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READER EDITION

August 23, 2026

ISRAEL BRIEF

Sunday, August 23

Hezbollah picks Israeli engineers over Lebanese soldiers on Ali al-Taher — and Washington stops describing the Iran sanctions as anything but regime change.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVER

THE BOTTOM LINE Tisch can tell a sanctuary how many of the city's confirmed hate crimes were aimed at Jews. Samuels can't tell anyone how many of his 398 complaints were, because the form his system uses never asked. That gap is the argument for the definition Sperrn wants, and Mamdani revoked it on his first day in office.

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THE war has moved onto the things Hezbollah and Iran cannot replace quickly — the concrete poured under the border villages, and the oil money that keeps Tehran solvent. Neither is close to settling, and the arguing over whether Israel may touch either is happening a long way from both. At home, a good deal of what got promised this weekend was promised on behalf of a government nobody has elected yet.

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FLASH BRIEF

- **Lebanon:** Katz speeds up the demolition, and Hezbollah would rather Israel take the ridge than the Lebanese army. *See The War Today.*
- **Syria:** Trump's envoy calls the Idlib strike election bait, and Katz answers on Shabbat with the intelligence. *See The War Today.*
- **Gaza:** Hamas flies kites over Nahal Oz to time Israel's response, and presses mediators to call a breach. *See The War Today.*
- **Draft:** Deri buys Rabbi Yosef back by committing Shas's next coalition to the yeshiva exemption law. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Airport:** A workers' committee chairman shuts Ben Gurion to arrivals on one of the year's busiest days. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Ankara:** Turkey asks Interpol for a red notice on Netanyahu, off an Istanbul case naming 35 Israelis. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Iran:** Bessent says the sanctions are meant to collapse the regime, and Qatar cuts its ministries and its aid. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Hollywood:** Ruffalo attacks the Paramount-Warner merger through Oracle's work for the IDF, and Paramount answers on the record. *See Israel and the World.*
- **New York:** Jewish teachers hand Mamdani 250 school incidents the city's own complaint forms could never have counted. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Gaza journalists:** HonestReporting ties 120 of the 209 names on CPJ's Gaza list to armed groups. *See Briefly Noted.*
- **Hormuz:** Tehran lets Iraqi oil through the strait it has kept shut since the end of February. *See Developments to Watch.*

The War Today runs three theaters on one question: what Israel will have finished before anybody else gets to rule on it. Inside Israel bends toward 27 October, where the exemption law and the next coalition's inheritance are both waiting on a result. The world sections are about reach — what an Interpol filing, a Treasury press conference and an actor's post can each actually make happen.

The War Today

Hezbollah Would Rather Lose the Ridge to Israel than to Lebanon

Defense Minister Israel Katz has told the IDF to speed up the destruction of Hezbollah's infrastructure in south Lebanon. Northern Command spent the weekend inside the villages the group built for exactly this. Kafr Kila, Al-Khiam, Bint Jbeil and Taibe went up with Iranian money over more than twenty years, on the routes and ridges that block an Israeli maneuver north and put Hezbollah's men within reach of the Galilee.

Underneath them the army has found shelters big enough to hold fighters by the thousand, weapons stores, command rooms, observation posts and firing positions. Some of it sits under houses, in Zawtar al-Sharqiya and elsewhere. Engineers are cutting new roads while they work, for access and to get recovery vehicles to armor that breaks down inside Lebanon.

All of this runs inside the June Israel-Lebanon-US framework. Israel's pull-back there is tied to Hezbollah's verified disarmament, and the ridge at Ali al-Taher is where that condition came due. Two months ago the Lebanese army offered to take the position. Hezbollah refused, and threatened to fire on any force that walked in.

This month, with the surface gone and its men sealed underneath, the group reportedly offered the ridge to the Lebanese army after all. A Western diplomat told LBCI it wanted its people and its equipment out. Israel said no. Hezbollah MPs then denied any offer had been made. Mahmoud Qamati of its political council said yesterday that the decision now is to hold and to push back every option on the site, and denied there are any Iranian Revolutionary Guards in the south at all.

The air force struck the ridge again before dawn this morning. It struck through the weekend at Mansouri, Sarbin, Beit al-Sayyad and Barashit, where Kfir Brigade troops watched several men cross into the security zone and go into a building. A figure close to Hezbollah told the Saudi channel Al-Hadath that more than a hundred of the group's fighters and Revolutionary Guards are on the ridge and that supply reaches them only in fits. He put the position plainly. Destruction by Israel is preferable to handing the ridge to the Lebanese army. Al-Manar has begun telling its own audience that Ali al-Taher is one point out of dozens and not the whole story.

Israeli security officials say the Lebanese army has produced nothing like the engineering results the American-mediated understandings assumed. It won't move quickly against Hezbollah, they say, because it is afraid of Hezbollah. The 402nd Artillery Battalion, Reshef, finished a battalion-scale exercise in the Golan this week, the first of that size since the war began. It goes back into Lebanon next week.

