



Office of the State Comptroller  
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## Judea and Samaria Region

# Aspects of Safety and Responsibility in Relation to Road Maintenance in the Judea and Samaria Region

Abstract



# Aspects of Safety and Responsibility in Relation to Road Maintenance in the Judea and Samaria Region

## Background

In the region of Judea and Samaria, in which Israel holds security and civil authorities, the IDF carries out operational activity for defense and security purposes, which include, inter alia, the following actions: the construction of various military facilities, the opening or blocking of traffic arteries and the placement of security and protective means on road infrastructures used by the IDF and by the public.

## Key figures

**1,500 km**

length of the roads in Judea and Samaria (in Area C)<sup>1</sup>

**73**

. Active IDF bases that the responsibility for maintaining the access roads to them is not agreed upon.

**120**

junctions and access roads to IDF bases in Israel and in Judea and Samaria have safety problems at varying degrees of severity<sup>2</sup>

**272**

traffic accidents occurred on roads in Judea and Samaria between 2016 and 2018, due to road deficiencies or collisions with objects

**100**

concrete barriers being used as protective means, which are positioned on the shoulder of the asphalt or abutting the guardrail, are installed at a nonstandard distance

**14**

IDF guard posts (pillboxes) that the connection between the access road to them and to the road under the responsibility of National Roads Company, has not been arranged.

- 1 Pursuant to the interim agreement signed in September 1995 between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian Authority was granted full security and civil authorities in Area A in Judea and Samaria and most of the civil authorities in Area B. Israel retained the security authorities and most of the civil authorities in Area C.
- 2 Based on a survey conducted in 2011 by the traffic engineering department of the IDF construction center, in collaboration with IDF traffic safety officers.

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## Audit actions

From September 2018 to August 2019, the Office of the State Comptroller examined the issue of the responsibility for road maintenance in Judea and Samaria and the issue of the placement of various protective means on the road infrastructure used by the IDF and by the public. The audit was conducted in the IDF (in the Central Command) and in the Civil Administration in Judea and Samaria, in the Ministry of Defense, in the Ministry of Transportation, in the Israel Police, in the National Road Company and in the Ministry of Justice.

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## Key findings

-  Although the Deputy Attorney-General began his efforts to resolve the disagreements between the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Transportation with regard to road maintenance in Judea and Samaria in November 2018, the issue of the authority responsible for maintaining the roads leading to IDF bases in Judea and Samaria has not been resolved, taking into consideration all of the risks involved resulting from a failure to maintain them, including the bridge over the Og stream<sup>3</sup> These risks – particularly the safety risks to users of these roads – still remain.
-  The lack of congruence of the geographic data in the information systems being used by the Defense Establishment regarding military facilities may, in some cases, prevent decision-making in relation to the handling of military facilities in general and in relation to maintenance of the roads leading to them in particular.
-  The IDF breakthrough roads or removed road obstacles for security reasons, and placed protective means on the roads that are under the responsibility of the National Roads Company of Israel, without coordinating this with the authorized transportation authorities and without their approval, and sometimes, without using precautions for road users. This was done without complying with the IDF's operational requirement procedure<sup>4</sup> or the Ministry of Defense directives<sup>5</sup> and by that endangers the safety of road users to the point of being life-threatening.

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3 A road connecting Route 1 to the Nabi Musa training base.

4 The operational requirement procedure serves to regulate the mode of execution of all infrastructure actions that are based on a military operational need in the Central Command area and particularly in Judea and Samaria.

5 Ministry of Defense directives regarding the regulation of real estate and building permits.



## Key recommendations

-  In light of the absence of an authority responsible for maintaining roads connecting to IDF bases, which could endanger road users, including users of the bridge over the Og River, and considering that the necessary mode of repair of the bridge has been determined, it is suggested that, until a decision is reached to determine the authority responsible for maintaining these roads, the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Defense should agree specifically on the method of repair of this bridge and should take action accordingly.
-  The Deputy Attorney-General, the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Transportation should promptly designate the authority to be responsible for maintaining the access roads to IDF bases in Judea and Samaria.
-  It is appropriate that the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Transportation should conduct an updated safety survey of all roads in Judea and Samaria, particularly in relation to those roads under dispute between the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Defense, and should map all of the deficiencies requiring repair. Furthermore, as soon as the decision is made regarding the authority that will bear responsibility for maintaining these roads, it is appropriate that the maintenance priorities should also be determined according to data to be received from the Israel Police and from the Palestinian Authority about Israeli and Palestinian traffic accidents that occurred on these roads, in order to reduce the potential risk to road users .
-  The Central Command and the Civil Administration should take action according to all sections of the operational requirement procedure and should ensure, in collaboration with a traffic consultant, that the repercussions of requested infrastructure actions<sup>6</sup> are examined in relation to traffic aspects. If the traffic professionals issue guidelines and conditions for carrying out infrastructure actions, they should be followed, while balancing between security needs and the need to maintain the principles of road safety, in order to reduce the risk posed to road users.
-  The Ministry of Defense and the IDF should ensure congruence between the IDF's operational requirement procedure and the existing Ministry of Defense directives so that their purpose may be achieved .

<sup>6</sup> The placement of security components and various types of protective means on road infrastructures that are also used by the public.

## Concrete barrier adjacent to a guardrail with no space for a clear zone\*



Source: Findings of an engineering inspection conducted during a police investigation of a fatal traffic accident on Route 57 at road marker 31.7 (the section between Einav and Shavei Shomron).

\* "Clear zone" – the space required between the guardrail wall prior to collision and the farthest point of the guardrail after collision.

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## Summary

In order to enable a response to the operational needs and to ensure order and security in the public space, the IDF is taking action in the territories of Judea and Samaria from a variety of facilities and using various infrastructure and security means. This operational activity is being carried out, inter alia, using access routes and roads that are used by IDF soldiers, some of which are also used by the general public.

The existing tension between the need to ensure operational needs and the need to protect the safety of road users in the public space, requires the use of a set of procedures and instructions and tools to coordinate between the various needs, while maintaining checks and balances.

The rectification of the deficiencies specified in this report will ensure that public order, security and the safety of road users are maintained, while ensuring better coordination between all military and civil authorities responsible for security and also obligated to maintain the safety of road users.

In response to the audit findings, the IDF advised that the findings and the conclusions presented by the State Comptroller were studied, since the subject "has grave safety implications" and that "the Central Command is currently taking action to regulate and collect obstacles and elements that are deployed in the field, all while addressing the safety and security aspects and achieving balance between them."