

State Comptroller

Annual Report 72A - Part One | 2021

Abstracts



STATE OF ISRAEL

STATE COMPTROLLER

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Abstracts



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Foreword



Foreword

The **State Comptroller's Report No. 72A - Part One** which has been presented to the Knesset, is the first part of the State Comptroller's annual report, and it contains the findings of the 2020 audit of various audited bodies. The report deals with the audits of government ministries and governmental institutions, and with audits regarding various security issues. The report's chapters present important audit findings concerning a variety of areas – and the report will make them part of the public discourse and place them on the public agenda.

My vision is that State audit deal with the core areas of the audited bodies' activities, and focus both on audit subjects that relate to social issues and to the service provided to the citizenry, and to the substantive risks that impact on the activity of audited bodies. These audit subjects will be studied alongside the issues relating to good governance and to ethical behavior.

The State Comptroller's office puts a special emphasis on performing audits regarding systemic issues that have a broad national impact. This report sets out the findings of four system-wide audits that were conducted this year concerning the following issues: **aspects of governance in the Negev; the conduct of law enforcement agencies toward Israelis of Ethiopian background; inclusive employment of a variety of populations in the civil service; and government ministries use of the public cloud and preparations for the establishment of a central cloud.** The following is a short survey of the said audits.

There are 268,000 Bedouins living in the Negev, according to 2018 data. They make up 3% of Israel's population, including 14,000 women who live in polygamous families. Approximately one third of the men who live in the Negev and practice polygamy have ten children or more. The audit regarding **aspects of governance in the Negev** uncovered several defects dealing with municipal administration; water and sewage management; the struggle against polygamy; issues involving abuse of rights; student transportation; security of educational institutions; transportation infrastructure; receipt of data from the population needed by the Central Bureau of Statistics for statistical work; tax collection; environmental protection issues; welfare, health, and more. Alongside this, despite the government budgets – amounting to NIS 1.7 billion over the years – that have been approved in accordance with the government's resolutions in the context of the five year plan, and which were designated for the elimination of numerous and varied gaps between population sectors; and despite the allocation of ongoing budgets to Bedouin local authorities and regional councils in the Negev – the disparities between the Bedouin communities and the other communities in the Negev remain significant. The Bedouins in the Negev are entitled to a socio-economic framework that will enable them to integrate into Israeli society in a substantive manner. Their current status as the poorest group in Israel imposes on the Israeli government a duty to act to increase governance in the Negev, in order to allow the Bedouins to move on and out of their current situation and to give them, particularly the younger generation – the tools and physical infrastructure that they need in order to



successfully deal with the challenges of the future. The display of governance in all parts of the country is required in order to ensure that proper and regular services are provided to all residents, whatever their backgrounds.

The chapter dealing with the **conduct of law enforcement agencies toward Israelis of Ethiopian background** shows that there are approximately 155,300 Israelis of Ethiopian background, who constitute approximately 1.7% of the entire Israeli population. The State of Israel has done much to absorb them and to integrate them into Israeli society and has provided them with many resources. Nevertheless, their acclimatization has been accompanied by more than a few challenges. In addition to the socio-economic disparities between these citizens and the general population, there are also very substantial disparities in terms of the treatment received from law enforcement agencies. The audit was carried out through an analysis of the databases of the audited bodies and with the active involvement of members of this community, in order to hear their views regarding their treatment at the hands of law enforcement authorities. At the time of the audit's conclusion – which was five years after the start of a police program to strengthen trust between Israelis of Ethiopian background and the Israel Police, and after the an inter-ministerial team published its report presenting a plan for dealing with racism exhibited against this population – we found that although the issue remains a focus of public discourse, and despite the increased involvement of enforcement bodies with the issue and the significant efforts that the Israel Police has invested in the issue in the framework of the police anti-racism program – the rates of policing and enforcement against Israelis of Ethiopian background remain much higher than the rates that occur towards the general population. Furthermore, the level of trust that Israelis of Ethiopian background have in the police and their levels of satisfaction with the police remain very low. They have expressed a lack of personal security in public spaces; they have experienced discrimination from law enforcement bodies toward them, excessive policing, and the sense that they are being profiled. The law enforcement bodies must act to eliminate any trace of racism, as well as excess policing and profiling. These entities must also act with transparency; they must cooperate and share information; treat all civilians equally, fairly and impartially – so that citizens of Ethiopian background can feel that they are being treated as equals within the general Israeli population.

Another system-wide audit dealt with **inclusive employment of a variety of populations in the civil service**. The Civil Service employs some 80,000 people in 79 different government entities. This audit, like the audit of law enforcement treatment of Israelis of Ethiopian background, also included an element of public participation, in which government employees from the Arab community, the community of Israelis of Ethiopian background and the ultra-Orthodox community all took part. Seventy-five percent of the participants from the Arab community and the community of Israelis of Ethiopian background reported that they had experienced racism from other employees or managers. We found that over a period of 13 years, the government had not updated the target number of employees that had been established as constituting proper representation of the Arab community in the Civil Service (10%) and even this was a low target, given the percentage that members of the Arab community represent within the entire population



(21%); 63% of government ministries and 79% of auxiliary units did not satisfy the government's target for fair representation of Ethiopian-Israelis; the percentage of ultraorthodox in the Civil Service was approximately 1.2% in 2019, a percentage that is far from the percentage that the ultraorthodox population represents among all working age residents of Israel, which is approximately 8%; in 2019, 86% of the large government entities in the Civil Service did not satisfy the targets for fair representation of persons with disabilities, in terms of employment (5%). In thirty-six government ministries and auxiliary units, the number of women at management level (middle and senior) was less than 50%. The entire Israeli public and the entire economy will benefit from the improvement of employment figures for members of the Arab community, for the ultra-Orthodox, persons with disabilities, and from an improvement of the quality of employment for Israelis of Ethiopian background. It is proper that the Civil Service be the flagbearer with regard to the integration of employees from these population groups, in all parts of the Civil Service and at all ranks therein. This task is incumbent on the entire management of any entity within the Civil Service, and on the Civil Service Commission in its entirety, which is responsible for managing the human resources within the Civil Service.

In recent years, the Israeli government has been working to have the government ministries and its auxiliary bodies move over to cloud computerization, which enables easy and broad access to a shared bank of computer resources. The audit findings on the subject of **government ministries use of the public cloud and the preparations for the establishment of a central cloud** show that there are various obstacles that are delaying or preventing the implementation of cloud computer usage by government ministries. The findings also indicate various aspects that the ministries failed to consider in the context of the implementation, and which may cause harm, from financial harm through damage to the public image of the relevant entity; the findings also pointed to difficulties in control regarding the implementation of directions concerning the ministries' transfer to a cloud computer environment, and to difficulty in controlling entities who are subject to sectoral guidelines of the ministries but not to the guidelines of the Government ICT Authority and of the Government's National Cyber Directorate; and the lack of an overall approved framework for transferring governmental computer services to the cloud environment. In order to ensure the best possible implementation of the use of the existing cloud computer storage systems, and of those which will be established in the future, it is recommended that the relevant government ministries and entities act in response to the noted obstacles and deficiencies, and to the recommendations made in the audit report, including in the framework of the Nimbus tender, and the establishment of a Cloud Center of Excellence.

In the course of their ongoing activities, governmental bodies may accumulate rights pursuant to contracts, agreements, service provision and court rulings, along with rights to receive funds, the payment of which is established by law. The audit regarding the **state actions to secure its rights through civil enforcement** indicated that in 2019, the amount due to the State according to its balance sheets and consolidated financial statements was approximately NIS 67.2 billion, of which approximately NIS 39 billion consisted of components of exchange transactions and nonexchange transactions. In 2019, the State Prosecutor filed 184 civil suits initiated by the State, for a total amount of NIS 290



million. Our audit focused on mapping and identifying any damage done to the State's rights, and on examining the obstacles preventing the State from initiating maximum enforcement and collection of debts by government entities. The audit also indicated that in the years 2018-2019, no civil lawsuits were brought to obtain reimbursement for compensation funds paid by the State to terror victims. It should be noted that during these years, there were 374 individuals who were confirmed to be victims of 93 hostile attacks. In 2019, the National Insurance Institute paid 5,237 victims of hostile acts a total amount of approximately NIS 540 million. The violent acts that took place during May of 2021 cost the State further expenses for damage done to public property, and the State is also expected to pay compensation to victims of violent acts through the Israel Taxes Authority-Compensation Fund. These cases sharpen the need for civil enforcement alongside criminal proceedings, especially against those who have been convicted in a criminal proceeding – enforcement with the goal of obtaining reimbursement of the funds that have been paid, out of public funds, as compensation for damages suffered. The situation described in the audit report obligates the government, and in particular the State Prosecutor's office, to analyze their abilities and to determine how to realize their policies. This is especially important, since even now, ten years after the State Prosecutor's office adopted a policy of moving from a primarily defensive legal position toward a policy of initiating lawsuits as a plaintiff – we see that the State's main involvement is still to defend itself against lawsuits in which the State is the defendant. Efficient and complete civil enforcement requires that all the relevant parties within the government bodies become involved, and this includes the directors-general of the entities and the various relevant legal, accounting and professional parties. Because of the complexity of using civil enforcement and of preparing State-initiated lawsuits, all government bodies must cooperate with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Justice.

Our office examined the **budget and expenses of the Central Elections Committee for the Knesset**. There were 6.45 million eligible voters in the elections for the for the 23rd Knesset, and the Central Knesset Elections Committee had a budget of NIS 392 million, of which NIS 166 million was for salaries of the Elections Committee's employees. It was noted that the average budget per voting station rose by 48% within 5 years (from NIS 25,000 to NIS 36,900). In light of the findings of this audit, it is recommended that the Central Elections Committee act to improve the presentation of the data regarding budgeted amounts and actual expenditure and increase its transparency both toward the entities who are authorized to approve its budget, and toward the public. It is also recommended that the Committee act to ensure that the approval of additional budgets and salaries be done with budgetary and operational efficiency and that the Committee act to improve the auditing and control in regard to its fiscal management. The need to implement these recommendations is even greater in light of the fact that after the audit was concluded in March 2021, there was an additional round of elections, this time for the 24th Knesset (the data from which were not reviewed in this audit), and the budget for that election amounted to approximately NIS 675 million, representing a 72% increase compared to the budget for the previous year's elections to the 23rd Knesset.



The Office of the State Comptroller puts special emphasis on following up on its audits, in order to check on the corrections undertaken in regard to defects mentioned in our reports; I intend to act to strengthen this practice significantly, and to expand the scope of the follow-up audits. This report includes a follow-up audit on the subject of the **non-exercise of social rights**. The non-utilization of social benefit rights, and in particular the right to support payments that are provided by the National Insurance Institute, is a problem that affects the entire population and primarily the population groups who are most in need of having their interests protected and promoted. The follow-up findings show that some of the defects noted in the previous report were either fully or mostly corrected; however, a significant portion of these defects were not corrected in any way, or were corrected only minimally. The National Insurance Institute and the other audited bodies that are discussed in this report must act to correct the deficiencies set out in the previous audit. They must take all the actions needed in order to reduce the bureaucratic burden imposed on the public and to help those who are entitled to the rights to utilize those rights.

The preparation of this report required great effort by the employees of the State Comptroller's Office, who prepared it professionally, with thoroughness, fairness and care and who carry out their public role out of a true sense of mission and I am grateful to them.

It is not unnoticed that audited bodies took positive actions. In accordance with the State Comptroller's Law, these actions have been properly reflected in this Report, in order to provide a whole picture of the situation indicated by the audit. The audited bodies are obligated to act quickly and efficiently to rectify the deficiencies raised in this report, in order to improve their activity and promote the public service in Israel.

Matanyahu Englman
State Comptroller
and Ombudsman

Jerusalem, August 2021



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Chapter One

Systemic Issues



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Systemic Issues

Aspects of Governance in the Negev



Aspects of Governance in the Negev

Background

"Governance" is defined as the capacity and ability of state authorities to act within their powers¹. The term describes the ability of the government to succeed in fulfilling its functions and implementing its policies in a good and effective manner. According to the March 2013 report by the staff for improving the work of the headquarters and the execution capabilities of the government ministries headed by the then director general of the Prime Minister's Office, governance is the way the administration operates - from the planning stage, through execution to measurement and retrospective monitoring. As a rule, the state is obligated to provide its citizens with various basic services, some through government ministries and some through various local authorities and statutory bodies. The state must also take care of the social order and make sure, with the help of law enforcement agencies, that the citizens of the state and its residents comply with the laws and civic duties imposed on them. Whereas the lack of governance means, inter alia, the lack of executive capacity of the government, which is manifested, among other things, in the fact that the decisions made lawfully are not actually implemented, that the state does not provide citizens with the services to which it is committed and the social order to which they are entitled, and that they do not fully fulfill their civic duties.

¹ As the Honorable President of the Supreme Court noted at a conference in December 2017: "Governance means the ability of the government to act within its powers."



Key figures

NIS 1.7 billion

Out of NIS 3.2 billion (53%), government ministries spent in 2017-2019 as part of the five-year plan to assist the Bedouin sector

NIS 1.2 billion

Out of NIS 2.38 billion in debt balances in 2019 for the Value Added Tax (VAT) branch in Be'er Sheva, belong to debtors from the non-Jewish population in the Negev

NIS 348 million

spent by the Bedouin Development and Settlement Authority in the Negev to achieve its goals, which account for 90% of the budget planned for 2019

The 9

Bedouin localities in the Negev are ranked at the bottom of the socio-economic ranking

80,000 addresses

of Bedouin in the Negev as of 2017 were listed as "Tribe", a situation that makes it difficult for them to receive tax benefits and vote in elections

268,000 people

The Bedouin population in the Negev - 3% of the total population of the country in 2018

14,000 women

in polygamous families in Israel in 2017

10 children or more

for about a third of the polygamous men in the Negev

Audit actions

 In the period of August 2018 - July 2020, the State Comptroller's Office examined, intermittently, aspects concerning the governance of the Negev in government ministries and various bodies, including the Ministry of Education, the Accountant General's Division of the Ministry of Finance, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), Israel Post, Israel Electricity Company, Mekorot, the Petroleum & Energy Infrastructure Company, Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), the Ministry for the Development of the Periphery, the Negev and the Galilee, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Negev Bedouin Development and Settlement Authority (Settlement Authority), the Ministry of Interior, and in the seven localities (Rahat, Hura, Lakiya, Tel Sheva, Segev-Shalom, Kuseife, Arara in the Negev), in the two regional councils of Al-Qassum and Neve Midbar, in the Population Authority, in the Ministry of Environmental Protection, in the National Insurance Institute (NII), the Tax Authority of Israel (Tax Authority), the Water Authority, the water corporations "Mei Rahat" and "Neve Midbar", the Israel Mapping Center (MAPI) and Magen David Adom.



Title One - Outlining policies for economic advancement and reducing disparities

Key figures

3,097 residents

were registered in the electoral register of the Al-Qassum Council in 2016, but according to the council's data, about 24,000 residents lived there.

323 agreements

for organized resettlement concluded by the Settlement Authority in 2019 - out of 641 agreements meant to be implemented according to its plan

1,050 housing

units in response to the natural increase in the Bedouin population were marketed in 2019

10,000 births

per year within the Bedouin population

41% of the residents

(only) in the recognized Bedouin localities were surveyed by the CBS in 2019; due to difficulties, the residents of the dispersion (unauthorized residence clusters), were not surveyed

9 Government Ministries

and the Settlement Authority did not report to the Ministry of Agriculture about the performance indices in 19 activities in their field in 2019

46,000 residents

of the Bedouin community are registered at one address in the Population Authority and at another address in the Settlement Authority



Key findings

- Compliance of the Settlement Authority with the goals of the work plans for 2019** - The Settlement Authority has partially implemented the goals specified in its work plan for 2019 in the areas of development of residential plots, and resettlement of residents from the dispersion in permanent localities and approval of transactions for marketing of residential plots as a solution to the natural increase in population. For example, it developed 758 plots (38%) out of the 2,000 it set as a target in the 2019 work plan. At the same time, according to data from the Settlement Authority from January 2021, 1,050 housing units were marketed in 2019 to the Bedouin population in the Negev. It should be noted that the Authority used 98% of the budget it set aside for the implementation of its work plan and also took action to legalise 24,652 housing units in the statutory planning stages, 23% beyond the target it set - 20,030 housing units.
- Master plan to complete the settlement of the Bedouin population in the Negev** - The Settlement Authority has formulated a proposal to complete the organization of the Bedouin settlement in the Negev by 2030. This plan was submitted to the Minister of Economy in 2020, but a budgeted master plan for the Bedouin localities in the Negev has not yet been approved beyond the five-year plan (ending in 2022), which considers trends of population growth, settlement of the Bedouin dispersion, construction and upgrading of infrastructure, evaluation of the need to transfer development powers to local authorities and so on.
- Socio-economic ranking** - According to the socio-economic index compiled by the Central Bureau of Statistics, the socio-economic ranking of Bedouin local authorities in the Negev is low compared to other local authorities in the Negev, and there has been no significant change in the ranking of Bedouin localities over the years despite government investment by virtue of government decisions. Thus, nine Bedouin local authorities are in a low socio-economic ranking - in the lowest places (1 - 11) out of 255 authorities.
- Implementation of the five-year plan 2397 (for the years 2017 - 2021)** - In three of the five years of the five-year plan (60% of the plan period), commitments were made to finance projects amounting to NIS 1.675 billion (approximately 53% of a total of NIS 3.177 billion). The Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Settlement Authority, responsible for the promotion of Bedouin settlements, have set budgetary commitments at only about 23% of what is required in the multi-year plan. Furthermore, nine government ministries and the Settlement Authority did not report to the Ministry of Agriculture on the result indices in 19 areas of activity (61%) budgeted in their area.
- Estimated number of Bedouin living in localities** - Regarding the 268,000 Bedouin in the Negev, there are large discrepancies between the Bedouin residence registration



data of the Settlement Authority and the data in the Population Authority. For example, according to data from the Population Authority from 2018, the number of Bedouin living in the seven local authorities is 46,000 greater than the number of Bedouin registered with the Settlement Authority.

