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READER EDITION

August 20, 2026

ISRAEL BRIEF

Thursday, August 20

Israel called Damascus before it bombed the airbase, and somebody finally audited the database behind the “genocide” charge.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE Argentina treated a judge’s Jew-hate as a question of whether he was fit to sit, and got him off the bench about eighteen months after the first complaint. The instrument it used is the one American school boards are being talked out of adopting and Zohran Mamdani revoked in New York on his first day. The definition was never the obstacle. Milei’s refusal to take the resignation is the part that travels: a resignation would have left nothing for the next complainant to cite, and a removal leaves a ruling.

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IN THIS EDITION

Israel Brief: Thursday, August 20	3
Flash Brief	3
The War Today	3
Mossad Called Damascus Four Days Before Israel Bombed the Base . .	4
Washington Runs Ten Million Barrels a Day Through the Strait Iran Closed	4
Inside Israel	6
Israel's Military Prosecutors Open Criminal Files in Two of Five Gaza Cases	6
Netanyahu and Smotrich Open the Budget for 25 Billion Shekels of Munitions	7
Israel and the World	8
Washington Funds a Gaza Force Nobody Has Agreed to Deploy	8
Israel Reads Trump's Syria Envoy as Erdogan's Advocate and Hosts Athens	9
The Database Behind the "Genocide" Charge Counts Checkpoint Delays as Attacks	10
Australia's Antisemitism Commission Is Offered a Model That Protects Antizionism	11
Argentina Removes a Federal Judge for Jew-Hate and Refuses His Resignation	12
Briefly Noted	12
Developments to Watch	14

Israel Brief: Thursday, August 20

Israel called Damascus before it bombed the airbase, and somebody finally audited the database behind the “genocide” charge.

NOBODY in this war gets surprised any more. Israel asks first and then strikes, Washington posts the threat before it does anything. Underneath that, a slower argument is running about who has to show their work. Israel is documenting its own conduct in public, the institutions that grade that conduct have never had to document theirs, and this week somebody finally went and looked.

FLASH BRIEF

- **Syria:** Mossad’s chief calls Damascus four days before Israel bombs the Abu al-Duhur airbase. *See The War Today.*
- **Hormuz:** Washington escorts ten million barrels a day through the closed strait, and Trump threatens Iran’s remaining money lines. *See The War Today.*
- **Gaza:** Israel strikes a police headquarters, and Hamas claims the dead as part of their own officer corps. *See The War Today.*
- **Accountability:** Military prosecutors open criminal files in two of five Gaza cases, and Canberra summons Israel’s ambassador. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Defense budget:** Netanyahu and Smotrich break the spending ceiling for some 25 billion shekels of munitions. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Gaza force:** Washington puts \$206 million into a stabilization force nobody has agreed to deploy. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Ankara:** Israeli officials read Trump’s Syria envoy as Erdogan’s advocate, and Zamir hosts Greece’s chief of defense. *See Israel and the World.*
- **WHO:** Two academics find the database behind the “genocide” charge logs checkpoint delays as attacks. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Australia:** A royal commission on antisemitism hears a hate-speech model that protects hostility to Zionism. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Argentina:** Milei’s government strips a federal judge for Jew-hate and refuses to let him resign. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Births:** Israel counts 137,343 Jewish births in a year, the highest figure in a table going back to 1996. *See Briefly Noted.*

What separates the institutions in today’s brief is which of them can survive being read closely. Israel’s military prosecutors published a count and reversed a denial the army had held for a year, and Human Rights Watch called it a whitewash inside the hour. The WHO’s database has never been open to a challenge from anybody, which is why it travels — and two academics have now put its methodology somewhere a prosecutor has to look at it.

The War Today

Mossad Called Damascus Four Days Before Israel Bombed the Base

Roman Gofman, who runs the Mossad, telephoned Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani on 14 August. Turkey's military footprint took up most of the call — the arms going to the Syrian army, the drone deliveries, the growing presence. Four days later Israeli jets hit the runways and storage sheds at the Abu al-Duhur airbase in eastern Idlib, overnight Monday into Tuesday. It was one of the highest-level contacts between Jerusalem and Damascus since Assad fell in 2024.

