah and Ayman Sharawna, working under Istanbul-based senior official Zaher Jabarin, who directed dozens of foiled attacks into Judea and Samaria over the past year by recruiting cells and smuggling weapons and funds. Palestinian media reported a man and a

girl killed in a strike on Mawasi west of Khan Younis, which the IDF did not comment on.

ASSESSMENT

Eighteen months on, every name the targeting cell reaches still answers the same question — the disarmament clause the truce was supposed to enforce is being enforced by Israel one operative at a time, because Hamas and PIJ read the ceasefire as the window to rebuild and Erdogan's Istanbul as the safe rear from which to direct the next wave into Judea and Samaria. The PIJ commander training fighters inside Nasser Hospital is the method stated plainly: embed in the protected site, dare the strike, bank the harm if it comes.

Inside Israel

THE KNESSET REFUSES REVOTE AND THE COURT REACHES FOR THE SEAT
Amir Ohana told the High Court yesterday there would be no second ballot for State Comptroller. “The Knesset has spoken,” he wrote, rejecting the rematch the justices floated on the tainted June 3 vote that handed the post to Michael Rabilio, Netanyahu's personal attorney, 61-57 after he trailed Yosef Elron 60-57 in the clean first round. The Court answered within hours: a conditional order on the ballot-secrecy question alone, the burden now on the Knesset to explain why the election should stand, an expanded five-justice panel, and a hearing next Sunday. The conflict-of-interest claim against Rabilio was set aside. The same Sunday the full eleven-justice bench heard the petitions against last year's Judicial Selection Committee law. Nine of eleven justices critical of the statute that takes effect only in the next Knesset, with Sohlberg and Mintz again doubting the Court's standing to strike a Basic Law at all. Court security removed Tally Gotliv from the gallery after she interrupted, and the Court Guard began requiring flagged visitors to sign a public-order pledge to enter the building.

ASSESSMENT

Two seats, one fight — whoever holds the Comptroller's pen audits the government the October election produces, and whoever staffs the next bench decides which of these fights the coalition can still win. Ohana refusing the revote is the elected branch declining to launder a result it intends to keep, and the photographed ballots are the genuine overreach inside it [a loyalty test behind the curtain is exactly what the secret ballot exists to prevent]. The selection-law hearing is the same battle from the other end, the bench it would reshape sitting in judgment of the law that reshapes it — which is precisely the conflict the reform names and the reason a justice's alarm is not the neutral reading the headline treats it as.

HAREDI BOYCOTT COLLAPSES AND NETANYAHU PICKS THE DISSOLUTION DATE

The ultra-Orthodox parties have conceded they are out of leverage. “We failed in everything,” a UTJ figure told Behadrei Haredim, “Netanyahu played us and played us, and we followed him like a blind goat” — the boycott that withheld the floor for two weeks spent, the daycare and Torah-study bills

stalled, the dissolution timetable now Netanyahu's to set. Coalition heads convene tomorrow to decide the final weeks. The emerging date is October 20, a week early, with Likud and Religious Zionism preferring dissolution to a pre-election vote on bills the public opposes, and Smotrich himself holding the Torah-study Basic Law in committee for the political damage it carries. The street ran the other way from the math. As Israel buried its soldiers who fell in Lebanon this weekend, Beitar Illit staged a limousine-and-music procession for an evader released from Military Prison 10. Goldknopf toured the prison to complain about the meal trays. And Gur Hasidim rioted in Arad over an arrested couple. Shas's Yitzhak Yosef called the AG "Jezebel, this wicked woman" and named the emerging Iran deal divine punishment for the arrests. Meir Porush of UTJ said that if Baharav-Miara would not stop, "she will have to be driven out with sticks and stones."