- 📌 Gaps in the number of residents registered in the Neve Midbar and al-Kassum councils** - Data from the Population Authority from February 2020 regarding the number of residents registered in the Neve Midbar and al-Kassum regional councils are significantly lower than the data of the income distribution committee from the Ramat Hovav Local Industrial Council. Thus, the Neve Midbar Council has 8,287 residents, compared to 26,500 residents according to the committee's data, and the Al-Qassum Council has 12,723 residents, compared to 24,600 residents according to the committee's data. In the absence of complete data reflecting the number of residents physically living within the jurisdiction of each locality, decisions regarding budgeting authorities, infrastructure planning in the locality etc. will not be sufficiently established and will impair their implementation in all relevant areas - education, welfare, health, transportation, communications.
- 📌 Difficulty in clarifying residency requirements** - The Population Authority does not have the appropriate tools and resources to carry out a thorough clarification of any requirement for municipal affiliation of a person registered as a "tribe" or change of residence of a Bedouin resident, nor does it have the tools to thoroughly clarify any residency requirement on the part of the Bedouin population. According to a representative of the Population Authority, over the years, fake documents and certificates have been used many times to "prove" residence in Israel, such as fictitious leases and fake water and electricity consumption data. Furthermore, the Population Authority rarely conducts field investigations in the Bedouin villages due to concerns for the personal safety of the researchers. The authority usually relies on investigations and decisions of the NII, which also faces difficulties in conducting such investigations.
- 📌 Social security benefits provided to residents of the Bedouin population living in Judea and Samaria** - Residents of the Bedouin population actually living in the territories of Judea and Samaria enjoy benefits granted to them, in particular benefits from the National Insurance Institute, by virtue of being registered as residents of the Negev, and this leads to the loss of state funds. It emerged that no departures of residents from Israel to the Judea and Samaria area are recorded and monitored, and that entrances to Israel are registered only partially.
- 📌 Non-compliance with property tax collection targets and non-enforcement of orders regarding the distribution of non-residential property tax revenues (military bases and industrial areas)** - according to CBS data, the average residential property tax collection ratio in the nine Bedouin authorities in the Negev in 2016 was 24.4%, while in the other 31 authorities in the Negev it was about 78.6%. The Ministry of Interior does not enforce the orders regarding reduced income distribution (at a rate



of 85%) to local authorities that do not collect residential property taxes at all, such as the al-Qassoum and Neve Midbar regional councils.

- 📌 **Deficiencies in the locality of Tarabin a-Sa'ane (Tarabin)** - 20% of the residents of the tribe live outside the jurisdiction of the locality; in the years since the establishment of the settlement, some of the infrastructure built in it was destroyed - a sports field was set on fire and damaged to the point that it could not be used; development, asphalt and lighting work in a particular neighborhood has been halted due to threats to managers and contractors.



Evaluation of the achievements of the five-year plan for the years 2012 to 2016 -

An accompanying research procedure was conducted to examine the achievements of the five-year plan (3708) for the years 2012-2016.

Key recommendations

- 💡 **Designating an entity for the coordination of treatment of the non-Jewish population in the Negev** - It is recommended that the government ministries responsible for the treatment of the non-Jewish population in the Negev, headed by the Prime Minister's Office, designate an entity which will coordinate all relevant areas regarding the treatment of the non-Jewish population, and be responsible for the strategic plan and the monitoring of its implementation.
- 💡 **Examining the barriers to improving the socio-economic standing of the Bedouin localities** - It is recommended that the five-year plan be formulated in a way that will identify the main barriers and set goals for improving the socio-economic standing of the Bedouin communities in the Negev and other objective socio-economic data concerning the Bedouin population in the Negev.
- 💡 **Implementation of the five-year plans** - it is recommended that the Ministry of Economy monitor the receipt of all required reports from all ministries participating in the five-year plan on an annual basis and after exhausting all budgets on an ongoing basis, examining barriers to their implementation and presenting solutions to these barriers. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Economy initiate a regular discussion in the government regarding the implementation of the five-year plan.
- 💡 **Establishment of a mechanism for settling the registration of residents** - It is recommended that the Ministry of Interior, the Population Authority, local authorities and relevant regional councils, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Welfare, the CBS and other state bodies establish a mechanism for registering Bedouin residents who



receive services in each locality, according to the goals of the various bodies, in such a way that each body will maintain a registration of the residents who apply to receive services from it. This should help to optimally allocate the budgets between the various authorities and to improve the services provided to the Bedouin population in the Negev.

 **Improving the registration data of the Bedouin in the Negev** - It is recommended that the Ministry of Interior and the Population Authority examine the continued use of the "tribe" status registration against registration according to the resident's place of residence as is customary for all Israeli residents. They should do this with a view to improving the data concerning the number of residents living within the jurisdiction of each of the Bedouin localities.

 **Enforcement of the order regarding the distribution of income** - It is recommended to enforce the order that established rules regarding the distribution of income from non-residential property regarding municipalities that do not meet their self-collection goals, and to examine the issue of establishing a fund for the development of the Bedouin authorities that did not meet the condition of collecting the property tax for residences, as recommended in the Razin report.

 **Preparations for conducting expenditure surveys and a census in the Negev** - it is recommended that the CBS be prepared, in cooperation with the relevant parties such as the Settlement Authority, to optimally execute the nearest census among the Bedouin population in the south, while drawing the necessary lessons from the previous census and allocating the appropriate budget. It is also recommended to act to increase the rate of household visits in the annual household expenditure surveys and to perform visits also in the dispersion to present a complete picture.

 **The treatment of the locality of Tarabin** - it is recommended that the Settlement Authority and the Al-Qassum Regional Council work to absorb and locate all residents living outside the blue Line. The Settlement Authority must continue to act to accompany security personnel in any infrastructure work that has a risk of threats to workers executing their duties. It is further recommended that all relevant parties, including the local leadership and the police, set up a "round table" for the purpose of holding regular talks and resolving disputes, and formulate a plan for the war on vandalism.



Title Two - Functioning of local councils and water corporations in the Bedouin sector

Key figures

91% of public	NIS 180 million	15% - 38%	NIS 21 million
infrastructure is lacking in localities in the Neve Midbar and al-Qassum regional councils, including water, electricity, sewage, roads and communications, as of 2020	The budget for transporting 44,000 pupils in the Neve Midbar and al-Kassum councils. NIS 20 million is the budget gap required to finance transportation in al-Qassum	Residential property tax collection rates in the Bedouin municipalities in the Negev, compared with an average of 84% in the other municipalities in the south. The Bedouin municipalities in the Negev have an income of NIS 120 per person from non-residential property taxes, compared to about NIS 2,100 in the Jewish localities in the Negev.	The extent of the financial damage of the Neve Midbar Water Corporation due to water thefts of the residents of the locality in 2016; the corporation has 57% water depreciation and 68% collection depreciation
384 streets	30% dropout	12,600 pupils	53,000 residents
Out of 886 streets in the seven oldest Bedouin localities in the Negev, where the local authority did not advance the mapping process	rate among Bedouin pupils, a rate that is significantly higher than the dropout rate in the whole country	who do not live or study in Al-Qassum were reported by the council to receive a budget for student transportation	of the Bedouin dispersion receive municipal services in seven localities, even though they are not registered in them



Key findings



- Connection of the dispersion villages to public infrastructure** - As of the end of the audit, in most localities of the Al-Qassum and Neve Midbar regional councils, almost no public infrastructure of water, sewage, electricity, roads, communications, street lighting and sidewalks existed. For example: public water and sewage infrastructure was set up only in Tarabin.
- Water depreciation rate** - In the Neve Midbar and Mei Rahat water corporations, the water depreciation rate in 2016-2017 averages about 17% to 38%, compared with an average of about 7% in the other southern corporations. These data indicate the financial vulnerability of these water corporations. Thus, in three of the six localities of the Neve Midbar Water Corporation, water depreciation in 2016 was particularly high, standing at 59% (Tel Sheva), 50% (Lakiya) and 61% (Arara in the Negev). According to an estimate by the Neve Midbar Corporation, the extent of the financial damage due to the theft of water from the corporation in 2016 was about NIS 21 million for water theft of about two million cubic meters.
- Dependence of the water corporations on state funding** - About six years after the establishment of the Neve Midbar Corporation and about seven years after the establishment of the Rahat Water Corporation, and although these corporations benefit from subsidy for water purchase and state grants from the date of their establishment, their dependence on state funding has not been reduced, and it is not clear what the expectation is for their independent existence without such dependence in the future as well.
- The total annual income of the Bedouin municipalities from residential property tax** - stands at only about NIS 25 million out of the income in the regular aggregate budget (about 2%). This compares with revenues from residential property taxes of NIS 1.12 billion in the other municipalities in the south of the country out of revenues in the aggregate budget (approximately 14%).
- Non-issuance of property tax assessments in the Neve Midbar and al-Qasum councils** - Despite the state and council statements to the High Court, since the establishment of the councils in 2012, they have not issued property tax assessments to their residents by law and hence have not collected these charges.
- Balance Grants** - In February 2018, an inter-ministerial team was established to examine balance grants of the Ministry of Interior for residents registered in the Population Registry as residents belonging to the Bedouin tribes in the Negev (hereinafter - the inter-ministerial team). It was learned that the Ministry of Interior has not yet adapted the balance grant formula to the unique situation of the Bedouin local authorities in the Negev.



- 📌 Conducting field inspections regarding pupils' transportation** - In the years 2015 - 2018, two field inspections were conducted. An audit conducted on 4.5.17 to examine the distances and costs requested for transportation submitted by the Al-Qassum Local Council found discrepancies between the distance listed in the application and the distance actually measured, at rates of between 100% and 500%.
- 📌 Bad roads and unsafe buses for transporting pupils** - The roads by which the bus passes in the Bedouin dispersion are unpaved and very bad, and during the winter season the floods sweep sections of road. Therefore, the danger to pupils is increasing, and according to the director of the council's education department, many parents choose not to send their children to school during significant rain events. Also, the transportation companies that transport the students use old buses, more than a decade old, that are inferior in terms of safety.
- 📌 Attendance data of employees of the Education Department of the Al-Qassum Regional Council** - The internal auditor's report on employee attendance reporting raises concerns about the existence of an improper norm of false reports.
- 📌 Documentation and procedures in the execution and approval of subcontractors' work** - In the al-Qassum Regional Council, there is no procedure for submitting execution invoices of infrastructure contractors and their approval. Also, in the computerized system of project performance of the council no project file is managed, which should include the work tender, the employment contract, quantity calculations, execution sheets and so on.
- 📌 Naming streets and giving numbers to houses-** In the Bedouin local authorities in the Negev, there is an ongoing problem of the lack of mapping and naming of streets. Most of the streets in these localities have no official names, and the houses do not have signs stating the house number. Locality mapping was ordered for the seven recognized old localities, but not for 11 other recognized localities in the al-Qasum and Neve Midbar councils.



Key recommendations

-  **Formulation of a multi-year plan to complete all public infrastructure in the localities in the Negev** - It is recommended that the Settlement Authority, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Transportation, the Water Authority, the Ministry of Communications, the Ministry of Finance and the Al-Kassum and Neve Midbar Regional Councils and any other concerned governmental body will formulate a multi-year plan to complete all the infrastructure in all the localities, specifying implementation schedules and required budgetary resources.
-  **Initiating a plan to increase enforcement and payment collection of water corporations** - It is recommended that the Neve Midbar Water Corporation initiate a plan to increase collection and enforcement in all the corporation's localities, which will include mapping of those refusing to pay and use of all enforcement measures available to the corporation, including foreclosure.
-  **Conducting property surveys and charging residents' property taxes** - The Neve Midbar and Al-Kassum regional councils must complete the property surveys and, if necessary, take alternative measures, send property tax assessments to residents by law and in accordance with the state notification to the 2018 High Court and collect these property tax charges by law. The Ministry of Interior must monitor the activities of the regional councils and ensure that the issuance of property tax assessments to all their residents by law and that the activities required by the authorities to collect them are performed. It is recommended that the Ministry of Interior consider the conditioning of the granting of balance grants to the municipalities to meeting the targets for the collection of property taxes and the application of measures against heads of localities who do not perform their duty to collect property taxes.
-  **Legislation of by-laws** - It is recommended that all the municipalities complete the enactment of by-laws in their area, and in particular regarding the imposition of development levies. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Interior monitor the activities of regional councils and all Bedouin municipalities and ensure the completion of bylaws, issuing invoices by the authorities to residents accordingly, performing the activities required to collect levies and completing development work against these levies.
-  **Pupils transportation** - In view of the amount of money invested in transportation through the Ministry of Education budget, its participation in their costs at a rate of 100% and the high degree of inconsistencies with field reports, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education conduct field inspections more frequently and consider computerized methods and means for routine control, such as installation of control devices in the vehicles that transport and equip the students with a smart card (such as a Rav-Kav card to be validated upon boarding the vehicle), in coordination with



the relevant bodies in the regional councils. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Education work in cooperation with the Population Authority to improve the data on the students transported by it, thus significantly increasing the reliability and accuracy of the data appearing in the transportation file.



Control over al-Qassoum Council and its staff reports and enforcement of conflict of interest provisions - Al-Qassoum Regional Council must refine its guidelines for all its employees and school principals so that false reports shall not be signed and that regular and routine oversight of all attendance reports signed by the council should be performed. Subsequently, the Al-Qassoum Council must enforce the provisions of the law and the guidelines and require all its employees to fill out the proper disclosure form. It must also complete a mapping of all the relatives employed by the Authority, and, if necessary, submit the appropriate cases for approval by the Service Committee for the Employment of Relatives. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Interior conduct an array of ongoing audits of the council's reports.



Evaluation of the construction and upgrade project of ORT High School in a-Sayed locality - it is recommended that the council, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education, the body that financed the project, conduct a thorough examination of the project management and examine the need to take steps.



Examination of the activities of the Al-Kassoum Council by the Ministry of Interior - It is recommended that the district commissioner in the Ministry of Interior examine the activities of the council and instruct it to prepare a plan for reorganization in all areas mentioned above and monitor its implementation.



Finalizing the mapping of localities and naming of streets - it is recommended that all relevant parties - including the local planning committees, the district planning committee, the Settlement Authority and the Ministry of Interior - work to close the gaps in each locality between the number of streets in the master plan and their location and the mapping of all types of streets actually paved, in such a way that at the end of the process a full understanding will be obtained in regard to the street data in all relevant governmental authorities, including MAPI and the Population Authority. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Interior monitor the activities of the Bedouin local authorities to complete the mapping project regarding the streets mapped by MAPI and verify its completion.



Title Three - Government Infrastructure

Key figures

13 instances of theft

Of transformers from the Electricity Company and high voltage lines in the years 2018 - 2019

30 pirated

connections to the electricity grid in one neighborhood in Rahat in January-June 2018

1,150 instances

of sabotage of the Mekorot water company's infrastructure and theft of water and equipment in the years 2008 - 2018

NIS 41 million

Estimated economic damage to the IEC due to illegal power connections in 2020

NIS 300,000

Estimated damage to the PEI company for damage to fuel lines during attempts to steal fuel in 2017-2019

70,000 houses

in the Neve Midbar and al-Kassum regional councils discharge their sewage through septic tanks, which create a risk of groundwater pollution and diseases.

73 criminal

events including stone throwing and penetration of the Nevatim army base in the years 2018-2019

1,628 events

which included, among other things, theft of equipment, entry into firing range areas and the construction of cannabis greenhouses at the Tze'elim base in the years 2017-2020



Key findings



- Damage to Mekorot facilities** - Mekorot annually deals with about 105 sabotage incidents at its facilities in the Negev and theft from them. The extent of the damage to the company's infrastructure in the years 2008-2018 was very large and amounted to approximately NIS 1.5 million. In 2019, the company's infrastructure was damaged - such as the theft of diesel and water, car theft, burglary of buildings and damage along the lines - which caused it a total damage of NIS 275,900. These events causes considerable financial damage to the company. In addition, such incidents damage the most vital national infrastructure and delay the implementation of projects for the proper connection of the population to the water network.
- Damage to IEC facilities** - The IEC deals with many theft incidents every year, mainly of metal transformers, from its facilities in the Negev. Thus, between January 2018 and September 2019, 13 theft incidents were documented in the northern Negev, mainly of transformers, copper cables and equipment, which are apparently a target for metal traders. In addition, in some of the Bedouin localities in the Negev, there is a pirated connection of local residents to the electricity infrastructure of the Electric Company or of public bodies, and it appears that this is a relatively common phenomenon in these localities. This phenomenon has many negative consequences, including risking human life as a result of unsafe connections, causing faults in the electricity network that affect all residents, damage to IEC equipment and burning of fuses. According to IEC data from October 2020, the estimated annual economic damage caused to it due to illegal electricity connections was at least NIS 41 million in 2020.
- Damage to the facilities of the Petroleum & Energy Infrastructure Company (PEI)** - PEI has been dealing for years with damage to the company's fuel lines in the south and attempts to steal fuel from underground pipelines. Beyond the economic damage to the company, there is damage to the continuity of supply to essential facilities as well as damage to the environment as a result of fuel leaks to the ground.
- Lack of wastewater treatment infrastructure** - Neve Midbar and al-Qassum councils do not have wastewater treatment infrastructure. The effluent from about 70,000 homes is currently carried out in an old-fashioned way, using septic tanks, a situation that serves as a fertile ground for groundwater pollution and disease, while endangering human life. The damage from the environmental hazard that originated in those localities is also expected to reach Be'er Sheva.
- Absence of a water corporation to organize the treatment of wastewater**- In the unrecognized localities, there is no water corporation that organizes the treatment of wastewater. Furthermore, by February 2020, the Water Authority has not yet determined how it will share the burden of the costs involved in expanding the Beer Sheva Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) between the Mei Sheva and Neve Midbar water



corporations. Also, this expansion was not promoted, that concerns the collection of sewage from Wadi al-Naim to the Mei Sheva sewage treatment plant. A precondition for the expansion of the sewage treatment plant is the quality of the sewage.