ASSESSMENT

Hezbollah would rather Israel blow the ridge to pieces than let a Lebanese soldier stand on it, and that is the answer to the question the June framework was written to ask. Handover was available twice and is gone — the Lebanese army asked in June and got threatened for asking, Hezbollah asked this month and Israel refused. So demolition is the only disarmament anybody in south Lebanon is actually performing. [I keep hearing the framework failed because nobody could agree who verifies anything. Ali al-Taher is being verified. By engineers.] Katz's order moves the rate and not the destination, and the rate is the one term Jerusalem still sets while Beirut goes on declining to search a house.

Trump's Syria Envoy Reads the Idlib Strike as Election Bait

Tom Barrack holds both the Ankara embassy and the Syria file for Trump. He spent a Friday night interview offering a theory about the Israeli strike on the Abu al-Duhur airbase in Idlib last Tuesday. The Israelis were baiting the Turks, he said, in a very aggressive but maybe well-received pre-election concept. Netanyahu is moving toward October and knows what his constituency wants.

Israel raised the Turkish movement with Washington about six days before the strike, Barrack said, and American officials ran it down with the people who would know and were told no, that's not happening. A Turkish attempt to intercept the jets, he added, could have produced World War Three. His alternative theory was a miscommunication between the Prime Minister's Office, the IDF and the Mossad. He also said Israel occupies the Golan Heights against UN resolutions and against the entire international order.

Katz answered yesterday afternoon, in the middle of Shabbat. He doesn't do that. The IDF had recommended striking Abu al-Duhur several times, on what he called clear intelligence that Turkey meant to operate there. Netanyahu and Katz took it through a run of discussions with the security chiefs. They decided to warn the Syrian regime directly at the highest level first, and to pass the intelligence to the relevant American authorities. The warning went unanswered. The two of them then authorized the strike. "Erdogan was caught with his hand in the cookie jar and was forced to back down," Katz said. On the Golan he was blunter. Barrack's remarks are full of inaccuracies and contradict Trump's own position, he said, since Trump recognized Israeli sovereignty there in his first term.

The operational account under the argument hasn't moved. Israeli sources told KAN the intelligence was specific: a radar, an air-defense system and Turkish troops for the base. The four strikes went into the runway to stop Turkish aircraft landing on it. Since the diplomatic message did not get through, one of those sources said, Israel delivered it through a targeted warning strike.

Yesterday the IDF hit a man near Beit Jinn in southern Syria it said was in the final stages of preparing a bomb attack on Israeli troops. Damascus called that a strike on a civilian vehicle and a violation of its sovereignty. Ankara says no Turkish delegation was at Abu al-Duhur before or during the strike. Israeli security officials told Channel 12 that Turkish navy ships have come close to Israeli vessels several times lately in international waters.

Jerusalem's own read is that the escalation is checked. Israeli officials say the message landed both ways it was sent, through the channels and through the runway, and that the Americans passed a calming word to Ankara. Nobody there expects much American leverage on Erdogan. They expect him to keep working Turkish forces into Syria by whatever route stays open. Narrowing Israel's freedom of action over Syria is one of the reasons he wants them there.

ASSESSMENT

Barrack put the election theory into circulation himself, and that is worth more to Ankara than anything Ankara could have said in its own defense. [Trump recognized Israeli sovereignty on the Golan in 2019. His own ambassador spent Friday night arguing the other side of it.] The State Department wouldn't say whether that recognition still stands. Katz says Israel warned Damascus and handed the intelligence to Washington. Barrack says Washington ran that intelligence down and was told nothing was happening. Neither man has produced a document. What the row doesn't touch is the hardware. A Turkish radar and air-defense battery at Abu al-Duhur closes the corridor the air force flies over Syria and on the way to western Iran, and that war opened when Tehran shut the Strait of Hormuz at the end of February and hasn't ended. Israel hit the runway before the equipment got there. Afterward there would have been no point.

Hamas Flies Kites Over Nahal Oz to Time Israel's Answer

Four kites crossed the Gaza fence into the Nahal Oz area inside twenty-four hours this weekend. The IDF checked them, found nothing on them, and said the public was in no danger. The defense establishment's own reading came out Saturday night. Hamas is behind the launches, and is using children and teenagers to fly them — to see how long Israel takes to react, and to record what happens in the area when it does. The strings run for kilometers.

Security officials describe the kites as intelligence work ahead of an operation using tethered drones, and say Israel will reach the people flying them. For the first time since the incendiary-balloon wave of 2018 and 2019, residents of the Gaza-border communities were told not to approach or touch a kite, a foreign balloon or a drone.

