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READER EDITION

August 2, 2026

ISRAEL BRIEF

Sunday, August 2

Trump called off the Iran strike again and announced Israel's agreement to the deal that replaced it — Jerusalem has said nothing.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE The statutes keep getting better and the sentences don't, and the sentence is the only part of this that a man thinking about driving at a synagogue ever hears about. Sohail walks out this week. The charge was damaging religious property, nobody brought a hate crime, and the US Attorney's office won't say why, so a guideline written for a broken door did the sentencing. [If you sit on a shul security committee and you were waiting to see what the law would do for you — that was it.]

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Israel Brief: Sunday, August 2

Trump called off the Iran strike again and announced Israel's agreement to the deal that replaced it — Jerusalem has said nothing.

HAMAS signed a roadmap for its own disarmament that opens with Israel's obligations and puts the Israeli pullback before any of it, and Israel did not offer its signature on such a farce. Erdogan asked for a place on Israel's northern border once UNIFIL is wound up. What Israel settled on its own went under the Beaufort Ridge — 700 tons of it, on charges laid weeks ago and shelved for the framework's sake.

FLASH BRIEF

- **Iran:** Trump calls off the American strike and announces a Hormuz deal Jerusalem has not confirmed. *See The War Today.*
- **Gaza:** Hamas signs a disarmament roadmap that opens with Israel's obligations, and Israel rightly refuses to sign it. *See The War Today.*
- **Lebanon:** Seven hundred tons of explosive brought down Hezbollah's Bader Unit command post under the Beaufort Ridge, and the Galilee Panhandle felt it. *See The War Today.*
- **Givati:** A battalion walks off Sde Teiman, fourteen go to military prison, and Zamir asks for more battalions. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Haredi draft:** Hundreds of haredi men, marching to fete the men arrested for rioting at a High Court justice's home, chase three off-duty soldiers of Netzah Yehuda — the battalion the state built so a haredi man could serve — through Jerusalem. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Judea and Samaria:** Police seize a soldier's rifle over a shooting as Israelis walk back to the ground where two of them were killed. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Turkey:** Erdogan asks for a role in whatever replaces UNIFIL on Israel's northern border. *See Israel and the World.*
- **The Hague:** Rubio opens a campaign to break the ICC, and Trump says it is to defend Netanyahu. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Spain:** Sanchez's transport minister points at Israel to explain the sixty thousand who crossed at Ceuta. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Columbia:** The graduate union drops its divestment demand as the university opens its Tel Aviv center. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Diaspora:** Canada condemns the burning of Nöam, a Montreal kosher restaurant, and charges nobody, and a federal judge frees the man who rammed Chabad headquarters. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Michigan:** The state's Jewish attorney general says she does not feel safe at her own party's convention. *See Israel and the World.*

Police arrested sixty-three men over the riot at a High Court justice's home and prosecutors indicted four, and on Thursday night the rest of them got a stage and a crowd. Canada's ministers condemned the burning of Nöam within hours and have charged nobody for a week of gunfire at Jewish businesses.

The War Today

Trump Cancels the Iran Strike, and Tehran Calls It a Retreat

Trump called off a major American strike on Iran late Saturday night, at the end of two days spent getting the region ready for it. He posted that the United States was “locked and loaded and ready to go against the Islamic Republic of Iran,” and then that Iran and other Middle Eastern countries had asked him to hold off “in that the perimeters of a deal has been agreed to.” The deal he described covers the “Immediate, complete, and total OPENING OF THE HORMUZ STRAIT” and an end to Iran’s nuclear threat. He also wrote that “the country of Israel joins me in this commitment.” Jerusalem hasn’t said a word about any of it.

Trump had ordered a fresh wave of strikes meant to force the regime’s surrender, expected to last several days, with power plants and refineries on the target list. One account had Israel briefed and coordinating with the American military. An Israeli official told CBS that Jerusalem knew of no decision and had not been asked to join anything. American embassies in eleven capitals from Cairo eastward told their citizens to consider leaving the Middle East. Israel raised its readiness. Gen. Alexis Grynkewich, who runs American European Command, warned the Pentagon that without another destroyer he would have to choose between defending the American homeland and defending Israel from Iranian ballistic missiles. More than thirty US refueling aircraft are now parked at Ben Gurion with ten more on the way.

Mohammad Marandi, who sits close to the negotiating delegation, spent Saturday warning that Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the UAE, and perhaps Oman were living their “last night of normality,” and Sunday morning writing “Trump retreated again.” Iranian military sources called the claim that Tehran asked for a pause “a new lie” and an attempt to squeeze Gulf rulers. Mohammed bin Salman phoned Trump on Saturday and asked him to step back from the big strike. Qatar, the UAE, Turkey, and Pakistan sent the same message.

Kuwait’s air defenses engaged missiles fired from Iran, a projectile holed a tanker’s engine room eleven nautical miles off Oman and left it unable to steer, Iran said it had halted two ships leaving Hormuz and turned four more back, and CENTCOM answered that the strait is open and Iran does not control it.

By midday Sunday Tehran was denying the whole thing. Iran’s semi-official Fars quoted a member of the negotiating team calling the report that Araghchi had agreed to a US-Qatari arrangement dividing the strait with Oman “false,” and an Iranian military source said the waterway stays closed to any ship that does not coordinate with the Revolutionary Guards.

ASSESSMENT

The deal Trump described doesn't reach the thing the war is about. Trump announced a deal that neither Jerusalem nor Tehran will confirm. Hormuz and the missile array are what Washington keeps aiming at, and the centrifuges Iran moved into the deep complex beside Natanz sit outside both — a night on Iranian refineries wouldn't have touched them either. Trump announced Israel's commitment to hold fire on Israel's behalf. The decision to fire on Iran has sat in Washington since the war opened in February. The destroyers that shoot Iranian missiles down over Israel are the same hulls enforcing the blockade of Iran's ports, and there aren't enough of them to do both.