- 📌 **Unregulated Bedouin settlement near Nevatim base and criminal activity near it** - Bedouin settlement near the base results in defense risks, damage to the base infrastructure and damage to the environment, and may harm Bedouins living there. For example: (1) the Nevatim base can be observed, a situation that allows the study of patterns of the base activity, both in routine and emergency, activity that is a strategic intelligence asset; (2) the intrusion of flocks of sheep can cause damage to aircraft; (3) Occasionally there are incidents of tires and stones being thrown at military vehicles; (4) Burning pruned tree branches by the Bedouin residents near the electronic perimeter fence of the base damages the fence.
- 📌 **Illegal construction near the Tze'elim base (CGT)** - In recent years, there has been illegal construction by residents, most of whom are identified as residents of the village of Bir Hadaj, near the IDF CGT base in Tze'elim and the firing ranges of the base. There is also a phenomenon of herds grazing in the firing ranges of the base, endangering both shepherds and animals.
- 📌 **Criminal activity in the Tze'elim base area (CGT)** - Criminal activity is carried out in the base area, including the theft of equipment for various purposes, including the sale of it to criminal organizations (ammunition, explosives), aiding smuggling activities (night vision devices and radios) and generating economic profits (iron, copper, diesel). Between January 2017 and July 2020 there were 1,628 criminal incidents, and hundreds of cannabis greenhouses were set up in the base's firing range areas.



Key recommendations

-  **Cooperation to eradicate the damage to national infrastructure** - In view of such significant and ongoing damage to the vital infrastructure in the Negev of major government companies in the economy (IEC, Mekorot and Petroleum & Energy Infrastructure Company), it is recommended that government ministries and relevant companies work to eradicate the phenomenon, in close cooperation with the Israel Police. In addition, law enforcement authorities and the Israel Police must work to give high priority to dealing with the issue of damage to infrastructure in the Negev and the illegal connections to water and electricity of the residents and other unauthorized parties.
-  **Lack of resources in weak water corporations** - It is recommended that the Water Authority evaluate the lack of sufficient resources of weak corporations to invest in important projects in the water sector and work to find a solution for investments in these projects. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the local authorities and regional councils responsible for these areas take care of organizing the solutions required for sewage treatment and the consequences of the sewage leakage phenomenon.
-  **Non-regulated Bedouin settlement and criminal activity in the vicinity and within the Nevatim and Tze'elim bases (CGT)** - it is recommended that the IDF, the Ministry of Defense, the Israel Police and the Settlement Authority work to prevent criminal activity in close proximity to IDF bases.



Title Four - Enforcement and Public Health

Key figures

87% of the fines

for people driving without a license were given to residents of the non-Jewish population in 2017-2018

264 extortion cases

were opened in the Negev region between January 2015 and March 2020; 205 of them from January 2019

4,411 calls

to the Southern Police Control Center in 2018 due to dangers on the road - shooting, bullying, throwing stones and roaming camels

20 pirate waste sites

are located in the Negev, to which household waste is also sent from the center of the country

224 polygamy cases

out of 259 handled in the Southern District were closed, and only 15 were transferred for indictment

61% of fatal accidents

in the Negev and 60% of serious accidents in 2018 involved drivers from the non-Jewish population, who account for about 10% of the drivers in the Southern District

244 children

Below the age of 16 of the non-Jewish population (61% of the underage population) were caught driving in the years 2016-2020

17 persons

were killed in accidents with animals and about 399 were injured in the years 2008-2018

70% of criminal

cases in the Negev for material tax offenses are associated with the non-Jewish sector

NIS 400 million

Loss of tax revenue each year due to water dilution in gasoline sold at pirate gas stations



Key findings



- 📌 **Disposal of waste and carcasses in the public space** - In the temporary localities and permanent localities where the Bedouin population lives, there is a phenomenon of waste disposal in the public domain and in violation of the Cleanliness Law, and "private initiatives" are carried out for unregulated waste fires, causing significant air pollution to which the population is exposed. In addition, the local authorities in the temporary localities where the Bedouin population lives do not collect waste and carcasses following the slaughter of animals for private purposes and do not take care of it properly. Permanent localities lack waste recycling sites, and the frequency of waste collection and treatment is low. In addition, the Ministry of Environmental Protection is unable to prevent the phenomenon of dumping waste in the unincorporated areas throughout the Negev.
- 📌 **Proximity of educational institutions to Neot Hovav** - about 3,000 pupils study in two elementary schools and 13 kindergartens in a large educational center under the responsibility of the Neve Midbar Regional Council, which is close to the Neot Hovav site (2.5 km from it), and as of July 2020 they had not yet been transferred to another school as required by the Minister of Environmental Protection.
- 📌 **Establishment of police stations** - As of February 2020, police stations had not yet been established in Hura, Kuseife and Lakiya, intended according to the plan of the Minister of Internal Security to strengthen the police deployment in the Arab sector in the south. A police station has been established in Arara in the Negev, and a sub-station is operating in Segev-Shalom where a small number of police officers are stationed compared to a regular police station. In comparison to the staffing levels of a standard police station.
- 📌 **Extortion of protection fees from business owners, private builders, educational institutions and factories** - From January 2015 to March 2020, 177 (67%) cases of extortion of protection fees in the Negev region were shelved or transferred to closure proceedings, and 87 cases (33%) were transferred to the Southern District Attorney's Office. The police data regarding the extent of the phenomenon of extortion of protection fees in the Negev do not fully reflect the extent of the phenomenon, but only the reports to the police about this phenomenon.
- 📌 **Lack of enforcement of pirate gas stations by local authorities** - In 2014-2018, local authorities and regional councils did not initiate enforcement against the pirate gas stations in their area. It also emerged that the information received by the Israel Police regarding the pirate gas stations came from private sources and not from government bodies related to the field.



- 📌 **Involvement of drivers from the non-Jewish population in fatal and serious road accidents in the Negev** - The involvement of drivers from the non-Jewish population in the Negev in fatal, serious and minor accidents is significantly higher than their rate in the Negev region (10%) and the general population (21%). Thus, in the Negev region, drivers from the non-Jewish population were involved in 62% of the fatal accidents and 45% of the serious accidents in 2016-2019.
- 📌 **Reports of life-threatening traffic offenses and road bullying in the Negev region** - in 2016-2019, the rate of recorded fines for drivers from the non-Jewish population in the Negev region was higher than the rate of recorded fines for these drivers throughout the country and in the Southern District. Thus, 57% of the reports for life-threatening offenses and 62% of the reports of road bullying offenses were recorded for drivers from the non-Jewish population.
- 📌 **Driving without a valid driver's license / insurance** - the rate of traffic reports (tickets) in the Negev for drivers from the non-Jewish population is higher than the rate of reports recorded for drivers from the non-Jewish population throughout the country and in the Southern District, in each of the offenses examined, and stands at between 81% and 90%. In addition, in the years 2016-2019, the rate of drivers from the non-Jewish population who received traffic reports for insurance offenses in the Negev region was 88%, higher than this rate in the Southern District (73%) and throughout the country (68%).
- 📌 **Child driving** - from 2016 to 2020 (partially) 399 children (aged 0-16) were caught in the Negev area driving a vehicle, without ever having a driver's license. 244 of them (about 61%) are from the non-Jewish population. However, the work plans of the Israel Police at the villages station and at the Rahat Negev station for 2017 and 2018 did not address the phenomenon of child driving in the Negev region, and no goals and enforcement methods were set.
- 📌 **Traffic danger due to wandering of camels on transport routes** - Between 2008 and 2018, 17 people were killed in road accidents involving animals, most of them in camel accidents, and 399 people were injured, including more than 70 seriously. The work plans of the Traffic Division in the Southern District and of the stations in the towns of Rahat-Negev for the years 2017-2018 do not address the phenomenon of camel wandering and no enforcement targets have been set.
- 📌 **Closure of polygamy cases without indictment** - Although the Attorney General gave instruction to increase enforcement in the field of polygamy, and hundreds of reports of polygamy offenses were forwarded to the police from the Sharia court, the Ministry of Interior, the Civil Prosecutor's Office and the Population and Immigration Authority, in practice, between 2017 and February 2020, as of February 2020 data, 18 indictments had been filed, while 345 cases had been closed. That is, indictments were filed in only about 5% of the cases.



- 📌 **False reports to the National Insurance Institute** - There is a phenomenon according to which women are divorced by their husbands and remain living in their place of residence and even remain under his control, but report to the National Insurance Institute as independent (single-parent) families. There is also a phenomenon of Bedouin women residing in Israel who have moved to the territories of Judea and Samaria and continue to receive payment from the NII. Due to the lack of adequate resources and objective difficulties, the NII is unable to conduct proper investigations and checks, that could enable to prove that most women who report as independent families still have a regular family lifestyle, in one form or another, with the man who divorced them. The lack of adequate enforcement allows the exploitation of the phenomenon of polygamy for the purpose of receiving benefits illegally.
- 📌 **High rate of tax offenders among the non-Jewish population in the Negev** - As of June 2020, 218 of the 388 criminal cases (56%) opened for tax offenses (Offense Disclosure Report) in the Negev region were related to the non-Jewish population. It should be noted that the percentage of active dealers (active businesses in the VAT), in the Negev region is 22,416 dealers, of whom 3,504 belong to the non-Jewish population (approximately 16%). In other words, the rate of VAT offenses of the non-Jewish population is 3.5 times greater than their relative share in the total population of those active in the Negev.
- 📌 **Enforcement operations of the Negev Tax Authority** - In the years 2016-2019, the Authority conducted 327 enforcement operations in the Negev region, but only one of them was conducted in the Bedouin dispersion. The Tax Authority's failure to enter these areas could result in a material loss of tax revenue and a reduction in deterrence.
- 📌 **Loss of tax revenues for the state as a result of the gasoline mix at pirate gas stations** - The loss of annual revenue for the state taxes as a result of the gasoline mix at pirate gas stations is estimated at NIS 400 million (not including tax loss due to tax evasion at these gas stations). According to data from the Tax Authority from October 2020, in the years 2016-2019 at the Beer Sheva Assessing Officer, no assessments were made for owners of pirate gas stations. At that time, only one person who sold fuel in the yard of his home was subject to enforcement through the Beer Sheva VAT office, in cooperation with the Israel Police.
- 📌 **Security of Educational Institutions** - The Ministry of Education and the Israel Police have not assigned morning positions for security guards to educational institutions in the al-Qassum and Neve Midbar regional councils. Also, contrary to the procedures of the Ministry of Education, in the al-Qassum and Neve Midbar regional councils, educational institutions are not secured in the morning. There is "property protection" in the evening by security companies, which were budgeted in 2018 in the amount of about NIS 19 million.



Key recommendations

-  **Treatment of pirate waste sites in the Bedouin local authorities** - It is recommended that all Bedouin local authorities throughout the Negev work to remove the waste from their area to regulated waste disposal sites, and the Ministry of the Interior must monitor their activities on the subject. The Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Israel Police must work to close all pirate waste sites throughout the Negev and enforce legislation prohibiting the dumping and burning of waste at unauthorized sites, as well as issuing cleanup orders to local authorities and landowners by law. It is recommended that the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Ministry of the Interior formulate a comprehensive plan for cleaning the Negev areas from the many environmental hazards found in it.
-  **Dealing with the phenomenon of extortion of protection fees** - It is recommended that the State Attorney's Office and the police examine ways to eradicate the protection phenomenon. It is also recommended that the police formulate courses of action and, accordingly, regularly hold proactive operations in the blackmailers' centers of activity - construction sites, industrial areas, public institutions, and the like.
-  **Institutionalized treatment of pirate gas stations** - The Ministry of Interior, in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the Israel Land Authority and the Israel Police, must examine the need to name an entity for organization of enforcement operations in pirate gas stations, and the storage and destruction of confiscated fuel. In addition, the police must act, along with enforcement in the localities, to gather intelligence on pirate gas stations in the Bedouin dispersion areas as well, and work to close all these gas stations.
-  **Enforcement in the field of traffic offenses** - To ensure the safety of all passengers and pedestrians in the south of the country, it is recommended that the Ministry of Transportation and the Israel Police join forces to eradicate the prevalent criminal driving of some non-Jewish populations, creating a risk to all residents and passengers in this area. It is also recommended that the Israel Police carry out effective enforcement of the ban on driving and using a vehicle without any auto insurance or with expired insurance coverage permitted the use of the vehicle. It is also recommended that the responsible parties consider initiating a settlement that will allow for the imposition of a sanction by way of a fine of a high amount for the offense of using a vehicle without insurance alongside the enforcement of an offense of driving without a valid driver's license. It is also recommended that the Israel Police, the Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of Education and other relevant parties work to eradicate the phenomenon of child driving through strict and systematic enforcement, including imposing administrative sanctions on a person who allows a minor - who cannot obtain a driver's license - to drive a vehicle he



owns or controls. It is also necessary to carry out information activities in schools about the dangers involved in children driving.



Systemic handling of polygamy cases in the Southern District - It is recommended that the Attorney General examine the implementation of his guidelines among law enforcement systems regarding the phenomenon of polygamy, and that the Ministry of Justice and the Israel Police conduct processes to learn lessons from all the investigation files closed in 2017-2018. Among other things, they should examine the need to allocate appropriate resources to enforce the legal prohibition of polygamy and to reduce this phenomenon, which is rooted in deep social, cultural and religious strata among the Bedouin population in the Negev. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Justice examine the implementation of all the recommendations of the Palmor Committee regarding the eradication of the phenomenon of polygamy in an orderly and periodic manner, and verify the compliance of all the different entities with the various recommendations. It is recommended that the National Insurance Institute regularly compare its files to examine the cases of women who, on the one hand, receive an income guarantee after their divorce and, on the other hand, had additional children with their spouses after their divorce and receive child benefits for them. This should be done in order to make sure that they have the right to continue receiving these benefits.



Treatment of material tax offenses and the phenomenon of fictitious invoices - The Tax Authority must continue to deal with the phenomenon of fictitious invoices among the non-Jewish population in the Negev region in order to reduce it as much as possible. It is also recommended that the Tax Authority formulate an annual collection plan with targets for all the Bedouin localities in the Negev, in which it will integrate the residents of the dispersion, and will allocate enforcement resources as required. Increasing the physical presence of the Tax Authority units in the Bedouin localities and in the Bedouin dispersion will strengthen the authority's deterrence capability and is expected to raise the level of compliance and reporting among taxpayers and dealers. In addition, all relevant parties, including the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the Police and the Fuel Administration, must cooperate with the Tax Authority in all operations they conduct to locate pirate gas stations in the Negev region. The tax authority must act to collect the taxes and even consider filing indictments for these tax offenses. It is also recommended that the National Insurance Institute and the Tax Authority examine ways to improve cooperation between them in order to advance their goals, especially with regard to the non-Jewish population in the Negev, which on the one hand, as stated, receives a share of National Insurance benefits which is high in relation to the entire population, and on the other hand, is subject to a low level of enforcement by the Tax Authority which needs to be improved.



Eradication of the phenomenon of paying protection fees for "night guard" in educational institutions - it is recommended that the relevant bodies create effective control and supervision mechanisms for the current activities of local



authorities and regional councils, so that the money from the five-year plans and the budgets of the current activities will not actually be directed to the payment of protection fees as part of night guards, at the expense of guards in educational institutions during school hours and educational activities.



Title Five - Provision of regular services

Key figures

48.4% of registered mail	41 cases	55% of residents	54% of resuscitation
sent to the residents of the Bedouin population in the Negev in 2019 was returned to sender	of attempted burglary and robbery in postal units in the Negev, most of them in the localities of the non-Jewish population, in the years 2015 - 2019	who were supposed to participate in health training courses within the framework of the five year plan (2397) for the years 2017 - 2019 did participate in them	systems and devices provided to localities in the Negev compared to those that were supposed to be provided under the five-year plan (2397) for the years 2017 - 2019

Key findings

- Difficulties in the distribution of mail in permanent and dispersion localities** - the rate of return of registered mail in the localities of the Bedouin population in the Negev is about 48.4%, much higher than the rate of return anywhere else in the State of Israel, which stands at an average of about 24%. This mainly hurts the state, its agencies and debtors who are unable to collect their debt. This creates a kind of protection for debtors who refuse to accept the registered mail from taking enforcement action due to non-payment of taxes, fees and debts.
- Post offices in the Bedouin localities in the Negev** - the branches are not physically and logistically prepared to handle the large number of those in need of their services, especially during the days of distribution of social security benefits of all kinds, such as income support and child benefits.
- Damage to postal distribution centers** - In some localities of the Bedouin dispersion, the postal company was unable to distribute mail through postal distribution centers due to damage to the distribution centers, and some were even dismantled. Also, in recent



years there have been many break-ins and cases of damage to post offices in the Negev. Thus, in the years 2015-2019, there were 18 burglary incidents, 14 robbery incidents and nine robbery attempts at post offices, mainly in the localities of the non-Jewish population in the Beer Sheva area.

-  **Absence of Home Front Command alerts in Bedouin dispersion localities** - As of the date of the audit in May 2020, no warning systems have been installed in the Bedouin dispersion localities using horns, which provide preliminary notice of rocket fire. This is due to the fact that their installation requires a combination of an orderly connection to electricity and decent and stable public buildings, which are lacking in these localities. Also, in most of the settlements in the dispersion, those responsible for the mosques refused to install loudspeakers. The main means for receiving alerts in the dispersion is the Home Front Command's applications for mobile phones.
-  **Emergency Rescue Services organization in the Bedouin population in the Negev** - Although actions were taken among the Bedouin population in the Negev to train rescue workers and provide resuscitation equipment, it appears that about 1,700 residents participated in training courses out of about 3,080 residents who were supposed to participate (about 55%). In addition, 334 resuscitation kits and devices were provided to the localities out of 620 intended to be supplied (approximately 54%).

Key recommendations

-  **Organization of the distribution of mail in the localities of the non-Jewish population** - it is recommended that the postal company work to examine solutions for non-delivery of registered mail in the permanent localities and the Bedouin dispersion in the Negev, and among other things will file complaints with the police when there are concerns about harming its agents. The postal company should consider applying the solution it had at the time with the court administration about other registered mail that it distributes for other law enforcement agencies. The police must also examine the phenomenon and the ways to eradicate it. It is also recommended that the National Insurance Institute examine ways to increase the use of a personal area on the institution's website among the Bedouin population and send messages by it via text messages in accordance with its procedures.
-  **Improving the service in the post offices** - It is recommended that the postal company work to improve the service in the Bedouin localities, while examining other alternatives for paying allowances. This becomes even more important in light of the fact that the rate of those in need of benefits among the residents of the Bedouin population is significantly higher than the rest of the population. This also has the effect of regulating the loads in the branches in a better way. It is also



recommended that the postal company examine the establishment of additional mail distribution centers in localities where there is a demand for it.



