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READER EDITION

August 12, 2026

ISRAEL BRIEF

Wednesday, August 12

Israeli fire crosses the Yellow Line for the first time under the new approval rules, and Likud's own court freezes a Netanyahu slot.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE Britain has already priced its answer and the price is guards — 250 million pounds over three years for police around Jewish schools and synagogues, and not a pound of it reaching whoever is teaching the children arriving at those gates. Bell's recommendations are teacher training and a standard reporting form, which is the instrument the government already reached for when it funded a training scholarship against antisemitism last year. The count he is working from is CST's, because the community built the thing that counts and the state did not. A head who loses nine-tenths of a week to security is not short a form.

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ISRAEL cut the water to the tunnels under Ali Taher, and the resupply drones Hezbollah flies in overnight are coming down. Dozens of men are sealed in there. No Lebanese unit is coming for them. Three weeks into the first handover, the Lebanese army has photographed caches in the villages and left Hezbollah's own infrastructure alone. (*See The War Today.*)

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FLASH BRIEF

- **Gaza:** The 99th Division fires at a sniper near the Yellow Line, the first strike published since the rules changed. *See The War Today.*
- **Hormuz:** Tehran makes ending the wars in Gaza and Lebanon the price of reopening the strait. *See The War Today.*
- **Likud:** The party's own tribunal stops one of Netanyahu's three reserved slots with the secretariat mid-vote. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Levin:** A recording has the justice minister counting ten High Court appointments inside the next Knesset's term. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Qusra:** Bluth takes the tent outside Qusra down himself, and a magistrate frees Dardik without conditions. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Venezuela:** Caracas restores consular relations seventeen years after Chavez cut them, and Washington cleared it first. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Primaries:** AIPAC's lane loses Minnesota and Connecticut in one night, and its endorsement is now the attack. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Hasan Piker:** Britain pulls the streamer's visa and Sanders vouches for him, and neither move reaches the stream. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Influence:** An Iranian operation writes the incitement against Netanyahu, and his own supporters do the distributing. *See Israel and the World.*
- **New York:** Mamdani's office picks the ten rabbis who get the hour, a week after he sat with Satmar. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Jewish schools:** A government reviewer finds Britain's Jewish head teachers losing whole weeks to security. *See Israel and the World.*

Rezaei's price for reopening the strait is an end to the wars in Gaza and Lebanon, and the party that would have to deliver it sits in Washington. Rome has now agreed how somebody would certify a disarmament nobody in Beirut intends to carry out.

The War Today

Israel Cuts the Water to Hezbollah's Ali Taher Complex

Dozens of Hezbollah men are reportedly sealed inside the underground complex known as Amad 4, on the Ali Taher ridge above Nabatieh in south Lebanon. Israeli forces have cut its water lines and are downing the drones Hezbollah sends in overnight with supplies. Across parts of the ridge the IDF holds ground by observation and fire.

Three weeks into the first pilot handover — begun on 20 July at Zawtar al-Gharbiya and its neighbors, under the June Israel-Lebanon-US framework, which ties Israel's pullback to Hezbollah's verified disarmament — Israeli officials say the Lebanese army is "not doing enough." [color me shocked] It has gone into the area and turned up weapons and ammunition caches. It has not gone at Hezbollah's own infrastructure. Until it does, no further zone opens.

The seventh round of talks in Rome ended a day early last week as the fighting in the south escalated. The delegations still came out of it with common

maps, operating parameters and, for the first time, agreed definitions of what a cleared area is and how somebody verifies it. Round eight is set for Rome in early September, with a shortlist of outside states floated to do the verifying, Switzerland among them. Aoun told a Maronite delegation yesterday that the talks are progressing and that diplomacy beats going back to war. Lebanon, he said, will not let Israel remain “on even a single inch of our land.”

ASSESSMENT

Aoun can promise that not one Israeli soldier remains, and the Lebanese army can walk into a village and photograph a cache, and neither act reaches the tunnels under Ali Taher. Israel has said from the start that the zones expand on performance, and three weeks of performance has bought one more round of talks — and handed Beirut the line it takes to Washington, that Jerusalem is stalling until its October election.