Hamas Signs a Disarmament Roadmap That Starts With Israel's Obligations

Hamas signed a fifteen-point roadmap for its own disarmament on Thursday night, and Trump announced it as a “HISTORIC agreement for the COMPLETE DISARMAMENT of Hamas and all other armed groups in Gaza.” The Board of Peace, which he chairs, published the text on Friday.

It opens with what Israel has to do: complete its Sharm el-Sheikh commitments “without delay,” halt military operations and targeted killings, pull back to the agreed Yellow Line that Israeli forces hold inside the Strip, and restart a humanitarian protocol running to at least 600 trucks a day, Rafah open both ways, and rebuilt water, sewage, hospitals, bakeries, and roads. Only after every party approves do the sides get fourteen days to write the implementation timetable, a deadline a new International Verification Committee can extend. Then the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza walks in and takes over. Heavy weapons go into storage that committee controls. Full disarmament is meant to take between 200 and 350 days. The text names its own endpoint as a “credible political path” toward Palestinian self-determination and statehood. [Full disarmament will not happen if we wait for Hamas to comply. Don't be fooled by wishful thinking.]

Israel didn't sign it. A political source said the document is an agreement between Hamas and the mediators, that the fifteen points don't answer Israel's demands, that the objections went to Tony Blair, and that nobody moves off the Yellow Line until Hamas is disarmed and Gaza demilitarized. Gaza never came up in the Netanyahu-Trump meeting in Washington this week. Danny Danon put the Israeli position on CNN: “disarmament is not transferring weapons from one warehouse to another.”

Hamas's Ghazi Hamad said the group won't take a step toward disarming before Israel withdraws, and another Hamas official told Reuters it won't implement anything unless Israel endorses the text first. Asked at Camp David on Friday which comes first, the Israeli pullback or the disarmament, Trump didn't answer the question. “We have understandings with Israel, they're very happy,” he said. On Saturday a Board official walked back his own claim that the fourteen days had already started.

The enforcement ran through all of it. Overnight into Saturday the air force destroyed five Hamas weapons depots holding Kalashnikovs, anti-tank launchers, explosives, and ammunition. The 188th Armored Brigade and Yahalom engineers took apart more than ten tunnel routes in southern Gaza, including one used to hold hostages.

The targeting cell reached three more October 7 men in four days. Ahmed Kafina of Kataeb al-Mujahideen took part in abducting Noa Argamani and Avinatan Or and directed the abduction of Sudthisak Rinthalak, the Thai farm worker murdered at Be'eri. Abd al-Rahim Kardi was a doctor at Shifa Hospital who held Romi Gonen captive and hid the body of Cpl. Noa Marciano ז"ל. Salem Abu Labad commanded a Nukhba cell that came into Nir Oz.

ASSESSMENT

The disarmament clause is a storage clause. Point 8 decommissions the heavy weapons to a Palestinian committee, point 9 treats personal weapons as a separate question, and the IDF destroyed most of the heavy stock, the tunnels, and the production lines long before anyone drafted this — so what Hamas is handing over is largely an inventory it no longer has. In exchange the text hands governance to a committee without saying the Hamas officials running the ministries go anywhere, names a route toward Palestinian statehood, and puts the Israeli withdrawal Hamas wants at the front of the sequence.

Seven Hundred Tons Under Beaufort Answer Hezbollah's Ali Taher Drone

The IDF put 700 tons of explosives under the Beaufort Ridge in southern Lebanon on Thursday night, and Netanyahu and Katz said in a joint statement that it was the answer to the explosive drone Hezbollah flew into an unmanned IDF engineering vehicle at the Ali al-Taher ridge. Residents of the Galilee Panhandle were told to leave their windows open so the glass would survive. The network underneath was built over two decades on several levels with Iranian money and Iranian planning, and served as the main command post of Hezbollah's Bader Unit in southern Lebanon. Dozens of UAVs, explosive drones, and anti-tank missiles were fired at Israeli troops and towns from it. It sits about ten kilometers from where I am typing this.

[Seventh floor, Kiryat Shmona, and the whole building moved. My first thought was Modi and whether this was a seizure coming on. My second was earthquake. It was neither, and I have never been so glad to be wrong twice in one minute.]

The demolition had been prepared for weeks and held back because of the framework Israel and Lebanon signed in June. Most of the Beaufort network is gone now.

Saturday night the shooting came back to Ali al-Taher itself, where dozens of Hezbollah operatives are still holed up in a tunnel complex the framework keeps Israeli ground troops out of. Commando brigade forces ran into gunmen there. An officer was moderately wounded and evacuated, and the IDF killed the gunmen in a strike afterward. This morning the 401st Brigade combat team finished eight months in the security zone under the 91st Division, with more than 1,200 Hezbollah terror infrastructures destroyed, more than 600 weapons recovered, and more than 60 terrorists killed. Its commander, Col. Meir Biderman, was severely wounded by an explosive drone in May.

Beirut spent Friday and Saturday answering the demolition. President Joseph Aoun called the explosions "an extremely dangerous escalation" and "a direct threat" to the framework, and said the timing before the Rome round

“sends negative messages.” Prime Minister Nawaf Salam called them “a blatant violation of the ceasefire.” The UN’s Special Coordinator for Lebanon said the scale of the detonations was having a “devastating impact on civilian infrastructure, cultural heritage, and the collective memory of communities.” Beaufort Castle is UNESCO-listed. [The UN is mourning the collective memory of a hillside Hezbollah spent twenty years drilling out from under. I’d take the heritage complaint more seriously if UNIFIL had ever filed one about the drilling.] The Israeli and Lebanese delegations sit down in Rome on Tuesday, and Israel has told the mediators it is giving up no further ground until Hezbollah disarms.