Arranging measures for the Home Front Command alerts in the Bedouin dispersion - it is recommended that the Home Front Command work to find solutions to install alert devices, including contacting with those responsible for mosques regarding the placement of loudspeakers, and examine the placement of loudspeakers in existing public buildings in all localities (kindergartens and schools). If necessary, the Home Front Command should work to raise the issue with the Ministry of the Interior for their assistance in this issue with the Bedouin local authorities.



Formulation of a plan to reduce gaps in emergency infrastructure and train health trustees - It is recommended that the Ministry of Health formulate a multi-year plan to complete the reduction of gaps in the deployment of emergency and rescue services and training in the Negev in general and among the Bedouin population in particular, in coordination with Magen David Adom and relevant local authorities.



Summary

Demonstrating the state's governance in all parts of the country is required as part of the need to ensure the provision of proper and regular services to all its residents wherever they are.

This report discusses the range of services and roles imposed on state authorities as part of their commitment to its residents in the Negev region. On the other side are law enforcement and the fulfillment of the obligations imposed on the residents. In the absence of these two, governance is significantly harmed.

According to CBS data, at the end of 2018, the Bedouin population in the Negev numbered about 268,000 people, which is about 20% of the total population in it, but according to the data in the report, its involvement rate in incidents related to violations of governance is significantly higher. This, among others, includes issues of transport, environment protection, tax payments, polygamy, protection payments and damage to civilian and military infrastructure.

In this report, deficiencies were noted regarding municipal management, water and sewage management, the fight against polygamy, dealing with cases of abuse of rights, pupils transportation, security of educational institutions, transportation infrastructure, receiving data from the population for statistical needs of the CBS, tax collection, environmental aspects, welfare, health and more.

Despite the government's budget allocations over the years in billions of shekels in five-year plans aimed at reducing the gaps between the sectors, and allocating current budgets to local authorities and Bedouin regional councils in the Negev, the gaps between Bedouin localities and other localities in the Negev remain considerable.

The promotion of the Bedouin population in the Negev depends on coordination between all related parties: the Settlement Authority, the Ministry of Housing, the Green Patrol, the Planning Administration, the Enforcement Unit, the Budget Division in the Ministry of Finance, the designated headquarters in the Ministry of Economy, the Israel Land Authority, Israel Police, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice and more.

The Bedouin in the Negev are entitled to a socio-economic framework that will allow them to really integrate into the Israeli society. Their position today as the poorest group in Israel imposes on the Israeli government the responsibility to work to increase governance in the Negev to enable the Bedouin to emerge from their situation and provide them, and especially the younger generation, with the necessary tools and physical infrastructure to successfully face future challenges.



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National-Strategic Spheres of Activity

Conduct of Law Enforcement Agencies towards Israelis of Ethiopian Background



Conduct of Law Enforcement Agencies towards Israelis of Ethiopian Background

Background

The population of Ethiopian origin in Israel has about 155,300 members, and its share is about 1.7% of the population of Israel. The State of Israel has worked hard to absorb and integrate Ethiopians into Israeli society, while allocating multiple resources to it. However, their integration was accompanied by considerable challenges. In addition to the gaps between Israelis of Ethiopian background and the general population from a socio-economic point of view, there are significant gaps between them in the field of criminal enforcement as well.

In 2015, following the publication of a video showing two policemen beating a soldier of Ethiopian background in uniform, the crisis of confidence of Ethiopians in the authorities intensified, and this was reflected in a widespread wave of protests by Israelis of Ethiopian background against the police. The protesters' allegations revolved around institutional racism, violence and discriminatory enforcement by the police as well as the incompetence of the law enforcement system, especially the Department of Internal Police Investigations in the State Attorney's Office (DIPI), in dealing with police offenses.

Following the wave of protests, in 2015 the police formulated a plan to strengthen trust between the police and the Ethiopian community. The program included focusing activities at police stations in Ethiopian-populated areas in collaboration with local communities, cultural training for police officers, recruiting personnel of Ethiopian origin, and investigative and legal activities. In 2016, the government decided to set up an inter-ministerial team to formulate an action plan to deal with the phenomenon of racism against Ethiopians. The team formulated recommendations on tools for dealing with racism and discrimination, with special emphasis on law enforcement agencies. The government has adopted most of the recommendations of the inter-ministerial team.

In early 2019, a wave of protests by Ethiopians resumed following two deaths of young Ethiopians caused by the police.



Key figures

1.7%

Percentage of the Ethiopian community in the population of Israel.

13%

Proportion of respondents from Ethiopian origin who trusted the police according to the police attitudes survey from 2019, compared to 56% of the respondents from the total population.

5.6%

Rate of arrests of minors from the Ethiopian community out of the total number of arrests of minors in 2019 - 3.3 times their rate in the population.

64%

Rate of reduction in the number of arrests of minors of Ethiopian origin over the years 2015-2019

65%

Rate of days arrest not resulting in detention of detainees until the end of the proceedings out of the total number of arrests of adults of Ethiopian origin in 2019, compared with 75% among the general adult population.

3.2%

Rate of investigation files of adults from Ethiopian origin out of the total investigation files for adults in 2019 - 1.9 times their rate in the population.

32.6%

Rate of investigation files for which indictments were filed, out of all investigation files concerning adults of Ethiopian background in 2019 - compared with 26.8% among the entire adult population.

34%

Rate of investigation files referred to conditional treatment (alternative to criminal proceedings) of minors of Ethiopian origin in 2019 - compared to 43% of all minors.

Audit actions

 In the months of December 2019 to December 2020, the State Comptroller's Office examined the conduct of the enforcement agencies towards the Ethiopian community in the years 2015-2020. The audit was conducted in the police and DIP; completion audits were conducted in the Ministry of Internal Security, the Ministry of Justice, the IDF, the Prison Service and the administration of the courts. The audit was performed, inter alia, by collecting, monitoring, analyzing and cross-referencing data from the databases of the audited entities. The State Comptroller's Office also conducted a



public participation process with participants of Ethiopian background to hear their views on the conduct of law enforcement agencies.

Key findings

Police data and police enforcement against Israelis of Ethiopian background:

A comparison with the entire population shows that in all stages of the criminal enforcement process, from arrest, through the opening of the investigation file to the filing of an indictment, the proportion of Israelis of Ethiopian background is greater than their share of the population. For example, the rate of investigation files of Israelis of Ethiopian background in 2019 is considerably larger than their rate in the population (1.7%): 3.8 times higher among minors and 1.9 times among adults. The data indicate over-policing of this population. The data show particularly high anomalies for minors of Ethiopian background.

 **Police actions to reduce friction with the Ethiopian community:** As part of the police program to strengthen trust between the Ethiopian community and the police, actions were taken that led to a reduction in policing and enforcement rates against Israelis of Ethiopian background in 2015-2019: a 4.1 percent reduction in the rate of detention of minors of Ethiopian background and a reduction of percentage points in the rate of investigation files of minors of Ethiopian background. At the same time, there has been a trend of stability or a moderate increase in the rate of policing and enforcement data against adults of Ethiopian background. However, despite the actions of the police and the trend of improvement in the rate of over-policing among minors of Ethiopian background, in 2019 the policing and enforcement rates against them remained much higher than their proportion in the population.

 **Position surveys conducted by the police:** Position surveys conducted by the police among the Ethiopian community revealed that in 2018 there was an improvement in the degree of trust of the community in the police relative to the previous year, but in 2019 there was a sharp decline in the level of trust and satisfaction of Israelis of Ethiopians background from the police. It also emerged that the police did not meet the goal they set for themselves and according to which in 2019 30% of respondents of Ethiopian background would trust the police - in practice in that year only 13% of respondents of Ethiopian background trusted the police. The Ethiopian community's confidence in the police and their satisfaction with it were much lower than among the general population.

 **The public participation process conducted by the State Comptroller's Office with the Ethiopian community in 2020:** The process reflected the difficult feelings of this public in terms of the attitude of the enforcement agencies towards it and its



distrust of these bodies. Despite government actions and the measures of the various law enforcement agencies taken in recent years, Israelis of Ethiopian background feel that the said actions were not sufficiently implemented in the field and did not bring about a substantial change in the basic perception and inequality in the conduct of law enforcement agencies towards them.

- Management of the police program to strengthen trust between the police and the Ethiopian community:** In 2015-2018, less attention was paid by the highest ranks of the police to the police program intended to strengthen trust between the Ethiopian community and the police, the responsibility for including and managing the program was split between different units, and there were deficiencies in the actions of all the police entities who took part in the program. All of these led to a loosening of the ongoing implementation of the program and hampered the promotion of the program, the execution of staff work aimed at re-evaluating the program and achieving its goals. As of the date of the end of the audit, there is no entity in the police that examines from above the entire range of aspects related to the conduct of the police towards the Ethiopian community and works to advance proactive steps in the field.
- Conditional treatment procedure:** It was found that in 2015-2019 the proportion of minors of Ethiopian background who were referred for conditional treatment (an alternative procedure for criminal proceedings) was 10% lower than the proportion of minors referred for this procedure among the general population. In practice there is a gap in the opportunity for minors of Ethiopian background to quickly get out of the cycle of crime through this procedure.
- Investigation files for minors prior to recruitment:** Open investigation files may prevent minors from the opportunity to be recruited to the IDF and integrate into society. There is a phenomenon in which teenagers of Ethiopian background with open investigation files do not even know that the investigation files have been opened against them, they do not know the status of their treatment, and sometimes in the absence of motivation, ability or support they are unable to close the case to promote their recruitment to the IDF. Despite the desire and actions of the IDF and the police to assist youth with open investigation files, prior to their recruitment, by clarification of the status of their investigation file and the expedited management of the case until its closure, the existing process and cooperation between the various parties has not yet been settled in an overall and binding procedure. As a result, teenagers with a criminal record who could have enlisted in the IDF and thus gain an opportunity to better integrate into society may "fall through the cracks" due to not receiving the best possible assistance.
- Arrangement for pardon for deleting the criminal record of minors and young people of Ethiopian background:** In November 2018, the President and the Minister of Justice published an outline for deleting the criminal record of minors and young people of Ethiopian origin. In this framework, 140 applications for deletion of a criminal record were received and identified by May 2021, of which only 48 requests



were answered positively. The small number of applications submitted by youngsters of Ethiopian background for the deletion of a criminal record indicates gaps in adapting the arrangement and marketing it in its current format to these young people, given the distrust they feel towards law enforcement agencies.

- 🗨️ **Concept of operations and goals for the NCO police force designated for the Ethiopian community:** This organization is a key component in the implementation of the police program to strengthen trust and direct contact with the community to drive processes to bring the community and the police closer. This system is also fully funded through a budget of approximately NIS 11 million per year allocated by the government program for the integration of the Ethiopian community in Israeli society. As of the end date of the audit, it was found that the operating concept, targets for achievement, metrics and a unique control mechanism for the NCO police officers designated for the Ethiopian community have not yet been formulated.
- 🗨️ **The stations under focus of the police program to strengthen trust:** It appears that there is great variability between the core stations in the degree of motivation and promotion of the police program and in the activity of the stations regarding the Ethiopian community. Station commanders who attached importance to this program gave a boost to the designated NCOs, while station commanders who did not attach importance to the program diverted the dedicated NCO officers to other activities and reduced the station activity pertaining to the Ethiopian community.
- 🗨️ **Complaints of Israelis of Ethiopian background to DIPI:** It was found that the rate of complaints submitted by Israelis of Ethiopians background to DIPI is more than twice the rate of the Ethiopian community among the general population. The audit revealed that in the years 2017-2020, 24,033 cases were opened in DIPI, of which 1,074 (about 4.5%) of the complaints were from Israelis of Ethiopian background. About 60% of the complaints filed by Israelis of Ethiopian background in 2017-2019 originated in "police material" cases (documents from the police investigation materials in a criminal case, documenting a statement or claim made by the suspect regarding the use of force used by a police officer) and not in initiated complaints. Most of these complaints are not investigated and are closed because the complainant abandons his complaint.
- 🗨️ **Compilation of complaints of Israelis of Ethiopian background regarding improper conduct of police:** There is no single entity that **compiles** all the complaints about police misconduct from Israelis of Ethiopian background, which are received by the police and DIPI. The low number of complaints filed with the Public Complaints Unit of the Police (PCU) and the Police Disciplinary Department for racist behavior of police officers is inconsistent with the Ethiopian community feeling of over-policing towards them.
- 🗨️ **Analysis of complaints about violence and racist treatment by police officers:** DIPI, the Disciplinary Department and the CPU are key nodes that gather a lot of



information regarding complaints about violence and racist treatment of police officers against Israelis of Ethiopian background, which may be used by law enforcement agencies to deal with the inappropriate phenomena among police personnel. In practice these bodies do not segment by population groups the complaints stemming from racism, discrimination against excluded populations, over-policing and profiling (suspected criminal activity based on skin color, ethnicity or other identifying mark, leading to selective and discriminatory undertaking of arrests and searches). Hence they cannot examine and analyze trends in complaints from Israelis of Ethiopian background about discriminatory or racist treatment of police officers, and consequently act to change the situation.

 **Cultural training:** Until 2019, various bodies in the police held hundreds of cultural training sessions. The results of the training did not show modifications in the feelings of the Ethiopian community, as emerged from surveys conducted by the police in those years. It was also found that the cultural training focused on police officers and commanders at police stations spread across the country, while the headquarters were given little cultural training.

 **Adding a racist motive in indictments:** Although in recent years emphasis has been placed on refining guidelines on adding a racist motive in indictments under section 144F of the Penal Code, it has been found that the number of approvals for adding a racist motive in indictments is decreasing: In 2019, a total of nine applications were approved, compared to 33 in 2015, which is not coherent with the feelings of the public and the populations suffering from racism.

 **The government unit for the coordination of the fight against racism:** The unit's handling of complaints focuses on examining and following up the treatment of the entity against which the complaint was filed on the issue on which the complaint revolved and updating the complainant on the findings of the investigation and follow-up. Since the unit has not been given enforcement powers to fulfill its functions and does not even have professional status, especially vis-à-vis the DIPI or the police, the capacity of the unit to treat complaints is limited.



In general, the distribution of DIPI decisions regarding cases of complaints submitted to it by Ethiopians is similar to the distribution of DIPI decisions regarding cases of complaints submitted to it from the general population.

The team for improvement of the response to complaints against police officers recommended in December 2020 that both the police and the DIPI establish databases where complete and uniform data on complaints about police officers will be gathered, that procedures be established for coordination and cooperation between the DIPI and the police, that the police publish annually information on the manner in which they have dealt



with complaints about police officers, and that the police issue a comprehensive ordinance on the use of command tools.

The rate of adequate representation of Israelis of Ethiopians background in the police would be about 3%. However, among police officers, the rate of Israelis of Ethiopians background is only about 1%. In the Israel Prison Service (IPS), the appropriate representation rate for Israelis of Ethiopians background is about 5.5%. However, among IPS officers, the rate of Israelis of Ethiopians background is only about 2% of all officers.

Key recommendations

-  It is recommended that the police regularly analyze data on policing and enforcement against the Ethiopian community and compare them with data on policing and enforcement against the entire population, in order to get a broad picture of the gaps between them both nationally and locally. It is also recommended that the police analyze the findings of the opinion polls among the Ethiopian community, locate the barriers to achieving the goals it has set for itself to measure the effectiveness of the program and work to remove them. These tools can be used by the police to draw lessons and evaluate the steps it is taking to reduce excess policing towards the Ethiopian community, to increase the trust of Israelis of Ethiopians background in the police and to generate insights regarding continued activity in the field. It is also recommended that the police determine who shall be the commanding officer who will supervise the police program to strengthen trust between the Ethiopian community and the police, and that the commanding officer work to promote the program, while continuously monitoring compliance with its goals and the promotion of its goals.
-  The Ministry of Internal Security should closely monitor and control the police program in accordance with its national importance and financial investment.
-  It is recommended that the police and the IDF complete the institutionalization of interfaces and improve the cooperation between them in order to promote the recruitment of citizens of Ethiopian background with criminal backgrounds, and in particular those with still open investigation files, in a way that promotes their return to a normative route and their recruitment to the IDF.
-  It is recommended that DIPI pay attention to the closure of complaints filed by Israelis of Ethiopians background, and work to locate the complainant and explain to him that it is necessary to file a complaint for the purpose of prosecuting the suspected police officer. It is also recommended that DIPI complete the upgrade of its computer system.
-  The DIPI and the police discipline department must act to organize the handling of complaints about police officers who have used force illegally against persons of



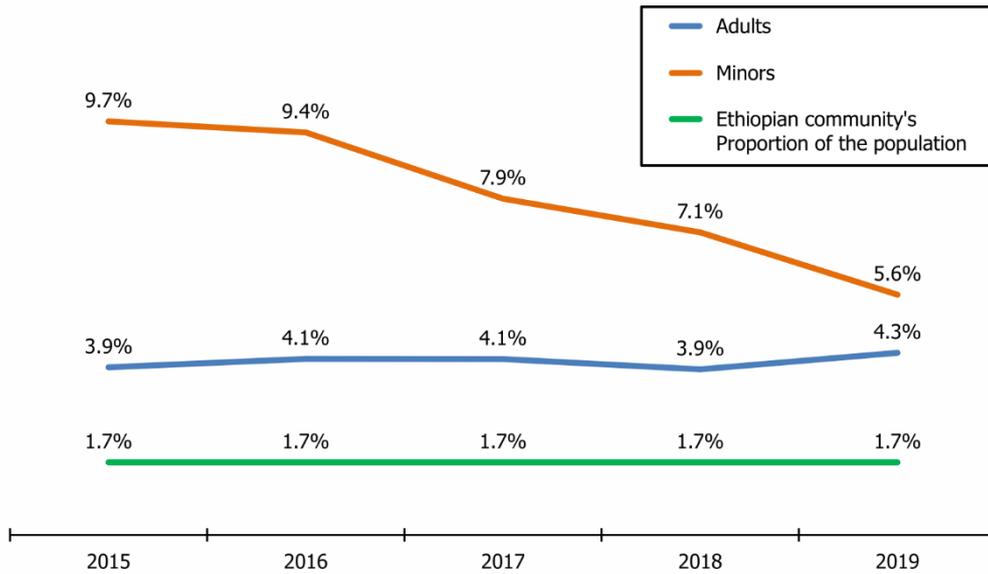
Ethiopian background, in such a way that no complaints remain without handling due to lack of clarity regarding the person authorized to handle them. It is also recommended that DIPI and the police collect complete data on the complainants' details, enter the data on the relevant offenses in computerized systems and analyze the data in order to identify failures and draw lessons, including issues of over-policing, profiling and racism, and work to eradicate them.