Nahal Oz put out a statement that reads like a timeline of the last one. First came kites that looked innocent, with Arabic writing on them. Then Hamas worked out where they were landing and attached burning material, and thousands of dunams of wheat went up. Then came the explosive balloons. Then everyone saw how it ended.

Uri Epstein, who heads the Sha'ar HaNegev Regional Council, wants every kite dealt with in the air and not picked up off a field afterward. "After October 7 the days are over when you tell people here it's only a kite," he said. Security officers in the councils are less worried about kites than about what they think is behind them, a fiber-optic drone somebody can steer into a crowd.

Hamas spent the weekend pressing the mediators to declare Israel in breach of the ceasefire that has held in Gaza since last October. Israeli defense officials read that two ways. One is stalling a disarmament that was supposed to have started. The other is advance cover for stepping up attacks on troops inside the Strip.

Osama Hamdan said Hamas told Jared Kushner it owes nothing until Israel publicly accepts the deal and begins withdrawing, and that it has never agreed to give up its weapons. Heavy weapons would be restricted and stored under a Palestinian administrative committee, in Palestinian hands, with nothing going to any non-Palestinian party. He was describing the

Board of Peace's 15-point roadmap of 30 July. Hamas accepted that one and Israel is not a party to it. It is a different document from the 20-point plan Israel accepted last October under Security Council Resolution 2803, where the weapons go permanently beyond use and independent monitors verify it. Egyptian officials told Kushner in Cairo that no disarmament is possible under this Israeli government, and that the whole question waits for the next one.

The army kept working through all of it. It killed Sharif al-Hasanat, 44, in Deir al-Balah yesterday. He commanded a company in Hamas's battalion there and had spent the war putting the tunnel network back together. On Wednesday it killed Sabahi Sami Mahmoud Shahata in Nuseirat. He was a platoon commander who came through the fence on October 7, held hostages afterward, and turned up at the November 2023 handover ceremony. On Friday troops in the south shot a man who crossed the Yellow Line toward them, and troops in the center took another with a knife and brought him into Israel for questioning.

ASSESSMENT

The people who live along that fence worked it out before the defense establishment did. They are the ones who watched containment run its full length once already. [I don't need a defense briefing to tell me what a kite over Nahal Oz turns into. Neither does Nahal Oz.] Cairo has meanwhile moved the disarmament to a government Israel hasn't elected yet. That buys Hamas until 27 October to keep rebuilding, and gives the mediators somebody else to blame for the wait.

Inside Israel

Deri Buys Rabbi Yosef Back With the Next Government's Exemption Bill

Aryeh Deri went to Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef's house on Thursday carrying a letter from Rabbi Moshe Maya of the Council of Torah Sages, and came away with a deal. Yosef and the Council get full partnership in Shas's political and halachic decisions, plus a standing appointment every Friday. In exchange, Shas's next coalition is committed to advancing the yeshiva exemption law. Yosef turned up at the party's campaign launch the same evening. He had reportedly been telling students in his own yeshiva not to vote Shas, and he has said in public that Shas could back Gadi Eisenkot for prime minister. Deri says Shas backs Netanyahu.

The first campaign film went out on Saturday night. An Israeli family sits around a Shabbat table, one son in a yeshiva and one in uniform, and it is aimed squarely at the four seats' worth of traditional voters who have been walking away. In January the same rabbi said his grandson had torn up his call-up order and flushed it, which is what he had told him to do. On Saturday night, after Yosef's weekly shiur in Jerusalem, a Jerusalem Faction crowd surrounded MK Michael Malchieli's car, banged on the roof and shouted that Malchieli is a murderer. His offense is saying deferral for men learning full

time and refusing to ask for a blanket exemption. Shas called them an anarchist fringe working with left-wing organizations. The party polls at six or seven.

Enforcement moved in the same seventy-two hours. The Attorney General's office published its summary of an August 3 review of the 2025 draft year: haredi enlistment up 53 percent to 4,298 men, and criminal enforcement below what the state requires, because a prosecution starts when somebody is arrested and the arrests are not happening. Gali Baharav-Miara wants proactive arrests resumed across every sector and the economic sanctions widened. Overnight Thursday police picked up a yeshiva student near Ben Shemen Forest and handed him to the Military Police. Haredi crowds blocked roads and massed at the Maccabim checkpoint. Meir Porush told an economics conference that the haredi public spends more than 51 billion shekels a year and will not hesitate to use it if the sanctions keep coming. The Democracy Institute published its read of the labor-force survey this morning: National-Religious men are 15 percent of the population and 31 percent of the reserve force, 0.3 percent of haredi men do any reserve duty at all, and participation is falling in every group.

