



Office of the State Comptroller  
Annual Report 70C | 2021

## **Nationa-Strategic Spheres of Activity**

# **Preparedness to Defend the Home Front against the Threat of Missiles and Rockets (Physical Protection, Warnings and Population Evacuation) – Follow- up Audit**

Abstract



# Preparedness to Defend the Home Front against the Threat of Missiles and Rockets (Physical protection, Warnings and Population Evacuation) – Follow-up Audit

## Background

The State of Israel and the IDF are responsible for civil defense, including defense against a threat of missiles and rockets, with the objectives of: protecting the civilian population and preventing casualties; minimizing property damage; minimizing any adverse impact on the population's sense of security and enabling it to maintain its routine life; and minimizing the impact on the functioning of the economy.

In December 2016, the Office of the State Comptroller published a report on the preparedness for defending the home front against a threat of missiles and rockets ("the previous audit"), which raised deficiencies that could potentially increase the threat to the population during combat. Significant deficiencies were found especially in settlements along the northern border.

## Key facts

**2.6 million**

residents of Israel (28%) have no standard sheltering near their homes (correct to 2018)

**300,000**

the number of residents that government ministries must be prepared to evacuate according to the government decision

**50,000**

residents are living in Sderot and Kiryat Shmona, that their evacuation plans have not been completed

**50,000**

residents of Israel are living up to 9 km from the northern border without standard shelters near their homes (as of 2018)

**231,650**

residents of Israel are living up to 40 km from the border with the Gaza Strip without standard shelters near to their homes (as of 2018)

**17**

Settlements adjacent to the border (where approximately 8,000 residents are residing) have no designated site to accommodate the residents in the event of an emergency evacuation


**12,601**

Public shelters in Israel, out of which 2,494 (20%) are unfit for purpose (correct to 2019)

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## Audit actions

 From February to June 2019, the Office of the State Comptroller conducted a follow-up audit on the rectification of the main deficiencies that were raised in the previous audit. The audit was conducted in the IDF: in the Home Front Command, in the Operations Directorate in the General Staff, in the Southern Command, in the Northern Command and in the Air and Space Force, as well as in the Ministry of Defense, including in the National Emergency Management Authority. Supplementary examinations were performed up until October 2019 in the National Security Council; in the Ministry of the Interior; in the Ministry of Health; in the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services; in the Ministry of Public Security; and in local authorities throughout Israel.



The subcommittee of the Knesset State Control Committee decided not to submit to the Knesset and not to publish parts of this report for national security reasons, pursuant to section 17 of the State Comptroller Law, 1958 [Consolidated Version]. The classification of these parts does not prevent the understanding of the fundamental issues raised in this audit.

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## Key findings

-  About 2.6 million residents of Israel (28%) have no standard shelters in proximity to their place of residence.
-  In July 2018, the State Security Cabinet decided that a multiyear plan for protecting the home front and for improving the preparedness for earthquakes will be formulated for the years 2019 – 2030 (“the Northern Shield” Plan). This plan has not yet been formulated and no budgetary source has been allocated to it and therefore, its execution is uncertain.
-  In June 2014, the government passed a resolution to regulate the authorities for managing the home front between the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Public Security. This regulation has not yet been completed.
-  Public shelters located in settlements adjacent to the border in which residents may be required to stay in shelter for a prolonged period can be considered adequate according to the Home Front Command, even if they do not fulfill the physical conditions necessary for prolonged sheltering. Furthermore, the expected crowdedness in the shared private shelters won't allow prolonged sheltering. The fact that some of the shelters do not enable prolonged sheltering was not expressed in the review of the inventories of adequate means of protection that the Home Front Command is reporting.



-  According to the determination of the National Emergency Management Authority, the “Melonit” plan for evacuating populations from lines of confrontation is based on false fundamental principles; consequently, it will be difficult to implement this plan. The alternative plan currently being formulated by the National Emergency Management Authority does not address the evacuation of settlements on the northern border.
-  The evacuation plans for Kiryat Shmona and Sderot have not yet been completed.



Since the previous audit, the physical protection of the home front has been improved by the addition of apartment secure spaces for approximately one million residents.