IDF Opens Fire Beyond the Yellow Line Under the New Approval Rules

Troops of the 99th Division spotted a Hamas sniper close to the Yellow Line in northern Gaza yesterday afternoon, fired to remove the threat and identified a hit. It is the first strike the army has published since the political echelon rewrote how it operates in Gaza last week. Immediate threats can still be engaged on the spot. Anything else — a targeted killing of a man who isn’t about to shoot at anyone — now needs the signature of the chief of staff, Eyal Zamir, and the political echelon above him. Until yesterday no Israeli fire had crossed the line at all.

In Washington the Board of Peace has stopped naming the Yellow Line it means. Under the ceasefire that has held in Gaza since last October — Trump’s 20-point plan, adopted as Security Council Resolution 2803 — Israel pulled back to a line that left it holding 53 percent of the Strip. Hamas accepted the Board’s separate 15-point roadmap of 30 July, and Israel never signed it. That roadmap sequences a further Israeli pullback against a Hamas disarmament. Asked to name the withdrawal it wants, the Board declines, and rules on the ambiguity case by case. Qatar’s foreign ministry spokesman, Majed al-Ansari, accused Israel of “foot-dragging” and credited Hamas with the breakthrough.

ASSESSMENT

What has actually moved sits on the Israeli side. Until last week a regional commander could authorize a strike on a Hamas military-wing operative. Now the army waits for a man to raise a rifle at it first, and yesterday was the first time that happened.

Tehran Ties Hormuz to Ending the Wars in Gaza and Lebanon

Mohsen Rezaei, named secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council on Sunday, said yesterday that the Strait of Hormuz stays shut until Washington changes its behavior. He spelled out the terms: end the war “throughout the region, including in Lebanon and Gaza,” release Iran’s frozen money, and accept the rest of Tehran’s conditions. A transit agreement between Iran and Oman, he added, would be a separate matter from the closure. Qatar’s foreign ministry called the Oman track advanced, and Pakistan’s defense

minister, Khawaja Asif, said the two sides are “close to some sort of an arrangement.”

Eight vessels were tracked through Hormuz yesterday, a one-week low against a ten-day average of about twelve and the 130 to 140 a day that ran before Iran closed the water on 28 February. The seven that entered all took the Iranian route. An American navy helicopter put missiles into the Panamanian-flagged container ship Vela Nova in the Gulf of Oman after its crew ignored repeated warnings and kept running for an Iranian port. The crew came off onto another vessel. Nobody was hurt.

One Israeli security official told a closed forum this week that the situation “could deteriorate within a matter of days. Within weeks or within months.” Israeli officials read the deal Washington brokered to get the nuclear material out of Syria’s Site 99 as a signal that it wants Iran’s enriched uranium out the same way, by agreement. And it was Israeli intelligence that told Washington the Iranians were preparing to bring down Air Force One with shoulder-fired missiles at Ankara last month. The Secret Service walked Trump out of sight of the reporters into a catering truck and flew him home on a military C-32A. Rubio and the press corps rode the decoy.

ASSESSMENT

Rezaei’s asking for something no American president can hand over and still call it a win. So the strait stays shut, and Trump’s stated alternative is to “bop along” and let the Iranian economy finish the job — the cheapest thing on his desk, and it runs past the November midterms. The head of Iran’s joint chamber of commerce with China admits the blockade is costing Iran \$18 billion a year in trucking and says Tehran should break it “even through war.”

Inside Israel

Likud’s Own Court Freezes a Netanyahu Slot Mid-Vote

The Likud secretariat was voting Tuesday when the party’s own tribunal stopped one of the three reserved places in front of it. Gideon Sa’ar’s went through, under the agreement that folded his party back into Likud. Israel Katz’s went through on reasons Netanyahu filed with the tribunal. Haim Katz’s did not go through. He chairs the Likud Central Committee, the body that voted Netanyahu his reserved slots in the first place, and a petition says that puts him in a conflict of interest. The tribunal did not rule on it. It held the claim deserves a hearing. It also held that a man who has already registered for Monday’s primary and started campaigning shouldn’t be pulled out of the race on a slot the court might have to cancel later.

Before the vote was halted, 66 of the 73 secretariat members present had backed the package. Two voted against the whole thing. Four voted against Haim Katz alone. That leaves Netanyahu picking ten of the first twenty-nine names with a party court sitting on the eleventh, against roughly ten realistic places for the 140,000 members who vote on Monday. Afif Abed has gone to

the High Court over the separate ruling that keeps sitting MKs and ministers out of the four district slots.