ASSESSMENT

Deri paid in the only currency Yosef wanted, and the receipt is a written commitment binding a coalition that does not exist yet. Enlistment rose 53 percent in a year when almost nobody was prosecuted for evading, which means the money and the civil gates moved those 4,298 men. That is the machinery Porush is now threatening to answer with a consumer boycott. And the voters Shas is filming for are the ones who watched a rabbi tell a yeshiva student to flush his call-up: in a Ynet poll of 509 reservists, 70 percent say the government's handling of conscription weighs heavily or very heavily on how they vote, and Eisenkot's Yashar takes 19 percent of them against Likud's 13.

Closed Dossier: [The Math Survives The Vote](#) — The Dossier's argument is that no election breaks haredi power and the live question is which coalition members end up holding which ministries, which is what Deri actually bought on Thursday — a written commitment on the exemption law from a coalition that has not been elected. ##### [The Man Who Closed Ben Gurion Promises Nothing About Next Week](#)

Pinchas Idan started at the Israel Airports Authority in 1979 as a baggage handler and driver. He won a seat on the workers' committee in 1982 and has chaired it since 1986. On Thursday, with close to 100,000 passengers and 600 flights booked through one of the busiest days of the year, baggage sorters walked off their positions, the belt stopped, check-in closed and Ben Gurion shut to incoming flights for about an hour. Aircraft already in the air turned back. More than ten flights sat stranded at Paphos. By Friday morning Ben Gurion was the most disrupted airport in the world, and the Finance Ministry put the cost at 25 to 30 million shekels.

There are two accounts and they do not overlap anywhere. Idan says twelve porters who came on at three in the morning and were being held until three in the afternoon asked to go home, and he told them to go. You don't close

an airfield by losing twelve men out of a shift of 150. He says the airport manager closed it, that he is short roughly 400 workers, and that he's going to the labor court to stop twelve-hour porter shifts. The authority says the men abandoned the sorting positions, the belt backed up, and head-office staff had to go down and sort bags themselves. Netanyahu ordered Idan expelled from Likud. Transport Minister Miri Regev instructed the authority to petition the labor court against the committee. Asked on Kan on Saturday night whether next week would be all right, Idan said he promises nothing.

ASSESSMENT

One committee chairman closed the only way in and out of the country, and the state's answer was to throw him out of a political party. He has held that committee since 1986, through every prime minister and every transport minister since, and he ran a stoppage at the same terminal in 2023 during the judicial-reform protests. Thursday surprised nobody who had to plan for it. The expulsion takes nothing off the belt: he still runs the committee, the posts are still empty, and he has already said next week is not promised.

Israel and the World

Turkey Takes Netanyahu to Interpol Over the Flotilla Interception

Turkey asked Interpol on Friday for red notices against Benjamin Netanyahu and one other Israeli. The request came from justice minister Akin Gurlek, following arrest warrants an Istanbul court issued on 14 July. The case runs to 35 defendants, Defense Minister Israel Katz and Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir among them. The charges are "genocide," crimes against humanity, torture and hijacking, over Israel's interception of the Global Sumud Flotilla, which sailed to break the naval blockade of Gaza. Prosecutors have asked for sentences up to 4,596 years. A red notice binds nobody. Interpol screens each one against its own bar on political cases, and every member country then decides for itself whether to lift a finger.

Israeli jets hit the runways and stores at the Abu al-Duhur airbase in Idlib on Tuesday, to stop a Turkish deployment there. Syrian officials have since confirmed a Turkish delegation was at the base that day. Israel's public case is that Turkey holds about five percent of Syria and Israel about a tenth of a percent, along a border it actually shares. Netanyahu's office answered the red notice within hours. Israel "has long ceased to be impressed by Turkey's hypocrisy," it said, and Erdogan is "an antisemitic dictator who has massacred Kurds, harbors Hamas terrorists, occupies half of Cyprus, and jails record numbers of journalists and politicians who oppose him." Israel's foreign minister, Gideon Sa'ar, said on Saturday that Jerusalem isn't looking for escalation. It also won't accept Turkish bases in Syria.

ASSESSMENT

The red notice will not put anyone in handcuffs, and this exact move has failed before — Turkey asked Interpol for four Israeli officers over the 2010 Mavi Marmara raid and got nothing, because Interpol's rules exclude the political case Ankara keeps bringing. What it buys is thirty-five Israeli names in a filing that travels to every prosecutor already holding a Gaza brief, and an Istanbul court that can lengthen the list whenever the relationship needs another turn.

Washington Names Regime Collapse as the Goal and Qatar Cuts Its Budget

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the United States will impose “the toughest sanctions in history” on Iran, and he named the objective without dressing it up. “We are going to collapse this regime.” Details come at a press conference on Monday. Allies are “either with us or against us,” he said, and any government, bank or buyer still moving Iranian money or lifting Iranian oil will have the full weight of the Treasury turned on it. Trump had warned two days earlier that a country handing Tehran “any type of lifeline” faces tremendous economic consequences. Bessent also gave his reason for preferring the money to the missiles. Maximum economic pressure, he said, means there probably won’t be a large-scale return to shooting. Israel has been holding at readiness for one since February.

