



Forensic intelligence for those who act.

READER EDITION

August 25, 2026

ISRAEL BRIEF

Tuesday, August 25

Washington announces the campaign it is not yet willing to enforce, and Israel spends the day taking the weapons stores out from under the mosques.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE The finding British and Australian courts have spent this month declining to make was available here because Marsh wrote “you Jews” instead of “Zionists.” An English employment tribunal ruled in early August that David Miller’s belief that Zionism is inherently racist and colonial is a protected philosophical belief under the Equality Act, and a New South Wales judge then refused to read “Fuk Israel” sprayed across cars in Sydney’s eastern suburbs, plus a torched car, as antisemitic by any degree of analysis. Marsh handed the prosecution the noun neither of those cases had. [Four members of the public called the police on her. Thirty years in that party, and it took strangers.] What Yorkshire produced is a finding of fact with an absolute discharge attached, against a defendant the court had already ruled unfit to answer for any of it.

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ROME and Beirut are two months into an appointment nobody has made, and a Michigan nominee issued a statement that condemned no one. None of it commits anyone to anything. The rest of the day belongs to people who did not stop to explain themselves — a survey ship holding station over a wreck at 503 metres, a brigade that sealed thirteen kilometres of tunnel before it moved north, and an Efrat council putting five hundred homes on the slope below Zayit.

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FLASH BRIEF

- **Iran:** Bessent launches Operation Economic Outcast and concedes that enforcing it now could damage the world economy. *See The War Today.*
- **Hormuz:** Iran blacklists forty-six ships in the strait, and transits fall to sixteen a day from a hundred and thirty. *See The War Today.*
- **Election security:** Netanyahu says Iran tried to murder one of his sons, and asks Shin Bet to guard every candidate. *See The War Today.*
- **Gaza:** Israel stops taking individual gunmen and starts destroying the Hamas weapons stores kept inside mosques. *See The War Today.*
- **Lebanon:** Israeli jets hit Bint Jbeil while Rome argues over who verifies that a village has been cleared. *See The War Today.*
- **Judea and Samaria:** MK Sukkot takes a hammer to a monument the Samaria brigade had already planned to demolish. *See Inside Israel.*
- **The ballot:** Ben-Gvir rules out a joint list with Smotrich and sends him to Ofer Winter instead. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Syria:** Washington delists Damascus after forty-seven years, and Israel and Turkey argue over one Idlib airbase. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Israel Bonds:** Luxembourg stops approving the prospectuses on 1 September, and Israel loses a \$2.5 billion European market. *See Israel and the World.*
- **Democrats:** Two members of Congress condemn Hasan Piker by name, and Michigan's Senate nominee never uses it. *See Israel and the World.*
- **York:** A jury finds a former Harrogate mayor stirred up racial hatred, and the court can impose nothing. *See Israel and the World.*
- **American opinion:** Support for military action against Iran falls to 31 percent, with Republican backing down eight points. *See Developments to Watch.*

The Treasury can designate sixty entities across five sectors and cannot make China stop buying Iranian oil. Rome can host the argument about who verifies a Lebanese village and cannot appoint anyone to do it. A Luxembourg regulator, asked only to renew a filing, declined — and took two and a half billion dollars a year off Israel's borrowing on his own reading of prospectus law. The bigger the podium today, the less came off it.

The War Today

Washington's Economic D-Day Arrives as a Warning and Iran Answers At Sea

Scott Bessent launched Operation Economic Outcast from the Treasury podium on Monday, the “economic D-Day” Trump had been promising since Thursday. It came to just over sixty designations across five sectors — digital assets, technology, gold, aviation and shipping — and one message to everyone else: cut your remaining ties to Tehran or share in its isolation. Trump did not appear. A reporter noted that the Allies hadn't announced Normandy to the Germans in advance and asked why Washington wasn't

already punishing the countries still trading with Iran. Bessent's answer was that doing it now could do heavy damage to the world economy, so the campaign will tighten by stages instead.

Tehran answered in the water it shut at the end of February, when closing the Strait of Hormuz opened the Iran war that is still running. Its Persian Gulf Strait Authority named forty-six ships as violators of Iranian transit rules facing fines, detention or confiscation, most of them tankers shuttling Gulf crude out to bigger vessels waiting on the far side, most owned by Abu Dhabi National Oil Company or South Korea's Sinokor. About sixteen ships a day are making the passage now, against more than a hundred and thirty before the war. Overnight a tanker nine miles off Oman's Ash Shishah reported a projectile through its engine room that left it disabled, crew safe. CENTCOM says its blockade has redirected seventy-one commercial ships, disabled three, boarded two and waved more than forty aid vessels through. Pete Hegseth put the other half of it plainly: "By no means are we foreclosing using kinetic strikes anywhere in the Strait of Hormuz or around Iran." The IRGC's spokesman Hossein Mohebbi said any strike on Iranian infrastructure would bring heavy attacks on American energy chokepoints, and that Iran's guided-missile production has not stopped.

Off Yanbu, Saudi Arabia's main Red Sea oil port and the route the kingdom has been using to move crude around Hormuz, the Houthis said they put a ballistic missile into the tanker Amzan and set it alight. Saudi Arabia's national shipping line confirmed the attack and said the crew was fine. Sanaa's defense minister Muhammad al-Atifi declared the movement's battle "pre-emptively offensive" now.

