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READER EDITION

August 4, 2026

ISRAEL BRIEF

Tuesday, August 4

The Board of Peace rewrites its withdrawal terms after Netanyahu says no. The deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz waits on the Revolutionary Guards.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE Terrell describes his own instrument as a spotlight, and a spotlight has never charged anybody. New York's numbers describe a charging problem. The department arriving to fix it already holds federal civil-rights charging authority it can use in any of those fifteen cities without asking a mayor for anything, so whether September produces indictments or press availabilities is the whole of it. Septemner, with the high holy days brings more risk — and so, we will see what happens. Mamdani answered July's figure by saying the work of uprooting antisemitism will continue until hate crimes end in the city. I'm sure he'd rather just uproot the Jews.

CLASSIFICATION

Reader Edition

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THE Board of Peace's high representative for Gaza came to Jerusalem to buy fourteen days of quiet and published Israel's sequence instead — decommissioning first, the line after. In the Gulf, Qatar told Trump that Iran had agreed to open Hormuz, and the men who keep it shut have not said so themselves. Neither of those is where Israelis spent the last two days looking: the defense minister said he'd replace the Central Command chief during a talk show appearance. The army refused, and the chief of staff froze every general-officer appointment until the next government takes its seat.

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FLASH BRIEF

- **Gaza:** Netanyahu refuses a fourteen-day halt, and the Board of Peace rewrites its own text to put decommissioning first. *See The War Today.*
- **Iran:** Revolutionary Guards drone an American base in Kuwait, and CENTCOM has now redirected forty-four commercial ships off Hormuz. *See The War Today.*
- **Lebanon:** Israel and Lebanon open a round in Rome, and Hezbollah's leader calls the table a humiliation for Beirut. *See The War Today.*
- **Central Command:** Katz reveals Bluth's replacement on Channel 14 — though the army refuses to comply, and Zamir freezes general-officer appointments until after the elections. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Haredi draft:** The army counts 4,298 haredi enlistments this year, and Netanyahu says his coalition's arrest-exemption law failed. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Hormuz:** Qatar told Trump that Iran had agreed to open the strait, and Oman wants the Revolutionary Guards to say so themselves. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Montreal:** Three antisemitic incidents in thirty-six hours, and Israel's and America's ambassadors both tell Ottawa (again) to protect Canadian Jews. *See Israel and the World.*
- **New York:** Twenty-three of the city's thirty-three confirmed hate crimes last month targeted Jews, and Justice answers with a fifteen-city tour. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Ramallah:** Sotomayor leaves a \$655 million terror judgment standing, and the plaintiffs mean to collect from Israel's clearance transfers. *See Israel and the World.*

The 4,298 haredi men who enlisted this draft year came in under pressure from arrests and sanctions aimed at individuals (which is the enforcement the coalition tried to relieve) — and the prime minister now says the law it passed didn't work. A UNICEF-led survey of Gaza's children came back under one percent on the indicator the famine threshold actually considers (more than a year after that declaration went into court filings and trade statutes nobody is reopening).

The War Today

The Board of Peace Rewrites Its Withdrawal Terms After Netanyahu Says No

Nickolay Mladenov, the American-chaired Board of Peace's high representative for Gaza, sat down with Bibi in Jerusalem yesterday and asked Israel to stop all strikes and targeted killings for fourteen days. The pause was meant to start the disarmament sequence in the roadmap Hamas signed on July 30. Netanyahu rightly said no. Israel doesn't come off the line the IDF holds and doesn't hold its fire, because Hamas rebuilds through every pause it gets.

Hours later the Board published a correction to its own text. Withdrawal beyond the Yellow Line — the line the IDF pulled back to under last year's hostage deal — “will take place only once decommissioning is complete, as Hamas committed to the mediators,” and that covers light weapons, heavy weapons and the tunnels alike. The words “full withdrawal” came out.

After roughly fourteen hours without a strike, a drone hit a vehicle on Al-Rashid Street along the Gaza City seafront last night and killed two men Gazan sources named as Islamic Jihad. Over the weekend the IDF and Shin Bet killed Mahmoud Fatair, a commander in Islamic Jihad's Central Gaza Brigade, in Deir al-Balah. He crossed the fence on October 7 and helped hold Rom Braslavski in captivity, and he wears the Islamic Jihad uniform in the footage of the November 2023 handover ceremonies. Braslavski made a statement in Arabic: you are dying one after another. Two Hamas commanders went down that weekend too, Abdallah Abu al-Tayf in Deir al-Balah and Jalal Tsubeih in Shati. Palestinian officials put Sunday's dead across the Strip at eighteen, among them Nafez Sbeih, described there as a Qassam Brigades commander.