Channel 12 reported Tuesday night what a good part of Likud has known since 2023. Nir Barkat and Yuli Edelstein tried to replace Netanyahu by constructive no-confidence in the weeks after October 7, the mechanism that seats a new prime minister without dissolving the Knesset. A significant number of the faction was with them. They could not agree on who would take the job, some of them offering to vote Netanyahu out only if they were the replacement, and Edelstein eventually proposed himself as caretaker. Netanyahu found out and took it apart, reportedly with promotions, conversations and a posting abroad.

ASSESSMENT

Netanyahu is building this list against his own members, and Barkat's file is why he thinks he has to. A reserved slot takes a name out of their hands before they can vote on it, and eleven of them takes most of what Monday was going to decide. The one body that stopped him is his own party's court, on a conflict-of-interest claim about the chairman of the committee that handed him the power in the first place. [Haim Katz is reportedly the man who walked into Netanyahu's office at the end of November 2023 and told him the putsch was coming. His is the one name the court pulled.] A party checked its own leader on Tuesday, and nobody had to petition a state court to make it happen.

Levin Counts Ten High Court Seats Inside the Next Government's Term

Kan published a recording Wednesday morning of Justice Minister Yariv Levin talking to Likud activists about who gets onto the High Court. Levin says a justice phoned him around a year and a half ago to tell him that Aviad Bakshi and Rafi Bitton are “not up to our standard,” and that if he insisted, the court would wait for the next justice minister, when everything would be a great deal easier. “I told him, and I tell the judges all the time, that I believe we will win,” Levin says on the tape. “We will wait for the next term, when two thirds of the justices leave, and you will have no choice.” And then: “In the next term you don’t need a reform. They will simply become extinct.”

The arithmetic under it is real. Eleven justices sit on a bench of fifteen. Four seats have gone unfilled while the Judicial Selection Committee stays deadlocked, with neither Levin nor the judges’ representatives able to carry a majority alone. Six more justices retire during the Knesset Israel elects on 27 October. That is ten appointments for whoever holds the Justice Ministry, and Levin said he intends to ask for it again. Bakshi runs the legal department at the Kohelet Policy Forum. Bitton helped draft the reform.

ASSESSMENT

The four seats Levin cannot fill today are the case for the ten he expects to fill later, and the justice on the phone made that case better than Levin has ever made it. A court that tells a sitting minister his candidates are beneath its standard, and then offers to wait him out until a minister it prefers arrives, has described the selection problem in a single phone call. Levin handed it back with “they will simply become extinct,” a promise about people, and that is the sentence his opponents will read into every appointment he makes for the next four years. He has the better argument and a word that costs him it.

Closed Dossier: *The Unfinished State* — The Dossier's argument is that with no written constitution the composition of the bench is itself the constitutional settlement, which is what a justice minister counting ten appointments inside one Knesset term and a justice phoning him to say his candidates are beneath the court's standard are actually fighting over. ##### Bluth Clears the Qusra Tent as a Court Frees Dardik Without Conditions

Border Police took the tent down outside Qusra on Wednesday morning, with Central Command chief Maj. Gen. Avi Bluth on the ground while they did it. Word of the operation got out before the force arrived, so dozens of Israelis were there first, pulling fences apart and blocking the approach roads with boulders. Army Radio reported no arrests by midday. The tent was one of several thrown out from the Tel Talpiot outpost. It had stood in the yards of Palestinian homes since Sunday. The army declared Qusra and Jalud a closed military zone on Tuesday.

The Jerusalem Magistrate's Court freed Tal Yinon Dardik on Tuesday with no conditions attached, after thirty-eight days in custody. Judge Amir Shaked said the state cannot braid a criminal case and an administrative order together the way it had done here. Dardik was held for breaching an order that sent him to sit out house arrest at his mother-in-law's home in Adei Ad. She had never agreed to take him. A military appeals committee found the order could not be performed, and the district court upheld that on Sunday. Dardik is now barred from Judea and Samaria except Modi'in Illit, where he reports to the police twice a day. Prosecutors never assembled a chargeable file on the March incident at Khirbet Humsa. Israel opened 967 police investigations in 2025 and filed 61 indictments off them, and this was one of the files that would not close.

