



State of Israel
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Audit Reports on Municipalities 2020

Measures to Increase Road Safety within the Jurisdictions of the Arab POPULATION'S Local Authorities

Abstract

Measures to Increase Road Safety within the Jurisdictions of the Arab Sector Local Authorities

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Background

According to the data held by the National Road Safety Authority (hereafter NRSA), the percentage of the Arab society* population involved in fatal road accidents is higher relative to the percentage of the general population. The main victims in this society are road users aged 0 – 24. The main factor contributing to this increased risk is a cultural environment that opposes safety; a state of mind that is expressed through the low awareness of road safety rules and non-compliance with traffic laws. Additional risk factors are lax enforcement and a neglected and unsafe physical environment characterized by poor infrastructures.

Key figures

17 billion shekels

The annual cost of road accidents to the national economy (about 1.3% of the GDP)

33%

Of those killed in road accidents in the last decade were of the Arab population, even though they constitute only 21% of Israeli society

2.4 times

Young drivers from the Arab sector were involved in road accidents in the last decade, in comparison to young drivers from the Jewish sector

1.9 times

Drivers from the Arab sector were involved in road accidents in the last decade, in comparison to drivers from the Jewish sector

* The NRSA uses terms such as "Arab society" or "Arab sector" as a general name encompassing the non-Jewish minority, including the Bedouin and Druze populations. In this report, the terms "Arab society", "Arab sector" or "Arabs" refer to the State's non-Jewish population.

18

Of every 10,000 drivers from the Arab sector were involved in severe road accidents in the last decade, compared to 8.3 drivers from the Jewish sector

7.5 times and 3.4 times

Pedestrian toddlers below the age of 5 and children aged 5 – 14 from the Arab society (respectively) were killed in road accidents in the years 2017 – 2018, compared to their counterparts in the Jewish society

8%

Of grade 6 classes in the Arab sector operated a crossing guard system during the 2018/9 academic year in comparison to 54% in the Jewish sector

39%

Of directors of road safety headquarters in the Arab sector local authorities who did not take a training course for directors of road safety headquarters

Audit actions



In the months of June through November 2019, the Office of the State Comptroller examined the activities to raise road safety in the jurisdictions of five local authorities in the Arab sector: the municipalities of Kfar Qasim and Qalansawe and the local authorities of Jisr a-Zarqa, Jatt and Tel Sheva (five local authorities). Supplementary examinations were conducted at the NRSA, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Transportation and Road Safety, the Ministry of Public Security, and the Israel Police.






Key findings



Examination of the effectiveness of the road safety study programs and activities for students: The Ministry of Education did not conduct a methodical examination of the effectiveness of the road safety study programs and the Ministry of Education and the NRSA did not check the degree of effectiveness of the conducted by private contractors activities (plays, lectures, workshops, simulations etc.), they authorized. These activities were.



Information about accident hotspots: The five local authorities examined haven't recorded and documented the locations of road accidents that occurred in their jurisdictions and their causes.

-  **Paving roads and sidewalks:** In the jurisdictions of the five local authorities*, there are about 32 km of unpaved roads and sidewalks (four of a total of approximately 176 km of roads and sidewalks). Four of the five local authorities had not charged a road paving tax in the last few years.
-  **Traffic arrangements:** Deficiencies were found in traffic arrangements and safety devices in the examined local authorities, which put road users at risk. The Jisr a-Zarqa local authority did not have any traffic signal plan. The traffic signal plan of Kfar Qasim municipality and the Jatt local authority was not updated.
-  **Marking and installations:** The Jisr a-Zarqa and Tel Sheva local authorities did not make use of the budgets allocated to them by the Ministry of Transportation for the years 2016 – 2018 on behalf of marking and installations. The Qalansawe municipality and the Jatt local authority did not make use of the budget for marking and installing allocated to them for 2018.
-  **Prevention of road accident near educational institutions:** Safety deficiencies such as non-marking of crosswalks, non-standard safety railings and vehicular traffic intersecting the routes taken by students were found near some educational institutions. The examined local authorities did not limit the speed of vehicular traffic near schools.
-  **Enforcement:** The enforcement mechanisms in the examined local authorities are lacking: in the Qalansawe municipality and the Jisr a-Zarqa, Jatt and Tel Sheva local authorities, there were no municipal units responsible for traffic supervision. In all the examined local authorities there were no urban police units (in the Tel Sheva local authority, one is in the process of being established).