ASSESSMENT

The party that spent two weeks holding the coalition's agenda hostage now admits it got nothing and handed Netanyahu the one thing it had left, which is the timing of the vote that ends the Knesset. It did, actually, get a lot — years of exemptions from service, from the workforce, from responsibility. And it cost a lot — public trust, political favor, the reputation of the haredim generally. Men carried on shoulders for refusing to carry the weight, on the day families buried sons who did. Disgraceful. A poll after the riots put public support for sanctions on evaders higher than before, and a senior rabbi telling his public that Israeli soldiers are dying because the state arrested draft-dodgers moves that number further every time it is repeated. Porush reaching for "sticks and stones" against the Attorney General names the register the street has been operating in for far, far too long.

✠ **Dossier:** *Field Dossier: From Deferment to Duty* — The procession for a released evader on the day four soldiers were buried is the burden-not-shared argument this Dossier builds in full — that the exemption fight is not a religious-freedom question but a question of who carries the war's weight, and that the rising public support for sanctions on evaders is the political ground shifting under the parties that traded the coalition's agenda for the right not to serve.

Israel and the World

WASHINGTON AND JERUSALEM MOVE TO SHRINK THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY'S COMBAT ARM

Washington and Jerusalem have handed the Palestinian Authority a list of conditions for any improvement in relations with the US, and the security clauses are the big ones. The two governments want Force 101 and the eight other special battalions stood down, the units trained abroad to a military standard and carrying weapons beyond anything Oslo authorized, with the Americans reportedly describing them as "the Authority's army." Ramallah's answer was to offer to merge the battalions or rename them, and to relocate Force 101's operations center from Ramallah to Jericho to keep its men off the street. The conditions also name the Jew-hate-inducing school curriculum Ramallah promised the EU it would clean up and never did, and the stipend

fund for terrorists' families (what you know of as pay-for-slay), now trimmed at the edges and dressed in socioeconomic criteria but still paying. Regavim says the PA's armed ranks have doubled and tripled, with cross-border training and "invasion units" pointing at a full-scale war scenario.

ASSESSMENT

Ramallah has already answered by offering to keep the force and lose the letterhead. Merging nine battalions into fewer battalions and moving an operations room twenty miles down the road disarms nothing [the same wash cycle that turns the martyr fund into a socioeconomic-assistance program]. Every reform on the list is one Ramallah owed years ago and produced only when relations with Washington were the prize, while the armed ranks that have doubled and tripled keep training across the border for a war Oslo was supposed to have ended.

VANCE REFRAMES THE ANTISEMITISM LINE WHILE BRITAIN DEBATES AN "ISRAEL LOBBY" INQUIRY

Vice President JD Vance told a podcast that pro-Israel advocates make two mistakes: treating American and Israeli interests as always aligned, and "conflating criticism of a particular government with Jew hatred. Because if everything is Jew hatred, then nothing is Jew hatred." This after he repeated anti-semitic tropes. Asked whether Israel holds outsized influence in the United States, he answered that Israel "like a lot of other countries, tries to influence American politics. I sort of take that as a given," and placed it alongside the United Kingdom and France as a "good partner" rather than a singular one. The same day, the House of Commons cleared an e-petition past the 100,000-signature threshold — 118,331 names — forcing a Westminster Hall debate on whether to open a formal inquiry into "pro-Israel influence on UK politics and democracy," a petition whose own text cites "the horrific devastation in Gaza" and "the ongoing suppression of Palestinians in the West Bank" as grounds. The British government has declined to hold the inquiry.

ASSESSMENT

The line that lands is the second one (because a sitting American vice president is now setting the terms on which Jew-hatred gets named), handing the people who spent two years rebranding "Zionist" as a slur the exact framing they need to claim every accusation is a bad-faith muzzle. Israel was not abandoned, it was sorted, and the vocabulary follows the sort down to the words themselves. Vance grants that Israel "tries to influence American politics" as a throwaway and files it next to Britain and France, which is its own tell. No one is gathering 118,000 signatures to investigate the French lobby's grip on Westminster.

