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READER EDITION

July 14, 2026

ISRAEL BRIEF

Tuesday, July 14

Washington seizes Hormuz and strikes Iran a third night — at home the Knesset writes Torah study into a Basic Law and adds two months to the men who serve.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE The hostility has credentialed itself, and it now reads a hospital chart as a target list. Conduct that would end a career against any other minority gets logged as a “personal conflict” when the patient is a Jew, and the complaint dies in human resources. The enforcement gap runs along the same fault line. Norway’s prosecutors declined to charge a professor who called the October 7 massacre “the most beautiful thing that has happened in our century,” ruling it protected speech. A British court, the same week, jailed a man sixteen months for threatening to break an Orthodox Jew’s jaw over “babies in Palestine.” The West closes the gap where a government decides it must, and Europe keeps deciding it need not.

CLASSIFICATION

Reader Edition

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WASHINGTON seized the Strait of Hormuz and struck Iran a third night — the war most likely to land on Israel is being fought without it, and largely without its say. Trump did in an afternoon what Tehran spent a month failing to do, putting a price on the strait it could only threaten to close, then naming the one nuclear site the war never reached as the target of the next round. At home the coalition gave its final week before dissolution to writing Torah study into a Basic Law and adding two months to the men who already serve.

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FLASH BRIEF

- **Hormuz:** Washington reinstates the blockade, tolls Gulf cargo, and strikes Iran a third night as oil tops 85 dollars. *See The War Today.*
- **Yemen:** Saudi-backed forces crater Sanaa's runway to block an Iranian landing, and the Houthis fire back at Riyadh. *See The War Today.*
- **Gaza:** Israel kills the Hamas commander rebuilding its naval force as the UN, rarely, names Hamas's aid racket. *See The War Today.*
- **Torah study:** The Knesset writes yeshiva study into a Basic Law and adds two months to conscripts' service. *See Inside Israel.*
- **AG override:** Rothman's bill clears final readings, letting ministers overrule the attorney general's binding legal opinions. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Likud list:** Netanyahu wins eight reserved slate slots as his party's own court weighs petitions against the deal. *See Inside Israel.*
- **ICC:** Rubio opens a State Department campaign to pull governments out of the court that warranted Netanyahu. *See Israel and the World.*
- **IRGC:** Britain designates the Revolutionary Guard a state threat after seven Iran-backed attacks on British Jewish sites. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Church of England:** The Synod votes to "engage with" a text branding Israel genocidal since its 1948 founding. *See Israel and the World.*
- **PEN America:** Its president resigns rather than back a report defending Jewish writers the literary world is shutting out. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Hospital wards:** Thirty Australian medics describe Jewish patients sabotaged and abused once a Jewish name hits the chart. *See Israel and the World.*
- **EU sanctions:** Brussels drops the failed settlement-sanctions push for a bloc-wide trade ban on Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria. *See Developments to Watch.*

Two of the day's three fronts are being decided by hands that are not Israel's. The war that could reach it runs between Washington and Tehran over a strait it does not border. What is fully Israel's own is the smallest front and the only one it can lose outright: a coalition spending its final week before dissolution to bind the High Court with a Basic Law and strip the veto of the attorney general who might still contest it.

The War Today

Washington Seizes the Hormuz Tollbooth as It Strikes Iran a Third Night

Trump declared the United States is "taking over" the Strait of Hormuz, re-instating the naval blockade on Iranian ports and levying a 20 percent fee on all cargo that crosses under American protection, Washington cast as the strait's "guardian." CENTCOM ran a third consecutive night of strikes across southern Iran and the Gulf islands, five hours of them, and for the first time in the war sent one-way attack sea drones against Iranian air defenses, radars and boats, with early reporting putting the drones into the Bandar Abbas naval base and a submarine and maintenance yard among the targets. Iran

hit UAE- and UK-linked tankers in Omani waters, killing one crewman and wounding eight, claimed its ballistic missiles struck an American air base in Jordan, and said it will not let Washington “interfere” in managing the strait. Trump named Pickaxe Mountain — the deep complex beside Natanz, untouched through the war and still being dug — as “a possible target for a nice big fat shot.” Oil passed 85 dollars as Hormuz traffic all but stopped.