Road safety education: In the academic year 2018/19, there was a significant increase in the number of high school classes in the Arab sector studying road safety programs relative to the 2017/18 academic year: from 7.5% to 46.5% in grades 9 and from 82% to 85.6% in grades 10.

Particular program for the Arab society: commend must be given to the NRSA for developing and operating commend p rograms for the Arab society. These programs encourage Arab society to promote road safety and reduce the high rate of traffic injuries. In 2017 – 2018, the NRSA transferred a one-time additional budget of local Arab authorities in the sum of 8 million shekels, to strengthen activities to increase road safety and to build traffic signal programs.

* There is no information regarding the Jisr a-Zarqa local authority since its Department of Engineering has no data or assessment about the length of unpaved roads and sidewalks in its area.

Key recommendations

-  It is recommended that the Ministry of Education complete a methodical examination of the effectiveness of all the road safety programs in all educational frameworks. It would be appropriate for the Ministry of Education and the NRSA to conduct effectivity examinations and get continuous feedback about all the activities run by private contractors. It is also recommended to consider increasing use of online training and mobile phone apps on this matter.
-  Given the importance of road safety education from a very young age, and in light of the contribution of the school crossing guard program, it is suggested that the police periodically check if sufficient resources exist to carry out the training. It should examine knowledge and training ability and of human resources, in order to guarantee that educational institutions needing school crossing guards get the required training.
-  It would be appropriate for the NRSA to encourage the heads of local Arab authorities to conduct low cost voluntary informational activities.
-  The Kfar Qasim and Qalansawe municipalities should convene their road safety committees at n accordance with the municipalities ordinance. Albeit the law does not mandate the establishment of such a committee by a local authority, the Jisr a-Zarqa, Jatt and Tel Sheva local authorities should consider establishing one to strengthen the road safety in their jurisdictions.
-  The heads of the examined local authorities should maintain the roads and sidewalks in their jurisdictions at the appropriate level; should see to the soundness of traffic arrangements, safety fixtures and lighting, and charge a road paving tax from residents.
-  Because of the significant gaps in road infrastructures in the examined local authorities and in the Arab sector overall, it is recommended that the Ministries of Interior and Transportation assist the local authorities in preparing individual programs based on budget sources and timetables to complete and repair the road infrastructures in the communities having subpar infrastructures.

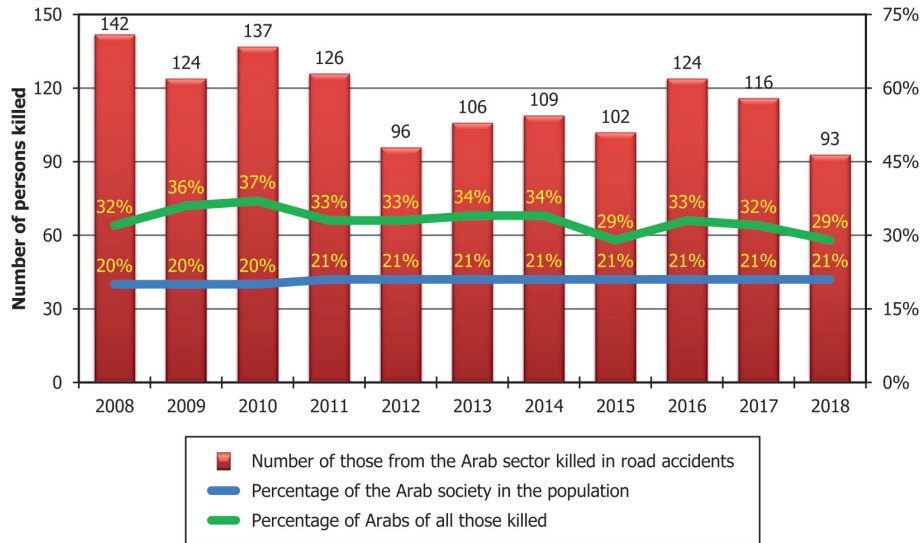
Summary

In order to promote road safety in the Arab society, action must be taken on a number of levels: education and information, infrastructure improvement and enforcement.

To reduce the number of traffic accidents and victims in the jurisdictions of the local authorities in the Arab sector, the local authorities must give road safety top priority. More involvement of local authorities in Arab society is required to promote the issue of traffic safety and lead activities that will provide solutions to the populations at risk and to the risk hotspots.



Persons killed in road accidents in the Arab sector 2008 – 2018 (in numbers and percentages)



Source: The National Road Safety Authority