-  It is recommended that the police conduct effective cultural training among all police officers, including in the headquarters and command units, as well as prepare them to use severe punitive measures against police officers who practice racism and publicly publish the manner in which these cases were handled. It is also recommended that both the police and the IPS work to increase the rate of adequate representation of Israelis of Ethiopians background among the officers and senior members of the organization.
-  It is recommended that the State Attorney's Office implement the guidelines regarding the addition of racist motives in indictments, and work to gather information on the origin of the victims in order to improve the supervision and control of the filing of racist motives, especially against Israelis of Ethiopians background.
-  It is recommended that the Ministry of Justice complete the examination of the need to anchor the powers of the government unit to coordinate the fight against racism, for the purpose of effective treatment, supervision, control and enforcement in matters of racism and discrimination.

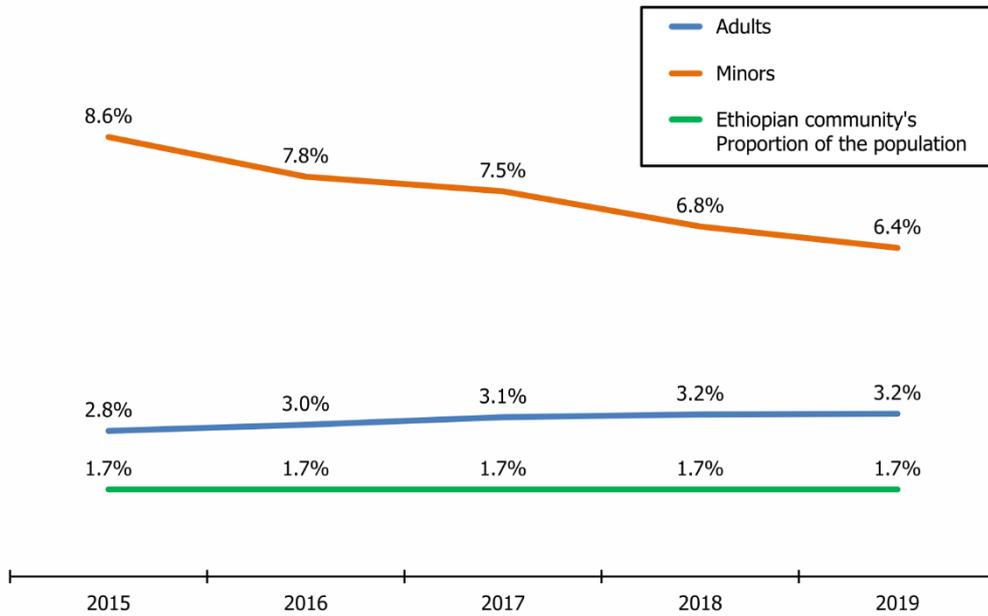


Rate of arrests and investigation files of Israelis of Ethiopians background from all arrests and investigation files, 2015 - 2019

Arrests



Investigation files





"I did a morning run next to an Israeli resident citizen like me. I was arrested. Why are you arresting me, is everything OK? They asked for an ID card. I said I am wearing sportswear and do not have it with me. I hear two cops discussing "Leave him, he looks fine, we'll let him go". This caused a feeling of profiling against the black person who is the immediate suspect, and that is how the police treat every black citizen who is in an environment that is not in accordance with the perception about them."

""I'm a major in the IDF, returning home after a full week at the base and going out, the mistake I made was that I took off my top shirt with my ranks and went out to throw garbage and what happens is the patrol car passes, sees me with a hoodie, stops next to me 'What are you doing here?' I told the officer that I live here. "Give me an ID". I told him that I do not have my ID on me, I just came back from base, if you want I will go up to get the ID. He tells me no, he's inside the patrol car, it's pouring rain outside and he starts finding out about me on the computer while comfortably sitting in the car. These are the interactions and we are talking about youth and children? It's not youth and children, it's everybody."



Israelis of Ethiopians background demonstrate against police violence, Tel Aviv, January 30, 1919.
Photographer: Rotem Ben Hamo (Shutterstock.com).



Summary

As of the end of the audit, five years after the implementation of the police plan to strengthen trust between the Ethiopian community and the police, and after the publication of the inter-ministerial team report which formulated an action plan to deal with the phenomenon of racism against Israelis of Ethiopians background, it was found that despite the issue being at the center of public discourse, and despite the increased involvement of law enforcement with the issue and the considerable efforts made by the police in the police program, policing and enforcement rates against the Ethiopian community remained much higher than the general population, and the degree of trust of the Ethiopian community in the police as well as the degree of satisfaction from it remained low. Ethiopians expressed feelings of personal insecurity in the public sphere, discrimination in the attitude of law enforcement agencies towards them, over-policing and profiling. Enforcement agencies must act to eradicate racism, over-policing and profiling, act transparently with cooperation and knowledge sharing, for equal, fair and impartial treatment by law enforcement agencies, so that Israeli citizens of Ethiopian background feel equal to all other citizens.



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National-Strategic Spheres of Activity

Inclusive Employment of a Variety of Populations in the Public Service



Inclusive Employment of a Variety of Populations in the Public Service

Background

Inclusive employment of employees from different populations strives to give each of the organization's employees the feeling that they are equal to all employees, while maintaining their uniqueness and without requiring to conceal their diversity as belonging to a particular population in society, such as religious, ethnic or cultural diversity, or due to disability or sexual preferences. An organization that employs a variety of populations benefits by enhancing its creativity and innovation, improving decision-making processes and ameliorating service to the public.



Key figures

79

Government bodies in the civil service (employing about 80,000 workers) (in 2019)

57%

Rate of job tenders for the Arab community in which no winner was selected (in 2019)

5.4%

Of the employees joining the civil service in 2019 were from the ultra-Orthodox community - lower than the government target (7%)

0

Number of government hospitals that met the representation target for people with disabilities (5%) (in 2019)

88%

civil servants from the Ethiopian community were in the junior ranks (in 2019)

75%

Of Arab and Ethiopian participants in the public participation process reported that they felt manifestations of racism by employees or managers

86%

of the major government bodies did not meet the target for adequate representation of people with disabilities (5%) (in 2019)

11

Number of government bodies without employment diversity officers (15%)

Audit actions



From February to November 2020, the State Comptroller's Office conducted an audit on the issue of the inclusive employment of a variety of populations in the civil service. The audit was conducted at the Civil Service Commission, and supplemental examinations were conducted at the Prime Minister's Office and the Commission for Equal Rights for People with Disabilities at the Ministry of Justice. The audit dealt with the absorption, integration and promotion of workers from the following populations: members of the Arab community, including the Druze and Circassians (hereinafter - the Arab community); Ethiopians; the ultra-Orthodox community; and people with disabilities. The examination included two main components: (1) **analysis of databases on all civil servants** for the years 2015-2019 and **analysis of databases of tenders** in the civil service in the years 2017-2019; (2) A process of **public participation of civil servants** from the Arab community, from the Ethiopian community and from the ultra-Orthodox community.



Key findings

- Representation of the Arab community-** For 13 years, the government has not updated the target set for adequate representation of the Arab community in the civil service (10%), and this target is low considering the proportion of the Arab community in the total population (21%) and even in the total labor force (18%).

 - 77% of government ministries and none of their support units, including units with thousands of employees, did not meet the target for adequate representation of the Arab community in the civil service.
 - 75% of the participants in the public participation process among the Arab community reported that they felt some degree of racism manifestations on the part of employees or managers.
 - The representation of Arab civil servants decreases when going up in seniority. For example, their representation at the junior level of government ministries was 15% and their representation at the senior level was 3%. A large majority (77%) of the respondents in the public participation process believed that an employee from the Arab community required more effort, compared to another employee, to advance to a more senior position.
- Representation of the Ethiopian community -** 63% of government ministries and 79% of the support units did not meet the government target for adequate representation of the Ethiopian community.

 - 75% of participants in the public participation process among the Ethiopian community reported that Ethiopians encountered racist comments in their work.
 - Most of the respondents among civil servants from the Ethiopian community in the public participation process (57%) thought that their organization was not working to encourage the recruitment of Ethiopian candidates.
 - Civil servants from the Ethiopian community in all government organizations have junior over-representation (88% compared to 55% of all state employees) and under-representation at other levels (2.9% at middle management level - middle level - compared to 15% of all state employees). As a rule, representation decreases significantly when going up in seniority.
- Representation of the ultra-Orthodox community -** In 2019, almost 1,000 ultra-Orthodox workers worked in the civil service, 64% of whom were women. The rate of ultra-Orthodox workers in the civil service in 2019 was about 1.2%, and is far from the rate of the ultra-Orthodox population of all residents of the country of working age, which stands at about 8%.



- 1% of all ultra-Orthodox employees in the civil service were at the senior level and 19% were at the intermediate level. In 2018, a reserve program for academics from the ultra-Orthodox population was launched for the first time - the "Influencers" program. Since the first running of the program for ultra-Orthodox women and men, the program has not been run a second time, as of the end of the audit.
- About 71% of the participants in the process of public participation among the ultra-Orthodox civil servants reported encountering abusive remarks.

Representation of people with disabilities - Since 2017, there has been a decrease every year in the representation of employees with disabilities in the civil service (representation of 5% in 2017 compared to representation of 3.8% in 2019). In 2019, 86% of the large government bodies in the civil service did not meet the target for adequate representation of people with disabilities (5%), including all government ministries with more than 1,000 employees - Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Services, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Foreign Affairs - and all government hospitals.

Representation of women - In 36 government ministries and support units, the proportion of women in management levels (mid and senior levels) was less than 50%.

- For five years there has been an increase in the proportion of women from the populations entitled to adequate representation in the civil service from all civil servants, but there remains an almost constant under-representation of Arab and Ethiopian women: the proportion of Arab women in the total number of civil servants in 2019 (8.6%) was lower than the proportion of all Arab workers in the total number of civil servants (12.4%), and among Ethiopians - 2.6% and 2.8%, respectively.
- In respect of female civil servants among the Arab community and the Ethiopian community, there is a double under-representation: due to both being a woman and being part of the under-represented population in the civil service, and especially in its senior ranks.

Enforcement of employment diversity objectives - the activity of the Civil Service Commission to enforce the duty of adequate representation of the populations entitled to it was lacking: the Civil Service Commission made little use of the enforcement measures available to it and in addition, did not implement the 2007 and 2009 government decisions regarding actions for ensuring appropriate representation of the Arab community in the civil service. This is despite the fact that government bodies, including large bodies that employed thousands of workers, did not meet the obligation to adequately represent population groups entitled to it.

Appointment of employment diversity officers - about 15% of government bodies, including large bodies with more than 1,000 employees - including the Ministry



of Justice, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Services and the National Fire and Rescue Authority - did not appoint an employment diversity officer during the audited period, as required by the Civil Service Law (Appointments), 1959 (hereinafter - the Appointments Law). Government bodies in which employment diversity officers have served are characterized, according to the audit findings, by the inclusive employment of a variety of populations compared to other bodies, in several aspects: the work atmosphere; encouraging the recruitment and promotion of workers from a variety of populations; encouraging personal and professional development of the employee and even preventing manifestations of racism.



In almost all government hospitals, the representation rate of civil servants from the Arab community in 2019 was higher than in 2018.

The number of ultra-Orthodox employees in the civil service is steadily increasing from 121 employees in 2015 to 980 employees in 2019, and in government ministries the increase is particularly noticeable (from 26 employees in 2015 to 446 in 2019), and they are also represented at the administrative levels.

Key recommendations

-  It is recommended that the Civil Service Commission take effective action to ensure that, as a rule, government bodies meet government targets for adequate representation of all eligible population groups, including at senior levels.
-  The director-generals of government ministries and the directors of government support units and government hospitals must work to make the organisation they manage meet the objectives of adequate representation of populations entitled to it, including at management levels. When Director-Generals believe that there are objective difficulties in locating candidates from the Arab community, such as candidates who meet certain professional requirements, it is advisable to enlist the help of the Civil Service Commission to examine appropriate solutions, striving to achieve the government goal of employing workers from the Arab community.
-  The managements of government ministries, support units and government hospitals - under the professional and managerial leadership of the Civil Service Commission - must take action to correct and improve the organizational climate in the civil service. Along with actions already taken by several government bodies, there is room for promoting actions in the field of information and in-depth acquaintance with the diversity of populations in Israeli society, in order to



improve the way employees behave with their colleagues from different communities in one way or another.



It is recommended that the Civil Service Commission work to set goals for the employment of civil servants among the Arab community, goals that will suit its representation in the state population, and work to achieve them in all government bodies and in particular in government ministries and their support units. It is also recommended that the Civil Service Commission work to improve the representation of Arab civil servants, especially at management levels. As a general rule, there is room to consider setting goals for adequate representation, especially at the upper level as well; to act, if possible, to appoint members of examining committees from among the Arab community in tenders in which there is an Arab candidate, and to monitor the results of the implementation of the change; to work for the integration of candidates and employees from the Arab community in reserve programs for managers in the civil service; to provide appropriate professional guidance to Arab workers in the middle levels, in order to prepare them to serve in senior positions.



Improving the employment characteristics of civil servants from the Ethiopian community depends on the mobilization of the managements of government bodies to increase the pool of candidates in public tenders; in the allocation of tenders intended for suitable positions in terms of the requirements of education and experience in them and for higher ranks positions; in assimilating values and ways of working in the organization that will facilitate the absorption of workers from the Ethiopian community and their promotion according to their skills. The Civil Service Commission must take action to ensure that these managements act in this way. Among other things, it is recommended to set goals at the ranking level as well, in order to encourage the appointment of employees from the Ethiopian community to more senior positions as well.



It is recommended that the Civil Service Commission continue to act on the issue of employing ultra-Orthodox in the civil service, including proposing to set a government target for the adequate representation of ultra-Orthodox from all civil servants and to act accordingly. Actions are required for the inclusive employment of ultra-Orthodox civil servants while maintaining their uniqueness and taking into account their diversity as people who belongs to the ultra-Orthodox population.



It is recommended that the Civil Service Commission and the Government bodies work to increase the recruitment of people with disabilities to the civil service. The difficulties in locating employees raised by government bodies and government hospitals should be brought to the attention of the Civil Service Commission. It is recommended that the Commission lead joint work with those bodies to realize the possibilities of locating candidates with disabilities for government bodies, including increasing the number of job tenders intended for this population and



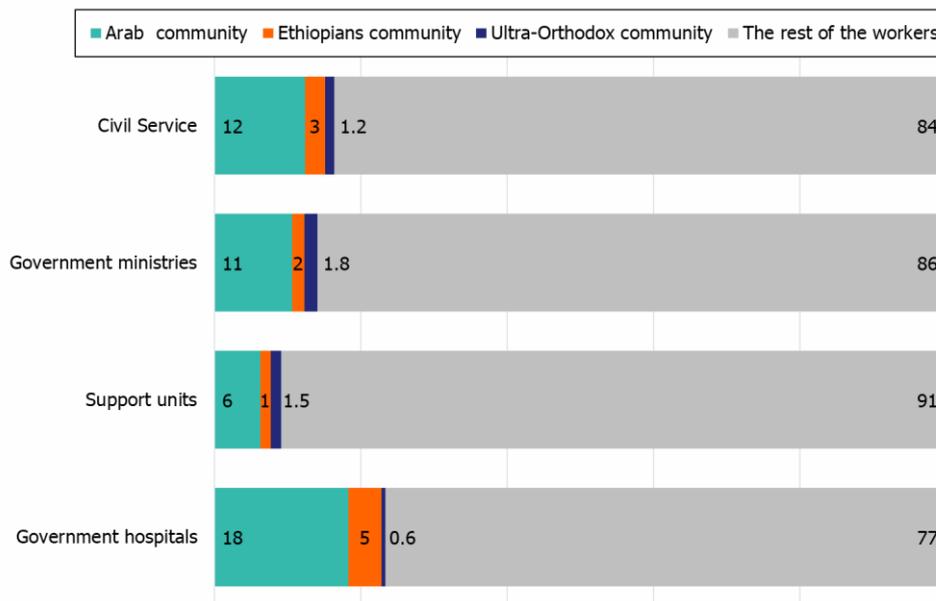
distributing them through organizations specializing in treating people with disabilities, such as the rehabilitation branch of the Ministry of Defense.

-  Comprehensive action in the civil service is required to increase the representation of women, especially among the populations entitled to adequate representation, in senior positions in the civil service. It is recommended that the Civil Service Commission formulate a comprehensive action plan, based on organization wide and specific data for government bodies, and work to implement it in all the branches of the government.
-  The managements of government bodies must appoint employment diversity officers and provide them with sufficient tools for the purpose of ensuring a suitable and inclusive work environment for the employment of workers from a variety of populations. The Civil Service Commission must act to implement the provisions of the Appointments Law regarding the obligation to appoint an employment diversity officer in all bodies of the civil service.



Percentage of workers from the populations entitled to adequate representation of all civil servants, in general and by type of government bodies, 2019

In 2019, about 80,000 employees were employed in the civil service: about 25,000 employees in government ministries; About 23,000 employees in support units; About 32,000 employees in government hospitals.



Summary

Improving the employment rate in the Arab community, the ultra-Orthodox community and among people with disabilities, and improving the quality of employment of members of the Ethiopian community, may benefit the public and the economy as a whole. The civil service should be the flagship regarding the integration of workers from these population groups, in all its branches and at all levels. This task is incumbent on all the managements of a civil service organization and the Civil Service Commission, in its role as responsible for the management of human capital in the civil service.