ASSESSMENT

The document moved. Israel didn't. [Point 9 leaves personal weapons as a separate question, and Hamas spent the week handing rifles to operatives as "personal property".] American officials are now asking why Israel would keep killing commanders and give Hamas an excuse to walk away, which idiotically takes for granted that Hamas was walking somewhere.

Iran Strikes a US Base in Kuwait

Iran's Revolutionary Guards put at least three drones into an American military base in Kuwait early this morning. Explosions were heard across the border in Basra. Iranian state media reported a large fire. Within the hour a cargo ship thirty-seven kilometers northeast of Al Khasab, on the Omani tip of the strait, reported being hit by an unidentified projectile. Iran's news agency said the vessel had refused instructions from the Guards' navy and broken the blockade. Israeli monitoring showed an anti-ship missile in that water.

CENTCOM has now redirected forty-four commercial ships, disabled two and boarded two, up from thirty-five on Sunday. Six vessels made the Hormuz transit yesterday (seven the day before).

Tehran says there's no deal to pause for. Its foreign ministry insists no talks with Washington are running and none are scheduled — that the negotiating team never left the country, and that the only conversation open is with Oman.

Mohsen Rezaei, military adviser to Mojtaba Khamenei, said the Guards will never allow a second corridor through the strait and that American ships and men will take casualties while the blockade runs. He also falsely claimed Iran killed hundreds of Americans in July. CENTCOM's own count is four dead in Jordan and Iraq that month, fourteen earlier in the year, and 417 wounded across the war.

That said, Washington is short of answers. A senior officer in CENTCOM's intelligence branch emailed a wide group of analysts last week asking for "new creative and unconventional ways to pressure and punish Iran." Israel pays for the indecision in manpower. Each threatened American strike puts

the IDF back on maximum readiness — the last one pulled targeted call-ups out of air-force units over the weekend before Trump stood it down — and senior defense officials say they can't hold that indefinitely with divisions running in southern Lebanon and Gaza and more than two dozen battalions deployed in Judea and Samaria.

ASSESSMENT

Whatever Muscat signs, the strait stays under Iranian duress. Washington's indecision gets billed to an Israeli force that cannot take Balata because its battalions are somewhere else.

Rome Opens With Hezbollah Calling the Table a Humiliation

Israeli and Lebanese delegations sat down at the American embassy in Rome this morning for the next round on the framework the two governments signed in June. Beirut came wider than last time. The envoy Simon Karam heads the delegation, with the ambassador to Washington Nada Mouawad, the army's operations chief Gen. George Rezkallah, five specialist officers, the president's legal adviser, and a maritime expert. It will ask for a full stop to hostilities and American guarantees which would constrain Israel's freedom of action.

Naim Qassem stated, on TV this morning, that direct talks with Israel bring Lebanon "nothing but shame, humiliation, and successive compromises." The Hezbollah leader further claimed that Lebanese President Joseph Aoun "has not acted as an arbiter, nor as a unifying figure, but has become biased and divisive."

Israel is carrying one demand into that discussion. Hezbollah leaves the Ali al-Taher compound in Nabatieh province, and Jerusalem has told Washington it will let the Lebanese army try to talk them off the ridge first, and that the IDF takes it if the army can't. Dozens of Hezbollah men are still sealed in the tunnel complex underneath. Israel put a fighter jet over the ridge overnight, and Lebanese observers took the tremors under it for bunker-busters. Engineers ran controlled demolitions at Majdal Zoun, Mansouri and Haddatha before dawn.

The damage assessment from the Beaufort demolition reached Katz on Sunday. Northern Command had known for years about the network Iran and Hezbollah dug under that ridge, and only after surveying the whole thing did the officers understand how much of the group's fire plan against Israeli towns and positions ran through it. Fortunately, most of it's gone now. Beirut also had to withdraw a charge over the weekend. The Lebanese army said an Israeli strike near Bint Jbeil had wounded five of its soldiers. The IDF reviewed it and answered that the device was Hezbollah's, that it went off under an army vehicle in Kfara outside the security zone, and that no Israeli troops were anywhere near where it happened.

ASSESSMENT

Lebanon's delegation is in Rome to trade something Beirut doesn't have, and Hezbollah's own leader said so before the motorcades even pulled up to the venue. [Qassem calls a negotiating table humiliating from a country where his own men are sealed in a tunnel under Ali al-Taher. Me? I'd take the table.]