Israel Katz spent Tuesday at the Kirya with the heads of the Shavim Habayta forum, telling them the defense establishment will keep expanding the farms in Judea and Samaria and put up more settlement points. He called the farms a first-rate security asset and a central pillar of Israeli security thinking after October 7. The forum wants a good deal more than farms. Its Hundred Points plan would put Israeli communities into the open ground of Areas A and B and undo the Oslo division that drew them. Families move back into Ganim tomorrow, twenty-one years after the Disengagement carried their neighbours out.

ASSESSMENT

The magistrate's ruling is the enforcement story of the day, and it runs against the state. Katz is fighting his Central Command chief over which instrument gets used, and the Central Command chief is the one who was out at Qusra at seven in the morning. Ganim gets its families back tomorrow, and neither of them has to win that argument first.

Israel and the World

Venezuela Reopens to Israel Seventeen Years After Chavez Cut It Off

Israel and Venezuela renewed consular relations yesterday, seventeen years after Hugo Chavez severed them in 2009, days after Israel opened Operation Cast Lead in Gaza. Gideon Sa'ar and Venezuelan foreign minister Felix Plasencia agreed a coordination mechanism that lets each country service its own citizens living in the other. The joint statement, issued in both capitals, names Venezuela's Jewish community as the historic bridge the two governments are crossing back over.

The opening came through a disaster. Twin earthquakes of 7.2 and 7.5 hit Venezuela on 24 June and killed more than six thousand people, and Israel put ZAKA volunteers and IDF Home Front Command teams into the rubble. Delcy Rodriguez was installed as president in January, after American forces took Nicolas Maduro out of the country, and she has turned Caracas toward Washington since. Israeli officials say the Americans were in on this one and cleared it. Eli Cohen has been talking to Venezuelan ministers about energy, trade and technology, with an Israeli professional delegation to follow. Venezuela sits on roughly 303 billion barrels of proven oil reserves and can't get them out of the ground.

Sa'ar calls the run "a real diplomatic revolution," and says he told his ministry two years ago that 2026 would be Latin America's year. Colombia's Abelardo de la Espriella has restored full relations, sent ambassadors back, scrapped visas, returned to the free-trade agreement, said he will move his embassy to Jerusalem, and recognized Israeli sovereignty on the Golan. Chile's Jose Antonio Kast has told Herzog he is sending his ambassador back — from the country with the largest Palestinian community outside the Middle East, more than 350,000 people.

ASSESSMENT

Jerusalem is buying signatures ahead of a fight it can see coming. Israel's foreign ministry reads the legitimacy Washington is handing Ahmed al-Sharaa as the front end of an international push to put the Golan back on the table as Syrian land. Sa'ar wants names on the board before that opens. [A 7.4 earthquake had just killed more than two hundred Colombians, and de la Espriella put the Golan statement out anyway.] Damascus, Riyadh, Qatar, Kuwait, Iraq and Ankara all condemned Bogota inside a day, which is the volume a precedent draws. Caracas is the more durable asset — a consular channel backed by a government Washington effectively seated.

AIPAC's Lane Loses Minnesota and Connecticut in One Primary Night

Minnesota Democrats picked Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan over four-term Representative Angie Craig for the Senate nomination yesterday, 60 to 40. Flanagan accuses Israel of genocide, says she would have voted to cut off American military aid, and spent the race calling Craig "AIPAC's candidate." Craig was among the House Democrats who voted down Thomas Massie's amendment to halt \$3.3 billion in military aid to Israel. She spent the campaign explaining that vote.

Former Hartford mayor Luke Bronin took 53.6 percent in Connecticut against Representative John Larson's 33.3, ending Larson's bid for a fifteenth term. Larson had the whole Connecticut congressional delegation behind him, and AIPAC raised about \$130,000 for his campaign. Bronin backs Iron Dome and opposes offensive weapons for Israel. The pro-Israel candidate for the House seat Craig is vacating lost too, to Matt Little.

Abdul El-Sayed took Michigan's Senate nomination off Haley Stevens last week running against her AIPAC endorsement. All but seven Senate Democrats voted in April to block offensive weapons sales to Israel.

ASSESSMENT

AIPAC's endorsement has become the attack, and yesterday it beat two incumbents in two states. Larson had fourteen terms behind him and the whole Connecticut delegation, and he finished on thirty-three percent in a district the Cook Political Report rates safe Democratic. [Sanders put the number at twenty million dollars of outside money spent to stop Flanagan in Minnesota. She won by twenty points. Whatever that money is buying, it isn't primaries.] Craig's defense of the Massie vote was that halting the aid would endanger Israelis and American troops in the region. It did not save her. Bronin's district is safe and Flanagan is expected to win in November, so yesterday was the election in both.