ASSESSMENT

Hezbollah tested what an unanswered violation buys and got 700 tons under its Bader Unit command post inside 48 hours. That reverses what the Megiddo bombing and the tent on Har Dov taught the group in 2023, when nothing came back and the next rung got cheaper. The political echelon drew its line when it finally signed off, and the line was inside the security zone, nowhere near Beirut’s southern suburbs. What Israel actually spent here was a concession it had already made — the charges were laid and shelved for the framework’s sake, and one drone bought them back off the shelf.

Inside Israel

Givati Jails Fourteen as Zamir Asks for More Battalions

About a hundred soldiers of Givati’s Tzabar Battalion put down their rifles and walked off the Sde Teiman base on Thursday afternoon, chanting an obscenity at their officers. The battalion had just come out of a long deployment in southern Lebanon, and the argument started at a routine equipment inspection. One company refused to let the battalion commander open its container. He insisted, and inside were the boards that go with the veteran-over-junior hazing rituals the army has spent decades trying to end. He smashed several of them with a hammer while the soldiers watched. Senior officers say that was his error — take them away, don’t shatter them in front of the men. He wrote to the soldiers’ parents that what he broke were wooden signs of Satan, the Angel of Death, and “Kingdom of Devils,” with no connection to the battalion’s fallen or to any memorial corner, which is what some of the soldiers had told reporters they were.

Brigade commander Col. Netanel Shamaka closed the disciplinary proceedings on Friday. Fourteen men he named as the leaders got thirty days in military prison and permanent removal from combat duty. The eighty or so who walked out and came back spent Shabbat on base in what the army calls a command and educational process, two more will be sentenced later, and one still hasn’t reported. The battalion commander will be punished and keeps his command. Tzabar goes back to work today and then takes a line in Gaza. Hezbollah’s newspaper in Beirut led with “rebellion in the enemy army,” and Ma’an, Al Jazeera, Egyptian state media, and the Iraqi wires all ran the footage of the rifles left in a heap on the ground.

The same squeeze showed up everywhere else this week. The government extended the emergency reserve call-up orders to the end of September. A Taub Center study published Thursday found that average compensation per reserve day fell about 30 percent in 2024 and that roughly 70,000 students served in the reserves over the past year. Reservists' organizations say the 55-day annual ceiling written into the government's own decision is running past 110 days with five months of the year still to go. Reserve officers holding the northern sector say companies that fielded hundreds at the start of the war now turn out about seventy, and that the army runs them a week on and a week home, so half the roster is absent at any moment. The Manpower Directorate has frozen 2,300 reservists recognized with PTSD, men who had already been re-examined, re-drafted, and fought. [I've spent time in Israeli rehabilitation wards. For a lot of these men getting back to the unit is the recovery, and somebody just froze 2,300 of them without asking.]

On the Gaza envelope the army is canceling the reserve orders of standby-squad members in communities more than four kilometers from the fence and closing the battalions raised after October 7, and the heads of Sderot, Shaar HaNegev, Eshkol, Sdot Negev, and Hof Ashkelon have written to Israel Katz demanding he stop it. Zamir told the Hasmonean Brigade's Jonathan Battalion that the lesson of October 7 is an army that has to grow, with more battalions and more brigades, and that haredi enlistment is vital to Israel's security and has to let a haredi soldier keep his way of life.

ASSESSMENT

A battalion that took the Beaufort Ridge and Bint Jbeil doesn't abandon a base over a piece of plywood. It does that because it has been at this for almost three years and nobody will tell it when it ends. The IDF's own operational-learning branch reportedly put a study in front of senior command in December 2023 finding that units in continuous combat past sixty days come apart on discipline and turn dangerous to themselves, and the paper caused a row and went into a drawer. Zamir can name what the army needs. The men who decide whether it gets there spent this session writing the exemption into a Basic Law.

Haredi Marchers Attack Netzah Yehuda Soldiers as an Arson Indictment Lands

Hundreds of haredi men drove in convoy from Beit Shemesh to Jerusalem on Thursday night and marched to Kikar HaShabbat to fete the sixty-three arrested over the June 3 riot at the Alon Shvut home of Deputy High Court President Noam Sohlberg. The rioters that night smashed the windows of the house and of the family's car, wrecked the entrance, and laid Israeli flags with swastikas on them in the street. Sixty-three were arrested. Four were indicted. The rest walked, and on Thursday they climbed onto a stage in Shabbat dress while the crowd held placards reading "We will never serve in the enemy's army." Three off-duty soldiers who happened through the area were chased and pelted with objects. They serve in Netzah Yehuda. Border Police sent to the scene were called Nazis and had things thrown at them too. No arrests were reported. [If they are well enough to chase soldiers through Jerusalem, they were plainly not in the beit midrash that evening — and a man with the

strength to fight has the strength to serve, if he wanted to contribute rather than wallow in cowardice.]

Saturday brought the fifth consecutive protest Shabbat outside Cafe Basimta on Agripas Street in central Jerusalem, and the biggest turnout yet after organizers called on more communities to send people. Protesters broke the police barriers, climbed the fences and tried to force their way inside while customers and neighbors held the door. Police used batons once the crowd was on the verge of getting in. Avigdor Liberman came and sat there — and told the demonstrators they'd all be in basic training if he ever formed a government. On Friday the Tel Aviv District Prosecution indicted three men from Beitar Illit, Shalom Hershtag, 23, Uriel Ben Abu, 18, and a 16-year-old, over one of three arson attacks on the Bandita cafe in Ramat Gan, and asked to hold them until the end of proceedings. They booked a Tel Aviv hotel, scouted the block, bought gasoline, and set fire to the front of a ground-floor business in a residential building.

ASSESSMENT

Sixty-three men were arrested over the riot at a justice's home and four were charged. The men chased through Jerusalem on Thursday wear the uniform of Netzah Yehuda, the battalion the state built so a haredi man could serve without giving up his way of life. On Agripas Street the same energy has now spent five Saturdays trying to get through a cafe door. [I keep Shabbat. I have never once needed a mob to help me do it.]