Netanyahu said in a video yesterday that Israel had learned Turkey meant to establish itself south of its line, close to Aleppo, and had sent Ankara a one-word message: don't. "The message was delivered, but apparently they didn't hear it. So we made sure they understood." Defense Minister Israel Katz tagged Erdogan directly this morning. He is dragging Turkey into dangerous adventures in Syria, Katz wrote, and would be better off delivering empty, fantastical speeches against Israel in the Turkish parliament than testing Israel's determination to defend itself.

Al-Shaibani claimed that the visiting Turkish officers were only there to offer "training and an exchange of expertise", the same sort of program Syria runs with Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Qatar and Russia. The field was largely empty when the bombs landed. This morning he added that Damascus still wants an agreement to bring the escalation down and has not closed the door. Trump said he had been briefed on the strikes and would not say whether before or after. Gen. Dan Caine, who chairs the US Joint Chiefs, phoned the Turkish chief of staff.

Eyal Zamir spent yesterday morning in the Israeli-held zone in southern Syria with the head of Northern Command and the 210th Division, took an operational briefing and sat with the reservists holding the ground. Israel has built a forward defensive area there that works as a buffer in front of the border communities, the chief of staff said, and it will not allow hostile forces to establish themselves on the border.

ASSESSMENT

Israel put its question to Damascus on the highest line it has, heard the answer, and struck the base four days later. The Prime Minister's Office says Syria was on the verge of breaking a security understanding. What is not in dispute is what the field was being prepared for: radar and air defense at Abu al-Duhur close the corridor the air force flies over Syria and on the route to western Iran. [Ankara says the whole thing is campaign material, and Erdogan has been up on Netanyahu's election billboards for weeks. Fine. I still haven't heard anyone explain why a radar installed in August stops mattering in November.]

Washington Runs Ten Million Barrels a Day Through the Strait Iran Closed

Israel and Iran have been at war since the end of February, when Tehran shut the Strait of Hormuz and kept it shut. For two months now the US Navy has been running its own shipping lane through the southern channel of the strait, along the Omani coast: fifteen to twenty tankers a night, close to ten million barrels of oil a day, roughly half the volume that moved before the

closure. The escorts run both ways, loaded tankers out and empties back in to load at Gulf ports. “We have been controlling the southern lane of the Strait of Hormuz for two months now,” an American official with direct knowledge of the operation said. “The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps can be a nuisance, but they don’t control the strait. We do.” Israel is not flying this stretch of the war. Its part is the intelligence picture and a force held at readiness with CENTCOM to go back in on short notice.

Trump called it an economic D-Day, “the most crushing economic operation ever taken against any country.” Any country that lets its banks, businesses, airports or government bodies hand Iran a lifeline faces consequences of its own. “Oil smuggling, swap lines, cash transfers, exchange houses, ship registries, front companies — it all needs to stop NOW. You know who you are.” Speaking to reporters yesterday he said the strait is open, boats are coming through, and oil is at \$84 or \$85 against the \$350 a barrel people had been forecasting. Hormuz, he added, “is not going to be quite as important as it was in the past.”

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi called the announcement a distraction from America’s own debt and interest costs and said doubling down would bring another defeat. IRGC spokesman Hossein Mohebbi said the warheads on Iranian missiles are far more destructive than the ones used in previous rounds, and that Iran’s weapons would be different in every respect if another war breaks out. Ali Abdollahi, chief of staff of the armed forces, turned on the Gulf: that many military aircraft, refuelers especially, cannot sit on regional bases without the host government knowing, and any facilitation of the American military counts as taking part in it. That came a day after the Emirates cut every trade, commercial and financial tie with Iran.

Iraq is caught underneath all of it. Parliament speaker Haibat al-Halbousi used Iranian speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf’s arrival in Baghdad to ask Tehran for special treatment for Iraqi crude through the strait, while Iraq’s own government has given Iran’s militias until 30 September to hand their weapons to the state. Gulf producers are buying hulls instead of waiting: the largest class of oil tanker now costs more than \$130 million, the highest since 2008.