ASSESSMENT

Tehran spent the month trying to price a strait its navy cannot hold, and Washington answered by taking the pricing power and the blockade — the toll Iran could only announce is now collected by the fleet that can actually close the water, and charged to everyone, allies included. The regime’s reply is a placard: a missile it says hit a base in Jordan and then asks the Jordanian public to forgive, a claim to “manage” a strait its own tankers run dark to cross. And the Pickaxe threat says what the shipping-lane fight was talking around: the nuclear file the strikes were meant to close reopens as the stated reason for the next round, the one deep site the war never reached now named at the top of the target deck.

Saudi-Backed Yemen Bombs Sanaa Airport, Houthis Strike Back at Riyadh

Yemen’s Saudi-backed government bombed the runway at Houthi-held Sanaa International Airport to stop an Iranian aircraft from landing and opening a direct air link between Tehran and the Houthis. The rebels said the plane landed anyway, blamed Riyadh, announced “the de-escalation phase is over,” and fired ballistic missiles and drones at Saudi Arabia’s Abha airport while warning airlines out of Saudi airspace. Saudi air defenses intercepted the missiles with no casualties reported. It is the sharpest Saudi-Houthi exchange in years on a front frozen since the last truce, and it lands as Bahrain reports intercepting Iranian fire and Gulf officials weigh collective strikes through the Peninsula Shield Force.

ASSESSMENT

The Houthis reopening a frozen front the week their patron is pinned under CENTCOM is the axis doing the one thing still available to it — widening the map so no single front can be shut. And the Gulf that spent a decade buying quiet from Tehran is intercepting Iranian missiles over its own cities and pricing joint strikes [the accommodation looks dearer every night Iran fires on the people paying for it].

Israel Kills Hamas’s Naval Rebuilder as the UN Names the Aid Racket

An airstrike in Gaza City killed Osama Naim Hamdi Shamlakh, a Hamas cell commander the military said was rebuilding the group’s Naval Array. A separate strike in northern Gaza killed three armed operatives, and one in the south killed Mustafa Oweisi, tied to smuggling military equipment into the Strip. The UN’s humanitarian coordinator issued a rare condemnation of Hamas after armed operatives seized a food-distribution point in Jabaliya and a World Food Programme depot and assaulted two truck drivers, calling it “a dangerous pattern of intimidation and violence,” even while naming the terrorists Gaza’s “de facto authorities.” In Judea and Samaria, security forces arrested

fourteen people in a ring that smuggled millions of shekels of dual-use material used to build the roadside bombs surfacing across the territory.

ASSESSMENT

The same office that spent two years euphemizing Hamas gave it a full sentence this time: Hamas holds Gaza by the gun and takes the aid meant for the people it governs [and “de facto authorities” is still a title Hamas collects at gunpoint]. The smuggling ring rolled up in Judea and Samaria is that same architecture pointed north, the buried-IED capability that turned Gaza into Gaza arriving one dual-use shipment at a time.

Inside Israel

Torah Study Becomes Basic Law as the Serving Majority Absorbs 32 Months

The Knesset gave Basic Law: Torah Study its final approval Monday evening, 63 to 52. The softened text enshrines Torah study as the only value written explicitly into a Basic Law, built to blunt High Court review of the exemption it protects. The coalition cut the clause balancing Torah study against other values. Legal advisers had warned that wording could route combat-veterans’ benefits to men who never serve. Netanyahu skipped the vote, and Edelstein and Illouz broke ranks against it. The same overnight session finalized the bill extending mandatory conscription to 32 months and deferring the promised cut to 30 months by five years. The army’s manpower chief warned the committee that some units could collapse. Even 32 months, he said, leaves the IDF short of the 36 it needs. Zamir sent Netanyahu, Katz and Bismuth a written objection to the companion arrest-freeze bill, which halts arrests and enforcement against draft-evaders for seven months, extendable through the election. Gafni froze every coalition vote until that bill clears, its final reading set for this morning.