Sanders Vouches for the Streamer Britain Barred

Hasan Piker, the Twitch streamer who broadcasts eight hours a day, seven days a week, to 3.1 million followers, posted in January that Hamas is "a thousand times better" than Israel, and stood behind the line on a Democratic podcast in April. He says he has no problem with Hezbollah and that its flag is his favorite. He has cast doubt on the testimony of October 7's sexual violence, claiming Israel contaminated the evidence and that it doesn't change the dynamic anyway. In April he toured Michigan campuses with Abdul El-Sayed, who won the state's Democratic Senate nomination last week on a promise to end American military aid to Israel. Hundreds queued outside the Ann Arbor venue in the cold.

The University of Washington pulled him from its 2026-27 speaker series on Friday, saying the school that booked him had not followed the university's own process and that his positions on Israel had nothing to do with it. Britain cancelled his visa 48 hours before a trip that included a speech at Oxford, and he read the notice on stream to thirty thousand people: his presence was "not considered conducive to the public good." And Bernie Sanders told CNN last week that if James Carville does not want to be in a party with Piker and El-Sayed, he can start his own.

ASSESSMENT

Sanders settled the acceptability question on television last week, and what the party argues about now is who leaves over him. Don't read Michigan as the stream's win, though — El-Sayed ran more than five hundred events across a hundred and ten towns with twelve thousand volunteers, and Haley Stevens still took nearly half the vote against him. The eight hours a day buy standing, and standing is what gets a man with no office and no voters a say in who the party's friends are. [Ezra Klein spent a column in April arguing that Piker is an anti-Zionist and no Jew-hater. The man says his favorite flag is Hezbollah's, and I'd like to know what Klein thinks that label is buying anybody.]

A revoked visa and a pulled booking both work on the room he was going to stand in. Those are the instruments the community has relationships for. Neither one reaches the stream.

Tehran Writes the Incitement and Lets Israelis Spread It

An account posting under the Israeli-sounding name Daniel Omer put up an image of Netanyahu and his wife Sara ringed by soldiers, over a caption saying their end will be the same as the Ceausescus' — the Romanian dictator and his wife, shot in 1989. Netanyahu's supporters circulated it widely as evidence of the incitement running against him. FakeReporter, an Israeli group that tracks fictitious social-media accounts, traced the account to an Iranian influence operation.

Israel votes for the 26th Knesset on October 27, its first election held on schedule since 1988. Iranian networks are behind most of the campaigns now aimed at Israeli voters, the group says, with some coming out of Russia. They work every side of the map — haredi conscription, the October 7 inquiry, Israelis in Judea and Samaria, Arab citizens. Close to a fifth of the campaigns FakeReporter has identified got material into Israeli media, where it was reported as real. The State Comptroller wrote in June that Israel is completely unprepared for any of it, with no national policy and no agency assigned to the problem.

ASSESSMENT

The operation doesn't need anybody to believe it. It needs an Israeli to forward it, and the prime minister's own supporters did the distributing inside a day — which is what Roy Shushan at FakeReporter means when he says these networks pull out reactions that would not otherwise have been expressed and then amplify them.

Israel's own auditor found the gap and named it in June. Nobody has been assigned to close it, the detection work sits with a small Israeli NGO, and the vote is seventy-six days out.

Mamdani's Antisemitism Office Picks the Ten Rabbis Who Get the Hour

Ten rabbis from Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist and Modern Orthodox congregations sat with New York's mayor, Zohran Mamdani, for an hour at City Hall on Monday, in a closed roundtable convened by his Office to Combat Antisemitism and staffed by its executive director, Phylisa Wisdom. They went in to tell him that the way he talks about Israel is putting Jewish

New Yorkers at risk — AIPAC as “monsters,” Netanyahu as a “war criminal” and “the architect of a horrific genocide against the Palestinian people.” Rick Jacobs, who runs the Union for Reform Judaism, put it to him as “this is not going well.” NYPD’s own count has anti-Jewish hate crimes up 8.5 percent across the mayor’s first seven months and running at 57 percent of every hate crime confirmed in the city. Reported anti-Jewish offenses this July were up 53 percent on July last year.