ASSESSMENT

Iran’s single strategic instrument was the ability to shut Hormuz. It still holds the water and collects nothing on it, while half the pre-war volume sails past under American escort on a route Tehran cannot charge for and the oil price sits where Washington wants it. So the D-Day post is a lagging indicator. What last night actually added was the secondary threat to third countries still moving Iranian money, and Trump pointedly declined to name one of them.

Closed Dossier: *Axis in the Shadows* — The Dossier maps the sanctions-resistant network Iran built with Russia and China — ghost-fleet shipping, barter and crypto payment rails, front registries and flag-of-convenience hulls — which is the machinery Trump’s secondary threat is aimed at, and the reason a post naming oil smuggling, swap lines, exchange houses and ship registries named no country holding any of them. ##### Israel Strikes a Police Headquarters and Hamas Names Its Own Commanders

The IDF killed a Hamas military-wing platoon commander in Nuseirat yesterday afternoon, in the central Strip, one of the men who came through the fence into Israel on October 7. Less than half an hour later the IDF and the Shin Bet struck a gathering at the municipal police headquarters in the Daraj-Tuffah quarter of Gaza City. At least four operatives from Hamas’s military wing were in the room, the army said, along with one from the Popular Resistance Committees. They were working out of a civilian police building to plan attacks on troops inside the Strip. Gaza’s police department put the dead at nine and the wounded at fifteen.

Hamas identified them itself. A movement leaflet conceded that most of the nine were its own police officers and commanders. The names that came out of Gaza City were Ayman Jandia, head of the city’s police district and less than a week into the post, his operations chief Osama al-Hajin, Ibrahim Tamraz, released in the last prisoner exchange, and Faten al-Sahhar, who ran the women’s police department.

Gaza Division combat engineers spent yesterday sealing two Hamas tunnel routes east of the Yellow Line, more than two kilometers of them, packed with concrete instead of blown. Hamas is meanwhile trying to rebuild the naval invasion unit it used on October 7. It has moved more of its smuggling onto the water since the Yellow Line shifted west, against a full naval blockade and patrol boats around the clock.

ASSESSMENT

Hamas’s police force is the formation it never has to give up. The 15-point roadmap moves the heavy weapons to a committee and leaves the men in their jobs. So Hamas is fighting this one over the word “civilian.” [A district police commander a week into the job, his operations chief, and four Qassam men in one room in Daraj-Tuffah. Which of them made up the traffic division exactly? Ah, that’s not what “police” do there is it.] The unit that came ashore on October 7 is being put back together at sea while the leadership tells mediators it accepts the plan.

Inside Israel

Israel’s Military Prosecutors Open Criminal Files in Two of Five Gaza Cases

The Military Advocate General’s Corps published its first public accounting of wartime misconduct since October 7. Its fact-finding mechanism has now reviewed about 150 exceptional incidents in Gaza and passed them to the Military Prosecution. In June the count was around a hundred. Five cases were

decided this week: two go to criminal investigation, two ended in disciplinary measures, and one was closed.

The first criminal file is Gaza City, January 2024. Troops fired on the Hamada family car as it came toward their position, against the evacuation direction the army had announced. A shell was fired later at the Red Crescent ambulance sent to reach the two girls who survived. Nine people died there, five-year-old Hind Rajab and both paramedics among them. The army said in February 2025 that none of its forces had been in the area. It now says they were, and military police will investigate how the ambulance's movement was cleared. The second file is Tel al-Sultan in Rafah, March 2025. A force set on an ambush line fired in three separate encounters with vehicles approaching it and killed fifteen. The fact-finding mechanism identified six of the dead as Hamas. Prosecutors ordered the investigation anyway.

The World Central Kitchen strike of April 2024 stays closed. Seven aid workers died in it. WCK had hired armed guards and hadn't told the IDF, and surveillance officers read the armed men as Hamas taking the convoy over. The vehicles then left the route agreed in advance while the army spent half an hour trying to raise somebody at the charity. Serious failures, the Chief Military Prosecutor found, and no reasonable suspicion of a crime. Two officers had already lost their posts, and the reprimands ran up to the head of Southern Command. Itay Offir, the Military Advocate General, took himself off that decision. He had worked closely with one of the commanders under suspicion.