Inside Israel

Zamir Freezes Every Senior Appointment After Katz Attempts to Replace Bluth on Air

Israel Katz named a replacement for his Central Command chief on live television Sunday night. Maj. Gen. Avi Bluth has run Central Command, and with it Judea and Samaria, since July 2024. On Channel 14, Katz said Bluth had gone against his policy by appealing over the administrative restraining order on Tal Yinon Dardik, an Israeli who is suspected in the March raid on Khirbet Humsa. Katz had told him to let the order lapse. Central Command and the Military Advocate General's Corps filed anyway. "They did it against my position. It was the wrong step," Katz said. Then he announced Personnel Directorate chief Maj. Gen. Dado Bar Kalifa as the next Central Command chief and told the studio his control over the military "is absolute." Bluth was sitting in an operational assessment on Palestinian terror when word reached the room.

The IDF answered within an hour that Bluth stays, that Katz hadn't coordinated with Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir, and that Bluth commands "with professionalism, bravery, and dedication." Zamir then told the General Staff forum he will appoint no generals until after the elections.

Netanyahu was reportedly furious, calling the conduct obscene and demanding a clarification. Katz's office denies the conversation happened. By Monday evening Katz was saying Bluth hadn't been dismissed, that there's no disagreement between them, and that the general is "performing his duties well." He also posted a clip of Saddam Hussein reading out the names of disloyal party members at the 1979 Baath purge, captioned as a joke about how these things used to be done, and launched his Likud primary campaign on Monday with a rock anthem and the slogan "finally a right-wing defense minister."

Bar Kalifa hadn't wanted the job. Zamir raised it with him three months ago and he asked for Northern or Southern Command instead. The Yesha Council and the regional council heads of Judea and Samaria spent Monday backing Bluth, who grew up in Neve Tzuf, went through the Eli pre-military academy, and approved dozens of the farms and communities established across the sector on his watch.

ASSESSMENT

Katz was right about who sets policy and threw his argument out the window on a talk show. A regional commander carries out the elected government's policy and does not set it. But the authority to move a major general sits with the chief of staff, and Zamir answered by freezing general-officer appointments until the new government takes its seat. He also went after a record that runs the other way. Twenty Israelis were murdered in Judea and Samaria last year and four since January, across a far bigger footprint of communities and farms, most of them approved on Bluth's signature.

Netanyahu Disowns the Arrest-Freeze Law as Haredi Enlistment Clears the Army's Estimate

The IDF put new figures in front of the attorney general's follow-up forum on Monday. In the draft year running July 2025 to June 2026, 4,298 haredi men enlisted, against 2,811 the year before. That is a 53 percent rise, and it clears by some eight hundred the 3,500 the Manpower Directorate's planning chief estimated to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee in June. It lands close to the 4,800 the coalition wrote into its own conscription framework. Don't be confused though — it's far from enough *and* a good chunk of them aren't what most would consider to be Haredi anyway (those from sects that are willing to serve or those that left the community altogether). About 69 percent of them went into the tracks the army built for haredi men, and 22 percent into combat roles. The same presentation put roughly 72,000 haredi men on the draft-evader rolls and repeated that the army needs another 12,000 soldiers a year, six in ten of them for combat.

Netanyahu told a closed forum this week that the temporary arrest-exemption law his coalition passed last month “did not succeed,” and that there will be no such law in the next government. He said he will pass a full conscription law in the next Knesset, that anyone not actually learning Torah will be drafted or go to prison, and that it can be done without the rabbis' consent. [Though, his claims on this subject are less than credible at this point.] The law passed 58 to 54 some three weeks ago. Netanyahu wasn't in the chamber for it. He skipped the Basic Law: Torah Study vote too. People around him say the polling after the legislative deal came back bad. Goldknopf answered that the arrest law was “another spin that was never meant to solve anything,” [even a broken clock can be right sometimes] and that United Torah Judaism will join only a coalition that regularizes the status of yeshiva students and kollel men.

ASSESSMENT

The number moved because enforcement moved. Arrests, sanctions aimed at individuals instead of institutions, and the service tracks the army built produced 4,298 recruits. The arrest-exemption law produced nothing. And Bibi is willing to admit it. Against 72,000 on the evader rolls and a standing need for 12,000 soldiers a year, the best year the army has ever recorded still covers under a third of a single cohort.

Closed Dossier: *The Math Survives The Vote* — The Dossier's argument is that no election breaks haredi power because the coalition arithmetic survives the vote — which is what a prime minister promising a full conscription law in the next Knesset runs into when Goldknopf has already named the price of joining one.