Memorial Walk at Tel Puts Israelis Under Fire Again

A week ago Maj. Yuval Ezra ז"ל, 27, a battery commander in Battalion 411, and Sgt. Maj. (res.) Benayahu Malat ז"ל, 32, the deputy security coordinator at Havat Gilad, were shot dead near the village of Tel. On Friday, some Israelis held a memorial walk. Palestinians met them with stone throwing — forcing IDF troops to move in and push the throwers back. One group went into the outskirts of Shechem, where an Israeli fired a warning shot into the air. The army cleared everyone out of the city, was stoned itself on the way, and opened arrest procedures against several of the Israelis and let most of the Palestinians go.

Terrorists stoned a shepherd near Metzad in Gush Etzion on Friday, and when the community's security coordinator arrived one of them ran at him and tried to pull his weapon away — the third attempt in a week to take a rifle off an armed Israeli, after Havat Gilad the previous Friday and a soldier home on leave in the Hebron Hills on Shabbat. Nobody was hurt and no weapon was taken. The men on the standby squads are reading it as a method, and one says he now raises his rifle the moment anyone closes the distance on him. [Which surely can't possibly have an unintended (and bad) consequences.] Two more battalions have gone into the sector since the Havat Gilad shooting. There was, unfortunately, a Jewish reprisal with a mosque burned at Qusra south of Shechem with "revenge for Benayahu" sprayed on the wall.

The enforcement moved fastest where the suspect was a Jew. Judea and Samaria District police arrested an active-duty soldier on leave on Saturday, a

19-year-old from the Binyamin area, on suspicion of shooting and wounding a Palestinian boy at a farm west of al-Mughayyir the night before, seized his weapon, and took him for questioning with the Military Police. On Wednesday the security services arrested an Israeli resident of Judea and Samaria over the masked assault filmed at Huwara in June.

The Shin Bet counts significant attacks dropping after the army emptied the Jenin, Tulkarem, and Nur Shams camps. Israeli police logged 660 “nationalist crime” incidents in the first half of 2026 against 405 in the second half of 2025, in a category that counts a slogan sprayed on a wall equivalent to an arson. Strip it down to verified violence and the caseload runs near 110 incidents a year, against thousands of Palestinian attacks.

ASSESSMENT

The violence in Judea and Samaria is coming at the Jews who live there, and the numbers are not ambiguous about it. The death toll fell because the army went into Jenin, Tulkarem, and Nur Shams and emptied them — not because anybody was talked round, and not because the people organizing the shooting changed their minds. Three attempts in one week to take a rifle off an armed Israeli is the line worth watching: that is a method being trialled, and the standby-squad men who have to answer it are the ones who will be judged for how they do. Qusra, Jit, and Surif are wrong, and they are a police matter, and the state is treating them as one — a weapon seized inside a day, a soldier questioned before Shabbat, an arrest over Huwara. Set that against 660 incidents in a category that files a spray-painted slogan next to an arson, and against the thousands of violent attacks (car ramming, stoning attacks, stabbings, shootings, assaults) on the other side of the ledger, and the proportion tells you which problem is actually generating the tension.

Israel and the World

Turkey Asks for a Place on Israel's Northern Border

Erdogan said Turkey wants a role in whatever replaces UNIFIL, standing beside Lebanese President Joseph Aoun in Ankara on Thursday. [Because that seems likely to work well.] The UN force that has patrolled southern Lebanon since 1978 is being wound up. The Security Council voted unanimously last year to end the mandate, at Israeli and American insistence, and the pullout runs through 2027. Israel's case was that in forty-eight years the force never once stopped Hezbollah from arming. “After the withdrawal of the current international force, Turkey wants to take part in all initiatives that will be launched to support security in the region and ensure Lebanon's sovereignty,” Erdogan said, and offered Turkish money to rebuild a south he blamed Israeli strikes for wrecking. Aoun wants the relationship “more present and more ambitious.” France and Italy have said they would contribute too. Nobody has settled what the successor force is or who commands it.

Saudi Arabia opened an arrangement of its own in Riyadh on Thursday, and Turkey signed that one too. Forty-three of the fifty-one invited governments

came, the EU with them, to launch a Multinational Maritime Defense Alliance covering Bab el-Mandeb, the Red Sea, and the Gulf of Aden. It is Saudi-led, headquartered in Riyadh, and built on shared intelligence and joint operations. Fourteen put their names on the joint statement: Turkey, Pakistan, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Sudan, and Djibouti. What they signed is a political communique. The charter that would bind anyone to anything hasn't been drafted. The UAE and Oman signed nothing, and no American troops are in it.

Riyadh desperately needs this to work. The Houthis declared a maritime blockade of the kingdom this month when their four-year truce collapsed, then hit Saudi tankers, and Saudi aircraft struck Hodeidah in answer. Iran is squeezing traffic through Hormuz — halting ships, turning others back — and the Red Sea port of Yanbu is the door Riyadh cannot afford to lose too. The kingdom's economy shrank 4.8 percent in the second quarter and its oil sector fell almost a quarter year on year, the worst contraction since 2020.

ASSESSMENT

Israel kept Turkey out of the stabilization force in Gaza because Israel holds Gaza. It holds nothing comparable in Lebanon, so the force Jerusalem spent years lobbying to abolish gets replaced by whoever volunteers, and Erdogan volunteered. Riyadh's coalition is thinner than its photograph. Fourteen signatures out of fifty-one invitations, a political communique instead of the charter that would oblige anyone to sail anywhere, and neither the UAE nor Oman — the two Gulf navies with hulls enough to matter — agreed. Ankara signed both, and Washington still hasn't decided whether it gets the F-35s.