Australia summoned Hillel Newman, Israel's ambassador in Canberra, over that one. Foreign Minister Penny Wong said she was outraged, and that the decision falls far short of the accountability Australia expects. The Greens want Newman expelled. He told reporters afterwards that there were operational failures, no criminal intent and no criminal responsibility, and that findings shouldn't be attacked just because they don't suit somebody's politics.

ASSESSMENT

Watch what happened to the release, not what was in it. Two criminal files opened, a year-old denial reversed in public, reprimands running up to the head of Southern Command — and Human Rights Watch had “whitewash” out within the hour. Canberra summoned the ambassador over the one case that closed. There is no finding either of them would have accepted, because the finding they want is a verdict they wrote first. An army that investigates itself in the middle of a war is doing the thing they say it never does, and it buys nothing.

Netanyahu and Smotrich Open the Budget for 25 Billion Shekels of Munitions

Netanyahu and Bezalel Smotrich agreed yesterday to break the spending ceiling and put tens of billions of shekels into weapons and ammunition. The figure gets fixed on Monday. A special cabinet meeting two days later approves it. A senior government official puts the increase near 25 billion shekels. That would take this year's defense budget from a record 158 billion to about 184 —

roughly a hundred billion more than Israel had budgeted for defense when the Gaza war started. Officials briefing on the deal put the immediate transfer lower, at 20 billion. Moving money inside the ninety days before an election needs the attorney general's approval and three readings in the Knesset. The Finance Committee and plenum votes need the coalition and the opposition to agree to schedule them. The government's legal advisers have dropped their objection. The Budgets Division has not.

The army's case for why this can't wait is three years on a war budget. That money pays for what it is doing today and builds nothing for tomorrow. The munitions plants need raw material now to fill their orders by the end of the year. Underneath the transfer sits the numerator, the multi-year floor that binds a government's defense spending, and it is set to move from 70 billion shekels to 90. That takes a cabinet decision and three readings of its own. Opposition figures said last night that none of the equipment arrives before the vote anyway, so the whole thing could have waited two months.

ASSESSMENT

The numerator is where this actually lands. Moving the floor from 70 billion shekels to 90 binds every government for three years. The opposition's objection mistakes what is being purchased. August money buys the inputs, and the ammunition comes a year behind them.

Israel and the World

Washington Funds a Gaza Force Nobody Has Agreed to Deploy

The State Department has told Congress it is putting \$206 million into the International Stabilization Force. Trump's Gaza plan hands that force security control after the IDF pulls back, along with the job of training a new Palestinian police. Two notifications went to the appropriations and foreign affairs committees on 30 July, and neither has been reported until now. The larger one covers \$200 million for equipment, vehicles, infrastructure and running costs. The second, worth about \$6.3 million, redirects nine American armored personnel carriers that were on their way to Nepal, with Albania and Kosovo first in line for them. It is the first concrete American money behind the plan.

Five countries have committed troops: Indonesia, Morocco, Kazakhstan, Kosovo and Albania. Egypt and Jordan have committed to train police. Nobody has said when any of them would deploy, and the notification concedes the final composition is still being negotiated. The Board of Peace has been asking member governments for more money, some of it to build the force a base inside the Strip. Trump chairs that board, chartered at Davos in January, with the Bulgarian diplomat Nickolay Mladenov as its high representative for Gaza. Those governments pledged \$17 billion for reconstruction. The Board won't say how much of it has arrived.

Netanyahu rejected the Board's 15-point roadmap this month and has held one condition since: no Israeli pullback until Hamas is disarmed. He and Kushner agreed reconstruction doesn't begin before that either. Hamas says it accepted the roadmap and that Israel has to stop attacking and start withdrawing first.

ASSESSMENT

The money is the only part of this plan that has moved. Two hundred million dollars buys equipment for a force whose first task starts after a disarmament that hasn't started, and whose first visible hardware is nine second-hand carriers rerouted from Nepal to two Balkan contingents. Against that sits \$17 billion pledged for reconstruction the Board declines to account for. Egypt, the one contributor that actually borders Gaza, took the police-training work and left the deployment to Indonesia, Morocco, Kazakhstan and two states from the Balkans.