The bill is landing on the neighbors first. China buys more than 80 percent of Iran’s exported oil and draws half its own energy from inside the Gulf. Beijing has answered by calling for dialogue and rejecting unilateral sanctions. The Emirates are Tehran’s largest source of imports, 30.6 percent of them, on \$21 billion of trade in the ten months before the Iran war. Abu Dhabi suspended all of it — trade, commercial exchange, financial transactions, until further notice — after its defense ministry tracked two Iranian ballistic missiles coming down near shipping. Offers of Iranian crude to Chinese refiners have thinned. Cargoes that sold at a \$3 discount to Brent a month ago are going out now at a \$2 premium, and Iranian oil parked outside the blockade zone has fallen from about 105 million barrels to 80 million. Treasury spent the same week re-designating Hezbollah as an arm of the Iranian government, and sanctioning ten couriers who flew hundreds of millions of dollars in cash between Lebanon, Turkey, the Emirates and Iran.

Qatar has cut government department budgets by up to 30 percent and foreign aid by roughly 85 percent. Its 2026 budget is about \$61 billion. Iranian strikes and the closed strait shut down the gas production that pays for the state. The IMF puts Doha’s contraction this year at 8.6 percent, the worst of the six Gulf states, and Goldman’s Middle East economist puts what Qatar and Kuwait are losing in energy export revenue at \$1.5 to \$2 billion a week. Neither has a pipeline around Hormuz. Mohsen Rezaei took over Iran’s Supreme National Security Council this month, and he told Iranian state television that any neighbor joining the American campaign counts as an enemy. Iran will go after the Gulf’s alternative export routes and American commercial interests, he said, which he claims it hasn’t touched yet.

ASSESSMENT

Bessent's "with us or against us" is addressed to Beijing, Abu Dhabi and Doha, and the governments that have actually moved are the ones already bleeding — the Emirates cut \$21 billion of trade after Iranian missiles came down in its water, and Qatar is cutting ministries because its gas can't sail. [That foreign-aid line is how Doha bought its seat at every table in this region, and it just cut it by 85 percent.] Rezaei's threat names the pressure point precisely. Saudi Arabia and the Emirates have pipelines around the strait. Qatar and Kuwait do not, and it's the two without an alternative that a threat to export routes actually reaches. The whole campaign rests on Tehran breaking before its neighbors decide they've paid enough for a war none of them chose.

Ruffalo Hangs a \$111 Billion Merger Fight on Oracle's Work for Israel

Mark Ruffalo has spent months fighting Paramount Skydance's \$111 billion bid for Warner Bros. Discovery. He testified against it before a Senate committee and signed an open letter alongside hundreds of other actors, on the argument that the deal costs about 4,500 film and television jobs in Los Angeles. On Friday night he posted something else. It was a clip of Oracle vice chair Safra Catz describing the "really profoundly scary technology" her company made available to the Israeli military after October 7. "Look how she revels in what we now have come to see as a genocide," Ruffalo wrote, "which was built on an apartheid system of oppression powered by Oracle." Larry Ellison, whose money is behind his son David's bid, is "a classic oligarch." The technology, he warned, will end up inside one of the world's largest media companies and "one day used on you."

Paramount answered "always troubled when alleged antisemitic imagery is used in the service of a business dispute," a spokesperson said. Genocide and apartheid applied to a corporate transaction "cross the line and cheapen the real suffering those words were intended to describe." The studio added that it would blacklist nobody. Its chief legal officer, Makan Delrahim, had already said in June that some of the people working to kill the deal were moving on antisemitic views of their own. Creative Community for Peace went further on Saturday and asked Hollywood not to platform Ruffalo until he retracts and apologizes. He called the accusation "appalling and fundamentally dishonest" and said he holds deep love and respect for Jews.

The same weekend, more than twenty actors from the Marvel films — Ruffalo, Benedict Cumberbatch, Ian McKellen, Cate Blanchett, Tilda Swinton — put their names to a campaign asking the UN and the world's governments to release Marwan Barghout, who is serving five consecutive life terms for five murders committed during the Second Intifada.

ASSESSMENT

Ruffalo's case against the merger stopped being about the merger when an executive's nationality became the evidence. His own number is 4,500 jobs, and the post that detonated counted none of them — it counted an Israeli-American vice chair, a Jewish family's money, and a technology that will "one day" be used on the reader. [She ran Oracle for a decade. What made her the clip this weekend was the army her company helped.] He settled this himself in 2021, apologizing for calling Israel's conduct genocide because the word "is being used to justify antisemitism here & abroad." He has now reattached it to who owns a studio. Paramount put the charge on the record about a man it will still have to work with, and Creative Community for Peace asked Hollywood for the de-platforming instrument the boycott campaigns have run for a decade. Whether anyone honors that ask is the open part.