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Systemic Issues

Government Ministries use of the Public Cloud and Preparations for the Establishment of a Central Cloud



Government Ministries' use of the Public Cloud and Preparations for Establishment of a Central Cloud

Background

The development of cloud computing technology enables the government sector to better address the many challenges it faces, such as improving service to the citizen, reducing inter-office variability and enhancing operational efficiency. But along with the benefits, the use of this technology also entails real risks in the areas of information security and cyber protection, privacy protection and more.

In recent years, the Government of Israel has recognized the need for forward-looking planning and outlining a vision, goals and objectives that will enable the realization of the potential inherent in cloud technology, and make it easier to deal with the challenges involved in using this technology.



Key figures

2%

Average annual utilization rate of existing local computing infrastructure resources in government in 2018

1%

In 2019, the government invested less than one percent of its total investment in ICT in cloud computing, compared to 8% worldwide¹

102

Number of systems that have been moved to a cloud environment² out of thousands of information systems and computer infrastructures in the government sector

773%

Increase in the number of threats to cloud services of the government sector worldwide in March and April 2020 compared to January and February of that year

60%

Proportion of offices that responded to the State Comptroller's Office questionnaire that did not carry out a learning process after implementing a system in the cloud

61%

Percentage of offices that responded to the State Comptroller's Office questionnaire that they do not have a master plan for computing or that their plan does not refer to cloud computing

99%

The vast majority of the offices that responded to the State Comptroller's Office questionnaire did not encounter multiple malfunctions in their cloud systems

Audit actions



From March to October 2020, the State Comptroller's Office examined aspects of government offices' use of the public cloud and preparations for the establishment of a central cloud. The audit was conducted at the Government ICT Authority in the Ministry of Digital Affairs, in the Procurement Administration in the Accountant General's Division of the Ministry of Finance and in the National Cyber Directorate in the Prime Minister's Office. Supplemental examinations were performed in the information systems divisions of several government ministries and support units, at the Federation of Local Authorities, in the Privacy Protection Authority in the Ministry of Justice and in

¹ According to the ICT Authority, 2020 activity at a glance.

² According to data from the Cyber Protection Unit (CPU) as of July 2020.



the Digital Transformation Administration in the ICT Division of the IDF. As part of the audit, the Office of the State Comptroller contacted 72 directors of main information systems divisions (hereinafter - MISDs) in government offices and their support units, and asked them to fill out a questionnaire on the use of public cloud services. Forty-five (about 62%) of the MISDs answered the questionnaire.

Key findings

- Approved government plan for transition to cloud computing:** The government plan for transition to cloud computing prepared by the ICT Authority was not presented to the Ministerial Committee as required by Government Decision 2097 of 2014, due to the dissolution of the committee in 2015 and its non re-establishment. It should be noted that the average annual utilization rate in 2018 of the existing local computing infrastructure resources in the government was 2%.
- Nimbus Project:** The Nimbus Project is a multi-year project that began in 2019 and is intended to provide a comprehensive solution to the issue of cloud services provision to government ministries. The project consists of four tiers that make up the central tender of the Government Procurement Administration. During 2020, tenders were published for the first tier (supply of cloud services) and the second tier (center of excellence in cloud computing) of the tender, and during February 2021, a tender was published for the third tier (modernization and migration services). A tender for the fourth tier (monitoring and optimization services) has not yet been published, and no estimated date has been set for its publication. The lack of a defined time frame for the project as a whole may lead to a prolongation of its implementation and a delay in the plan to migrate government offices to the cloud environment.
- Mapping of the systems implemented in a cloud environment:** As of the time of the audit, neither the ICT Authority nor any other government body had a complete and up-to-date mapping of all government systems that have already been implemented in the cloud. Such a mapping is required in order to obtain a complete and accurate picture of what is happening in the government offices and to verify that all government offices are operating in accordance with the guidelines of the ICT Authority regarding cloud computing.
- Information security for work in the cloud:** The director of the government's Cyber Protection Unit (hereinafter - CPU)³ issued a specific directive which states that

³ The CPU is a unit that operates within the framework of the Government ICT Authority in the Prime Minister's Office. The unit was established under Government Resolution 2443 "Promoting National Regulation and Government Leadership in Cyber Defense".



any system operating in the cloud environment requires the approval of the Advisory Committee on Transfer of Information and Computing Applications to the Public Cloud Environment, whether it is planned to move to the cloud or it is already operating in the cloud. Despite this directive, the responses of 42 offices to the questionnaire distributed by the State Comptroller's Office indicate that about ten systems operate in a cloud environment in these offices without the approval of the advisory committee. Operating such systems in a cloud environment without the committee examining whether this should be approved may lead to the realization of information security risks involved in operating these systems.

- Information Security Guidelines for entities not controlled by the CPU:** Entities subject to sectoral guidelines by government ministries but not subject to CPU guidelines, such as communications, transportation and energy companies, independently manage the field of cyber protection in their computer systems, including cloud systems implementation, without a leading and supervising professional-regulatory entity - except for those that are defined as a critical state infrastructure and are closely supervised by the Cyber Directorate.
- Control over the implementation of information security guidelines in the field of cloud environment:** There is no control over the implementation of the Cyber Directorate guidelines by the various entities. It also emerged that the Cyber Directorate does not have the authority to supervise and control the implementation of its guidelines in the area of cloud computing.
- Requirements of the Advisory Committee for carrying out penetration tests into the cloud environment:** The Prime Minister's Office (hereinafter - PMO) is required to conduct penetration tests or risk surveys every 18 months for a government decision monitoring system uploaded to the cloud environment in December 2018. The audit found that the system had undergone penetration tests and a risk survey at the time of its establishment, but as of February 2021, no further penetration tests or additional risk surveys have been performed.
- Contract without tender for the establishment of a system in a cloud environment:** In two of the three audited projects for the establishment of a cloud environment system, in the Ministry of Construction and Housing and in the Prime Minister's Office, it was decided to contract with a supplier to carry out the project without a tender process but rather on the basis that they were the sole supplier, based on the maximum price agreement signed between the supplier and the Government Procurement Administration. This is despite the fact that the maximum price agreement with the supplier did not apply to the supplier's cloud services, and a tender procedure could have been conducted.
- Government lesson learning procedure:** No orderly government procedure has been formulated to draw lessons from the implementation of systems in the cloud environment. Such a procedure can help identify the barriers, difficulties and



shortcomings that make it difficult for government ministries to implement systems in the cloud environment and help deal with them.



Publication of policies and guidelines: The Office of the State Comptroller welcomes the fact that the publications of the policies and guidelines of the ICT Authority and the CPU regarding cloud computing are updated in accordance with technological developments. It should be noted that in November 2020, the Procurement Administration issued a binding directive on "guidelines for the approval and control of cloud contracts". In addition, it should be noted that during the audit, the ICT Authority issued a directive in December 2020 on the subject of "approval, planning and control of cloud services."

Integration of additional entities in the Nimbus project: The State Comptroller's Office notes the integration of additional entities, such as institutional and financial entities, as well as the IDF, within the Nimbus project. The multiplicity of entities participating in the project enables the pooling of national resources and budgetary efficiency.

Key recommendations

-  In order to facilitate the implementation of projects in a cloud environment in the future, both by the ministries independently and as part of the Nimbus project, it is proposed that the ICT Authority examine the full findings of this report and the conclusions drawn from them - the MISDs' answers to the questionnaire; the need to update its guidelines; the need to control the entities to ensure that they are implementing the guidelines; the establishment of a lesson-learning process, including by professional entities such as the Privacy Protection Authority; and the need for a uniform policy for all the entities that can serve as a basis for individual regulations.
-  It is recommended that the Ministry of the Interior formulate a multi-year plan for the integration of municipalities in the Nimbus tender. As part of the plan preparation, it is worth considering the existence of a preliminary mechanism that will coordinate the ministry's guidelines for municipalities, including aspects of marketing, guidance and implementation, budgeting, etc. It is also proposed that the Ministry of the Interior and the National Cyber Directorate act as soon as possible to promote the establishment of a central Command and Control Center for handling cyber incidents in municipalities, in order to ensure functional continuity of municipalities.
-  The Information System departments in government ministries must submit to the CPU a mapping of all the cloud systems in the ministries and update the advisory committee about the systems established in the cloud environment without its approval. The CPU must complete a mapping of all cloud systems in government offices. In this context, it



is recommended that the Advisory Committee verify that in cloud ventures implemented prior to its establishment, the selected suppliers have adequate information security certifications. It is also recommended that the CPU apply control measures to ensure that the ministries implement its guidelines.

-  In order to ensure the level of information security and cyber protection when implementing cloud transitions among entities subject to sectoral guidelines of government ministries, it is proposed that government ministries serving as regulators examine the need to establish dedicated cloud committees for entities subject to sectoral guidelines within such areas as transport, communications and energy. These committees will be able to ensure that the implementation of systems in the cloud meets the accepted standards in the areas of information security and cyber protection, as well as carry out controls on the implementation of cloud systems by these entities. Alternatively, it is recommended that government ministries consider the possibility of instructing their subordinate and supervised bodies to set up internal cloud committees that will report to the government ministry on the implementation of cloud systems.
-  It is recommended that the Cyber Directorate shall consider the conduct of a periodic survey to examine the understanding and implementation of its guidelines on the implementation of cloud systems by government ministries and their support units, both to reduce the risk of not properly addressing the issue of information security when implementing a system in the cloud environment and to examine its effectiveness.
-  It is recommended that internal auditors in all government ministries as well as the Municipalities Audit Division of the Ministry of the Interior consider the importance of the issue of cloud computing and the incorporation of this issue into audits in accordance with the methodologies used by these bodies for the selection of audit subjects.
-  The State Comptroller's Office recommends that in light of the expected increase in contractual engagements regarding the transition to cloud environment, the Procurement Administration will ensure compliance with its guidelines regarding contractual engagements between ministries and suppliers for computer services in a cloud environment, and for this purpose it will examine the need to perform a comprehensive mapping of the contracts once every few years - including the dates of the contracts, their period of validity and cost.



Advantages and challenges of implementing cloud computing

Challenges of implementing cloud computing



Adaptation of the organization structure to the cloud model



Definition of clear responsibilities and boundaries



Dependance on the cloud supplier



Adaptation of the organization activity



Compliance with the Information Security and privacy requirements



Loss of capabilities in the organization



Transfer process



Subordination to foreign laws*

Main advantages of cloud computing



Optimization of acquisition processes



Specialization and leverage of scale advantages



Purchase of services as needed



Saving of capital costs



Ability scope adjustment to the organization needs



Agility



Increasing business survivability against risks



Focusing the organization on core activities



Robustness

* When the service supplier is not Israeli, the data is subject to the laws of the supplier's country of incorporation or of the country hosting the servers.



Summary

Cloud technology allows easy and wide access to a common pool of computing resources. In recent years, the Israeli government has been working to transfer government ministries and their support units to the cloud computing model.

The situation that emerges in light of the findings of this report indicates various barriers that hinder or prevent the implementation of cloud computing systems in government ministries: various aspects that the ministries do not take into account in the implementation and may cause damage, ranging from pecuniary damage to image damage; the difficulty in controlling the ministries' implementation of the guidelines for the transition to a cloud computing environment, and the difficulty in controlling entities that are subject to the sectoral guidelines of the ministries but are not subject to the ICT Authority and the CPU guidelines; the lack of a comprehensive and approved framework for the transfer of government computer services to a cloud environment. In order to optimally implement the use of existing and future cloud computing systems, it is appropriate that the specified barriers and deficiencies and the given recommendations receive a comprehensive response, including as part of the Nimbus tender and the establishment of the Center of Excellence for Operation in the Cloud.



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Chapter Two

Government Ministries



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Ministry of Justice

State Actions to Secure its Rights Through Civil Enforcement



State Actions to Secure its Rights Through Civil Enforcement

Background

In the day-to-day operations of the state, government bodies accumulate rights created by virtue of contracts, agreements, the provision of services and judgments, as well as rights to receive funds whose payment obligation has been determined by law. Civil enforcement is a general name for the use of the initiated civil tools and procedures of the State to secure its rights, to protect various protected purposes and values including protecting the rule of law and its enforcement, fulfilling obligations to the state, protecting state assets and lands, assisting in government policy and regulation, and optimal use of public money. Initiated civil enforcement has been defined as a central pillar in the strategy of the Civil Prosecution and in the positioning of the Prosecution at the core of maintaining the rule of law. The audit focused on mapping and locating the violation of state rights and examining the barriers that prevent proactive enforcement and optimal collection of debts by government bodies.



Key figures

**About NIS
67.2
billion**

The amount of the state's outstanding balances in the consolidated balance sheets and financial statements for 2019, of which the components of exchange and non-exchange transactions were approximately NIS 39 billion

**About NIS 6.9
billion**

The amount of debts to the state approved for write-off by the High Committee for Compromises, Write-offs and Debt Arrangements in the Ministry of Finance, from the beginning of 2017 to mid-2020.

**About NIS
215
billion**

The amount of debts remaining for collection in the Government Collection Administration at the end of 2020. Since 2017, approximately NIS 212 million has been collected.

**About NIS
5 billion**

The amount of the nominal debt to the Israel Land Authority, whose real value as of December 31, 2020, was NIS 15.3 billion.

**About NIS
534
million**

The total amount of municipal tax liability in 197 cases transferred to the Government Housing Administration in the Ministry of Finance in the years 2017-2019. After legal action, the outstanding tax liability was reduced to approximately NIS 133 million.

**98
Integrated and
complementary
enforcement
actions**

The number of enforcement actions conducted by the State Attorney's Office with the participation of additional law enforcement agencies in 2019 as part of round tables.

**184
Initiated
lawsuits**

The number of initiated civil lawsuits filed by the State Attorney's Office in 2019 in the total amount of approximately NIS 708 million. In the same year, 75 lawsuits were won in the courts in favor of the state in the total amount of NIS 290 million.

**About
22,700
Cases
Defended**

The number of files opened by the State Attorney's Office in 2019, concerning proceedings not initiated by the state. According to the State Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2019, the provision for legal claims is approximately NIS 9.3 billion.



Audit actions

 From February to December 2020, the State Comptroller's Office examined the issue of civil enforcement. The main audit was conducted at the State Attorney's Office, the Ministry of Finance and the Israel Land Authority, as well as at the Government Collection Administration, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Justice, the Police, the Government Companies Authority, the National Fire and Rescue Authority, the Volcani Institute, the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Economy and Industry and the Ministry of Environmental Protection. During the audit, the State Comptroller's Office sent questionnaires on the subject to 42 Director-Generals and heads of government entities for the purpose of gathering information on the subject from these government entities and analyzing it. Responses to the questionnaire were received on time from 34 entities (81% of the bodies to which the questionnaire was sent).

Steps for optimal use of civil enforcement



Key findings

 **Realization of the state's collection and claims potential** - In the consolidated financial statements of the State of Israel for 2019, the amount of financial liabilities owed to the state was approximately NIS 67 billion, of which the exchange and non-exchange transactions component was approximately NIS 39 billion. In the years 2017 to June 2020, the High Committee for Compromises, Write-Offs and Debt Arrangements in the Accountant General's Division (hereinafter - the AGD) approved requests for write-offs amounting to NIS 7 billion, and the entities' answers to the audit questionnaire show



that the amount of the aggregate debt approved for write-off in the Ministries' write-off committees during this period was approximately NIS 1.9 billion. These data demonstrate unrealized collection and claim potential.

- 📌 Risk mapping procedure** - 68% of the entities responding to the audit questionnaire did not conduct a risk survey regarding enforceable rights and 85% did not formulate a policy to prioritize the possible actions to be taken. In 42% of the respondent entities, there is no structured and systematic process for locating, mapping and analyzing debts owed to the ministry and violation of its rights. In the absence of mapping, the necessary basis for orderly and ongoing action to enforce rights is lacking, and the ability to perform optimal collection and enforcement is impaired.
- 📌 The State Attorney's method of operation** - The selection of events and legal cases in which sometimes far-reaching civil enforcement tools are used is not done systematically: there is a lack of an orderly methodology for identifying targets, prioritizing and selecting targets, and the targets against which enforcement operations are directed are selected by the entities not according to an orderly policy or clear enough criteria.
- 📌 Mechanism for locating breaches of contractual agreements** - In 41% of the bodies responding to the audit questionnaire, there is no structured mechanism for uncovering the obligations and breaches of agreements, and there is no valid work procedure for locating and mapping debts and breaches. There is concern that some of the debts to government bodies are not detected, and breaches of agreements are not reported and addressed, thus preventing the bodies' enforcement capacity, avoiding the possibility of creating deterrence against breaches of agreements and causing financial losses to the state.
- 📌 Potential for filing civil lawsuits initiated in connection with criminal proceedings** - The State Attorney's Office does not have a uniform and orderly mechanism for locating and identifying criminal proceedings which have civil and administrative enforcement potential. There is also a lack of a technological interface between the criminal prosecutor's office and the civil prosecutor's office. In 2019, nine civil lawsuits were filed on the basis of criminal proceedings, including three "supplementary lawsuits". In the same year, proceedings ended in 4,408 criminal cases conducted by the State Attorney's Office and 84% of the defendants were convicted. In the absence of such a mechanism, it is not possible to locate many of the cases that may be relevant for filing of civil claims.
- 📌 Avoidance of collection proceedings and filing of civil lawsuits - civil enforcement against terrorists** - The audit revealed that in the years 2018-2019 no civil lawsuits were filed to claim reimbursement for money paid by the state as compensation to victims of terrorism. It should be noted that in these years 374 victims were confirmed for 93 incidents of hostilities. In 2019, the National Insurance Institute paid 5,237 victims of hostilities, payments totalling NIS 540 million.



The cases of violence that occurred during May 2021 caused the state to incur expenses for the damage to public property, and it is even expected to pay the victims of hostilities compensation through the Tax Authority's Compensation Fund. These cases highlight the need for civil enforcement action, alongside criminal proceedings, and in particular against those convicted in criminal proceedings, to cover the funds to be paid from the public treasury.

Initiated claims by the Israel Land Authority - On December 31, 2020, the debts to ILA amounted to NIS 15.3 billion. In the years 2017-2020, the number of cases that ILA transferred to legal representation for filing initiated lawsuits decreased by 31%. In 2019, the ILA filed 30 lawsuits through the State Attorney's Office, compared to 57 in 2018.