Israel Reads Trump's Syria Envoy as Erdogan's Advocate and Hosts Athens

Israeli officials went on the record this morning with their read on Tom Barrack, the real-estate financier Trump made both his ambassador in Ankara and his envoy to Syria and Lebanon. What worries Jerusalem is the worldview he carries with him, in which Turkey — and Erdogan personally — sits at the center of whatever regional order Washington builds next. "Barrack is considered someone who promotes Erdogan's interests and those of the Syrian regime in the United States," said an official who works the Turkey file. "He is not sensitive to Israeli sensitivities. He is focused on the immediate benefit the United States can gain from Syria." A senior official put Netanyahu's own view more plainly: the prime minister thinks Barrack is behind Trump's support for Ahmad al-Sharaa, the former jihadist commander who took Damascus in 2024, and connects al-Sharaa to Erdogan.

Netanyahu set out his own message to Ankara:

We will not tolerate a Turkish military presence moving south. Because it threatens us. We saw that Turkey intended to establish a presence at an airfield south of its line, near Aleppo. And we sent a message — don't. The message got through, but apparently they didn't hear it. So we made sure they understood.

Eyal Zamir hosted Greece's chief of defense, General Dimitrios Choupis, who finished an official visit to Israel yesterday. Choupis also met the defense ministry's director-general Amir Baram and Yair Kulas, who runs its international defense cooperation. The army called the visit a mark of the strategic importance of a military relationship already in place.

ASSESSMENT

Jerusalem has concluded that the American channel on Syria answers to Ankara, and it is building around that. How much Barrack shifts the president is argued inside the Israeli system, and it changes little either way. He holds the Ankara embassy and the Syria and Lebanon files at once, so every American mechanism drawn up for Israel's northern border gets drafted by the man whose other job is representing the United States to Erdogan. Athens is the available hedge. The Greek government signs the defense agreements. The Greek street is where our own foreign ministry spent this month telling Israelis to tuck their tzitzit, cover the kippot with ball caps, and keep their Magen David under their shirts — lest they be attacked.

The Database Behind the “Genocide” Charge Counts Checkpoint Delays as Attacks

Leslie Johns of UCLA and Gregory Rose of the University of Wollongong spent months inside the World Health Organization's database of “attacks on health care.” They published what they found through the Henry Jackson Society and The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation. That database is where the numbers in UN briefings, medical journals and law reviews come from, and it is read everywhere as a record of verified fact. The WHO's own written methodology logs a doctor held at an IDF checkpoint and arriving late for his shift as an attack. So does an ambulance searched for weapons — a practice the Red Cross treats as lawful, and one Hamas has spent years supplying the reason for. By the authors' count, about a quarter of the entries logged in Gaza, Judea and Samaria and eastern Jerusalem clear even a loose threshold for violence. Six percent involve a death. That is among the lowest rates the WHO records anywhere.

The IDF's move into Al-Shifa in November 2023, made on evidence of a command complex underneath it, appears in the database as more than a hundred separate “attacks.” A hospital forfeits its protection the moment it is used as a headquarters or a weapons store — settled law for decades — and the methodology has no field for it. Al-Ahli Arab Hospital is still the single deadliest entry in the WHO's entire global database, the October 2023 blast Western intelligence services traced within days to a Palestinian rocket that misfired on launch. The correction never caught up. Nothing in the system lets Israel, or any accused state, contest an entry. And the primary reporting channel in Gaza is Hamas's health ministry.

ASSESSMENT

The WHO built an advocacy log, and the rapporteurs and prosecutors downstream have been reading it as a court record. The aggregate travels into Human Rights Council reports and prosecution dossiers carrying the WHO's name and none of the WHO's methodology. Johns and Rose want clearer definitions, independent verification and a right of reply for accused states, and none of it is coming — what makes that database worth citing is that it can't be argued with. For two years the people contesting the figure in op-eds, in Congress and on campus have had nothing on paper to set against it. Now they do.