Inside Iran the queues are at the pumps. Tehran's stations are rationing twenty litres a car, the state fuel body says the country is fifteen million litres short of a hundred and thirty-five million litres of daily demand, and the rial has gone past two million to the dollar. Pakistan's army chief Asim Munir landed in Tehran having spoken to Trump first, and Islamabad's interior minister Mohsin Naqvi came out of the meeting with Pezeshkian saying there had been "significant progress." Parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf told him Washington broke the Islamabad memorandum the two sides signed on 17 June, and Mohsen Rezaei, who runs Iran's national security council, said Tehran keeps its own "security management" of Hormuz either way.

Netanyahu said on Israeli television that Iran tried to murder one of his sons, without saying which, and that he had asked Shin Bet chief David Zini to extend protection to every candidate for prime minister through the campaign. Iranian state television is said to have run a three-minute segment on Sunday titled "Where to kill Barron Trump?", mapping the dormitory, habits and Secret Service detail of the American president's twenty-year-old son and putting ten million dollars on him. Israel is holding its own part of this war in reserve. The IDF sits at readiness with CENTCOM, able to go back to high-intensity operations on short notice.

ASSESSMENT

Bessent gave the ceiling away in his own answer. Washington won't run the enforcement that would actually bite, because China takes more than eighty percent of Iran's shipped oil, so what lands is a graduated threat pointed at a regime that has already absorbed six months of them. Netanyahu and much of Trump's cabinet told him before the war that Iran sat at its weakest point in decades and the opening wouldn't come twice. Tulsi Gabbard, then running national intelligence, told him that killing the Supreme Leader could produce a harder successor open to a bomb, that Tehran could shut Hormuz fast, and that American forces and allies would be hit for it. The office is Mojtaba Khamenei's now, decrees issue in his name, the strait has been closed since February, and Kuwait has spent half a year taking barrages into its desalination and power plants. [I keep hearing this regime described as a rational actor. It spent state airtime on where to kill a twenty-year-old.] What is actually squeezing Tehran got no press conference: rationing at the pumps, a currency past two million, and a navy reduced to writing tickets for ships it cannot catch.

Israel Widens the Gaza Strikes From Gunmen to Weapons Depots

The IDF and Shin Bet destroyed two Hamas weapons stores on Monday, both of them inside mosques, one in Shati camp on Gaza City's shore and one at Deir al-Balah, holding dozens of Kalashnikovs, magazines and other equipment. The Shati target sits past the Yellow Line, the edge of the ground Israeli forces hold under the ceasefire that has run in Gaza since last October on Trump's twenty-point plan and Security Council Resolution 2803. Phone warnings went out first — to an UNRWA elementary school, a Doctors Without Borders clinic, an International Rescue Committee compound. [Tell me again how these NGOs aren't complicit—still hosting weapons stores, are they still providing “staff” cover for terrorists as they were at the start of this tragedy?] More strikes followed at the Sheikh Radwan market in northern Gaza City and at al-Bureij in the centre, and overnight the air force killed Mohammed Abu Asad, a Nukhba man who came through the fence on October 7. Until this week Southern Command was taking individual names. Now it is taking the stores.

Five kites did that. Four came down at Kibbutz Nahal Oz on Friday and Saturday and one at Kfar Aza, none carrying incendiary material or explosives, one of them lettered in Arabic: “We will never calm down.” Early IDF work puts children and teenagers on the strings under Hamas commanders. Netanyahu and Katz ordered zero tolerance and zero containment — “a balloon is treated like a kite, and a kite is treated like a drone, with or without explosives” — and Israel has reportedly given the Board of Peace three days to stop the launches before the army goes further. Herzog said it at Nir Oz, opening an AI centre on a kibbutz Hamas gutted: the state cannot underestimate any sign that frightens the people who live there, and it cannot let a kite return Gaza to October 6.

And the Paratroopers Brigade closed three months on the Yellow Line under the 143rd and 99th Divisions and moved to Judea and Samaria. Working with Yahalom, the brigade dismantled and sealed thirteen kilometres of tunnel, including part of the one where Hadar Goldin *z"l* was held.

ASSESSMENT

Moving the target set from men to stores is the first thing Hamas cannot answer by promoting somebody. A commander is replaceable inside a week and a warehouse of Kalashnikovs is not, which is why the stores were under the mosques to begin with. Ten months into the ceasefire Hamas has handed over no weapons and dissolved no armed formation, and the Board of Peace's fifteen-point roadmap of 30 July — the one Hamas accepted and Israel is not a party to — was supposed to sequence that disarmament against a phased Israeli pullback. The force meant to take the ground over is nowhere near the twenty thousand it was drawn for: Uganda has pledged about 1,200, Morocco up to 500, Kosovo, Kazakhstan and Albania roughly eighty between them, and Indonesia's 8,000 has been frozen since the strikes on Iran.

Israeli Jets Hit Bint Jbeil While Rome Argues Over Who Verifies

Israeli jets struck the outskirts of Ainatha and Haddatha in the Bint Jbeil district on Monday, and earlier between Mis al-Jabal and Houla and at al-Mansouri and Beit al-Siyad. Under the June Israel-Lebanon-United States framework, Israel's pullback in south Lebanon is tied to Hezbollah's verified disarmament, and two months on nobody has agreed who does the verifying or what a cleared village is supposed to look like. Lebanon's army commander Rodolphe Haykal is in Rome on exactly that question: who runs the mechanism, how it works, how large the international force is and what it may do, and what becomes of UNIFIL when its mandate runs out at the end of the year. Lebanese press is carrying Italy as the front-runner. Neither government has confirmed anything, and until somebody is named the pilot zones do not expand and no Israeli soldier moves.