Since the previous audit, the Home Front Command has improved its presentation of the data regarding means of protection to the decision-makers and it does not include means of protection that are unfit for purpose.







In February 2018, the Minister of Defense approved a two-year plan at the volume of about NIS 150 million for protecting settlements within the range of up to 20 km from the Syrian border and from the Lebanese border. Within the framework of this plan, 553 shelters were renovated by the end of July 2019 and renovations of 181 additional shelters will be completed by the end of 2019.

Between 2015 and 2019, the Defense Establishment invested about NIS 400 million in improving the warning system.

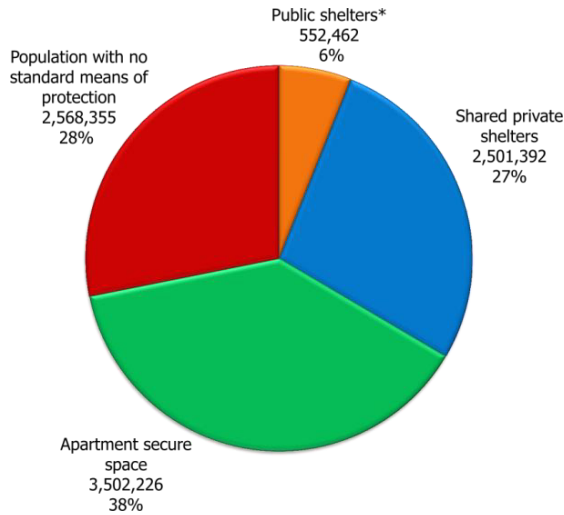
As a result of various actions by the Home Front Command and the IDF Air and Space Force since the previous audit, the warning time before missile attack has been lengthened by a few seconds in settlements around the Gaza Strip, and progress has been made in improving the detection capabilities in the northern border.

Since the previous audit, progress has been made in government ministries' preparedness for population evacuation as deriving from the government resolution “guests hotel.”

## Key recommendations

-  It is recommended that the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Public Security and the Home Front Command, whose representatives are members of the interministerial team, should complete the formulation of the plan for protecting the home front at the inclusive cost of NIS 5 billion, pursuant to the State Security Cabinet decision of July 2018.
-  The Ministry of the Interior and the Home Front Command should urge the local authorities to perform their role in regard to enforcing the provisions of the Civil Defense Law in shared private shelters in order to ensure that they are fit for protecting residents during emergencies.
-  The Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Public Security, in coordination with the National Security Council, should take action to implement Government Resolution 1661 and to submit a proposal for regulating the authorities for management of the home front between the two ministries. Insofar as disagreements arise between the ministries, the National Security Council should submit them for resolution by the Prime Minister and the State Security Cabinet.
-  It is appropriate that, when the Home Front Command is ascertaining which shelters are fit, it should consider whether shelters are adequate for prolonged stays, and it should map, out of all shared public and private shelters, those that do not enable prolonged stays, particularly in regions under threat.
-  It is recommended that the National Emergency Management Authority should finalize the plan for evacuating communities from the lines of confrontation, including the communities around the Gaza Strip and those on the northern border.
-  The IDF, in collaboration with the National Emergency Management Authority and the Evacuation, Relief Aid and Casualties Authority, should finalize the plans for evacuating and accommodating residents of Sderot and Kiryat Shmona and prepare for their implementation.

## Status of shelters for residents in Israel, 2018



Source: According to Home Front Command data; processed by the Office of the State Comptroller.

\* Public shelters also include standard mass shelters

## Summary

During the rounds of fighting in recent years, hundreds of missiles and rockets were launched daily towards Israel. According to the reference threat, this number will increase and tens of thousands of missiles and rockets will be launched towards Israel during combat.

The Office of the State Comptroller examined the rectification of most of the deficiencies that arose in the previous audit and found some improvement in the detection and warning capabilities and in the government ministries' preparedness to evacuate population; however, the plans for evacuating population have not yet been completed and some are not viable. It was also found that the authorities of the bodies responsible for managing the home front have not yet been regulated, that significant gaps in protection remain and that the State Security Cabinet's decision to formulate a multiyear plan for managing the home front has not yet been implemented.