Israel and the World

The Hormuz Deal Qatar Carried to Trump Waits on the Revolutionary Guards

Trump called off an attack on Iran's energy sites on Saturday night — he says it would have been the biggest since the Second World War — because Qatar told him Iran had agreed to open the strait. Qatari officials had asked him that morning for one more day, and by the evening they had their answer. The compromise they and the Americans wrote sends ships entering the Gulf up the northern lane along Iran's coast, the side Tehran controls, and ships leaving down the southern lane past Oman. Iran's foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, signed on to it, by two diplomats' account.

Oman agreed and asked for one thing first. It wants a guarantee that Iran's Revolutionary Guards, who have kept the strait shut since the war opened on February 28, will honor whatever Muscat signs. Qatar has been trying to get that guarantee ever since. It hasn't come. Mediators said yesterday they're still waiting on the Guards to answer. Tehran has added two demands in the meantime: its oil sanctions lifted, and a promise it won't be hit. Fars, the Guards' own news agency, quoted a member of Iran's negotiating team calling the whole account false. The strait stays shut, it said, to any ship that doesn't coordinate with the Guards.

American officials say a temporary lane needs no Iranian permission and costs nothing to use, and the mediators' own proposal carries no fee at all. Iranian officials say Tehran and Muscat would split a "service fee" on every hull, charged for environmental impact and tanker security. Esmail Baghaei, the foreign ministry spokesman, calls the route temporary and puts Pakistan in the mediator's chair with Qatar merely cooperating. Marco Rubio has been plain about what he's refusing: a precedent where a state declares an international waterway its own and sinks the ships that decline to pay for passage.

ASSESSMENT

The strike came off the table on a foreign minister's yes, and the men who keep the strait shut have not given one. Oman knows it. Muscat won't sign without a guarantee from the Guards, and Qatar hasn't been able to produce one. Tehran gets the cancellation either way, and if the Guards never answer, nothing was conceded to get it. [Rubio has the precedent right, and I'd watch what Ankara does with it. Malacca is somebody's coastline too, and so are the Turkish straits.]

Britain's Trade Ban Stalls on Whether It Would Elect Netanyahu

Andy Burnham's government is being pressed to hold its trade ban until after Israel votes. The measure would bar imports from Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria. Burnham took office two weeks ago after Starmer's resignation, says he is exploring firmer measures, and expects to announce something once Parliament returns next month. He had been persuaded to unveil it in his first weeks back — proof that Labour under him runs harder on Israel's government than Starmer did.

Burnham told Jordan's king last weekend he was weighing further measures over what the Downing Street readout called unacceptable violence in Judea and Samaria. That vocabulary arrives on schedule whenever a European government needs a hook for an instrument already drafted.

ASSESSMENT

The whole argument in London is about when to announce, and nobody in it is arguing about the goods. The trade these bans reach is negligible — Ireland's ran under a million euros across five years. The value has always been the text, written once and copied into the next parliament that wants a position at no cost to itself. [The diplomats have the mechanism right. I'd only add that they have described a foreign-policy instrument whose one measurable effect is on somebody else's election.] Burnham is choosing between announcing before October 27 and announcing after it. Israel gets the statute either way.

Sotomayor Leaves a \$655 Million Terror Judgment Standing Against the PA

Justice Sonia Sotomayor on Monday refused to pause \$655.5 million in damages the Palestinian Authority and the PLO owe American victims of Second Intifada attacks. The attacks hit Jerusalem and its approaches between 2002 and 2004. She denied the application without explanation and did not refer it to the full court, handling it as the justice who takes emergency matters out of New York. The Second Circuit there revived the case in March after years in which it had been dismissed. The suit was brought for the families of thirty-three people killed and hundreds wounded, and the jury award dates to 2015. Last year the Supreme Court upheld the 2019 statute that keeps such claims alive.

The plaintiffs' lawyers intend to collect from the tax revenue Israel gathers on the Authority's behalf and transfers to Ramallah. The Authority told the court that paying would wreck its ability to run security and schools across Judea and Samaria. It is clear they're misleading since they have enough to continue to pay-for-slay anyway.

ASSESSMENT

An American court has put the Palestinian Authority's finances inside the reach of American plaintiffs. The money they mean to reach is money Israel collects and hands over. Ramallah's argument is that it cannot pay this and keep the schools open — from a treasury that has paid convicted murderers and their families a salary by statute for two decades. [I'd like the schools argument read back to the families of the thirty-three. They won this verdict in 2015 and are still trying to collect.] Israel has used the clearance transfers as leverage and released them every time Washington asked. A New York docket has a claim on the same money now.