Jewish Teachers Hand Mamdani 250 School Incidents the City Cannot Count

United Jewish Teachers, a New York educators' group, counted 250 antisemitic and anti-Israel incidents in the city's public schools between Hamas's attack of October 7, 2023 and the end of July. They sent the file to Mayor Zohran Mamdani and schools chancellor Kamar Samuels the week before term opens. Just under two-thirds were direct acts against people or property. Brooklyn logged 91 of them, better than a third of the total. A student at Townsend Harris was harassed after he told classmates he meant to enlist in the IDF once he graduated. Someone carved a swastika into a board at Brooklyn Technical.

The city's own books can't confirm any of it. Religion-based bullying and harassment complaints in the school system climbed from 151 in 2018-19 to 398 in 2023-24, and ran at 319 last year. None of that data records a complainant's religion. The group's president, Moshe Sporn, wants the schools to adopt the IHRA working definition — the non-binding text institutions adopt to name what counts as antisemitic inside their own procedures. He wants police sent to hate graffiti before a custodian scrubs it, and a running log of incidents published.

Jessica Tisch, who runs the NYPD, spent Friday night at Central Synagogue in Manhattan, the congregation she grew up in and was married in, a week after Larry Montes stormed the bimah mid-service, knocked a 63-year-old congregant to the floor and head-butted a 65-year-old guard. She took an aliyah before she spoke. Jewish New Yorkers are about a tenth of the city, and they have been about half its confirmed hate-crime victims for years. Anti-Jewish hate crimes are running 8.5 percent above the same stretch last year. "Every publicized attack raises the risk of another," she told a full sanctuary. "People already on the edge don't always need instructions. Sometimes all they need is a spark."

ASSESSMENT

Tisch can tell a sanctuary how many of the city's confirmed hate crimes were aimed at Jews. Samuels can't tell anyone how many of his 398 complaints were, because the form his system uses never asked. That gap is the argument for the definition Sporn wants, and Mamdani revoked it on his first day in office.

Briefly Noted

Frontline & Security

- *Jerusalem Post*: The second Gidon tanker landed at Nevatim on Thursday, a converted Boeing KC-46 and one of six Israel has on order to carry the air force's long-range work. It also carries a drogue refueling system no Israeli aircraft is built to use, and the air force's own explanation for keeping it is regional cooperation.
- *Israel Hayom*: Hackers tied to the Iranian regime took a British power plant off line for four days in late July — the first time anyone is known to have managed that in Britain, and in the same weeks as the Iranian run at American municipal water systems. London says the site was too small to matter to the grid, which is true and is not what was being tested.
- *Walla*: Police and the Tax Authority raided a warehouse this week and pulled about thirty drones out of a shipment from China. The importer was a security firm that had been bringing them in through Ben Gurion customs for months and passing them to the networks smuggling weapons and drugs in the south.

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- *Ynet*: Islamic Jihad, which has never contested a Palestinian election, is in the Cairo talks on a joint “national alliance” list for the 28 November vote, alongside Hamas, Mohammed Dahlan's Democratic Reform Current, the Popular Front and the Popular Resistance Committees.
- *Israel Hayom*: Mahmoud Qamati of Hezbollah's political council said the group will not shut the door on direct contacts with the Americans, and that circumstances and interests will decide. Trump made that offer in July, sitting with Lebanon's president Joseph Aoun, and Hezbollah still refuses to talk to Israel at all.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Eight Arab and Muslim foreign ministers signed a joint statement against the E1 tender on Friday, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar and Egypt among them, and the case they made is that it is a direct challenge to Trump's own plan. The State Department told Axios the same day that Washington does not support Israeli annexation in Judea and Samaria.
- *JNS*: Rebeca Grynspan, who would be the UN's first Jewish secretary-general, lost Friday's second Security Council straw poll — ten encourage votes against one discourage in July, seven against four now, with Guyana's Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett taking the round. One discourage from a permanent member is enough to sink a candidacy, and the ballots stay anonymous until a later round color-codes the five.

Public Diplomacy & Media

- *JNS*: HonestReporting's audit of the Committee to Protect Journalists' Gaza list ties at least 120 of the 209 names to Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad

or another armed group, and puts 56 of them in combat when they died — 25 on death notices the armed groups published themselves. The ask has moved from a correction to an apology from CPJ and retractions from every outlet that ran the number, and CPJ says it cannot comment while its own review runs.