Defense sources briefed Israeli television that Iranian weapons are crossing the Syrian border into Hezbollah's hands at a rising rate, with the Quds Force paying for the traffic and running it on the ground, and a good deal of it arriving undetected. The IDF says there has been no spike against the past two years. Netanyahu's office said the report had not come from it and was right anyway. Israeli officials name that traffic as the reason the air force is over Syria at all, which is the one thing Damascus is currently asking Israel to stop.

ASSESSMENT

The verifier vacuum is the term Hezbollah is actually defending. A mechanism that can certify a village clean is a mechanism that ends the argument, and nobody in Beirut wants the argument ended. Lebanese security officials read the pattern of the strikes — the ridgelines above the villages, a road running deeper north — as groundwork for something wider, and Beirut commentary hangs it on the Israeli election. Northern Command has been inside Kafr Kila, Al-Khiam, Bint Jbeil and Taibe for weeks pulling shelters out from under houses, which is a poor fit for a campaign invented in August. [I would still like somebody to write down what a cleared village looks like. Two months, and not one page of criteria.] If the smuggling read is the right one, Hezbollah is rebuilding faster than anyone is counting, and the missing verifier costs more every week it stays missing.

Inside Israel

The Army Had the Demolition Planned Before Sukkot Brought a Hammer

Zvi Sukkot took a hammer to a monument in Madama, near Shechem, this morning, under an IDF escort he had been advised not to ask for. The Religious Zionism MK chairs the Knesset Education Committee and its Judea and Samaria subcommittee. He filed a request on 12 August for a “monuments tour” of Beita, Burin and Madama, villages in Areas A and B. The monuments honour Yaman Faraj, who helped send the bomber to the Geha Junction attack in 2003, and Hamdan al-Najjar, who carried out an attack near Har Bracha in 1988. Memorial events were held at them. Sweets were handed out to the village children.

The army said the participants “acted deceitfully and manipulatively, without authority and in complete violation of the approved framework.” Troops on operational missions were pulled off them and “put at unnecessary risk.” Commanders ordered the soldiers to stop him and walk him out of the village. The IDF had recommended postponing the tour after the recent trouble at Qusra, and had offered to photograph the monuments and hand him the material instead. The Samaria brigade already had an operation planned to bring the same ones down. Sukkot said he went because he had demanded their removal and nothing happened. Gideon Sa’ar, the foreign minister, gave the first condemnation from inside the coalition. “MK Sukkot is not the sovereign in Judea and Samaria,” he said. “Decisions have to be taken and carried out by the state and its authorities, the IDF and the security forces, and by them alone.” Two months ago the chief of staff wrote to Defense Minister Israel Katz over a Sukkot visit to Joseph’s Tomb that pulled a drone off the Lebanon sector.

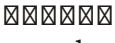
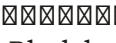
Zamir and Bluth called the meeting themselves. They convened it at Central Command on no notice last night and brought in Netanyahu and Katz, along with the national security adviser Shmuel Ben Ezra, Military Intelligence chief Maj. Gen. Shlomi Binder and Brig. Gen. Kobi Heller, who commands the Judea and Samaria Division. The two generals told the political leadership the sector is on the verge of an explosion, and the reason they gave was Jewish nationalist crime. Bluth called it “like a match that can ignite everything in an instant.” The complaint underneath that is operational: the army’s attention is being pulled off thwarting Palestinian terror to deal with Israelis, constantly, and the incidents are getting bolder. The figures the generals carried in showed Palestinian terrorism at its lowest in decades. Netanyahu pressed the chief of staff on what the army does if the sector goes up. Zamir answered: “We did not come prepared to the discussion to present that.” IDF officials say the plans were ready and rehearsed and only the briefing was not.

What does that decades-low figure tell us? Significant attacks fell after the army went into Jenin, Tulkarem and Nur Shams and emptied the camps —

Katz was still praising that order on his way out of the room last night. Capability was destroyed by Israeli soldiers. Nobody in Ramallah revised their opinion of Jews.

Elhanan Hanania pulled off Route 90 on Sunday morning to buy cigarettes. He is 24, a career soldier on leave, and his pregnant wife, their two daughters and his father-in-law were waiting in the car outside a shop near the village of Auja. A Palestinian waited by the shop until his back was turned and stabbed him several times. His father-in-law got out of the car and the man ran. Hanania is in Shaare Zedek with a fractured shoulder and internal bleeding. Eight hours later a Duvdevan force took the attacker — a sixteen-year-old who had argued with his family that morning and walked out of the house to find a Jew to stab. At Rimonim Junction that Sunday another man tried to pull a rifle off an Israeli soldier, and the soldier shot him. Overnight the IDF took Imam Hazem near Jenin, who had told people he intended to attack Israeli civilians. His father, Fathi Hazem, was killed on 21 August trying to stab a soldier near Jenin. His brother Ra'ad murdered three Israelis on Dizengoff Street in April 2022 and wounded more than a dozen. One family, three men, four years, and the only reason this week's entry in the series is not a funeral is that soldiers got to him first. On Sunday another was taken at Sa-Nur preparing attacks. When the sixteen-year-old goes out to knife a stranger, the Palestinian Authority pays him or his family for it, and Washington still calls that the moderate partner.