Use of dispute resolution mechanisms between the state and municipalities - The number of cases brought to dispute resolution before the district commissioners in the Ministry of the Interior in 2017-2019 is not large and amounted to several dozen cases, most of which focused on litigation brought by local authorities regarding the property taxes of government offices. The lack of timelines for the procedure delays the resolution of disputes.

Use of civil enforcement measures - Among the barriers that prevent the effective use of civil enforcement measures: the state delays in taking action to preserve its rights in a manner that may result in such action being blocked by the statute of limitations and lead to violation of state rights and property and to economic losses of public money; lack of adequate documentation raises difficulties in gathering evidence and formulating it in preparation for an initiated civil lawsuit; lack of economic viability in the execution of enforcement and collection proceedings; bureaucratic difficulties and lack of adequate personnel to carry out enforcement and collection actions.



The risk management project in civil enforcement led by the State Attorney's Office, which began in 2018 and is being implemented for the first time in the field should be positively noted. It is to be hoped that upon its completion, the State will be provided with an effective tool for the planned and intelligent management of civil enforcement resources, so that it is not done at random.

The "debt collection mapping" process carried out by government bodies under the direction of the Ministry of Finance, in which 54 government bodies have mapped about 5,005 types of debts and liabilities, as well as the actions of the Israel Land Authority in 2018-2019 to streamline collection procedures, should be viewed positively.



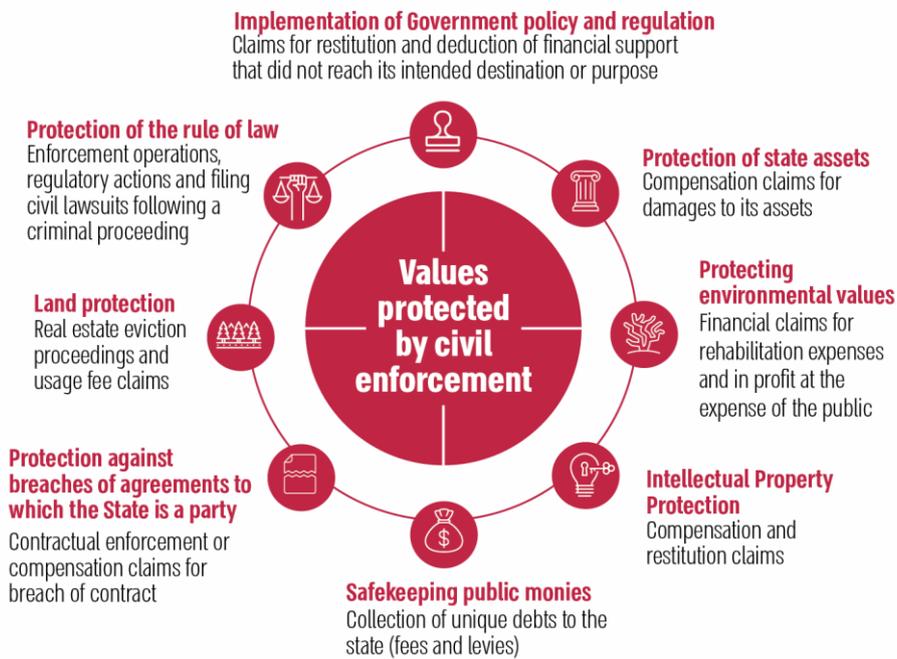
Key recommendations

-  It is recommended that the Ministry of Finance (the Accountant General branch) formulate a directive for all government bodies to conduct risk management procedures in their ministries, and that the Ministry of Justice accompany this procedure with supplementary professional guidance to legal advisers in government bodies. It is recommended that the Accountant General hold periodic meetings regarding the mapping of risks in all government ministries, formulate a government policy to prioritize collection and enforcement, and conduct a lesson-learning process among the ministry's accountants regarding ongoing lawsuits and concluded proceedings.
-  It is recommended that in view of the amount of debt as reflected in the state's financial statements, approximately NIS 39 billion, the Knesset formulate a multi-year plan and targets for reducing the debt owed to the State of Israel and act to reduce the state's debt balances, in consultation with relevant bodies in the Ministry of Justice (Enforcement and Collection Authority, Advice and Legislation Unit and the State Attorney's Office). For this purpose, the Accountant General should inform the Ministry of Justice each year of the status of the implementation of the plan and a breakdown of the outstanding balances, and in particular doubtful debts and static balances, which are recorded in the state's financial statements. These data will also help formulate the Ministry of Justice's work plans in the field of civil enforcement and collection.
-  It is proposed that the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance - the Accountant General branch - examine the creation of a mechanism for resolving disputes regarding violation of rights and payment of debts in cases where both parties are government bodies, including determining the responsible entity and the methods of repaying the debts, and work to regulate these debts and collect them.
-  It is recommended that the State Attorney's Office, and the Civil Enforcement Unit in particular, outline a uniform measurement method for all State Attorney's Offices that reliably reflects the range of activities carried out in the field of civil enforcement and their outcomes in order to obtain a more accurate picture of achieving its objectives.
-  It is proposed that the State Attorney's Office work to establish a valid work procedure, and examine the appropriate cases for supplementary civil enforcement in connection with criminal proceedings to protect the rights of the State. To this end, it is recommended to establish criteria for selecting the appropriate cases for civil enforcement and to establish a mechanism for locating all criminal cases that ended in a conviction, which meet these criteria.
-  It is recommended that the Ministry of Justice issue a directive to the legal bureaus in government bodies regarding the need for strict documentation of moves and preservation of documents, and especially those concerning the interests of the state, and regarding the documentation method. It is recommended to establish official forms



that will outline the process of building an evidence file based on a sufficient evidentiary infrastructure in preparation for a claim in an initiated legal process. It is also recommended that the State Attorney's Office conduct a mapping of the duration of the handling of cases transferred to its treatment, locate the causes of the duration of the treatment and act to shorten it.

Examples of protected values and civil enforcement tools used to preserve them





Summary

A decade ago, the State Attorney's Office decided to begin a process by which the state would initiate more legal action in order to preserve its rights; for the purpose of promoting the issue, the State Attorney's Office established the Civil Enforcement Unit. However, the picture that has emerged in the report requires the state, and especially the State Attorney's Office, to analyze its capabilities and examine how to implement this policy, since even after a decade, the state's main focus in the area of civil law is defending the cases in which it is sued.

Effective and complete civil enforcement requires the involvement of all relevant entities in government bodies, including the directors of the bodies and legal, accounting and professional entities. Due to the complexity of operating civil enforcement tools and preparing initiated lawsuits, full cooperation of government bodies with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Justice is required.

In light of the policy of proactive enforcement and protection of the rights of the state, it is appropriate that government bodies, law enforcement and prosecution bodies examine how to overcome the barriers, and refine their capabilities, to improve collection and enforcement.



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Ministry of Cyber and Digital Matters

"Ask Once Policy" to Improve Government Digital Service to the Public



"Ask Once Policy" to Improve Government Digital Service to the Public

Background

The technological development in the world has led to an increase in the consumption of digital services by citizens and businesses. This trend has created an opportunity to streamline the service processes that government ministries provide to the public. This is done, for example, through the implementation of "ask once policy", which means receive information¹ from the citizen only once and sharing it between government bodies for the purpose of providing various services, without the citizen being required to submit it again and again. In 2016, the government decided² to adopt ask once policy in government ministries and their support units, in order to improve government service to the public and reduce the bureaucratic burden.

1 Data stored in a government database or a certificate issued by a government office.

2 Resolution 1933 of 30.8.16 on the subject of "Improving the transfer of government information and making government databases accessible to the public."



Key figures

X 50

The cost of in-person service operation (receiving the public in government service bureaus) compared to the cost of digital service operation³.

55%

The rate of increase in the number of logins to the personal area on the GOV.IL website in March 2020 (during the Corona crisis) compared to February 2020 (before the Corona crisis).

68 of 100

Satisfaction level of service recipients from government ministries, according to a survey conducted by the ICT Authority in 2019.

70%

Proportion of OECD countries required to implement an ask once policy in government services by virtue of legislation or government decision.

3,545 services

Number of government services mapped in 40 government ministries by May 2020, for the purpose of promoting services digitization and ask once policy implementation.

261

Number of different government services for which the citizen is required to provide a photocopy of his/her identity card.

Audit actions



From March to December 2020, the State Comptroller's Office conducted an audit on the implementation of the ask once policy. The audit focused on the following issues: process of mapping government services; setting goals for reducing the amount of information and approvals required from the public to receive a service; development of a system for managing the work of the committees for the transfer of information (Moed system); and the creation of the "Government Information Highway" system. The audit was conducted at the Government ICT Authority. Supplemental examinations were performed at the Digital Israel Headquarters, the National Cyber Directorate and the National Insurance Institute.

³ Government ICT Authority "2019 activities at a glance"



Key findings

- Ask once policy implementation:** There is still a long way to go before the full implementation of the 2016 government decision, which stipulates that as of 2021 a government ministry shall not request from the public a certificate issued by another government ministry for the purpose of providing a service. Thus, for example, it appears that a photocopy of the identity card (a certificate issued by a government body - the Population Administration) is required in order to receive 261 different services in the government; a photocopy of the Graduation certificate (a certificate issued by the Ministry of Education) is required to receive 188 services; and a photocopy of a business license (certificate issued by the Ministry of the Interior) is required in order to receive 68 services.
- Mapping of government services:** Government offices have validated 933 (26%) out of 3,545 services mapped in 40 offices. In the absence of full validation of the services during the mapping, the ICT and Digital Israel did not have a complete and reliable picture of the total number of services provided by each office to the public, and accordingly - of the rate of services in which the ask once policy is implemented.
- Reporting about the ask once policy implementation in 2018:** 19 (56%) of 34 ministries included in their work plan reports to the ICT Authority data on the number of services in which the requirement to provide information was reduced that year, and eight of the ministries (23%) indicated which services were involved.
- Setting goals for information transfer in 2019:** Nine (30%) of 30 ministries that set goals in their 2019 work plan for implementation of the ask once policy reported a planned implementation for five or more new digital services, as required by ICT guidelines.
- Computer system for managing the work of the transfer of information committees⁴ (Moed):** The system is intended to streamline the process of transferring information between public bodies. It was found that among the entities that have not yet connected to the system were those that handled many requests for information transfer in 2019, including the Ministry of Health (43 requests), the National Insurance Institute, the Ministry of Defense (40 requests) and the Tax Authority (13 requests).
- Time for processing applications in the Moed system:** In 2019, the average processing time was more than half a year (191.7 days), and in 2020 - more than three months (97.8 days). This is despite the fact that rapid process of transferring

⁴ The role of the committees for the transfer of information between public bodies is to handle requests from the public body for information from another public body and to handle requests received by the public body to provide information to another public body.



information between government bodies is a necessary precondition for improving service processes in general, and for implementing the ask once policy in particular.

-  **Working procedure of the information transfer committees:** The procedure did not determine the required frequency of the committees' convening, even though low frequency of convening was one of the reasons for the delay in processing requests for information transfer. In addition, the privacy protection regulations have not yet been amended to reflect the provisions of the procedure regarding the work of the committees, as stipulated in the 2016 government decision.
-  **Secure technological infrastructure for information sharing (Government Information Highway system):** In mid-February 2021, the installation of the information highway in four (15%) of the 26 bodies where it was planned for 2020 has not yet been completed, due in part to technological difficulties.
-  **Risks Survey:** Although the Information Highway system has been defined as essential infrastructure both in terms of information security and cyber protection and in terms of the continuity of services to the citizen, the system information security risk survey and preparation of the disaster recovery site has not yet been completed.



One should commend the action of the ICT Authority to lay the methodological basis for implementing ask once policy in digital services, through the use of the government forms infrastructure, the government identification system⁵ and the information highway.

The activity of the ICT Authority for the establishment of the Moed system and the inclusion of 39 government bodies in this system by October 2020 contributed greatly to the ability to identify bottlenecks in the process of transmitting information within the government, in order to improve it.

Key recommendations



The ministries' deep commitment and their full cooperation with Digital Israel and the ICT Authority is required in order to carry out a comprehensive and optimal validation of the services in the mapping and in the unified catalog⁶. The ICT Authority and Digital Israel must set individual schedules and goals for government ministries to progress in their

5 The system is designed to enable secure online identification for the purpose of receiving services from government bodies.

6 Based on the mapping of services, the payment service, the form service and the service pages on the GOV.IL website.



actions to validate the government services. The ICT Authority must also monitor the extent to which the ministries meet the targets and report this to the government.

-  The National Insurance Institute must continue to work in cooperation with Digital Israel to map the services it provides to the public, in order to reflect a broad and comprehensive picture of government services and to promote the exercise of rights by the citizens. Furthermore, it is proposed that the ICT Authority and Digital Israel examine the possibility of integrating in regard to mapping additional public bodies that provide many services to the public, such as local authorities, hospitals and health funds.
-  It is recommended that the ICT Authority and the government ministries jointly examine what actions are required from the offices to implement the ask once policy in regard to service by phone and in person. This is especially necessary for disadvantaged populations, who may be in need of many services and assistance in exercising their rights, and do not use digital service methods.
-  Since the Moed system is intended to streamline the process of information transfer in the government in order to improve the service to the public, the ICT Authority and the bodies that have not yet connected to the system must take the necessary steps to implement their connection. Furthermore, the ICT Authority must examine, in cooperation with the information requesting bodies and the information holding bodies, ways to shorten the processing time for all stages of requests for information transfer, and complete the steps for the development of an online form that will provide an effective working interface with external public bodies.
-  The Ministry of Justice must complete the wording of the amendment to the Privacy Protection Regulations (Conditions for holding and storing information and arrangements for the transfer of information between public bodies), 1986, in accordance with the 2016 government decision, in order for the regulations to reflect the provisions regulating the work of the committees in accordance with the work procedure set out in the decision. All this for the purpose of its promotion with the Minister of Justice and the Knesset's Constitution, Law and Justice Committee.
-  It is proposed that the ICT Authority examine the possibility of increasing the support envelope in the process of implementing the Government Information Highway system, including reinforcing the work teams on its behalf and on behalf of the supplier for installation and training, and that it shall complete the information security risk survey and establish a disaster recovery site. In addition, the bodies required by the 2020 government decision⁷ to externalize information via the Government Information Highway system by April 2021, and have not yet implemented the system, must cooperate with the ICT Authority and examine ways to complete the required actions in this regard.

⁷ Government Decision 260 of July 2020 on "The Program for Accelerating Digital Services to the Public".

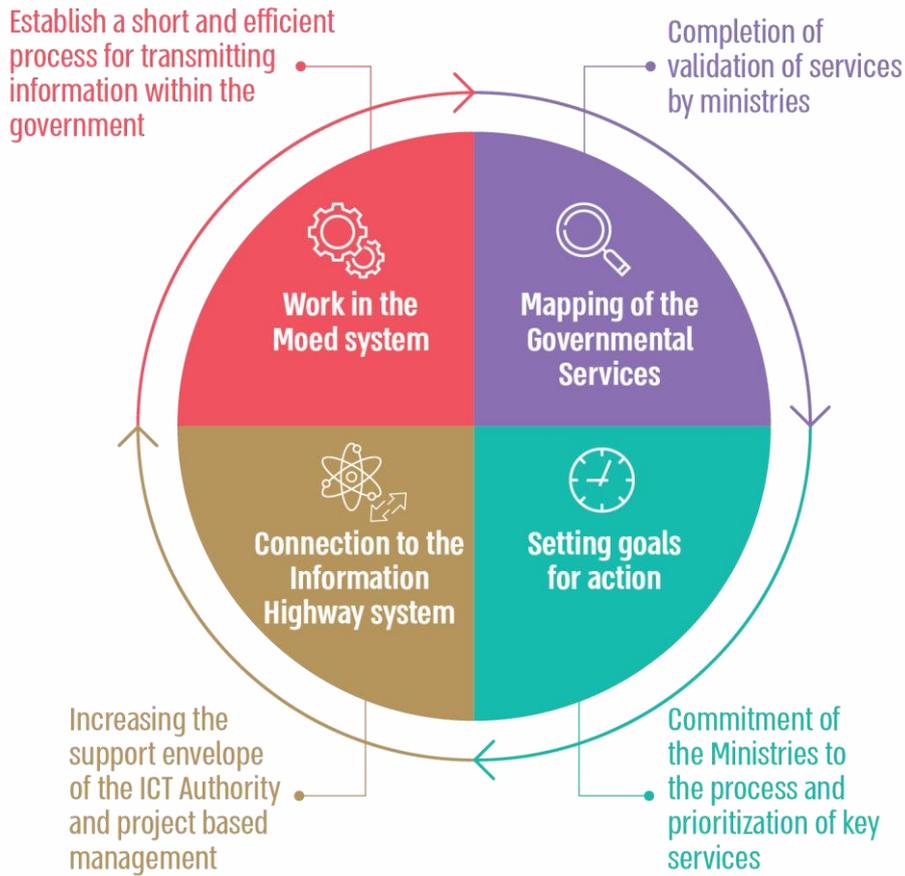


Examples of certificates that the citizen is required to provide in order to receive government services.

Type of Certificate	Number of services in State Offices requiring the certificate	Government Entity issuing the certificate
 ID	261	Population and Immigration Authority
 Graduation Certificate	188	Ministry of Education
 Business Permit	68	Ministry of Interior
 Marriage Certificate	36	Population and Immigration Authority
 Death Certificate	29	Population and Immigration Authority



Steps required to complete the ask once policy implementation



Summary

The government decided in 2016 to adopt "ask once policy" to improve government service to the public and to reduce the bureaucratic burden placed on it, thus promoting strategic government goals, such as improving the realization of civil rights and reducing social disparities. The findings of this report show that there is still a long way to go before a full implementation of the government decision that states that as of 2021 a government office will not request from the public a permit issued by another government ministry for the purpose of providing a service.



The success of the policy implementation depends on joint action, both by government ministries and their support units - in implementing the policy in the provision of their services, and by the ICT and Digital Israel, which serve as the coordinating and guiding body, including by providing tools and methods for implementation, removing barriers and facilitating bureaucratic and technological processes. In the absence of full cooperation on the part of government ministries and their support units and the allocation of resources required for this activity, while adhering to set deadlines, it will not be possible to promote the implementation of the policy for extensive services.