Washington Sets Out to Break the Court Holding Netanyahu's Warrant

Marco Rubio told a cabinet meeting at Camp David on Friday that the administration has begun an effort to bring the International Criminal Court “to heel.” The court “made themselves illegitimate,” he said, by claiming it can pursue nationals of states that never joined it. “We tried to get them to reform and listen to us, they wouldn't do it. They're very arrogant.” Trump then cut in to say who the campaign is actually for. The court is not pursuing him: “He's trying to defend Bibi and various other people.” The ICC issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu and then-defense minister Yoav Gallant in November 2024 over the Gaza campaign. Neither the United States nor Israel has ever been a member. Rubio announced a wider effort to dismantle the court several weeks ago.

The International Court of Justice set hearings for September 7 to 10 on Germany's preliminary objections to Nicaragua's claim that Berlin facilitated genocide in Gaza by arming Israel and by suspending its funding to UNRWA. Managua filed in March 2024. The September hearings go to jurisdiction and admissibility, not to whether any of it is true.

ASSESSMENT

What gives a warrant force is not the building in The Hague but the European prosecutors and parliaments that already treat it as settled law. The Dutch criminal ban taking effect on September 22 never mentions the ICC — its stated legal hook is the ICJ's advisory opinion, a different court entirely. And the hearing that matters more than either one is Germany's, where Berlin has to stand up in September and argue that selling weapons to Israel is not complicity in genocide. [Ortega's Nicaragua is the plaintiff, in case you were wondering who is instructing Berlin on the Genocide Convention now.] Protection this personal lasts as long as Trump does, and he goes into the November midterms at 34 percent.

A Spanish Minister Lends His Name to the Ceuta Conspiracy

Oscar Puente, Pedro Sanchez's transport minister, told Spain on Friday that Israel's hand in the Ceuta border surge "all seems to be becoming quite clear." Roughly sixty thousand people crossed from Morocco into Ceuta last week — the Spanish enclave on the Moroccan coast, one of the two land borders the European Union has with Africa. Nineteen died trying. Sanchez called it an attack on Spain's territorial integrity, declared a state of emergency and put soldiers in the city.

Puente was answering Danny Danon. Israel's ambassador to the UN had posted that Spain, "which never misses an opportunity to lecture Israel," might explain to the world why it still keeps colonial enclaves in Africa. Puente quoted him back with a single line, and Dana Erlich, who heads Israel's mission in Madrid, spent the rest of the day undoing it — the ambassador's comment, she wrote, "does not represent the position of the State of Israel."

The theory was already running on both wings by then. Candace Owens re-circulated a seven-year-old post of Yair Netanyahu's about Spanish NGOs and Ceuta as proof of the plan. Alex Jones told his audience Israel had "launched an Islamic invasion of Spain" with Washington behind it. Ana Alcalde, the Sumud flotilla activist Spanish media call Gaza Barbie, was posting within hours of the first crossings that the surge was a scheme to bring down a progressive government. Mohammad Marandi, who sits on Iran's negotiating delegation, reportedly gave the compressed version: Morocco is a tool of Netanyahu and Trump, punishing Spain for supporting Palestine. The New York Times, meanwhile, found Moroccan police at the fence telling people to go.

ASSESSMENT

A sitting European cabinet minister reached for the Jews to explain a border his own government couldn't hold. Of course he did. This is Spain — the country that solved its problems with the Jews in 1492 and has been living off the technique ever since. [Spain's own opposition is blaming Sanchez's immigration policy for the surge. His transport minister went with the Jews instead — and you can work out which of those two answers costs the government anything.] Alex Jones and a Sumud flotilla activist landed on the identical claim inside a day, from opposite ends of two countries' politics, with Iran's own negotiator writing the caption. Danon handed them the peg in the same week nineteen people died at that fence, and Israel spent Friday disowning its own UN ambassador through its mission in Madrid — the only piece of this Jerusalem ever controlled.

*Field Dossier: **Two Middles** — The Dossier's argument is that the extremes converge on Israel while the moderate cores diverge into two audiences one messenger cannot reach — and Alex Jones, Candace Owens, and a Sumud flotilla activist arriving at the same Israel-did-Ceuta claim inside a day, with Iran's own negotiator supplying the caption, is that convergence running live. #### Columbia's Union Trades Away Divestment as the Tel Aviv Center Opens*

Student Workers of Columbia, the United Auto Workers local representing about 3,500 graduate and undergraduate student workers, pulled its divestment demand off the bargaining table on Tuesday. Members had voted the day before to drop it. The proposal would have bound Columbia to divest from and stop contracting with any entity the UN or the International Criminal Court deems in violation of international law — the union's route to a boycott of Israel, endorsed in May 2024 while the encampment was still on the lawn. Grant Miner, the union's president, explained it without much decoration: "You start off a campaign with one thing, and then as you bargain, you have to face the realities of where you are."

Late in the week Columbia confirmed it will begin programming this summer at its Tel Aviv Global Center, the eleventh site in the university's international network and a project it first announced in April 2023. Columbia University Apartheid Divest, the coalition behind the 2024 encampment, had made killing that center one of its principal demands, and Columbia College students voted that year to oppose its opening. The union's separate proposal to block it has not been withdrawn.

ASSESSMENT

BDS's flagship campus campaign turned out to be worth nothing the first time somebody had to trade something real for it, and the union's own president said so on the record. Student Workers of Columbia has now pulled ten proposals and tentatively settled eight articles, and the strike authorization its members passed in March bought the divestment plank nothing. Columbia's investment committee had already refused the demand last year as too vague and not financially viable, and the local kept it in the contract campaign for another year regardless. They kept the proposal aimed at the Tel Aviv center. Columbia is opening it anyway.

Canada Condemns Every Attack on Its Jews and Charges No One

Nöam, a kosher restaurant in Montreal, burned to the ground before dawn on Saturday. The calls came in around 3:15 a.m. about Nöam and the shop next door. Firefighters needed hours. Both buildings are wrecked, someone was seen leaving as the fire started, and the SPVM's arson squad has opened a hate-crime investigation.