Australia's Antisemitism Commission Is Offered a Model That Protects Antizionism

Australia's royal commission on antisemitism, stood up after fifteen Jews were murdered at a Hanukkah candle-lighting on Bondi Beach, spent Thursday hearing from Rita Jabri Markwell, a Sydney solicitor and policy adviser to the Australian Muslim Advocacy Network. She was there to explain a hate-speech framework she helped build. It protects speech aimed at governments, militaries and political ideologies. It catches speech that dehumanizes people for their race, religion or ethnicity. She has offered it to institutions as a way to handle complaints. Under cross-examination by Nicholas Bender SC, counsel for a group of Jewish organizations, Markwell agreed she holds Zionism to be a form of violent extremism — dehumanization of outgroups runs through it, she said, and that is what defines a violent extremist movement. Commissioner Virginia Bell then asked whether she accepted that Israel's existence was legitimate at the point the UN recognized it in 1948. Markwell answered that no state resting on "unlawful occupation and apartheid and genocide" could be called legitimate.

Bender put it to her that her reading makes every Zionist a violent extremist, and she rejected that. He then took her to the evidence of Mia Kline, a student who told the commission she was thrown out of her university housing for being a Zionist, and who supports two states, backs Palestinian rights and criticizes Netanyahu and the IDF. Markwell said the values moved her and she couldn't square them with the Zionism. She has yet to hear a Zionist explain, she said, how Palestinian dignity fits inside the ideology.

Green Party activists in Britain ran the argument to its end in a private WhatsApp group called Greens Against Imperialism. The messages leaked this week. One member wrote that supporting the killing of Zionists "is not specifically racist any more than believing in capital punishment for traitors" is. Another said he understood wanting to "plough into" a group of Israelis. The group was set up by Sophus Magill, a Green parish councillor on the Isle of Wight who had earlier circulated a document arguing against proscribing Iran's Revolutionary Guards. Asked whether he wanted Israel wiped off the map, Magill said yes. Parliamentarians are pressing for the chat to go to the police.

ASSESSMENT

The carve-out is what the framework is for. Put hostility to Zionism on the ideology side of the line and it stops counting as hate speech — and antizionism drove roughly 48 percent of Britain's recorded antisemitic incidents last year. That is the ground the IHRA working definition covers, the one institutions adopt to name what counts as antisemitic inside their own procedures. [I'd like to know what Kline was supposed to have said differently.] Bell has a report to write, and she now has on her own record what the competing instrument does the moment it meets a Jew who ticks every box it asks for.

Argentina Removes a Federal Judge for Jew-Hate and Refuses His Resignation

Argentina's Council of the Magistracy stripped Alfredo Lopez of the federal bench on Tuesday, the first time the country has removed a judge over anti-Jewish hate speech. Lopez ran Federal Court No. 4 in Mar del Plata. Across 2024 and 2025 he posted some forty times about Jews — “rats,” “a race of vipers,” a poll asking his followers where Argentina's Jewish citizens' loyalties lie, a reply to one user that opened “Hey, Jew.” DAIA, the umbrella body of Argentina's Jewish organizations, filed first. Sabrina Ajmechet, an MP who runs the Argentine Forum Against Antisemitism, and a group of local jurists followed. The community they filed for is the largest in Latin America, about 170,000 people.

Lopez tried to resign his way out once the case reached the disciplinary tribunal. Javier Milei's government refused the resignation and insisted the trial run to its end. His defense was ideological persecution — personal opinions on public questions, no criminal complaint and no civil suit behind any of them, so criticism should not be confused with discrimination. The tribunal found the posts a clear manifestation of antisemitism under the IHRA definition Argentina adopted in 2020, and wrote that he was removed “because his public conduct, carried out under his office, became incompatible with the impartiality, the decorum and the public trust that office requires.” Supporters broke into the hearing room on the fourth day and police cleared them out.

ASSESSMENT

Argentina treated a judge's Jew-hate as a question of whether he was fit to sit, and got him off the bench about eighteen months after the first complaint. The instrument it used is the one American school boards are being talked out of adopting and Zohran Mamdani revoked in New York on his first day. The definition was never the obstacle. Milei's refusal to take the resignation is the part that travels: a resignation would have left nothing for the next complainant to cite, and a removal leaves a ruling.