The UN's Own Nutrition Survey Undoes the Gaza Famine Declaration

A UNICEF-led survey of Gaza's children puts acute malnutrition between 0.2 and 0.8 percent across the Strip's regions. It was run by the Nutrition Cluster, the body that operates Gaza's nutrition surveillance, and it measured weight, height and mid-upper-arm circumference on the same children. Gaza's pre-war rate was 0.8 percent. Egypt runs 2.9 and Jordan 2.0.

The measurement that matters is weight-for-height, the standard the World Health Organization uses to compare acute malnutrition between populations. To declare a Phase 5 famine, the UN-backed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification needs 30 percent of children under five acutely malnourished on that indicator. In August 2025 it had no weight-for-height data for Gaza at all. So it used arm circumference instead, and argued that weight-for-height generally finds about twice as many cases — which let a 15 percent reading stand in for the 30 percent threshold. The new survey ran both measurements side by side. Weight-for-height came in lower than arm circumference in every area measured.

ASSESSMENT

The famine call rested on a borrowed conversion rate, and the UN's survey has now measured that conversion in Gaza and found it inverted. Not so shocking. Take the substitution out and nothing holds up the August 2025 declaration. Of course, nobody is going to reopen the discussion. The word already traveled into court filings, council motions, and national trade statutes already in force.

The Ceuta Blood Libel Reaches a Hundred Million in Three Days

The Combat Antisemitism Movement's research arm went through 173 posts from 119 influencer accounts blaming Israel for the border surge at Ceuta, the Spanish enclave on the Moroccan coast where more than fifty thousand people crossed the fence last week and at least seventy-two died. Those posts drew 57.5 million views and an estimated reach of 103 million inside seventy-two hours, with 1.9 million likes and 368,400 shares. Reposts beat comments by better than seven to one.

Javier Bardem carried it furthest. The Spanish actor, an Oscar winner with 1.5 million Instagram followers, reshared a post reading "We don't know who engineered this crisis, but we know who benefits from a weakened, destabilised Spain: Israel." Mike Huckabee, the American ambassador in Jerusalem, called that "this laughable new blood libel by another dim-witted

actor.” Then Kenneth Roth, who ran Human Rights Watch for nearly thirty years, asked why Israel wouldn’t want its ally Morocco holding Ceuta instead of its critic Spain.

Dan Bilzerian invented a Netanyahu threat that Spain would pay “the ultimate price” and took 2.7 million views on it. Somebody then fabricated a quote from Bardem that went further than anything Bardem had actually posted, and Mia Khalifa pushed the fabrication to another 906,700 views. Morocco’s interior ministry spent Sunday blaming the crossings on social-media rumor and trafficking networks.

ASSESSMENT

Seven reposts for every reply describes a crowd that forwarded and didn’t stop to check, and 119 accounts carried it to a hundred million people in three days. [Roth’s old shop is the one whose own former staff put their names to a sixty-three-page account of how its Gaza output got written. I stopped being surprised by HRW years ago and yet, somehow, I was still surprised.] On a platform that rewards whichever explanation arrives fastest and hits hardest, the Jews are now the fastest available explanation for almost anything.

Israel and Washington Tell Canada to Protect Its Own Jews

Israel’s ambassador in Ottawa, Iddo Moed, said the hate has to be stopped “before it transforms into something lethal.” The American ambassador, Pete Hoekstra, called the fire tragic and told Canadian leaders to bolster protection for the community. Both were answering Montreal, which produced three separate incidents inside about thirty-six hours.

Noam, a kosher restaurant in Cote-des-Neiges that had closed for Shabbat, burned at three in the morning on Saturday. Eighty firefighters, a gutted two-story building, and security video from the garage next door showing a young man crouched on the deck with what looks like a can of accelerant. Police are calling it a possible arson and no arrest has followed. That night, fans at Saputo Stadium threw cans and lighters at Dor Turgeman, the Israeli striker playing for the visiting New England Revolution, and chanted “Death to Israel.” He scored anyway. On Sunday a visibly Jewish man was beaten in Outremont after being screamed at, and there the police did make an arrest.

None of this is new. Israeli and American leaders have been calling on Canada to tackle their Jew-hate problems to no avail. B’nai Brith Canada counted 27 antisemitic incidents in the first six months of this year against 10 in all of 2025. Last weekend a gunman shot up a branch of a Jewish-owned Toronto bagel chain an hour after vandals attacked another. Ottawa dropped the standalone job of national antisemitism envoy in February.