Canada's public safety minister said he was extremely concerned. The minister for Canadian identity said he was disgusted. Anthony Housefather, the Jewish Liberal MP for the area, wanted it prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Pierre Poilievre, who leads the opposition, wrote: "Another day. Another attack against Canada's Jewish people." B'nai Brith Canada was careful to say no motive is established. It also said another Jewish business has burned, and that the next thirty days will show whether any of them mean it.

They had a week's worth of material to say it about. Last Tuesday a woman in Montreal's La Fontaine Park told a Jewish father and his children that Jews aren't allowed here. He had asked her to take her dogs off the children's playground. It's on video. Police have the family's complaint and nobody has been arrested. Last night spectators at the Montreal–New England match reported chants of "death to Israel" at Dor Turgeman, Israel's striker, and bottles came down on him after he scored. And on Friday the community finally got the document on the Toronto police podcast. Five officers, two of them the force's Muslim liaisons, committed misconduct by telling listeners that October 7 was inspiring an unbelievable number of conversions to Islam.

ASSESSMENT

Every level of Canadian government now condemns these attacks within hours. Not one charge has come out of last week's gunfire at two branches of a Toronto Jewish bakery, an armored-vehicle plant and the American consulate. Toronto police said in June that hired men were doing the shooting, which is the one thing here a force can actually build a case around. The podcast finding took a year, two Jewish organizations filing under the Community Safety and Policing Act to force it, and officers who wouldn't sit for the interview. There's still no penalty. Meir Weinstein has answered by standing up a "New Jewish Defense Force," and whatever you make of that outfit, 400,000 Canadian Jews running their own intelligence-gathering is a verdict on Canadian policing.

Michigan's Jewish Attorney General Won't Walk Into Her Own Party's Convention

Dana Nessel is Michigan's attorney general, a Jewish Democrat, and eight years into a job that ends in December. On Thursday she said she won't attend her own party's nominating convention next month. "I don't feel safe going." She expects to be chased around, harassed, yelled at, and booed off the stage "irrespective of what I'm saying." She has filed a formal complaint inside the party against an official who called her a neo-Nazi, and asked the roundtable why he is more welcome in it than she is. At the April convention, delegates picked a pro-Hezbollah candidate over the pro-Israel Jewish incumbent for a

University of Michigan regent seat, and booed Representative Haley Stevens while she spoke.

Stevens is on the ballot Tuesday. A new poll has her fifteen points behind Abdul El-Sayed, who calls the war a genocide and wants a total arms embargo down to Iron Dome. At 10:30 on Thursday night she posted that “everyone in America understands you want to blame all of your problems on Jewish Americans.” She had avoided saying that outright for months. El-Sayed had told an interviewer, “When AIPAC watches this, come for me,” and that what people don’t want is “money in a foreign government.” AIPAC has spent some \$30 million against him, reportedly the most it has ever put into one race, inside about \$60 million of advertising for Stevens.

In the House seat Stevens is leaving, Don Ufford has been mailing voters that his opponent Jeremy Moss is “a career politician who has taken thousands from AIPAC-linked donors.” He runs a website called AIPAC Jeremy Moss. Moss is Jewish. AIPAC hasn’t endorsed him. He went through his own donor list and found the parents of his childhood friends. “Those people go to synagogue with me.”

ASSESSMENT

The sort isn’t waiting for Tuesday’s count. Nessel isn’t on the ballot and isn’t running for anything again. She’s the state’s chief law-enforcement officer, and she has decided that a room full of her own party’s delegates isn’t safe for a Jew who says what she thinks. No primary result reverses that, and none was ever going to measure it. Ufford’s mailer is the same finding at precinct level, because AIPAC never endorsed Moss and the flyer isn’t really pointing at AIPAC.

American Law Keeps Advancing on Jew-Hate and Stops Short of the Sentence

Dan Sohail pulled the security barriers away from the accessible entrance at 770 Eastern Parkway on January 28. Then he drove his Honda into the doors of Chabad’s world headquarters five times, reversing between hits, until the doors came off their hinges. About two thousand people were inside for Yud Shevat, the day Chabad marks the sixth Rebbe’s passing and the seventh’s assumption of the leadership. Sohail pleaded guilty in May to a single federal count of damaging religious property. Prosecutors asked for fourteen months. On Wednesday Judge Eric Vitaliano of the Eastern District of New York gave him time served plus seven days, under even the zero-to-six-month guideline. A longer sentence, the judge said, would do nothing to “remove the stain of antisemitism” from New York City.

A federal judge in California threw out the constitutional challenge to AB 715 with prejudice and closed the case. That’s the school-antisemitism law Newsom signed on October 7, 2025, and the teachers who sued to block it were told they hold no First Amendment rights while teaching. The Justice Department gave Montgomery County, Maryland, until noon Friday to promise it wouldn’t enforce a new ordinance, or be sued. The ordinance bars congregants and volunteers from carrying a firearm within a hundred yards of a house of worship. An Orthodox shul in Silver Spring had already sued that

morning. And California's education department took up the case of a Jewish student outside San Jose whose classmate told the teacher, "Don't talk to that Jew. That's why the Holocaust happened. I'm glad it happened." The complaint says the teacher pointed, smiled, and laughed. The district's own report found she kept a discriminatory classroom, and the state says that finding is consistent with law. The remedy on offer was to send the Jewish boy to a different high school for AP statistics.

ASSESSMENT

The statutes keep getting better and the sentences don't, and the sentence is the only part of this that a man thinking about driving at a synagogue ever hears about. Sohail walks out this week. The charge was damaging religious property, nobody brought a hate crime, and the US Attorney's office won't say why, so a guideline written for a broken door did the sentencing. [If you sit on a shul security committee and you were waiting to see what the law would do for you — that was it.]