ASSESSMENT

The coalition spent one night writing Torah study into a Basic Law and freezing enforcement against the men who will not serve. It also added two months to the conscription of the men who do, and canceled the discharge they were promised. The order was deliberate: the Basic Law passes first to bind the High Court before the arrest-freeze it was built to shield. [The exemption for the yeshiva, an extra semester for the reservist.]

Rothman’s Bill Lets Ministers Override the Attorney General Before Recess

The Constitution Committee approved Rothman’s bill for its final readings, clearing it for a plenum vote before Friday’s dissolution. The bill lets ministers disregard the attorney general’s binding legal opinions and decide for themselves whether their actions are lawful, ending Baharav-Miara’s authority over the government. The same marathon sent Karhi’s media bill to its final readings after more than 400 objections. The coalition dropped the state broadcast-app section that United Torah Judaism and Shas opposed for running on Shabbat. The High Court heard a challenge to the media bill Monday

afternoon. Lapid told the plenum the next Knesset would be one “of repair.” He pledged to repeal the blitz and seat a state commission of inquiry into October 7.

ASSESSMENT

This is the rebalancing the reform was written for. Baharav-Miara loses the leverage and keeps the duty, free to be overruled and still obligated to defend the government in court. [Advice that functioned as a veto becomes advice again.] Lapid’s answer asks voters to win in October and then unwind a Basic Law and a rewired attorney general’s office — the harder half of the promise.

Netanyahu Wins Eight Reserved Slots as His Own Party Court Intervenes

The Likud Constitution Committee approved Netanyahu and Haim Katz’s compromise Monday at the King David Hotel. It reserves eight realistic list slots — 3, 5, 9, 11, 15, 18, 26 and 31, including Foreign Minister Sa’ar’s — for the prime minister to fill, leaving other MKs to compete in district races. The plan goes to the Likud Central Committee on Thursday. Hours earlier the party’s own Likud Court ruled on three petitions. It ordered the legal adviser to answer by afternoon and left an emergency hearing open, the petitioners arguing the committee had defied the court’s earlier ruling. Bitan accused Netanyahu of leaking mid-session. Netanyahu told him to run and count his mandates. Associates of the prime minister phoned lawmakers, asking them to quit the primaries for appointed slots. Yitzhak Yosef praised Eisenkot, and Eisenkot called Shas “a party with Zionist components,” prompting Liberman and Golan to rule out any government with Shas.

ASSESSMENT

Netanyahu centralizes the list at the cost of the cohesion the centralizing was meant to buy. The reserved slots are down from the ten or eleven he first demanded, Edelstein and Illouz have already walked, and the party’s own court now asks whether he followed the rules. The bloc that would unseat him is splitting on the same exemption question, Liberman and Golan refusing the haredi parties Eisenkot courts. Whoever wins in October inherits the identical partners and the identical bill.

Israel and the World

Washington Opens a Campaign to Dismantle the Court That Warranted Netanyahu

Rubio launched a State Department campaign to press governments into quitting the International Criminal Court, singling out states that take American security guarantees while backing the court, with visa revocations, travel bans on ICC staff, and expanded sanctions on the court and its affiliates on the table. He pledged to break it “brick by brick,” branding the court a creature of “smug globalists” and “hostile Third World governments.” Washington never joined the Rome Statute; the court issued warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant in November 2024 regardless, and the campaign lands ten days

before the Assembly of States Parties votes on the prosecutor who signed them.

ASSESSMENT

Washington is applying from outside the pressure the Assembly of States Parties may apply from within on July 24, when the members decide whether to keep the prosecutor who signed the Netanyahu warrant. The leverage bites where the court is thinnest: most of its member states sit under American security guarantees, and a bench that issues warrants it cannot enforce cannot afford to test how many Rubio pries loose.