ASSESSMENT

The arson has surveillance video, a face, a can of accelerant and a landlord who pulled the footage himself. It has produced nobody and police are still calling it “possible” arson. Carney told a Jewish congregation in June that Canada’s civic compact is failing Jewish Canadians, which was true. Of course, his government had already dropped the antisemitism envoy four months earlier and has done nothing to stem the tide — indeed it can be credibly argued that they make it worse. [Noam burned on Shabbat, when a kosher restaurant is the one building on your street you can count on being empty. I’d be curious what Montreal’s police think that timing says about motive.]

Washington Answers New York’s Hate-Crime Count With a Fifteen-City Tour

Of course the hate isn’t limited to Canada. Mamdani has made sure of it. Jews were the targets in 23 of the 33 hate crimes the NYPD confirmed in New York City last month. That is 70 percent, in a city where Jews are about a tenth of the population. July of last year produced 15. Across 2026 the department has confirmed 360 hate crimes, 205 of them against Jews. That nearly one a day. Last month’s cases include a man stabbed with a screwdriver on the Upper West Side, a 64-year-old shoved to the pavement in Brooklyn by someone shouting slurs, and bags of motor oil and feces thrown at two Queens synagogues. Oh, and a stabbing. [Definitely a safe, healthy environment.]

The Justice Department is sending people. Leo Terrell, who chairs its anti-semitism task force, says an interagency team of FBI agents, Labor officials and department lawyers will visit 15 cities from early September. He won’t name them. But he pointed at New York and Los Angeles, said local district attorneys and mayors are not prosecuting hate crimes, and accused teachers’ unions in Los Angeles, Boston and Philadelphia of moving anti-Jewish material through K-12 classrooms. The two goals are telling Jewish communities what rights they have and publicizing what local governments haven’t done.

ASSESSMENT

Terrell describes his own instrument as a spotlight, and a spotlight has never charged anybody. New York’s numbers describe a charging problem. The department arriving to fix it already holds federal civil-rights charging authority it can use in any of those fifteen cities without asking a mayor for anything, so whether September produces indictments or press availabilities is the whole of it. September, with the high holy days brings more risk — and so, we will see what happens. Mamdani answered July’s figure by saying the work of uprooting antisemitism will continue until hate crimes end in the city. I’m sure he’d rather just uproot the Jews.

Briefly Noted**Frontline & Security**

- *Jerusalem Post*: The Shin Bet released Jibril Zubeidi, in administrative detention since 2023, when his order expired — his brother Zakaria, who commanded the Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades in Jenin, was recently elected to represent released prisoners on Fatah’s Revolutionary Council.

- *Arutz Sheva*: Reservists in the Paratroopers' 699th Battalion bought Lebanese eSIMs against orders during the fighting in Lebanon and ran company-level operational WhatsApp traffic over them without telling anyone.
- *Ynet News*: Israeli sailors took over INS Drakon at Kiel on July 22 with no press and no ceremony, the sixth and last of the Dolphin-class boats Germany built to give Israel a strike it can fire from under water after everything above it is gone.
- *Israel Hayom*: Ahmed al-Sharaa's Syria told Baghdad that any attack launched from Iraqi soil "will not pass without a response," Jordan said it would strike the pro-Iranian militias itself if they move on the kingdom, and Riyadh and Kuwait passed the same message. Baghdad's own deadline for those militias to surrender their weapons runs to September 30.

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- *Ynet*: Gulf officials say Abu Dhabi was pushing Trump toward the bigger strike he ended up calling off — go broad, weigh a ground operation — while Mohammed bin Salman warned him that hitting Iran's energy plants would bring Iranian fire down on Saudi and Emirati oil and gas. Riyadh won. The Emirates had been reported all weekend as one of the capitals asking for calm, which is worth holding onto the next time Washington counts the Gulf as one voice.
- *JNS*: Chile and Honduras have ambassadors in Israel again for the first time since October 7, presenting credentials to Herzog on Monday alongside envoys from Germany, Sri Lanka, Georgia and Nigeria, with Chile's Gabriel Zaliasnik making good on what President Kast promised Herzog in May. Latin America's returns are tracking who won the last election.
- *Times of Israel*: Lebanon arrested Ashraf Dabbour, the Palestinian Authority's ambassador in Beirut from 2012 to 2025, and is preparing to hand him to Ramallah on the embezzlement charges the Authority brought against him. Dabbour's answer is that Mahmoud Abbas's son runs the security services as a personal collection agency. Both can be corrupt. And are.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Morocco has named its 1,055-kilometer Tiznit-Dakhla expressway the Donald J. Trump Highway, for the recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara that Washington traded in 2020 for Rabat's normalization with Israel.