Briefly Noted

Frontline & Security

- *Times of Israel*: Nine Michigan water systems reported intrusions yesterday, days after more than thirty in Minnesota, with at least five more states reportedly hit and federal investigators putting Iran at the top of the suspect list. No one lost drinking water, and the intruder is the one who decided that.
- *Ynet News*: Mossad and CIA officers are hunting Mojtaba Khamenei — the son the regime installed as supreme leader and no Iranian has seen since February — who has reportedly not touched a phone or a laptop in over 150 days and lives underground, disfigured in the strike that killed his father. Hacked traffic cameras and intercepts fixed his father's convoy, and a man who moves only by courier has to be found by human sources inside Iran instead.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Cypriot authorities arrested Rashad Sultanov, a 44-year-old British-Azerbaijani from north London, on suspicion of running surveillance on Britain's RAF base at Akrotiri and handing what he saw to the IRGC — the first case Britain has brought under its National Security Act for conduct abroad. He watched the base through May and June of last year, and a Shahed-type drone hit it in March.

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- *Jerusalem Post*: UNESCO's World Heritage Committee, sitting in Busan, listed Sebastia in Area C on Friday as endangered Palestinian heritage — the Shomron, where Omri built the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel. Israel's Foreign Ministry called it a surrender to politicization, which is what UNESCO has been since it admitted "Palestine" as a member in 2011.

- *Times of Israel*: The PLO and the Palestinian Authority filed an emergency application at the US Supreme Court on Thursday to halt the \$656 million judgment won by Americans killed and wounded in the Jerusalem bombings of the early 2000s, arguing that paying would “destabilize critical government services” and “jeopardize regional security.” Ramallah is asking American judges to protect a budget it still uses to pay convicted murderers and their families.
- *The JC*: The UK Supreme Court will hear Huda Ammori’s challenge to Palestine Action’s terror proscription between October and December, and it let the appeal through on one narrow ground — that Yvette Cooper misapplied her own policy — while refusing the free-speech and free-association arguments outright. The ban holds until the hearing, and police arrested 77 people outside Westminster Magistrates’ Court for backing the group anyway.
- *JNS*: Rebeca Grynspan led the first, non-binding Security Council straw poll to replace Antonio Guterres with ten of fifteen encourage votes, against nine for Guyana’s Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett and seven for the IAEA’s Rafael Grossi. Costa Rica’s former vice president studied at Hebrew University, her parents got out of Poland, her sister made aliyah, and relatives of hers have served in the IDF — and the UN has never had a Jew or a woman in the job.

Public Diplomacy & Media

- *Times of Israel*: Every one of Maine’s eleven congregational rabbis signed a joint statement on Friday calling the genocide label “Holocaust inversion” and asking the state’s political leaders to drop it, after a Democratic Senate primary in which candidate after candidate picked the word up for the first time. Rabbi Rachel Isaacs of Waterville says plainly what the word buys — “currency for acquiring power and position in Maine’s Democratic party.”
- *The JC*: The Charity Commission has opened a probe into the Cheetham Hill mosque where Jihad al-Shamie worshipped before he murdered Melvin Cravitz and Adrian Daulby at the door of Heaton Park Synagogue, after The Times surfaced three sermons recorded from its pulpit in April 2024, one of them a prayer that God “deal with the Jews and their allies.” They sat on the mosque’s own YouTube page until somebody took them down, and a campaigner is still asking the police to open a criminal file.
- *Arutz Sheva*: Labour has readmitted Diane Abbott, an independent process ending in a formal warning over her remark that Jews face “prejudice” and not racism — a remark she went on the BBC last year to say she did not regret. The Jewish Leadership Council wants to know how that squares with “zero tolerance,” and an outsourced disciplinary process is exactly what lets a party say the answer was never its to give.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Boy George gave up his run as Herod at the London Palladium days after releasing “We Will Dance Again,” a song for the Nova dead carrying the line “If you’re ever confused, I stand with the Jews.” A West End cameo is a small bill for saying so, and it still arrived inside the week.

Domestic & Law

- *Ynet*: Baharav-Miara asked the High Court to freeze the new Mahash law before it takes effect, calling the committee that picks its Coordination Commissioner politicized — the commissioner sits for six years and can move a case between enforcement bodies or stop an investigation. Levin published the tender for the post weeks before the statute creating it starts.
- *Times of Israel*: Prosecutors indicted an ambulance driver from Bi'ina, Amir Hisham Mohammad Titi, 34, in Haifa District Court for selling Iran what his job let him see — hospital emergency readiness, Herzog and Smotrich on a visit to the Galilee Medical Center, and the streets around Gallant's home in Amikam. Iran paid him tens of thousands of shekels in crypto, and he made the first call himself the morning the president walked in.
- *Ynet*: Likud's own tribunal seated an expanded five-judge panel over the Central Committee vote that gave Netanyahu eight reserved slots, after the clause letting sitting ministers contest district seats turned out to have carried by two votes when the protocol had recorded five. Petitions allege forged ballots and observers pushed out of the polling stations, and Likud officials say the result could be voided or run again.
- *Israel Hayom*: Almog Cohen asked the Central Elections Committee to suspend KKL-JNF chairman Eyal Ostrinsky without pay until election day, citing the 1969 elections law that bars a KKL official with administrative authority from campaigning, after Ostrinsky came out publicly for Eisenkot. Ostrinsky refused Likud's demand that he take the post down, saying it sits on the personal Facebook page he has run since 2008 and not on anything KKL pays for.

Economy, Tech & Infrastructure

- *Globes*: Xsight Labs, run out of Kiryat Gat, raised \$300 million at a \$2.8 billion valuation a week after SpaceX flew its X2 switch processors — the company's answer to Nvidia-Mellanox — in the new V3 satellite.
- *Israel Hayom*: Discount and Hapoalim will stop handling the Palestinian banking system's business with the rest of the world within weeks, over money-laundering and terror-finance failures Ramallah undertook to fix and never did. Israel has run the Authority's only route to the global banking system through those two banks for over twenty years, indemnifying them and shielding them from prosecution, and Ramallah spent last week blaming Israel for the collapse.
- *Jerusalem Post*: A senior Israeli official told reporters in Washington that Israel can build its own stealth fighter and unmanned combat aircraft inside ten years, because "if the assessment is that one day others may stop supplying these systems, then we should begin producing them ourselves." Israel canceled the last one, the Lavi, in 1987, under American pressure.
- *JNS*: Navitas Petroleum has agreed to operate Block 1 CBK on a 37.5 percent interest, nearly 20,000 square kilometers of the Orange Basin off South Africa's west coast — an Israeli company running one of the world's

hottest offshore oil frontiers inside the country arguing genocide against Israel at The Hague.