The New York Board of Rabbis, which has historically represented the city’s rabbinate, had nobody in the room, and its president, Ammiel Hirsch, was not asked. Last week the mayor met the leadership of Brooklyn’s anti-Zionist Satmar community instead. On Sunday, in the annual Yiddish address marking forty-seven years since the death of Satmar’s founder, one of the movement’s two grand rebbes, Zalman Leib Teitelbaum, told his followers that to denounce the mayor and brand him an antisemite “constitutes a true provocation against the nations,” and that an observant Jew must accept the decree of exile. Dov Hikind, the former state assemblyman, said he did not believe for a second the rebbe said it lishma, and that it endangers Jewish New Yorkers.

City Hall is due to publish a new antisemitism strategy before Rosh Hashanah. It comes from a mayor who spent his first day in office revoking the city’s adoption of the IHRA working definition, which institutions adopt to name what counts as antisemitic inside their own procedures.

ASSESSMENT

He built the room and picked the ten people in it. A week before that he had sat with the one Hasidic court in Brooklyn whose theology could produce a rabbinic ruling for him, and on Sunday it did. [Seek the peace of the city, sure. I don’t remember Jeremiah saying seek the peace of the mayor.] What these rabbis want is for him to stop doing the thing his politics is built out of. So they got an hour. The ask that would cost him nothing is one sentence the next time he goes after Israel — that Jewish New Yorkers are not the Israeli government — and nobody who was in that room came out saying he had agreed to say it. Netanyahu is due in New York for the General Assembly next month, and Mamdani has already encouraged people to protest him.

Britain’s Schools Reviewer Finds Jewish Heads Losing Their Weeks to Security

David Bell, a former chief inspector of schools in England and permanent secretary at the Department for Education, published the first findings yesterday of the independent review the education secretary commissioned him to run in March, and the sharpest of them came from the head teachers themselves. One said there had been weeks when 90 percent of his time went on security, and that it followed him home and kept him awake. Bell called the scale of physical protection around Britain’s Jewish schools exceptional and said education has been pushed into second place in some of them. He used the word crisis. Of roughly 5,000 Jewish young people surveyed, at least one in five reported witnessing or experiencing antisemitism at school or

college, and Bell said some of the abuse pupils described to him in London came from adults.

He has not yet said what is driving the rise inside the education system specifically. That, and the recommendations — stronger teacher training and a standard way of reporting incidents — come with the full report in the autumn. The Community Security Trust, which counts antisemitic incidents in Britain and runs the community's own security, logged 178 school-related incidents in the first half of this year against 112 in the first half of 2025, inside a national half-year total of 1,926.

ASSESSMENT

Britain has already priced its answer and the price is guards — 250 million pounds over three years for police around Jewish schools and synagogues, and not a pound of it reaching whoever is teaching the children arriving at those gates. Bell's recommendations are teacher training and a standard reporting form, which is the instrument the government already reached for when it funded a training scholarship against antisemitism last year. The count he is working from is CST's, because the community built the thing that counts and the state did not. A head who loses nine-tenths of a week to security is not short a form.

Briefly Noted

Frontline & Security

- *Times of Israel*: Six died off al-Mokha yesterday when the Tanzania-flagged Tihamah was hit in the Bab el-Mandeb — four of the crew, three Pakistanis and an Indonesian, and two Yemeni rescuers killed when the party that came for them was struck as well. Yemeni officials put it on the Houthis, who have not claimed it, and these would be the first deaths on a ship since the Iran war opened at the end of February.
- *Jerusalem Post*: The Samaria Brigade, Yahalom and the Border Police brought down the Tell home of the terrorist who killed Maj. Yuval Ezra ז"ל and Capt. (res.) Benayahu Mellet ז"ל near Gilad Farm on July 24 — eighteen days from the attack to the demolition.
- *Israel Hayom*: Air defenses put an interceptor up overnight at a target over south Lebanon, and it turned out to be fire from the IDF's own troops inside the security zone. Nobody was hurt, and the army is investigating.
- *Walla*: A civilian drone crossed into Ben-Gurion's airspace yesterday morning and froze takeoffs and landings for several minutes, the second in under a week, and the operator turned out to be filming a promotional video for a construction company. Nobody brought it down — it was in and out of the airport's airspace before anyone could.