- *Israel Hayom*: UNESCO's World Heritage Committee added Sebastia — Omri's capital, rebuilt by Herod — as a Palestinian heritage site in July on an emergency track that took no vote at all, and the Palestinian Authority has twelve more sites queued on the tentative list. The nomination texts describe the Hasmonean winter palaces at Jericho at length without once naming the Hasmoneans, and put Herod at Herodion as an architect without ever making him king of Judea.
- *JNS*: Police and fire investigators found an electrical short circuit started Thursday's house fire at Beit Amra near Hebron, and no trace of an accelerant anywhere at the scene, against a resident's account to the Palestinian Authority's WAFA agency of five masked Israelis smashing a window and throwing in something flammable. February's sheep-pen fire at as-Samu went the same way — an electrical fault, and a main power cable somebody had pulled out shortly after the fire started.
- *Israel Hayom*: Of the five countries that boycotted Eurovision 2026 over Israel, only Ireland and Spain now look like staying out — the Dutch broadcaster AVROTROS is reported to have settled on a return for 2027, and Iceland and Slovenia are both softening. The European Broadcasting Union met most of the objections by rewriting its own rules: juries back in the semi-finals, each viewer's votes cut from twenty to ten, tighter limits on government-run campaigns, and a clause letting it move the hosting away from a winner in an armed conflict.

Am Yisrael

- *The JC*: Religiously aggravated crime targeting Jews in Britain doubled after October 7 and ran roughly threefold higher across the eight years to March 2025, and Daniel Allington of King's College London, who set those police files against five years of YouGov polling in a peer-reviewed paper, found the attitudes behind them sitting highest among British Muslims and among Britons under 28. He wants Britain's counter-antisemitism work pointed at those two groups.
- *JNS*: New South Wales Supreme Court judge Desmond Fagan refused the state's bid to keep Mohommed Farhat under supervision after he sprayed "Fuk Israel" across cars and walls in Sydney's eastern suburbs and set a car alight, ruling that the words are "a crude political expression of contempt and dismissal of a foreign state" and not antisemitic "by any degree of analysis or construction." The state is weighing an appeal.
- *JTA*: The federation serving Harrisburg's 9,000 Jews laid off its entire support staff this month and is selling the campus it bought for \$4.5 million in 2022, against a mortgage that had grown to \$9 million and a \$3.3 million operating deficit last year. Jewish Federations of North America, which

leaves its 141 locals to run their own affairs, sent in a retired Baltimore federation head to work the books.

- *Israel Hayom*: Munich prosecutors have named the man they believe poured petrol into the wooden stairwell of the Reichenbachstrasse Jewish old-age home in February 1970 and burned seven Holocaust survivors to death — a 25-year-old neo-Nazi whom witnesses heard saying near the building that the Jews “had everything” and that he wanted to set them on fire. He died in 2020.

Domestic & Law

- *Jerusalem Post*: The High Court struck down the government’s December decision to close Army Radio after 75 years on air — all three justices agreed the cabinet had the power to shut the station and needed no new legislation, and voided it on the ministers’ reasons for taking it. Defense Minister Israel Katz says the next government finishes the job.
- *Israel Hayom*: The High Court took the rabbinical courts and religious services out of the budget freeze it imposed this month and released 30 million shekels to the holy sites, after the Religious Services Ministry had told the Cave of the Patriarchs to be ready to lock its doors. The freeze holds on the rest of what Justice Alex Stein stopped — more than 360 million shekels the Finance Committee approved while sitting during the election recess, hundreds of millions of it for haredi and religious schools.
- *Ynet*: The judicial ombudsman, retired judge Asher Kula, upheld complaints against district court judge Michal Agmon-Gonen — active membership in a 500-strong Israel Women’s Network WhatsApp forum, and a message to it recommending a lawyer who appears before her as “the best” — found her conduct at odds with the restraint a judge owes, and recommended no disciplinary process.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Five lists sit under the 3.25 percent threshold in Maariv’s Lazar poll — Ofer Winter’s new party, Gilad Erdan’s Unity, Yaron Zelicha’s economic party, Benny Gantz’s Blue and White and the Reservists Party — holding 8.3 percent of the vote between them, about ten seats that elect nobody. The bloc against Netanyahu stands at 60 to the coalition’s 49, one seat short of a majority.

Economy, Tech & Infrastructure

- *Globes*: Bank Hapoalim and Israel Discount Bank are expected to put off cutting the correspondent-banking lines that carry more than NIS 20 billion a year of trade with the Palestinian Authority, after the Bank of Israel asked them to keep the money moving and Washington pressed to keep the Authority from collapsing. Ramallah’s monetary authority says it has been told to start planning an alternative to the shekel.
- *Israel Hayom*: The FDA has accepted Teva’s application for ecopipam, a Tourette treatment for children, on priority review, and will decide by the end of the first quarter of 2027. Teva paid \$700 million for the drug in June with up to \$200 million more riding on milestones, against an outside estimate of about a billion dollars a year at peak.

- *Israel Hayom*: Israel Electric is putting a few million dollars into printing power-station spare parts in Israel instead of waiting on foreign suppliers, with polymer printers already running at Orot Rabin, Haifa and Rothenberg and Israeli firms working on the harder job of printing the steel alloy that steam piping needs. A part that costs millions of dollars and years of waiting from a manufacturer abroad comes out at tens of thousands of shekels in weeks.