Public Diplomacy & Media

- *Jerusalem Post*: Norman Finkelstein told Hasan Piker's stream there is "not one single frame" of Hamas sexual violence on October 7 — no CCTV, no dashcam, no GoPro — and that therefore "it never happened," conveniently ignoring the 10,000 photographs and clips Cochav Elkayam-Levy's commission holds. To be clear, two years of investigation found rape, sexual torture, genital mutilation and forced nudity used as a systematic part of the attack and against hostages in captivity. Documented directly by Hamas.

- *JNS*: Israel's Diaspora Affairs Ministry published a study tracking some twenty US anti-Israel groups — AMP, the Palestinian Youth Movement, CAIR, SJP, Jewish Voice for Peace and Within Our Lifetime among them — that raised more than \$250 million over five years, and Amichai Chikli wrote to congressional committees and the Justice Department asking them to act.
- *Jerusalem Post*: B'Tselem's June report counted 54 Palestinian minors killed by Israeli forces in Judea and Samaria during 2025 and called roughly 60 percent of them uninvolved or undetermined. A case-by-case counter-investigation by the Israel Advocacy Movement — working off the terror groups' own martyr posters, Telegram traffic and IDF footage — puts about 78 percent in active hostilities, with a fifth claimed by Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas or the PFLP.
- *Jewish Insider*: Melat Kiros, the DSA-backed Colorado congressional nominee, told PBS that progressives are leaving a vacuum on Israel for Tucker Carlson and Candace Owens to fill with hatred of Jews dressed up as concern for Palestinians — and within a day said she had “fumbled this line.”

Am Yisrael

- *Jewish Insider*: Jewish and other nonprofits asked FEMA for more than \$1.3 billion in security money last year against the \$266 million there was to give. Not enough to fund security. At a time when the threat is as bad as any in the recent decades and the high holy days are coming. What could possibly go wrong?
- *Jewish News UK*: The Charity Commission is assessing three sermons from the Cheetham Hill mosque where the Heaton Park attacker and the man jailed for plotting alongside him both worshipped, one of them an imam praying that God “deal with the Jews and their allies.” The regulator has been careful to say it has not opened an inquiry.
- *Jerusalem Post*: A British court convicted Johannes Natland (just 18 at the time of the attempted murder) last week of conspiracy to murder for the Foxtrot Network, the Iran-linked Swedish crime group Britain and Washington both sanctioned last year over attacks on Jews and Israelis in Europe, after police found him in a Huddersfield hotel room with two guns and 25,000 euros waiting on the job.
- *Algemeiner*: New South Wales' appeal court restored the video of two Sydney nurses telling an Israeli man they would kill Israeli patients, overturning a district judge who had excluded it under a state privacy law, and the trial runs later this month. The case nearly turned on where a Chatroulette call legally happens — the nurses' microphone sat in Bankstown hospital, the man recording them was in Israel.

Domestic & Law

- *Israel Hayom*: Sharren Haskel told Lahav 433 that her own faction chairman, Michel Buskila, ordered New Hope's members to film themselves casting the secret ballot for State Comptroller and to show the footage to Netanyahu.

- *Ynet*: The state told the High Court that Netanyahu will appoint a permanent interior minister during the election period, ending a vacancy that has run since Moshe Arbel resigned in July 2025 and left about ninety of the ministry's powers parceled out to the prime minister. The Central Elections Committee expects to need some of them — the voter registry and soldiers' voting sit in there — before October 27. Maybe they'll clear some of the backlog.
- *Times of Israel*: Mansour Abbas has promised to cut Ra'am loose from the Islamic Movement's Shura Council and build secular party institutions in its place, with primaries at the 22 August convention — the price of putting Yoav Segalovitz, a former police assistant commissioner, on an Islamist party's slate.
- *JNS*: The Jerusalem District Court froze the plan to ring the Nukhba wing at Ketziot with Nile crocodiles, after Environment Minister Idit Silman reclassified the animal so the prison service could hold them — by then the trench was being dug and NIS 21 million had been earmarked.