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- *Jerusalem Post*: Lebanon's parliament voted yesterday to abolish the death penalty, the first country in the region to do it, and the only bloc that voted

against was Hezbollah's. The bill still has to clear the cabinet and President Aoun before it is law.

- *JNS*: Sa'ar welcomed Britain's proscription of the IRGC on his first call with its new foreign secretary and asked London to go after Al-Qard Al-Hassan, Hezbollah's bank. Ed Miliband's readout led on a "sharp escalation of settler violence" and on telling Israel to end its "blockages on aid into Gaza."
- *Times of Israel*: A Damascus court sentenced Bashar al-Assad and his brother Maher to death in absentia yesterday for war crimes and crimes against humanity, the first verdicts against the family since its five decades in power ended in December 2024. Both brothers sit in Russia on political asylum, and Damascus has asked Moscow to hand them over.

Public Diplomacy & Media

- *Ynet News*: Three British private schools running campuses in Qatar — Sherborne, King's College Taunton and Royal Grammar School Guildford — teach a Qatari state-approved curriculum whose Nazi Germany chapters leave the Holocaust out and point pupils at Mein Kampf, and a teacher told the Sunday Telegraph that staff are not allowed to mention Jews at all. Campaign Against Antisemitism wants all three out of the country.
- *JNS*: A union inside RAI, Italy's state broadcaster, signed a Palestine Action Italia petition naming three of the network's own journalists — press-office head Incoronata Boccia, Jerusalem correspondent Giovan Battista Brunori and presenter Antonino Monteleone — as "propagandists of the occupation," and Italian Jewish leaders compared it to the Fascist era's blacklists.
- *Algemeiner*: Rep. Ro Khanna could not hold his "genocide" charge together under questioning from Coleman Hughes, reaching for 19,000 dead children on the Hamas health authorities' count and a UN finding the UN has never issued.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Nearly half of Britons — 47 percent — want fewer Israeli immigrants or none at all, up eight points on 2016. Israel ranks fourth on YouGov's list, behind Russia, Pakistan and Nigeria.

Am Yisrael

- *CJN*: Ontario is setting up the first hate-crimes prosecution unit in Canada — Crown counsel who do nothing else — and it cleared the legislature without a vote against it. Jews absorbed 68 percent of the country's religion-motivated hate crimes in 2024, at under one percent of the population.
- *JNS*: Thirteen of the 66 hate crimes Seattle logged in the first seven months of this year targeted Jews, about one percent of the metro area, against five targeting Arabs and Muslims. Jews were 9.1 percent of the city's count over the three years to January.
- *Forward*: Jay Clayton, then the US Attorney in Manhattan, wrote to Devorah Halberstam last month that there is no question her son's murder would be investigated and prosecuted as a federal hate crime if it happened today. Rashid Baz opened fire on a van of Chabad yeshiva students crossing the Brooklyn Bridge in 1994 and killed sixteen-year-old Ari — his

mother spent the next six years getting it classified as terrorism, and no one ever worked it as a civil-rights case.

Domestic & Law

- *Ynet*: One suspected draft evader has been arrested in about three weeks, and it happened because he came in to Lahav 433 on a fraud summons with a desertion flag on his file. Haredi protesters plan to shut roads around Bnei Brak this afternoon over it.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Gilad Erdan's party with Yuli Edelstein got its name last night in Beit Shemesh: the Unity Party, running on "Real right. Real enlistment." Erdan is campaigning against the coalition on conscription in the weeks it writes the yeshiva exemption into a Basic Law.
- *Walla*: Nitzan Shmueli, the Rambam intensive-care physician who received the four wounded soldiers, wrote that Arab and Jewish nurses on her ward kept them alive minute by minute. The hospital's own review found nothing behind the post that said its Arab staff had mistreated them.
- *Ynet*: Metula reopens HaNadiv School next month with classes of eight to ten children — small on purpose, to bring families home to a border town Hezbollah emptied for three years.