Britain Names the IRGC a State Threat After Attacks on British Jews

Britain will designate the IRGC a state threat under the National Security Act that took effect last week, making support for the corps a crime carrying up to 14 years and membership up to life. Alongside it, the government proscribes the Islamic Movement of Companions of the Right, the Iran-backed cell that claimed seven attacks this year on Jewish and Israeli-linked sites across Britain, and the GRU Volunteer Corps run by Russian military intelligence. Starmer announced it from the Downing Street garden at a reception for Jewish communal leaders, casting Iran and Russia as states using “proxies and thugs” on British soil and pairing the designations with the security funding increase set out last week.

ASSESSMENT

For years Britain treated the IRGC as a diplomatic interlocutor and its operatives on British soil as extremism cases. Naming the corps a state threat is the reclassification Israel and Anglo-Jewry pressed for through that reluctance, and it reaches where most European measures stop, folding Iran’s proxies and Russia’s into one state-threat category and attaching sentences that bite. What it has not yet proven is the back end — Europe’s front line improves at the speed of the last attack, and the roster of jihadists named on paper and freed on bail is long. Seven claimed attacks on Jewish sites in a year is what it took, and the test now is whether the cells that ran them see a cell of their own. [The Hatzola ambulances that burned in Golders Green in March are funding a permanent headquarters now — the community answered the arson by buying the land.]

✘ Closed Dossier: *The Wrong Geography* — Britain reclassifying the IRGC from an extremism matter to a state threat on its own soil is the correction this Dossier argues is overdue everywhere — its central claim is that the Iranian-jihadist threat has relocated into Western cities while the institutions built to fight it are still sized to a foreign battlefield.

The Church of England Credentials the Genocide Charge as Lived Experience

The General Synod, the Church of England’s governing body, voted Monday in York to encourage churches at every level to “engage with” Kairos Palestine II — “A Moment of Truth: Faith in a Time of Genocide” — a Palestinian Christian text that brands Israel a “colonial, settler and exclusionary entity” built on racism, dates the genocide to the state’s founding in 1948, casts the October 7 massacre as “born out of decades of injustice” since the Nakba,

and instructs churches to separate “dialogue with Jews” from “dialogue with Zionism.” The bishops carried it 25 to nil, the clergy 115 to 20, the laity 113 to 27, softening the original “receive” to “hear” after Jewish objection. Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis called the vote shameful and the document “political activism dressed up as theology.” Lord Carey warned it could leave King Charles, as the Church’s supreme governor, committed to promoting a text the chief rabbi says undermines decades of Jewish-Christian relationship-building. The motion also directs Church investors to review their holdings against the ICJ’s July 2024 advisory opinion on the occupation.

ASSESSMENT

The motion never needed to pass as doctrine to do its work — it needed to become a citation, and a governing body of the established church voting to “engage with” a text that calls Israel a genocidal project from its 1948 founding is the citation the next synod and university chaplaincy will lean on. The same bishops who softened “receive” to “hear” adopted the IHRA definition in 2018 with every example attached, one of them naming the claim that Israel’s existence is racist as antisemitism, and then voted for a document that opens on exactly that claim. [The Methodists took the same text last month. The charge is collecting denominations the way it has been collecting polls.] The investment-review clause is the half that bites, a divestment track drafted to trigger the day the ICJ opinion gave it a hook.

A Free-Speech Group’s President Quits Rather Than Defend Jewish Writers

PEN America’s president, the novelist Dinaw Mengestu, resigned over the weekend in protest of his own organization’s report that the literary world is shutting Jewish and Israeli writers out — disinviting them from events, review-bombing them, dropping them from agencies, telling readers not to touch anyone who ever backed Israel. Mengestu’s objection was that the report, drawn from more than thirty such writers, failed to also defend the boycotters doing the shutting out. A boycott, he wrote, “is a form of dialogue.” The resignation lands the same week Dark Horse Comics, the third-largest US comics publisher, killed a Holocaust scholar’s book of 150 editorial cartoons on what Americans knew of the Shoah as it happened, after Rafael Medoff refused an editor’s demand that its introduction accuse Israel of genocide and call US detention facilities “concentration camps.”