Briefly Noted

Frontline & Security

- *Ynet News*: The air force has pulled the 190th attack-helicopter squadron out of Ramon for good and stood it up at Ramat David, so the Apache force sits at both ends of the country now instead of mostly in the south. The north had a thin attack-helicopter presence on October 7, and the pilots moving up talk about five hundred drones arriving at once.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Kata'ib Hezbollah's answer to Baghdad's push to disarm the Iranian-backed militias is that the Kurdish Peshmerga should hand in their weapons too, and that its own are already the state's because the militias sit inside the Popular Mobilization Forces. It has warned Prime

Minister Ali al-Zaidi that its patience with his “provocative and irresponsible actions” is running out, days after Iraqi counterterrorism officers arrested a senior militia commander in Dhi Qar.

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- *Ynet*: Britain summoned Christian Cantor, who runs Israel’s embassy in London, over the Housing Ministry’s tender for the first 1,400 homes at E1, and foreign secretary Ed Miliband promised a package of British measures within weeks. Bids close on 19 October, and European capitals are arguing over whether to move before Israel votes or after.
- *Israel Hayom*: Israel’s foreign minister, Gideon Sa’ar, and his Colombian counterpart have agreed to waive entry visas both ways from 1 September, and Vivian Eisen takes up the Israeli embassy in Bogota on Sunday after two years without an ambassador. Colombia recognized Israeli sovereignty on the Golan after Sa’ar met its new president — the only state besides the United States to have done it.

Public Diplomacy & Media

- *The JC*: The BBC’s Editorial Complaints Unit, the corporation’s highest complaints authority, ruled that “Moneybags Rothschild” on Radio 4’s Gardeners’ Question Time would not perpetuate prejudice, because “the Jewishness of the Rothschild family was not referred to.” A former attorney general, Sir Michael Ellis, calls that irrational to the point of judicial review, and he wants the complaint taken to Ofcom.
- *The JC*: Eight defendants faced fifteen charges over the 2024 raid on Elbit’s plant at Filton, and after 37 hours the Old Bailey jury had returned one conviction — criminal damage, nine to one — before the judge discharged it. Prosecutors are weighing a retrial on the other fourteen, and the mention hearing is 14 September.

Am Yisrael

- *JTA*: The Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division charged Larry Montes on Tuesday with two federal hate crimes and one count of damaging religious property with injury, on top of the state counts New York filed the night he punched a 63-year-old congregant to the floor at Central Synagogue and headbutted a guard.
- *CJN*: Quebec revoked the operating permits of three Belz boys campuses in Montreal, 582 pupils in all, over teachers the ministry says are unqualified, Torah study running in the hours the provincial curriculum reserves for compulsory subjects, and inspection findings of blocked emergency exits and bad wiring. Belz has asked the province’s Administrative Tribunal to stay the closures before term opens on 30 August.

Domestic & Law

- *Israel Hayom*: Likud petitioned the Central Elections Committee over Gadi Eisenkot’s use of uniformed IDF soldiers in campaign material and won — a soldier’s image, used prominently enough, can be a public asset.

Eisenkot's Yashar has now asked committee chairman Noam Sohlberg to apply that to dozens of posts on Netanyahu's own Facebook page, where the prime minister decorates officers and addresses recruits in uniform.

- *Ynet*: Hadash, Ta'al and Balad have agreed to re-form the Joint List without Mansour Abbas, with Hadash's Yosef Jabareen at the top and Ahmad Tibi running the faction, and polling puts the slate at nine seats. The arrangement is built around a disqualification fight nobody has had yet — the Central Elections Committee barred Balad in 2022 and the High Court reversed it unanimously, and if Balad is barred again the other two can run without it.

Economy, Tech & Infrastructure

- *Globes*: The US Army has ordered another \$50 million of UVision's Hero 120 loitering munitions through Mistral, its Maryland integration partner, on top of the \$982 million multi-year contract signed in October 2025.
- *The JC*: Alpha DaRT, the alpha-radiation treatment Hadassah developed with Alpha Tau for glioblastoma, controlled the tumors in all three American patients in the REGAIN study, two of them with no sign of regrowth — early numbers against a cancer that usually kills within a year of diagnosis.