Economy, Tech & Infrastructure

- *Jerusalem Post*: Ondas — a Nasdaq-listed American company that has spent the past year buying up small Israeli defense firms — beat Elbit Systems and Rafael for the Defense Ministry's tender to build the IDF's next generation of tactical attack drones, a week after it made former Mossad chief David Barnea president of its defense division. The same ministry blocked its bid for mPrest, which builds Iron Dome's command-and-control, and has spent months looking into the \$1 billion Ondas raised from an investor it won't name.
- *Globes*: Bank Leumi turned in a second-quarter profit of NIS 2.83 billion, the largest quarter any Israeli bank has ever posted, and it did that while paying its share of the NIS 3 billion surtax the state levied on the five big banks this year.
- *Times of Israel*: Israel's tech headcount barely moved in the first half of the year, but the Israel Innovation Authority's survey of 210 companies found software firms shedding 6.6 percent of their workforces against 1.1 percent at hardware and chip companies. A laid-off software engineer does not walk into a semiconductor job, which is how the sector holds 18,000 open positions and 15,000 job seekers at the same time.
- *Times of Israel*: Iran's oil ministry says it will restore 95 million cubic meters a day of gas production by the end of September, rebuilding four processing plants at Assaluyeh that the Iran war knocked out in February. Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad says the work is running ahead of schedule, and that some of the capacity still won't be there for the winter.

Culture, Religion & Society

- *Ynet*: Every site the National Center for the Development of Holy Places runs — Rachel's Tomb, Rashbi at Meron, the tombs of Samuel the Prophet and King David — shuts to visitors at the start of September unless the money turns up first, after Justice Stein's interim order froze the NIS 33 million that keeps them open. The Religious Services Ministry's director-general put that in a letter this week, and it lands a week and a half before Rosh Hashanah, in the nights those sites fill for Selichot.
- *Walla*: Ron Huldai pulled the cover off new signage at the Tel Aviv Museum plaza on Tuesday, and the name the country has used since October 2023 — Hostages Square — is now the city's own. He dated the chapter it marks from that morning to the return of the last hostage, Ran Gvili ז"ל, on 26 January.
- *Ynet*: The IDF located the grave of Shlomo Haimson ז"ל in Haifa this morning — a ma'apil shot by guards at Britain's Karaolos camp in Cyprus on the night of 29 September 1948, going through the fence with eight others to get home to the daughter he had just been told was born. His body came over in 1970 with 163 others and went under a blank stone, one of about 120 nobody could put a name to.

Developments to Watch

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Turkish air defenses over Syria** — Syria flew its first fighter exercise since Assad fell, near the Turkish border and shadowed by a Turkish helicopter, and Israeli officials say they have taken Turkey's build-up to Washington. Turkish air-defense batteries in Syria would sit under the route the air force flies toward Iran.
- **The Hermon crossings** — Three Bashan Pioneers activists crossed from Mount Hermon into Syria overnight, and the reservists who climbed after them ended up calling the police to come and collect them. Nothing has happened to a crosser yet that would stop the next one.

Gaza & Southern Theater

- **Israel rules out the monitors** — A senior Israeli official answered Nickolay Mladenov's roadmap pitch with a flat no — Qatar and Turkey will not oversee Israeli conduct in the Strip. Both brokered Hamas's acceptance of the roadmap, and neither will be monitoring anything Israel does.

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Iran fires into Iraqi Kurdistan** — Kurdish outlets report Iranian missiles and drones hitting three districts of Erbil province this morning, and Reuters cited security sources blaming Tehran for a rocket attack on a Kurdish opposition camp there yesterday. Tehran is shooting into a

neighbor in the week its mediators tell Washington a deal is close. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

- **Qaani tells the factions to wait** — Esmail Qaani flew into Baghdad ahead of the government's deadline for disarming the militias, and is reported to have told the Iran-aligned factions to refuse any handover for now. Baghdad's deadline is the first real test of whether a state can take weapons off an Iranian proxy by administrative order.

Diplomatic & Legal

- **Abbas flies to Ankara** — Mahmoud Abbas landed in Ankara yesterday for two days with Erdogan, and Smotrich has asked Netanyahu to refuse him re-entry to Israel and to Judea and Samaria. The demand needs an answer by the time the plane does.

Home Front & Politics

- **The Qatargate charging decision** — Baharav-Miara is reported to be preparing to charge Jonatan Urich, Eli Feldstein and a former senior Mossad official with contact with a foreign agent. Gofman was Netanyahu's military secretary before he got the Mossad, so the assessment the charge rests on has to be signed by somebody else.
- **Yosef tells students not to vote Shas** — Yitzhak Yosef, who sits on Shas's own rabbinical council, is reported to have told students to vote elsewhere and to bring the right down. He denies it, and the exemption law the coalition still has not passed is costing it the rabbis it was written for.

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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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