A count of successful attacks measures Israeli capability at least as much as it measures Palestinian intent. It cannot see a boy who decides at breakfast and acts before lunch, because there is no cell to infiltrate and no file to open on someone who told nobody.

The army has been clearing illegal outposts at close to two a night since the attack near the village of Tell on 24 July that killed Maj. Yuval Ezra ז"ל and Sgt. Maj. (res.) Benayahu Mellet ז"ל. Mellet served on the standby squad at Havat Gilad and oversaw its agriculture; he left a wife and two daughters, and he is buried there beside Rabbi Raziel Shevach, murdered on the same roads in 2018. Both men died going to help Israelis who had come under attack. The hilltops answered the evacuations by going after the commanders. A poster went round showing Bluth and Heller in uniform saluting a man in a keffiyeh, captioned "11 evacuations in one week. Bluth and Heller, champions of evacuations," under .  They started on Bluth and moved to Heller when it did not take — Bluth has approved more new communities than any of his predecessors and the councils know it, and Heller is the man who laid out the ground for families to go back into northern Samaria. Both are now accused by a few groups of coordinating with the Palestinian Authority, which is a government directive they are carrying out. And the farms have slowed. One settlement figure put it as close to a freeze, and the senior command's own reading is that American attention to these incidents is what did it.

Efrat's council is meanwhile advancing Mordot HaZayit — about 500 units on the slope below the existing Zayit neighbourhood, towers of twelve to

fifteen storeys, schools, shops and a sheltered-housing compound. The town is around 14,000 people now, and the plan takes it to 20,000 inside five years.

ASSESSMENT

The state was already taking that monument down, and the hammer cost it the operation. [Sweets handed out to children at a shrine to the man who sent the Geha Junction bomber — that is the sentence I would have led with, and instead the week goes on explaining a hammer.] Bluth is right about the men he is describing. A Jew who burns a house with a family inside it has committed an act of terror, he is a disgrace to his neighbours, and he should be caught — and Israel catches them, 967 police investigations opened last year and 61 indictments filed off them, Israeli police building the files and Israeli prosecutors filing them. That is a country working a crime problem through its own courts. But the number the generals carried into that room is not measuring what its name says. It is measuring its own definition. The dashboards that produce it file a sprayed wall and a house burned with people in it under one heading, and file a Jew who walked up to Har HaBayit as an incident too — 1,361 of 1,704 entries in eastern Jerusalem are exactly that. Strip it back to verified violence and it is on the order of a hundred and ten a year, in a population of half a million. [A category this loose is worth something to every faction in this country nine weeks out from a vote. That is not an accident of bookkeeping.] Those half a million are not a security problem. They are the people who put a standby squad on the road at Havat Gilad and lost two men off it in July, and who are still moving into Efrat and back into northern Samaria while the category gets argued over in Washington. Because that is where it is being argued. No American official decided where Jews may live in Judea and Samaria. American attention did the same work at one remove, and the Israeli officials who bent to it never had to say so.

Ben-Gvir Refuses a Joint Run With Smotrich and Points Him at Winter

Itamar Ben-Gvir, who runs Otzma Yehudit, ruled out a joint list with Religious Zionism's Bezalel Smotrich yesterday on Radio 103FM, and the reason he gave was arithmetic. "If I take Smotrich, the right loses," he said. "There isn't one poll I look at where joining Smotrich doesn't lose me the periphery and lose me young voters." His alternative is that Smotrich should join Ofer Winter, the reserve brigadier general who launches his own party today at the Shalva centre in Jerusalem, and whose separate run Ben-Gvir called "very dangerous" in the same breath.

Netanyahu spent yesterday morning making the opposite argument in a campaign video. He told the 1992 story — right-wing splinters that missed the threshold, Labour into power, Arafat out of Tunis, "and the rest you know" — then held up a sheet of paper, dropped it in a bin and said: "There are your votes. You can put them in the trash. You burned them." Coalition officials have spent the week briefing that Winter faces a "political thwarting" meant to hold him under the line. Netanyahu wants to reach the vote with four lists on his side, partly because a fifth leaves somebody without a surplus-vote partner and costs the bloc half a seat. Winter has refused a merger and a reserved slot both. Smotrich, at a parlour meeting in Efrat on Sunday, told the room the shout against splitting has to come from them. "I can't shout it, they'll say I'm doing it because of the polls. You shout." Lists close on 8 September, seven weeks before Israel elects the 26th Knesset on 27 October.

Channel 12's poll last night put Gadi Eisenkot's Yashar at 24 and Likud at 22, with the coalition bloc on 50. Run the same poll with Winter in it and Religious Zionism falls under the 3.25 percent threshold and the bloc drops to 49. Asked who is better suited to be prime minister, 44 percent named the former chief of staff and 34 percent named Netanyahu. Channel 14's survey the same night has Netanyahu's bloc at 63, with Winter under the threshold and Smotrich comfortably above it. The two pollsters are thirteen seats apart and neither has moved from its own last reading.