A BULLET IN ITALY AND A FATHER SPAT ON IN BERLIN

A man, 31, threatened a kippah-wearing Jewish father and spat on him and his two children in broad daylight on Uhland Street in Berlin's Charlottenburg, the verbal abuse escalating to assault before passersby flagged police, who arrested him on suspicion of an antisemitic attack. The attack came days after a German activist used a ZDF broadcast to argue that any ban on Muslim head coverings should extend to the kippah, and as Germany's antisemitism watchdog logged 8,725 incidents for 2025 — its highest count since the war,

68% of them Israel-related. The same weekend, the mayor of Varallo, a town in the Valsesia valley below the Alps where roughly 70 Israeli families have settled and restored abandoned homes, opened a yellow envelope containing a Smith & Wesson round and a sixteen-line letter signed by a self-styled “Anti-Zionist Movement:” “Nazi-Zionist butcher families,” “we will not allow more families through,” “this is the only warning before we start shooting.” Italian President Sergio Mattarella phoned the mayor to condemn the threat, and a Turin anti-mafia unit opened a case.

ASSESSMENT

Two countries, one instruction set — Jews made unwelcome by atmosphere in Berlin and by a mailed bullet in Italy, and the trigger no longer needs a movement behind it, only a permission slip the surrounding culture keeps signing. In France the same libel runs at the top of a parliamentary party, with Melenchon claiming Jewish organizations issue orders the state obeys — Jew-hate with a civics-class alibi. The diaspora cannot lean on Western institutions to defend Jews, only to constrain them once the round is already in the envelope.

Briefly Noted

Frontline & Security

- *Arutz Sheva*: IDF troops killed two terrorists and neutralized a third who burned tires and threw Molotov cocktails at Karmei Tzur in Gush Etzion on Sunday evening, with no soldiers hurt — the low-tier violence in Judea and Samaria that conditions tolerance for the heavier kind.
- *Jerusalem Post*: An ITIC assessment finds Hezbollah’s Shiite base fraying as the bill for dragging Lebanon into Iran’s war comes due — displaced families cannot fund a second flight, the compensation arm is short of cash, and a Lebanese poll now puts support for a peace deal with Israel at 49 percent, up 24 points in a year. Whether that frustration outlasts the cash injection Tehran is expected to send the moment the memorandum’s funds clear is the question the rebuild now turns on.

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- *Times of Israel*: Jordan hanged six men convicted of killing police and soldiers, ending a nine-year moratorium and announcing the remaining hundred-plus on death row will follow “one by one.” A Hashemite kingdom that reserves the rope for those who kill its own security forces still harbors the woman who masterminded the Sbarro massacre.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Arnold Roth, whose 15-year-old daughter Malka was murdered in the 2001 Sbarro bombing, used a Jerusalem event to press Jordan to extradite Ahlam Tamimi under its 1995 treaty with Washington, naming the kingdom’s protection of her as material support for terror. Twenty-five years on, a US arrest warrant and a signed treaty still cannot pry one convicted murderer out of an allied capital.

- *Jerusalem Post*: Baghdad's spokesmen are calling a state monopoly on weapons "non-negotiable" and "an existential issue," the new al-Zaidi government's framing for disarming the Iran-backed militias that have not, in fact, disarmed.
- *JNS*: Israel's navy chief hosted the head of the Hellenic Navy in Haifa, touring missile ships, submarines and the Shayetet 13 base and agreeing to widen Eastern-Mediterranean cooperation. The quiet maritime leg of the Israel-Greece-Cyprus alignment keeps deepening.

Public Diplomacy & Media

- *Globes*: Tel Aviv University climbed to 208th in the new QS world rankings from 223rd, with Hebrew University and the Technion also rising, three years into the academic boycott that was supposed to do the opposite.
- *Jerusalem Post*: An Algerian sports analyst told a national broadcast that the "Jewish lobby" controls the world "like the mafia" and rigged a World Cup call for Messi, after Algeria lost 3-0 to Argentina and filed a refereeing complaint with FIFA.