Culture, Religion & Society

- *Arutz Sheva*: Israel buried Sgt. First Class Yehuda Yekutiel Katz *z”l*, the last man still missing from Sultan Yacoub, on the Mount of Olives on Friday morning, and the funeral left from the study hall at Kerem B’Yavneh he went out to war from forty-four years ago.
- *Israel Hayom*: Noa Argamani, Omer Shem Tov, Bar Kupershtein and three others who came home from captivity in Gaza said a prayer of thanksgiving with the rabbi of the Kotel on Motzaei Shabbat, in front of tens of thousands at the central Selichot service.
- *Walla*: A haredi faction that Arad’s mayor, Yair Maayan, says came in from outside the city hung notices over the board the municipality put up for stickers commemorating its fallen soldiers, attacking a Defense Ministry program that places haredi women in hi-tech jobs. Maayan has filed a police complaint and is going through the city’s cameras.

Developments to Watch

Judea & Samaria

- **A manhunt in the Jordan Valley** — A 24-year-old from Betar Illit stopped to shop at Al-Auja on Route 90 this morning and was stabbed from behind, and Duvdevan, the Nitza 636 unit and the Jordan Valley Division have blockades up across the area hunting the man who did it. Hamas praised the attack in a statement and gave its reason as “settler violence,” a phrase Ed Miliband put to Gideon Sa’ar this month with a British sanctions package being drafted around it.

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Damascus expects the security talks back** — Asaad al-Shaibani told Reuters in Damascus on Saturday that Syria expects negotiations with Israel over a security agreement to restart soon, that contact broke off after the strike on the Idlib airbase, and that Damascus does not trust Israel. What he is asking for as confidence-building is a stop to the strikes, so the agreement Washington has chased for over a year now runs on whether Israel will hold its fire to get a table.
- **The Kurds finish folding into Damascus** — Mazloum Abdi said on Thursday that the integration of Kurdish military, security and administrative institutions into Syria’s state bodies is complete, and that what the Kurds

want now is their rights written into the constitution. The January agreement Washington called historic has closed out the autonomy the SDF held ground for over a decade, and it leaves no organized armed force in Syria outside al-Sharaa's chain of command.

Gaza & Southern Theater

- **The militias are written out of the plan** — The Board of Peace's 15-point roadmap carries a clause disarming the local militias Israel stood up in Gaza as a counterweight and barring their men from the security forces of any future technocratic government, which Hamas pressed for and got. Those are Gazans who took Israel's side in front of their neighbors, and the militia project is winding down while Hamas has not handed over a single weapon.

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Pakistan's army chief lands in Tehran tomorrow** — Iran's foreign ministry says Asim Munir arrives on Monday, and put the visit down to Pakistan's work for regional peace and security. Islamabad has carried the messages between Tehran and Washington since the war opened, and a mediator who sends the man who commands his army is doing more than passing a message.
- **Iran opens the strait for Baghdad** — Iraq's president said on Saturday that Iran has let vessels carrying Iraqi oil through the Strait of Hormuz over the past several days, after Baghdad asked repeatedly through several channels and raised it during Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf's visit last week. Tehran has kept that water shut since the end of February, and it has now shown every other neighbor that the closure opens for whoever asks the right way.
- **The Americans fly their tankers out of Bulgaria** — Bulgaria's defense minister said on Saturday that the two American KC-135 tankers parliament approved for Bezmer air base on 22 July left the country on Friday night, days after the Financial Times reported Iranian planning that named Bezmer among possible targets. Sofia says it has no information about any direct threat to Bulgarian national security, and the aircraft Tehran complained about are the ones that are gone.
- **A fresh deck takes over the blockade** — CENTCOM says the George Washington reached the Arabian Sea on Wednesday, and the Abraham Lincoln started for San Diego the next day after more than 260 days at sea and weeks of reporting on the conditions its crew was living in. A naval blockade needs a carrier on station every day it runs, and the swap says Washington means to keep running this one into next year.

Diplomatic & Legal

- **A Hormuz escort coalition without NATO's flag** — Alexis Grynkeiwich's headquarters hosted allied chiefs of defense on Wednesday to gather contributions for freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, and his spokesman said on Friday that this is not a NATO mission. France and

Britain are assembling about a dozen countries for the job, and not one of them can supply the Iranian acquiescence every plan on that table needs to hold.

- **Qatar gets four American tankers** — The State Department approved a \$4.5 billion sale of four KC-46A aerial refueling aircraft and associated equipment to Qatar on Thursday night, on the standard finding that it improves a strategic partner's ability to meet current and future threats and will not alter the basic military balance in the region. Qatar hosts Hamas's political leadership and sits in the middle of the Gaza mediation, and refueling aircraft are what set how far an air force can reach.

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