ASSESSMENT

Ben-Gvir has read the same polls Netanyahu has and drawn the opposite conclusion, which is what makes an appeal to bloc discipline useless. A merger costs him the periphery and the young voters he has been taking off Likud and Shas, so he won't do it — and his alternative, that Smotrich should go to Winter, hands Smotrich to the man taking his seats. Smotrich sits at four in Channel 12's poll and drops under the line the moment Winter runs, so the arithmetic that beat the right in 1992 is being rebuilt by people who each have a rational reason to build it. Netanyahu's remedy is a video and a briefed plan to hold Winter under the threshold, and the only person who can merge Otzma Yehudit into anything has just said no. [I keep hearing 1992 told as a warning to voters. It was a warning about party leaders, and that is the part that hasn't changed.]

Otzma Yehudit Announces the State's Altalena Find on Its Own WhatsApp Group

Sonar found the Altalena at half past midnight yesterday, sitting at 503 metres about twenty kilometres off the coast, seventy-eight years after Ben-Gurion had what was left of it towed out and sunk. The Irgun arms ship reached Israel from France in June 1948 carrying roughly 930 immigrants, many of them Holocaust survivors, and a large weapons shipment. Ben-Gurion demanded the cargo go to the new IDF, Begin demanded a share for Irgun units in Jerusalem, and the shore batteries opened fire. Sixteen Irgun men and three IDF soldiers were killed. Begin ordered his people not to shoot back. The Marine Mapping Division of the Survey of Israel ran the search on a million-shekel Heritage Ministry budget, and the IDF says it had no part in it.

The find reached the public through the WhatsApp group of Otzma Yehudit. "We found the Altalena, making history," the party wrote, presenting it as an achievement of Itamar Ben-Gvir and Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu. Netanyahu's office knew about the search and was surprised by the timing. Israel Katz's office was not told at all. By evening the prime minister had filmed his own statement outside the hall and pushed the ministers' press conference back half an hour, apparently to avoid a photograph with Ben-Gvir. Ben-Gvir took his podium and said Begin "knew the taste of persecution, and the taste of people not wanting to be photographed with you on the same stage." Netanyahu claimed the search — the Heritage Directorate he set up in 2009, the renewed budget in 2019, the captain Emanuel Fein's logbook — and promised to raise the ship.

Shlomo Nakdimon, who advised Begin and wrote the book on the affair, says the ship as it was does not exist: the lower section was sunk and the upper section was dismantled and burned. Israel announced a find once before, in December 2012, off Rishon LeZion at 300 metres. Raising a hull from 503 metres is probably not an engineering proposition at all, and the Heritage Ministry is looking at a floating memorial or a maritime heritage centre instead.

ASSESSMENT

A state mapping agency found the ship and a party announced it. The Survey of Israel did the work, the Heritage Ministry paid for it, and the Survey answers to Construction and Housing Minister Haim Katz, who learned about it from the same message everyone else did. Netanyahu is trying to win back the voters who left him for being too close to Ben-Gvir. Ben-Gvir is trying to hold the ones who came to him for that exact reason, which is why the useful thing to do with a ship neither of them can raise was to stand alone in front of it. Begin's whole claim on this country is that he told his people not to shoot back, and the two men who spent yesterday claiming him could not manage a photograph together.

Israel and the World

Washington Opens Syria to Capital as Israel and Turkey Draw Red Lines

The State Department took Syria off its list of state sponsors of terrorism on Monday, ending a designation that had stood since 1979. It also revoked the global-terrorist listing on Hayat Tahrir al-Sham — al-Qaeda's Syrian franchise until it broke with the network in 2016. HTS is the group Ahmed al-Sharaa rode into Damascus in December 2024, when it toppled Bashar al-Assad and made him president. The removal took effect when a 45-day congressional review closed on Friday with nobody moving to stop it. Rubio credited Damascus with distancing itself from international terrorism and with running operations against al-Qaeda, ISIS, Hezbollah and Iran-aligned groups. Cuba, North Korea and Iran are what is left on the list.

Trump ended the broad sanctions program on Syria in July 2025. What the designation still carried after that was legal exposure: restrictions on foreign assistance, defense exports, dual-use goods and financial transactions, plus enough compliance risk to keep banks out of the country altogether. Syrian foreign minister Asaad al-Shaibani called it the last obstacle. Bank of America executives have taken meetings with Syria's finance ministry, and Mastercard has been laying card rails with QNB and the Syrian central bank since May. Damascus reportedly agreed during the negotiations to cut its Russian oil imports sharply. Treasury sanctioned two former HTS men the same afternoon, one accused of moving money and logistics to al-Qaeda and the other out of Hurras al-Din.

Turkey's ambassador in Damascus, Nuh Yilmaz, wrote that the last obstacle to Syria's integration with the world had finally been removed. Israel put at least eight bombs into the runways and hangars at Abu al-Duhur in Idlib a

week ago. The intelligence behind that strike was that Ankara was preparing to install radar and then air defenses there, run by Turkish soldiers. Al-Shaibani says the field is being restored for the Syrian air force and that there will be no Turkish base. Ankara denies sending anyone. Netanyahu warned that expanding Turkey's military footprint in Syria would change the regional balance. Tom Barrack, who holds the Ankara embassy along with the Syria and Iraq files, called the strike an unnecessary escalation and welcomed the delisting as another wall coming down. Washington, he says, is building a deconfliction mechanism with Israel, Turkey and Syria inside it.