ASSESSMENT

The institution built to defend the heretic now vets him first, and a Jew who will not call his own state genocidal turns out to be the one heretic it will not seat. PEN did not stumble into this. Its board forced out a Jewish CEO on the same charge in 2024, and the president who quit this week quit because the group defended Jewish writers at all, a defense he casts as the betrayal of its mission. [A boycott, he explained, is a form of dialogue. It is the kind of line that survives only in a room where everyone has already agreed who does not get to talk.] The publishers now run the credentialing office for that room, and a Holocaust scholar’s cartoons die in it for declining a loyalty oath.

Jew-Hate Follows Jewish Patients Into the Hospital Ward

An investigation by The Australian collected testimony from thirty doctors, nurses, and midwives describing hospitals turned into anti-Israel battlegrounds

since October 7. Jewish patients report nurses botching IV insertions on purpose once a Jewish name appears on the chart. One senior nurse took four attempts where hospital protocol caps it at two. Staff wore protest symbols on the wards. Stickers of a crossed-out Star of David reached the bedside of a dying elderly Jewish patient in Melbourne. Sweden surfaced the same week, where a Jewish doctor in Stockholm lost his placement after a colleague cursed him as a Jew and told him to go to hell. Israel's Foreign Ministry called the Australian findings a wake-up call and pressed Canberra to confront them.

ASSESSMENT

The hostility has credentialed itself, and it now reads a hospital chart as a target list. Conduct that would end a career against any other minority gets logged as a "personal conflict" when the patient is a Jew, and the complaint dies in human resources. The enforcement gap runs along the same fault line. Norway's prosecutors declined to charge a professor who called the October 7 massacre "the most beautiful thing that has happened in our century," ruling it protected speech. A British court, the same week, jailed a man sixteen months for threatening to break an Orthodox Jew's jaw over "babies in Palestine." The West closes the gap where a government decides it must, and Europe keeps deciding it need not.

Briefly Noted

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- *The JC*: Britain's senior Middle East defence adviser took two briefings this year from Ramallah governor Laila Ghannam — who between the meetings publicly honored a terrorist convicted in the 2002 Netanya bombing that murdered a nine-month-old.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Syria's first post-Assad parliament convened in Damascus, though Ahmed al-Sharaa appointed a third of its 210 members outright and the rest ran through electors his own government picked.

Public Diplomacy & Media

- *Israel Hayom*: Six Dublin councillors asked Ireland's High Court to clear a path to rename Herzog Park — Dublin's only Jewish-named public space, honoring Chaim Herzog, Israel's sixth president and the son of Ireland's own former chief rabbi — with "Free Palestine Park" and "Hind Rajab Park" floated as replacements. The rename hearing was set, without apparent irony, for October 7.
- *Jewish News*: An Irish music festival barred anyone who has served in the IDF after activists objected to a single former soldier attending — and since Israeli service is compulsory, the ban reaches nearly every Israeli Jew alive.
- *Jerusalem Post*: The IDF reprimanded and reassigned a Spokesperson's Unit soldier who streamed with Braden Peters — the "looksmaxxing" influencer filmed months earlier singing Ye's "Heil Hitler" beside Nick Fuentes — on his clout-chasing swing through Tel Aviv. That Israeli hosts courted him

at all is the measure of how starved the country has gotten for a friendly face.

Domestic & Law

- *Israel Hayom*: The bill recognizing combat-shock casualties never reached a first reading, its veterans' forum charges, while the coalition's priority legislation raced toward final votes before Friday's recess. Coalition chairman Ofir Katz says the recognition bill reaches the plenum this week.
- *Globes*: Bennett has raised NIS 30 million and Eisenkot NIS 11.8 million in guarantees from heavyweight businessmen — Alfred Akirov, Shmuel Harlap, and Wix's Nir Zohar among them — the device that sidesteps the NIS 14,000 donation cap and keeps the new parties competitive against the veterans drawing state funding.
- *JNS*: A Council for a Secure America poll of 557 Jewish Israelis finds 81% backing expansion of the Abraham Accords and 78% wanting Saudi normalization, while 63% reject a Palestinian state and a plurality want Israel itself governing Gaza.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Karhi's broadcasting overhaul cleared committee for its final readings in the coalition's last legislative week. The High Court signaled it will not stop the bill mid-passage, calling the petitions against it premature.