Domestic & Law

- *Israel Hayom*: "Maaminim," a new religious-Zionist organization built on the sector's anger over the coalition's handling of the draft law, has held talks with former minister Gilad Erdan and is in contact with Brig. Gen. (res.) Ofer Winter, with Shomron deputy council head Davidi Ben Zion at its head and bereaved war parents among its founders. The burden-sharing fight is now cracking the national-religious bloc, not only the haredi parties.

Economy, Tech & Infrastructure

- *Jerusalem Post*: Germany is examining buying long-range cruise missiles from Covenant Technologies, a two-year-old stealth-mode Tel Aviv firm building a Tomahawk-class weapon at a few hundred thousand dollars a unit, after Trump cancelled the Biden pledge to arm Europe with the American original.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Qatar's sovereign wealth fund, Volkswagen's third-largest shareholder with two supervisory-board seats, is leaning on the carmaker to block Rafael's letter of intent to build Iron Dome components at VW's idle Osnabrueck plant. Doha holds the board seats to slow an Israeli defense deal it cannot veto outright, the same hedge the Gulf is running everywhere this fortnight.
- *Globes*: Anduril, the US defense-tech firm valued at \$61 billion, is finalizing a head of Israeli operations and scouting whether to enter through acquisition or build organically, targeting Defense Ministry sales and global R&D.
- *Jerusalem Post*: State Comptroller Englman's special report warns that the 2018 long-term-care reform pulled the National Insurance Institute's depletion year forward more than six years to 2035, as annual care spending tripled to NIS 21 billion and recipients more than doubled to 392,000. The

socioeconomic cabinet has not discussed the fund's solvency in years, and the elderly population it serves is set to hit two million by 2050.

Developments to Watch

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **The army moves to push its line forward, not back** — With the Ali al-Taher operation finished and the tunnel belt destroyed, the IDF is set to recommend the political echelon reposition onto better defensive ground along the Yellow Line, and Jerusalem is holding withdrawal to three minimum conditions: Hezbollah north of the Litani, the southern terror infrastructure dismantled, and full Israeli freedom of action. The recommendation reaches the cabinet as the fifth Washington round opens to negotiate a pullback, and the army is asking to move the line the other way.
- **Hezbollah rebuilds the eyes the strikes took out** — The IDF assesses Hezbollah has re-established a surveillance and intelligence network along the Yellow Line and is running night operations to locate Israeli command positions. The eyes go back up while the orders narrow to threat-removal, which is the targeting work that precedes the next anti-tank shot at a tank the army is no longer cleared to answer for. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Tehran ties the strait to the southern Lebanon front** — Iran's Tasnim, citing a source close to the negotiating team, says Hormuz will not reopen until the Lebanon ceasefire holds and the oil waivers are issued. The regime has hooked the chokepoint to the one front the IDF will not freeze, which leaves every tanker behind the strait hostage to the rules of engagement in Nabatieh.
- **The regime's own fracture surfaces mid-talks** — Iranian MP Mahmoud Nabavian disclosed internal correspondence he says shows the new Supreme Leader's dissatisfaction with the US track, throwing state media into a legal storm.

Home Front & Politics

- **A second Ebola case waits on a 72-hour test** — A second Israeli returned from Congo is in isolation at Sheba on suspicion of Ebola, with final results on both suspected cases expected within 72 hours, and the Health Ministry has ruled out barring entry from affected countries. The ministry calls the odds of a wider outbreak near zero, and the window that confirms or clears that read closes this week.

The capability the IDF built across two years of war is intact on every front and decisive on none, because the permission to use it now lives in a memorandum Jerusalem did not write and a President who says he can rewrite it

on a whim. The street that carried an evader on its shoulders while families buried sons named the other half of the cost. Both halves are paid by the same people, and neither bill is being settled this week.

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ABOUT MITZPE INSTITUTE

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