ASSESSMENT

A designation that outlasted both Assads came off for the man who ran al-Qaeda's Syrian branch until 2016. What Damascus reportedly paid for it was a sharp cut in Russian crude. Capital is much harder to reverse than a designation, so whatever Syria becomes now gets built while Israel and Turkey are still denying each other over one airbase. [Israeli jets have crossed Syria on the way to Iran since February. Washington's fix is a room where Ankara sits in on the flight plan.] Israel's conditions at the table in Jordan, where the Mossad chief met al-Shaibani on Sunday, open with no Turkish military activity in Syria at all.

Luxembourg Shuts the Last EU Door on Israel Bonds

From 1 September, Luxembourg's financial regulator will stop approving the prospectuses EU law requires before Israel can sell Israel Bonds inside the bloc. The bonds are non-marketable state debt bought mostly by diaspora Jews and pro-Israel organizations, and they raised more than \$2.5 billion in Europe last year and about the same in 2024. No other member state has been named to take the work. The Central Bank of Ireland said last week it has had no request from Israel to approve prospectuses again.

London handled the approvals until Brexit, and the work moved to Dublin. Three years of Irish governments calling for suspension of the EU's preferential trade terms with Israel, for sanctions, and for the prosecution of Israeli officials made Dublin unusable. Israel closed its embassy there in December 2024. Then-Accountant General Yali Rothenberg moved the file to Luxembourg in August 2025 to get ahead of the blow. The regulator there said at the time that it saw no reason to refuse. A year and a public campaign later, it will not renew. The reason it gives is technical: on its own reading of EU law it cannot substitute itself for Ireland as the approving state. Luxembourg has backed the Irish and Spanish position on suspending the free-trade terms.

ASSESSMENT

Nobody voted for this. One financial regulator declined to renew a filing. On 1 September Israel loses access to a market that took \$2.5 billion of its debt last year — no sanctions package, no qualified majority, no government that had to persuade twenty-six others. Luxembourg refused on its own reading of EU prospectus law, which leaves nothing to vote down and nobody in the Chamber of Deputies obliged to defend a position on Israel. Ireland has not been asked to take the work back, and a file moved once already to get ahead of exactly this outcome now has a week and no named home.

Democrats Condemn Piker While Michigan's Senate Nominee Avoids His Name

Two Democratic members of Congress condemned Hasan Piker by name yesterday. The Twitch streamer had told his audience a week earlier that American Jews who keep announcing they are invested in Israel will eventually have someone come for them. Hillary Scholten of Michigan, vice chair of the Democratic Women's Caucus, called that "unacceptable. Full stop," and said Piker "thrives on hate, shock and awe because he lacks substance." Josh Gottheimer of New Jersey said the only person inciting violence against American Jews is Piker, and that anyone campaigning with him is part of the problem. Piker answered Scholten by calling her "an Israel 1st congresswoman," and told his audience anti-Zionism is a "90/10 issue."

The man Piker had put on screen was Jeremy Moss, a Jewish state senator who won the Democratic primary for Michigan's 11th district and has withheld an endorsement from Abdul El-Sayed, the party's Senate nominee in the state. El-Sayed campaigned with Piker all the way through his own primary — rallies, campus stops, a Detroit pool party the night before the vote. His statement yesterday said every American deserves to advocate without fear of violence, and that his commitment to Jewish safety is the same as his commitment to his own daughters'. Nobody, he added, speaks for the campaign but him and his spokespeople. He never used Piker's name and never quoted a word of what Piker said. Mike Rogers, the Republican running against him, asked him to disavow the streamer outright.

ASSESSMENT

El-Sayed's statement condemns nobody, and it would read the same if Piker had said the opposite. [I can find gas and groceries in it. I can't find Hasan.] The two who did use his name got the answer his audience is trained to hear, and that is what sets the price of saying it. What Michigan is testing now is whether a Democratic nominee who wants the crowd Piker brings can afford to name him, and the answer went out yesterday under El-Sayed's own signature.

The Guardian Takes Its Gaza Case to the Golden Lion Competition

Venice added a film to its main competition yesterday, nine days before the festival opens and with the lineup otherwise closed. NAZA is the only documentary running for the Golden Lion this year. Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor directed it — two of the four directors of *No Other Land*, which took the Oscar for best documentary in March 2025 and whose acceptance speeches set off an argument in Israel that ran for months. The Guardian produced it, alongside James Wilson and Jonathan Glazer, who made *The Zone of Interest*.

They shot it at night from rooftops in Tel Aviv. The synopsis promises to reveal "the systems behind Israel's calculated mass killing of Palestinian civilians in Gaza." The title is a military acronym the film says Israeli intelligence uses for the number of civilians a strike is expected to kill. The Guardian says the film rests on disclosures published in +972, Local Call and its own pages between 2023 and 2025. The premiere is 10 September at the Sala Grande, and the Golden Lion goes out on the twelfth.

ASSESSMENT

The Guardian spent three years building this case in print and has now produced the film of it, which puts the whole thing in front of a jury whose verdict is a prize. Nobody has seen it. The synopsis already carries the finding, and the last film from these directors ended up being argued over as an acceptance speech. The reporting underneath this one was done in Israel, published in Israel, and nobody was arrested for it. None of that is in the synopsis.

A York Jury Names the Jew-Hate and No Sentence Can Follow

A jury at York Crown Court found on Friday that Pat Marsh, 78, a former Liberal Democrat mayor of Harrogate with more than thirty years in local politics, had posted material online likely to stir up racial hatred. Dementia left her unfit to plead or to give evidence, so the court ran a trial of facts — nine men and three women deciding only whether she did the things alleged, with no guilty or not guilty available to them. Judge Sean Morris, the Recorder of York, gave her an absolute discharge and said her health left him nothing else.