Economy, Tech & Infrastructure

- *Israel Hayom*: Smotrich brings NIS 1.6 billion in aid for hi-tech and exporters to a cabinet vote today, a hedge against the strengthening shekel. The Treasury calls it a stopgap — it buys time on the AI shift and leaves the structural problem to the next government.
- *Times of Israel*: Redis, the Israeli-founded database unicorn, is cutting about 75 jobs — a quarter of its Tel Aviv workforce. It joins Wix and Amdocs in a wave of tech layoffs the strong shekel and the automation shift are driving.
- *Globes*: FIMI, Israel's largest private equity firm, closed a record \$1.75 billion eighth fund. The close lands almost three years into the war, demand outrunning its \$1.5 billion target by half.

Culture, Religion & Society

- *JNS*: Keren Hayesod named Eli Vered Hazan — Israel's ambassador to Singapore and a former Likud foreign-affairs director — its next world chairman, succeeding Sam Grundwerg after eight years.
- *Israel Hayom*: A Tel Aviv University study argues the Qumran sect actually ran its 364-day calendar in practice until an unavoidable astronomical drift, nearly a month off the seasons within two decades, pushed it back to the Temple's reckoning.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Berggasse 6 in Vienna, where Herzl ran the early Zionist movement and organized the First Zionist Congress from 1896 to 1898, now houses a Palestinian-owned pizzeria on its ground floor. The Herzl plaque President Herzog unveiled a month before October 7 has since been defaced with red markings.

Developments to Watch

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Rome opens on a broken precondition** — Lebanon-Israel talks open in Rome this week to advance the pilot-zone handover Beirut set as its price for attending. Israeli officials now expect that handover to slip, so the table convenes to move a withdrawal neither side will execute.

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Jordan takes the missiles and stays quiet** — Iran says its missiles hit a US base in Jordan, then urged “the Jordanian people” to force Amman to strike those bases itself. A kingdom that hosts American forces and just absorbed Iranian fire sits one salvo from the war it has spent the week refusing to enter.
- **The blockade chases a five-billion-dollar war chest** — A JINSA tally puts Iran’s take near five billion dollars in the three weeks after the June 17 memorandum, the oil revenue Trump’s reinstated blockade is built to shut off. Whether it chokes those sales decides whether Tehran can keep funding the nightly fire.
- **Tehran’s new hardliners menace Trump** — Regime figures claim Iran killed Lindsey Graham and now threaten Trump directly, the clearest sign yet that the leadership consolidating after Khamenei wants a wider fight with Washington. Trump has answered such threats with a standing order to level Iran if he dies, so an open boast from Tehran carries more than bravado.

Diplomatic & Legal

- **Trump restarts the war-powers count** — Trump notified Congress that hostilities with Iran resumed July 7, a letter his administration treats as opening a fresh sixty-day authorization to fight without a vote. Democrats reject the reset, forcing a Capitol Hill fight over whether the resumed campaign has any congressional sanction at all.
- **A school-strike finding comes due** — Gillibrand-led senators demand the Pentagon disclose within a week its findings on the February 28 strike on a girls’ school in Minab, which Reuters reported American forces likely carried out. A documented US-caused civilian toll surfacing now would hand Tehran and the war’s domestic critics their sharpest weapon of the third round.
- **The EU settlement ban switches lanes** — European foreign ministers failed to agree on sanctions against Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria, and Brussels is advancing a bloc-wide trade ban instead. The measure the ministers could not pass survives by changing venues, and Ireland’s and Spain’s national bans stay the template the holdouts study.

Home Front & Politics

- **A segregation bill races the recess** — A bill mandating gender segregation is moving toward final votes before Friday's dissolution, and the deans of Israel's medical schools warn in a public letter that it is "a direct danger to the health of the citizens of Israel." The coalition is spending its last legislative days on the measure as the medical establishment mobilizes against it.

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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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