Culture, Religion & Society

- *Algemeiner*: Michael Zavros painted Alex Ryvchin, co-CEO of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, standing in a Sydney bay with tefillin wrapped on his arm, weeks after the attack on the Chabad Chanukah gathering at Bondi Beach, and *Alex with his tefillin in the sea* has taken the Archibald People's Choice on 45,769 votes, a record for the prize. Australians turned out for a picture of a Jew with his tefillin on.
- *JNS*: Shimon Leib and Rivka Herzl were exhumed from the Jewish cemetery at Zemun outside Belgrade and go into the ground on Mount Herzl on Wednesday, in a state ceremony with Herzog and Netanyahu expected. Herzl's will asked that his close family be brought to Jerusalem once there was a state to bring them to, and it has taken until now to reach his grandparents.
- *Times of Israel*: Uganda's military chief, Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, unveiled a statue of Lt. Col. Yonatan Netanyahu ז"ל at the old Entebbe terminal, on the spot where he fell leading the rescue fifty years ago, and read out the names of the four hostages who did not come home. Kampala wanted the monument.
- *JNS*: The Conservative movement's law committee published nine rulings that fold intermarried families into synagogue life and retire the 1989 policy telling congregations not to congratulate a couple or take a donation marking the wedding. Its rabbis still may not officiate at an interfaith wedding — not the paperwork, not a word of it.
- *The JC*: Barnet Synagogue ran the first Orthodox DeafShul service in Britain, with the mechitzah moved side by side so men and women could both sit where they could see the interpreter signing the davening and the leyning in BSL. One man there said it was the first time he had been inside a shul since he was a child.
- *Jewish News*: Ashley Jackson, in London days after making her conversion public, talked about saying Kaddish for her father, Jesse Jackson, who died in February. Her memory of him at a Los Angeles bar mitzvah is of the sweets thrown at the end — he got through seven before she told him that was enough.
- *JTA*: A laundry-room fire took at least 75 percent of AgriStar in Postville, Iowa, one of the largest kosher plants in the country, and put more than 600 people out of work. OU Kosher says a serious share of America's kosher beef and chicken will not reach the shelves before the Yamim Noraim, and it is already warning about the gougers.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Kick It Out logged 93 reports of antisemitism in English football last season against 65 the year before, the highest since the charity started counting. Social media produced 35 of them and grassroots youth football another 23 — which is where a Jewish kid actually meets it.

Developments to Watch

Judea & Samaria

- **Villages organize to meet the walkers** — Palestinians in the villages along the route are organizing to confront Israelis walking in Samaria, and the friction has moved inside Palestinian cities. The organizers say they will keep walking, and the next one goes past villages that spent the week preparing for them.

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Hezbollah answers its own government** — Hezbollah called the Lebanese state complicit for signing the framework and said Beirut should stop denying southerners the right to defend themselves. Aoun answered on Army Day that the army alone holds the legitimacy to be the state's military arm — the argument Beirut has to settle before it reaches Rome on Tuesday.

Gaza & Southern Theater

- **The Yellow Line moved this morning** — Gaza residents report the yellow barriers reached west of Salah al-Din Road for the first time this morning, at the Doula junction in Zeitoun. Point two of the roadmap Hamas signed requires Israel to halt operations without delay, and the line advanced the morning after.
- **The fourteen-day clock still has no starting gun** — Islamic Jihad has now reportedly agreed to the Board of Peace plan, after Hamas signed last week. The fourteen days to draft the implementation timetable begin only once every party approves, and Israel has not signed and says it moves off the Yellow Line only when Hamas is actually disarmed.

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Riyadh prepares a ground war in Yemen** — Yemeni sources say Saudi Arabia is readying a naval and possibly a ground offensive against the Houthis, and Saudi forces have already pulled back from eastern Yemen to re-form. Air strikes have not moved the blockade, and a ground campaign is the instrument Riyadh has left. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**
- **Moscow feeds Iran the targeting picture** — American and European officials say Russia is passing Iran satellite imagery and signals intelligence that helps it track American forces and defend against American aircraft. Every interception estimate Washington is running assumes an Iran that cannot see the fleet.
- **American air defenses leave Iraq as the strikes land** — The Patriot batteries covering the Kurdistan-region bases have already been pulled out, and Washington is nearing a full withdrawal from Iraq. Drones hit Erbil and Sulaymaniyah repeatedly across the weekend, and nothing that used to shoot them down is still there.

- **Baghdad promises measures it will not name** — Iraq's prime minister announced deterrent measures against attacks launched from Iraqi soil and raised the alert at every camp and base, without naming a mechanism. The militias whose own deadline for Baghdad is still running are the ones any measure has to reach.

Diplomatic & Legal

- **Hamas's political head surfaces in Turkey** — Hamas published its own footage of Khalil al-Hayya, its newly elected political-bureau head, meeting Turkey's foreign minister. The Gaza implementation timetable gets written over the next two weeks, and Ankara is housing Hamas's political leadership while it bids for a role policing southern Lebanon.

Home Front & Politics

- **The coalition moves against the roadmap** — Ben Gvir called a halt to targeted killings a reward for Hamas, and coalition partners are pressing Netanyahu to reject the plan outright. American officials say Trump will be very disappointed if Israel obstructs it, so Netanyahu owes Washington an answer his own coalition has already refused.

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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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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