“I hope you Jews feel proud of yourselves. Remember what happened to you during the Second World War. Why would you do the same?” That one is hers. So is a post from February 2024, seen 875 times: “The whole world is silent. The Jews will pay for that.” She called Jews a “so-called religious group who are evil” and “a disgrace to the world,” and wrote that they “fund politics throughout the world.” Prosecutor Ashleigh Metcalfe told the court that much of Marsh’s output was plainly anti-Israel and some of it was anti-semitic, and that the posts folded the Israeli government’s conduct into Jews as a whole — “Rabbis and Holocaust survivors” included.

North Yorkshire Police arrested her in February 2024 after four members of the public reported the account, seized six devices from her home, and found three X accounts on one laptop. The Liberal Democrats suspended her and she resigned from North Yorkshire Council. Her barrister accepted that the posts existed and could be read online, and argued that this didn’t prove who published them.

ASSESSMENT

The finding British and Australian courts have spent this month declining to make was available here because Marsh wrote “you Jews” instead of “Zionists.” An English employment tribunal ruled in early August that David Miller’s belief that Zionism is inherently racist and colonial is a protected philosophical belief under the Equality Act, and a New South Wales judge then refused to read “Fuk Israel” sprayed across cars in Sydney’s eastern suburbs, plus a torched car, as antisemitic by any degree of analysis. Marsh handed the prosecution the noun neither of those cases had. [Four members of the public called the police on her. Thirty years in that party, and it took strangers.] What Yorkshire produced is a finding of fact with an absolute discharge attached, against a defendant the court had already ruled unfit to answer for any of it.

Closed Dossier: *Controlled Surrender* — The Dossier's argument is that Britain is the working case study in Western institutional decline and that the rest of the Anglosphere is already on the same slope, which is what turns an employment tribunal protecting Miller's antizionism and a Crown Court finding nobody can sentence into one sequence rather than two bad weeks. # Briefly Noted

Frontline & Security

- *Ynet News*: Palestinian Authority police stopped an armed Israeli reservist at the Beitunia junction on Sunday night, took his rifle and drove him into Ramallah before handing him to Israeli forces — all of it inside Area C, where PA officers have no authority to operate. The Civil Administration first put him inside Area A and called it a rescue, then withdrew that — how armed PA officers came to be running a roadblock in Area C is what Israel is now investigating.
- *Jerusalem Post*: IDF lookouts on the Gaza border told the October Council, which speaks for hundreds of families of the October 7 massacre, that they still meet threats and silencing when they report what they see on the screens. A reserve soldier quoted in the same report describes formations thin enough that two incidents at once would leave one community holding alone for a while.

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- *Israel Hayom*: Chinese J-16s flew more than 6,000 kilometers into an Egyptian air base, refueling in the air on the way, and spent Sunday running one-on-one air combat against Egyptian Rafales in the second year of a joint exercise Beijing and Cairo call Eagles of Civilization. Egypt's air force flies mostly American aircraft and is now sparring with China's, and Beijing put out the video itself.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Gideon Sa'ar and North Macedonia's foreign minister Timco Mucunski signed two cooperation agreements in Jerusalem yesterday, and Mucunski said his government has made the relationship with Israel a foreign-policy priority — he wants direct flights, defense-industry work and Israeli investment next. Sa'ar thanked him for North Macedonia's voting record in the international forums, which is what Jerusalem needs most from a small state right now.

Public Diplomacy & Media

- *Jewish News UK*: Gary Lineker reposted a clip of Tony Greenstein — expelled from Labour, expelled from the Greens this year, and a man a British court ruled the Campaign Against Antisemitism was entitled to call a “notorious antisemite” — telling a camera outside Kingston Crown Court, after a jury cleared him of inviting support for Hamas, that “Zionism is in the tradition of the Nazis.” Lineker gave up Match of the Day last year over a Zionism explainer with a rat in it, and his defense then was that he had not looked at what he was sharing.

Am Yisrael

- *JNS*: Nathan Hewett, 36, is accused of firing about twenty rounds from a semiautomatic rifle toward the basketball courts of Camp Modin, the Jewish summer camp in Belgrade, Maine, on 7 August, and the camp's guards put on ballistic vests and armed themselves with the campers on site — the police affidavit records a suspected Jew-hate motive. Camp Modin goes to court for a protection order on 31 August, and deputies have taken 23 guns off Hewett's property.
- *Jerusalem Post*: A speaker at Sunday's anti-Israel demonstration at Bathurst and Sheppard in Toronto, a heavily Jewish residential neighborhood where these rallies now recur, told the crowd through a megaphone that Zionists "have raped and killed and eaten children" and that Jews are "the most kicked-out people in the world for making black magic." B'nai Brith Canada wants Toronto Police to investigate the speech and to look again at how it polices the Bathurst-and-Sheppard protests themselves.

Domestic & Law

- *Ynet*: The Tax Authority now requires yeshivas that already hold Section 46 approval to file a full student roster with ID numbers by 11 October and declare that none of those students has ignored a call-up, or lose the 35 percent credit their donors claim. The deadline lands sixteen days before Israelis vote.
- *The JC*: Jonathan Pollard, who served thirty years in a US prison for spying for Israel and made aliyah in 2020, is standing for the Knesset on Sharren Haskel's Israel First list. Herut tried to put him on its list in 2002, while he was still serving the sentence.