Economy, Tech & Infrastructure

- *Globes*: Visa is buying the Israeli fraud-detection company BioCatch for \$2.4 billion in cash, one of the biggest deals Israeli tech has ever done — and nearly double the \$1.3 billion the company was worth when Permira took control of it fifteen months ago.
- *Ynet News*: Reserve pay accounts for about NIS 100 billion of the roughly NIS 280 billion the war has cost since October 7, more than a third of the whole bill, on the Defense Ministry's own numbers. The 2026 defense budget came in at NIS 143 billion against NIS 68.5 billion before the war, and the establishment had asked for 177.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Northrop Grumman won a \$1.84 billion Pentagon framework contract running to 2035 to supply and sustain Litening targeting pods — the Rafael system Israel built forty years ago because Washington would not sell the Israeli Air Force the American equivalent.
- *JNS*: American Airlines pushed its Tel Aviv return back again, to March 28, 2027, leaving it the only one of the big three US carriers that has not flown to Israel since October 7. United and Delta are both back in September, and until then El Al and Arkia are the entire New York nonstop market, which is what the summer and high holy days fares reflect.

Culture, Religion & Society

- *Ynet*: The state told the High Court that what happens to Kfar Aza's Dor Tzair neighborhood is for the kibbutz members to decide, backing their vote to demolish it and move some of the structures to a memorial compound outside the community, against a petition from bereaved families who want it left standing where it is. Forcing the kibbutz to preserve it, the state wrote, could cost the returning residents their trust in state institutions.
- *Ynet News*: IDF Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Effie Defrin admitted to the army's podcast that he has carried PTSD since he was badly wounded at Wadi

Saluki in 2006, and that a slamming door still puts him back inside the tank. His advice to the men coming out of almost three years of war was to go get help.

- *JNS*: The Israel Guys, the evangelical group that has been sending volunteer farmers into Judea and Samaria for a quarter century, opened a beautiful visitor center at Har Bracha on the ridge of Mount Gerizim last week [Modi and I were there for the opening.] It was built by some seventy American volunteers on land the regional council gave them.
- *Times of Israel*: Seventh-century grape seeds dug out of Avdat turned out to be ancestors of two varieties still growing wild in the Gaza envelope, once part of the same Negev wine country, and the Nature and Parks Authority has taken cuttings and put the vines back on Avdat's Byzantine terraces. You can drink the result.

Developments to Watch

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Grads come across from Syria** — The Lebanese army seized Grad rockets smuggled in from Syria near Arsal and arrested two men from the network. Rome is arguing over the south, and this shipment came in on the Syrian border.

Gaza & Southern Theater

- **Israel's own militias say no** — A figure in one of the Israeli-backed militias in Gaza says he does not believe Hamas will disarm, and that taking his men's rifles would stop Gazans working with Israel. The roadmap disarms every armed group in the Strip, and the men who took Israel's side hear that as being handed back to Hamas.
- **Tehran answers for Hamas** — Pezeshkian phoned Khalil al-Hayya to pledge Iran's continued support, by Hamas's account, and the Revolutionary Guards marked Haniyeh's anniversary by declaring the disarmament plan already defeated. Hamas hands over nothing its patron tells it to keep.

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Iran announces a Kurdish campaign** — Tehran announced that its army's 23rd Airborne Brigade ran fourteen ground operations in Sulaymaniyah and Erbil over two months, killing Kurdish opposition fighters and taking others prisoner. Iran is fighting inside Iraq and saying so, because nothing in Iraq is positioned to stop it.
- **Saudi tankers go around Africa** — Six Saudi-flagged supertankers turned around in the Gulf of Aden this week and are running in formation for southern Africa. The Houthis threatened Saudi shipping, and Riyadh answered by sending its empty hulls the long way home.

- **Iranian fingerprints on American water** — American officials suspect Tehran is behind a cyberattack on desalination plants across the United States. Iran ran the same play on Israel's drinking water and on Gulf plants, and an attribution would put an attack on American civilians in front of a president who called off a strike on Saturday.
- **The leader nobody can produce. Still.** — Pezeshkian has reportedly met Mojtaba Khamenei once since taking office, in the back of a car with faces covered, and people around him doubt the man was Khamenei. Araghchi can initial whatever Muscat hands him, and nobody in Tehran can produce the man whose name it is all supposed to be under.

Diplomatic & Legal

- **Michigan votes on Israel** — Michigan Democrats pick a Senate nominee today in a primary that has turned on Gaza, and Abdul El-Sayed leads the polling. An open Senate seat carries further than a House seat, and tonight the party finds out where it stands.

Home Front & Politics

- **Smotrich wants the vote taken again** — Smotrich and Strock wrote to Netanyahu demanding a fresh cabinet vote on the Board of Peace roadmap, arguing ministers approved it on a presentation that hid the weapons staying in Gaza. Board officials answer that the Prime Minister's Office had every document weeks ago, so the fight is over what Netanyahu knew.

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