Culture, Religion & Society

- *Arutz Sheva*: Religious Services Ministry director-general Yehuda Avidan has told the Cave of the Patriarchs administration to be ready to lock the doors within fourteen days — no worshippers, no visitors, staff laid off, every booked ceremony cancelled — because the High Court's suspension of the Finance Committee's transfers left Judaism's second holiest site with no approved budget. Its running costs have always come out of coalition funds, never a state budget line.
- *Algemeiner*: Israel recorded 137,343 Jewish births in the twelve months to June, the highest annual count in the Central Bureau of Statistics table going back to 1996, and it did that three years into the war Hamas started. Jewish women now average 3.07 children against 2.59 for Arab women, a gap that pointed the other way in 2002, when it was 2.64 against 4.19.

Developments to Watch

Judea & Samaria

- **Two communities get their locality codes** — The Interior Ministry issued locality codes yesterday to Karmeit Oz in Binyamin, which has been sitting on its hill for 28 years without one, and to Sahlab in Samaria, where the plan runs to a town across 4,500 dunams, after Avi Bluth signed off on both jurisdictions. European capitals spent this week arguing over whether to sanction Israel before the election over one housing tender, and the two communities that became permanent yesterday were already there.

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Rome is penciled in for 1 September** — Israel has put the remains of its fallen taken in Lebanon since 1975 into the negotiation and lists have started moving both ways, and Lebanese MTV reports the next round set for Rome on 1 September, which neither government has confirmed. The two sides still have not agreed on who certifies that a pilot zone is clear or how, and Italy and Britain are among the states being weighed for the job by people who have not written down what the job is.
- **Beirut hands Damascus a general** — Lebanon transferred Adel Issa, who commanded the Syrian army's 17th Division and later its ground forces in Deir ez-Zor, to Damascus yesterday on charges of premeditated murder and torture, the first Assad-era officer sent across that border since the regime fell. Beirut and al-Sharaa's government are building a working channel of their own in the same week Israeli jets hit a Syrian airbase and Israeli negotiators sat down with Lebanon.

Gaza & Southern Theater

- **Militias lift a Hamas man out of Deir al-Balah** — Gazan sources say militias opposed to Hamas took Yahya Oni Shahin out of his house in eastern Deir al-Balah overnight and carried him east into the Yellow Line area. A week ago those cells were working the line itself, and an organization that cannot keep its own men in their beds in the central Strip is telling mediators it will govern the Strip.

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Yemen says the Houthis are going for Bab al-Mandab** — Moammar al-Eryani, information minister of a government that has not held Sana'a since 2014, told AFP that the Houthis are working to seize Bab al-Mandab by expanding along the western coast and taking the Red Sea islands, days after they claimed strikes on the government-held port of Mokha. Washington answered the closure of Hormuz by escorting a lane through it, and there is no lane and no escort at the bottom of the Red Sea.

Diplomatic & Legal

- **CUNY has fifteen days to open its books** — City University of New York settled a two-year records fight on Tuesday and agreed to produce every stock and bond holding it has had since January 2020, after a law student filed to see what it holds in 30 companies she named, Elbit and Lockheed among them. Students for Justice in Palestine is calling the settlement the start of a new chapter in its divestment campaign, and in two weeks it gets the list it has been demonstrating without.
- **A Maryland shul gets an early hearing** — Judge Deborah Chasanow gave Montgomery County until Monday to answer the Silver Spring Jewish Center's motion against an ordinance barring licensed carry within a hundred yards of a house of worship, and set the hearing for 3 September. Rabbi Menashe Shapiro asked for that schedule so an injunction can land before

the High Holidays, which is when the congregations that post armed members at their own doors need them there.

Home Front & Politics

- **The bloc starts ruling the haredi parties out** — Vladimir Bliak said he sees no way to sit in a government with the haredi parties after what he watched them take in this Knesset, that he would go to another election before he did it, and that he hears the same from Bennett and Lapid. Bennett spent the same day telling Eisenkot that a thirty percent exemption is how every conscription framework before this one ended, which leaves the haredi parties shut out of one bloc and still inside the other.
- **A district judge asks to be moved north** — Nasser Abu Taha, the first Bedouin appointed to the Israeli bench, has asked to leave the southern district for the north because men he sentenced are demanding that his family compensate them, i24NEWS reported, and the Courts Administration will not comment. His car was burned in 2014 and he stayed on the bench, so what the administration answers now settles whether the networks running the Negev get a say in which judges sit over them.

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