Economy, Tech & Infrastructure

- *Jerusalem Post*: Israel's Defense Ministry has put a dedicated budget behind space work — weapons to defend Israeli satellites against hostile ones, and weapons that strike targets on Earth from orbit — with Katz telling closed forums he wants Israel among the five leading countries in the field. The target banks satellites built through Roaring Lion are one reason the budget is moving now.

Culture, Religion & Society

- *Times of Israel*: Ramat Hasharon's mayor has demanded a police investigation after vandals smashed the windows at the Darchei Noam congregation, the second Reform synagogue hit in ten days.
- *Jerusalem Post*: Border Police went into Silwan to work a family feud that killed three over the weekend and found a Second Temple-period burial cave.

Developments to Watch

Judea & Samaria

- **Chabad court moves on the Hebron cemetery** — The Chabad Rabbinical Court asked the Jerusalem District Court yesterday to halt earthworks, an elevated access road and residential caravans going in over the Ashkenazi section of Hebron's 170-year-old Jewish cemetery, with the Chief Rabbinate's burial-honour committee warning that graves and burial caves are at risk. Repeated appeals to the authorities have not stopped the work, which leaves an interim injunction as the only thing that can.

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Beirut regularizes the ambassador it expelled** — Lebanon's General Security granted Iranian ambassador Mohammad Reza Sheibani a residency extension yesterday as a courtesy carrying no diplomatic status, five months after the foreign ministry pulled his accreditation, declared him persona non grata and set a 29 March departure date Tehran ignored. The state being asked to certify that Hezbollah has disarmed cannot make one ambassador leave.

Gaza & Southern Theater

- **An Israeli clinic opens in Mawasi next week** — Natan, the Israeli disaster-relief organization, opens a children's clinic at Al-Qarara on 1 September for roughly 10,000 children in the Mawasi displacement camp, paid for by Israeli and American Jewish donors, staffed by Palestinian medics with Israeli doctors consulting remotely. Israeli organizations cannot work inside the Strip directly, so Natan built it anyway and put its doctors on a screen.

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Washington puts \$10 million on five IRGC commanders** — The State Department's Rewards for Justice program offered up to \$10 million and relocation yesterday for information on Ahmad Vahidi, Ali Abdollahi, Saeed Aghajani, Hamidreza Lashgarian and Majid Khademi, who run the Guard, Khatam al-Anbiya, the Aerospace Force's drone unit, cyber command and intelligence. Vahidi pushed the decision to fire on Israel and held the hard line opposite Washington, and the offer is aimed at the people standing next to him.
- **Iran's hackers reach a British power plant** — Hackers believed to work for Iran took a small British energy plant offline for four days in July, reached through an industrial controller still running its factory password, and operators lost control of water systems across a dozen American states that July too. London answered on Monday with amendments letting ministers bar energy, health and telecoms firms from buying from high-risk suppliers, which is a procurement rule against people who walked in through a password nobody changed.

Diplomatic & Legal

- **Guterres offers to register Hormuz fertiliser traffic** — The UN secretary-general offered on Monday to have the UN register and verify ships carrying fertiliser through the Strait of Hormuz, coordinated by Oman, and said the mechanism exists only if every belligerent accepts it. Iran has spent six months insisting the strait runs on its permission, and a registry Tehran signs off on is that permission written down.
- **Two appropriators give the Navy until 1 September** — Patty Murray and Christopher Coons wrote to Hegseth and the acting Navy secretary demanding an independent review of the Ford, the Lincoln and the Benfold, citing the Pentagon's "inability, or refusal" to give Congress full and accurate information and unbudgeted repair costs nobody has shown them. The blockade needs a carrier on station every day the answer takes.
- **American support for the Iran war falls to 31 percent** — A Reuters/Ipsos poll that closed Monday puts support for US military action against Iran at 31 percent, down from 37 in March, with Republican backing at 69 from 77, Trump's approval at 33, and 83 percent of the country expecting the war to run long. A pressure campaign that tightens by stages needs months of American patience, and the president running it is at 33 percent with his own party sliding eight.

Home Front & Politics

- **The High Court freezes the coalition money until 10 September** — An order nisi issued yesterday on a petition against the Finance Committee sitting at all during the election recess froze hundreds of millions of shekels it approved on 4 August, and gives the Knesset speaker, the committee chair and the Finance Ministry until 10 September to say why the transfers should not be voided. Smotrich refused to separate the northern and southern rehabilitation budgets out of the package, so the court separated them for him and released them.
- **Police reopen the siege of Justice Solberg's house** — Police have summoned 25 suspects over the night of 3 June, when dozens of haredi men surrounded High Court Justice Noam Solberg's home in Alon Shvut and broke his windows and his car's, and the first of them are due for questioning tomorrow. Nothing had moved on it in nearly three months, and it restarts in the week draft-evasion arrests put the Jerusalem Faction back on the highways.

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Mitzpe Institute is an intelligence and strategy organization focused on Israeli security, diaspora threat assessment, and the strategic challenges confronting the Jewish people and the West. We produce daily intelligence, forensic analyses, strategic assessments, and tactical briefings read by policymakers, military leaders, and institutional decision-makers across more than 90 countries and all 50 US states — from the Knesset and the US Congress to allied governments, major policy institutions, and Jewish organizational leadership worldwide.

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