The ICT Authority and Digital Israel must prioritize the issue and act with the central services and government ministries that control many services. As well, it may be productive to use methods such as running a broad-based governmental project involving many various bodies, to further this issue. Moreover, in order to realize all the benefits inherent in implementing the ask once policy, it must be implemented in all service methods, including in-person and telephone service methods used by disadvantaged populations that need many services.



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Chapter Three

State Institutions, Government Companies and Corporations



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Central Election Committee

The Budget and Expenses of the Central Election Committee for the Knesset



The Budget and Expenses of the Central Election Committee for the Knesset

Background

The Knesset Central Election Committee operates under the Knesset Elections Law, 1969, and is the body responsible for organizing and conducting the Knesset elections, which form the basis of the democratic nature of the regime in Israel. The role of the committee is to maintain proper and efficient conduct of the elections, to ensure the fulfillment of the will of the voters.

The Central Election Committee is an independent statutory body. Its budget is determined by the Knesset's Finance Committee based on the proposal of the Central Election Committee, and the State Treasury makes this budget available to the Chairperson of the Election Committee, who is responsible for the expenses.

In the years 2013-2020, five elections were held in Israel, and another election was held in March 2021. Three of them took place within a period of just one year - between April 2019 and March 2020.



Key figures

6.45
million

Holders of the right to vote for the 23rd Knesset elections (an increase of 14% within 7 years)

10,630

Polling stations in the 23rd Knesset elections (8% increase in 7 years)

NIS 392
million

Budget of the Central Election Commission in the 23rd Knesset Election Campaign

48%

The rate of increase in the average budget per polling station within five years (between the election campaign for the 20th Knesset and the election campaign for the 23rd Knesset)

NIS 166
million

Expenditure on the salaries of employees of the Central Election Commission in the election campaign for the 23rd Knesset

57%

The rate of increase in wage expenditures within five years (between the 20th Knesset election campaign and the 23rd Knesset election campaign)

NIS 223
million

Total purchases of the Central Election Commission in the years 2016 - 2020

47%

The rate of increase in the number of employees on Election Day between the elections to the 20th Knesset and the elections to the 23rd Knesset

Audit actions



From May 2020 to December 2020, the State Comptroller's Office examined the issue of budget and expenditure of the Central Election Committee. The audit included the following topics: election management budget; expenditure on wages; expenditure on the purchase of services and products; spending on publicity; as well as recruitment and employment of employees. The audit was carried out in the Central Election Committee.



Key findings

-  **Election campaign management budget:** The average budget per elector for an election year in 18 countries included in an international survey was US \$ 7.8, a budget 46% smaller than in Israel (in the election campaign examined, for the 20th Knesset). The budget of the Central Election Committee (including all its changes) for the financing of the Knesset election campaigns increased between the date of the elections to the 20th Knesset and the date of the elections to the 23rd Knesset by 55%, from NIS 253 million to NIS 392 million, and the budget implementation increased by 62%, from NIS 227 million to NIS 368 million. After the audit completion, in March 2021, another election campaign was held for the 24th Knesset (which is not included in this audit report) and the budget for its implementation amounted to approximately NIS 675 million (the Central Election Committee defined approximately NIS 230 million of the total budget as a supplement required for holding the elections during the COVID-19 period) - an increase of 72% compared to the election budget for the 23rd Knesset that took place a year earlier.
-  **Presentation of budget implementation data:** The Central Election Committee specified in the budget proposals data that make it possible to compare the budget amounts and its implementation for only one similar previous year (election year or non-election year). In some cases it indicated requested budget additions without summarizing data of existing resources. Also, the increase in expenditure (implemented budget) relative to the number of polling stations was not presented to the competent committees so that they could examine the committee's budget proposals and decide whether there was room to approve them. The committee partially reflected to the committee's plenum, the committee's presidency and the Knesset's Finance Committee the expenses over the years for financing the preparations for the 21st Knesset elections.
-  **Audit of financial management:** From 2016 to 2018, not a single audit report was compiled. In 2019 and 2020, the committee's internal auditor was employed at a third of a position in the committee's organization. The auditor dealt with three audit reports: the preparation of one of them was completed and submitted to the committee's management, and he engaged in an "examination and counting of votes in outer envelopes", and two reports are still in progress at off the end of the audit - one deals with election day workers in the regional election committees, and the second concerns the work of secretaries of polling committees. These three reports do not concern the implementation of the committee's budget. It emerged that the scope of control over the election committee financial management is relatively limited compared to the scope of control of the management of funds in government ministries. Also, the audited financial statements are not displayed on the Committee's website.



- Data about wages:** In 2019, the Election Committee began implementing the recommendations of a public committee to provide wage supplements to some employees during the election period (estimated at an average rate of 6.8% of their wages), and a few months later an additional wage increase was approved and budgeted for all election period workers (at a rate of 32% of their wages). One of the main reasons for this wage increase - difficulty in recruiting workers for the election period - did not emerge from data presented by the Central Election Committee before the competent bodies to approve the increase and did not come up in an examination by the State Comptroller's Office. In addition, in the meeting for approval of the budget increase for the 22nd Knesset election campaign, the Election Committee did not state that there had been a comprehensive change in the salary during the 21st Knesset election campaign.
- Rate of wage increase:** Within about five years, between the elections to the 20th Knesset and the elections to the 23rd Knesset, the number of jobs of employees during the election period increased by 22%¹; Expenditure on their employment increased by 63%; and the average expenditure on employment increased by 34% - almost 8 times the increase in the average expenditure on wages in public bodies in the said period (4.3%) and 3 times the increase in the average expenditure on wages in government ministries in that period (10.4%).
- Transparency:** The Election Committee did not publish the budget proposals on its website. Nevertheless, budget proposals discussed in the Knesset Finance Committee are published on the Finance Committee's website as background material for the meetings at which they are discussed; the degree of transparency practiced by the Central Election Committee with regard to the number of jobs it employs and their salaries is not in line with the practice of the public service; the committee did not publish decisions it made regarding procurement exempt from tender as required by the tender obligation regulations and does not publish data on all its contractual engagements, as is customary in government ministries.
- Procurement exempt from tender:** during the 21st Knesset election campaign, the Central Election Committee often used the tender waiver that allows a contract with a value not exceeding NIS 50,000 (relative to government procurement, 31% and 10%, respectively); the committee often used the tender waiver for urgent contracting to

¹ In order to translate the number of hours into the number of months employed, the total work hours of those working during the election period were divided by 220 hours per month. The number of employment positions was calculated by dividing the total number of months employed by 3.5. The totals for employment positions in charts 18 and 19 include the entire period of employment for the workers at headquarter during the years in which the elections for the 21st, 22nd and 23rd Knessets took place, including months which weren't officially part of an election period. These figures do not include figures for employment of headquarter employees beyond the election period for the 20th Knesset, nor figures for service workers at the Knesset. The number of employment positions for the election period for the 20th Knesset was calculated on the basis of other figures supplied by the Central Election Committee. A similar method of calculating the figures for the 20th Knesset elections may have yielded a figure of less employment positions but a greater average expense per position.



prevent actual damage (relative to government procurement, 8% and 5%, respectively), thus its rate of use on this ground was 60% greater than the extent of use of this ground in all government procurement exempt from tender; The rate of use by the Committee of the waiver reason for continued contracting was 87% greater than the rate of its use in government procurement; And the rate of use by the Committee of the tender waiver for contracting with a sole supplier is similar to the rate of use of it in the framework of government procurement. The Central Election Committee's extensive use of the tender waiver in a contract that does not exceed NIS 50,000 and the tender waiver intended for urgent contracts and follow-up contracts may lead to the conclusion that the committee is required to purchase a significant portion of the goods and services required for holding the election within short periods of time, not allowing enough time for a tender procedure.

- Procurement exempt from tender:** The tiered control created by the legislature for the purpose of approving contracts exempt from tender is not implemented in regard to the procurement of the Central Election Committee. The Director General, the Accountant and the Legal Adviser of the Committee serve as members of the Tenders Committee and of the Ministry Exemption Committee as well as the Central Exemption Committee, and the Director General is empowered as an "Accountant General".
- Public information budget:** Between the election campaign for the 20th Knesset and the election campaign for the 23rd Knesset, the budget of the Election Committee for Public Information Activities increased 2.5 times, and the implementation of the budget increased 2.6 times during that period and amounted to NIS 6.7 million. This compares with the voting rates of 72.34% and 71.5% in the elections to the 20th Knesset and the elections to the 23rd Knesset, respectively.
- Free publicity broadcasts for the lists:** In January 2018, the Chairperson of the Committee for Evaluation of the Publicity Scheme presented the bill formulated by the committee before the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee in the Knesset. The Constitution, Law and Justice Committee held several meetings in the first half of 2018, and at its last meeting on this issue, in July 2018, it approved the bill, and this proposal did not include the issue of publicity broadcasts for the Knesset elections. The proposed bill was presented to the Knesset for a first reading in the 20th Knesset plenum, five months before the announcement of the 21st Knesset elections. But since then the bill has not been promoted which, according to the report of the Committee for the Examination of the Publicity Law, is intended to repeal the customary arrangement, which allocates time for publicity broadcasts to the lists for free. As a result, the 2017 recommendations of the Committee for the Examination of the Publicity Law, appointed by the then President of the State and the Chairperson of the Central Election Committee for the 20th Knesset, have not been implemented - including the recommendations regarding the cancellation of the arrangement regarding publicity broadcasts.



Utilization of human resources: There are considerable gaps between the degree of utilization of human resources in the various regional committees, given the number of polling stations and the number of those entitled to vote in them. For example, in the elections to the 23rd Knesset, the Safed and Kinneret regional committees were allocated 18 and 17 months of employment for every 100 polling stations, respectively, and 34 and 31 months of employment for every 100,000 eligible voters, while the Rehovot and Tel Aviv committees were allocated 5 and 7 Months per 100 polling stations and 9 and 12 months per 100,000 eligible voters, respectively. Similar discrepancies also occurred in the allocation of resources to the regional committees in the other audited election campaigns. Such gaps may indicate inefficient use of resources for the employment of hundreds of workers.



In the years 2013-2020, five elections were held in Israel, three of them during one year. The way in which the committee dealt with the multiplicity of election campaigns and the increase in the number of eligible voters, and the challenges involved, is commendable.

Key recommendations

-  It is recommended that the Central Election Committee present in the budget proposal to the Finance Committee of the Knesset the budget and implementation data at the level of the election campaign, which reflect the expenditures over the years and the gap between the election campaigns; and that it present data on the change in the budget in several election campaigns, including the influence of material changes, such as the changes in the number of polling stations and any budget analysis that may contribute to the existence of procedures for examining the committee's budgets and their approval. It is also recommended that the committee publish on its website its budget proposals for financing the election campaigns. It is also recommended that along with each proposal, full information be provided on budget execution data in the previous election campaign, including expenditures in previous years.
-  It is recommended that the Central Election Committee consider the possibility of formulating a plan to streamline and reduce the costs of holding an election campaign, so that it reflects the costs of the 20th Knesset election campaign, plus an increase due to price increases and population growth, while examining the need for budgeting and implementation of new projects and projects which have already begun to be carried out, which are required for the purpose of holding the election.
-  It is recommended that the Election Committee examine the budget per voter during the election year, which is relatively large compared to other countries (ranked 15th out of 18 surveyed countries) as well as the gaps between budgeting during regular years and election year, and formulate a plan to reduce these budgets.



-  It is recommended that the Central Election Committee examine ways to ensure that audits and controls are conducted over the management of its funds during the election period and in the periods between elections and then implement the most appropriate way. In addition, the auditors' audit of the committee's financial statements should also include audits such as those carried out by the Accountant General in government ministries.
-  It is recommended that, as a general rule, the Central Election Committee examine the need for salary supplements before requesting their approval, and that whenever it submits an application for approval of a salary supplement or its budget, it will present detailed data that can substantiate the need for those supplements. It is also recommended that the plenum of the Central Election Committee examine the wage increase it has approved in the past, in preparation for future election campaigns, taking into account the accepted wage increases in the market and the tax benefits related to work during the election period; Discussions and decisions of the Central Election Committee on changes in wage expenditure should also be based on data on changes already made to total wage expenditure over several years and between election campaigns, including the average increase per position, and in light of changes in the public sector wages at that time; It is also recommended that the committee publish to the public on its website comprehensive data on the scope of jobs and employees under its administration as well as data on its employees' salaries, according to the usual rules of publication in the public service, and include detailed data on this subject when submitting its budget to the Finance Committee for approval.
-  The Central Election Committee must compile data on all the goods and services that the Committee purchased under tender exemption (on several grounds for exemption), including the circumstances of each procurement transaction, and present the data to the Committee Chairperson to ensure that the extensive use of exemption is justified. It is proposed to hold tender procedures for the purchase of goods and services needed by the Committee for Elections in non-election years, and in this framework to be prepared in advance and to include in the tender procedures and their resulting contracts an option to expand the scope of contracts with suppliers for possible subsequent election campaign to be held within a short time, and to enter contracts after tender with suppliers committing to supply the goods and services during elections. In this way the committee will also be able, as other public bodies are required to do, to procure what is necessary through public tenders, thus giving bidders an opportunity to compete in conditions of equality and fairness.
-  It is recommended that the Chairperson of the Central Election Committee establish a hierarchy of powers between the various procurement committees as well as a course of action that will ensure the existence of control processes that compensate for decisions to allow procurement without tendering. Furthermore, the Central Election Committee must publish decisions on procurement without tender, in accordance with the mandatory tender regulations. In addition, it is recommended that the committee



publish to the public data on its contracts with suppliers for the purpose of purchasing goods or services.



The committee must act on the matter of public information within the budget allocated for this purpose. It is recommended that the committee examine the effectiveness of public information and the necessity of spending in the amount of NIS 6.5 million, especially in light of the fact that between the election campaign for the 20th Knesset and the 23rd Knesset election there was no significant change in the proportion of those entitled to vote who exercised this right. The need to examine the issue of the public information budget is sharpened in light of the fact that in the elections to the 24th Knesset the committee's public information budget was NIS 18.5 million, including an increase of NIS 12 million due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2.8 times the public information budget for the 23rd Knesset elections and seven times the budget of the 20th Knesset.



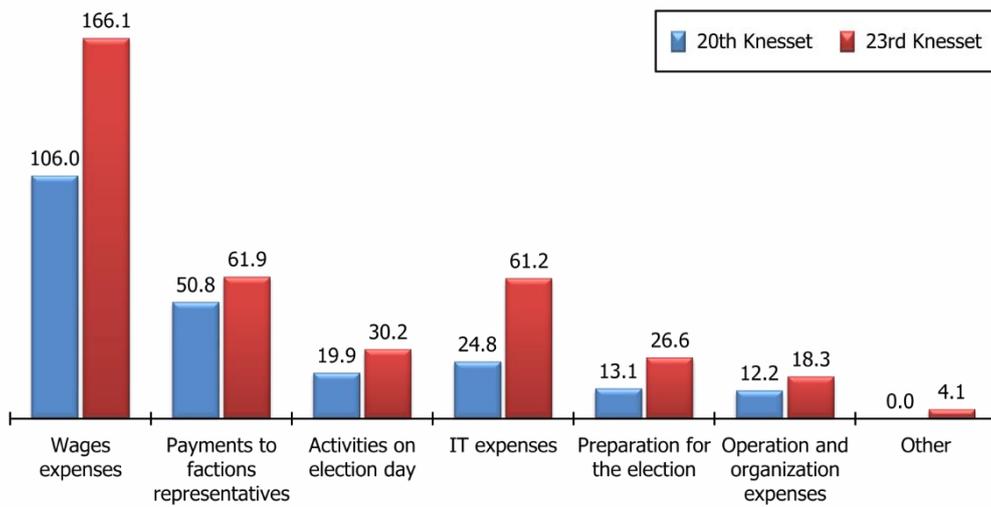
It is recommended that the Central Election Committee re-examine the issue of publicity broadcasts, including the need and way to make a change on the issue.



It is recommended that the Central Election Committee establish criteria for the allocation of human resources to the regional committees, including with regard to employees employed by the hour, and act to allocate the resources accordingly and take into account the need to streamline the allocation of human resources in this regard.



Segmentation of budget execution for the 20th Knesset election campaign (March 2015) and implementation of the budget for the 23rd Knesset election campaign (March 2020), by type of expenditure (NIS million)



Summary

In view of the findings of this audit report, it is recommended that the Central Election Committee work to improve the presentation of the budget data and its implementation and to increase their transparency towards the authorized institutions that approve its budget and towards the public. It is recommended that it work to ensure that budget and salary increases are provided with strict adherence to budgetary and operational efficiency; and that it will work to improve the audit and control operations of its financial management. This is exacerbated by the fact that after the end of the audit, in March 2021, another election campaign was held for the 24th Knesset (which is not included in this audit report) and the budget for its implementation amounted to NIS 675 million - an increase of 72% compared to the 23rd Knesset election budget that was held one year before.



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The National Insurance Institute

Non-Exercise of Social Rights

Follow-up Audit



Non-Exercise of Social Rights - Follow-up Audit

Background

Many public entities grant citizens diverse rights under laws or regulations. The complexity of some of these rights makes it difficult for the ordinary citizen to know all his rights and the conditions for obtaining them. The guarantee of these rights depends not only on the fact that social rights are enshrined in laws and regulations, but also on the exercise of these rights and their granting to all those entitled to them in an open and accessible manner for all. Exercising rights means removing barriers, such as ignorance of the existence of these rights and bureaucratic hurdles that may cause the person entitled to give up on the procedure and waive his rights.



Key figures

**About NIS
670 million**

have not yet been paid by the National Insurance Institute (NII), the IDF and the Ministry of Defense to reservists and their employers for reserve duty performed by reserve soldiers in 2008-2012 since the previous State Comptroller's report was published in 2015, due to a dispute between them regarding the number of days of reserve duty performed and the amount of reserve compensation to be paid.

**About NIS
650 million**

According to NII estimates, is still left to be paid to reservists and their employers for days of reserve duty that have not yet been claimed for the years 2013 to 2019. During 2020, NII, the IDF and the Ministry of Defense paid NIS 19 million for non-salaried reservists for reserve duty for these years.

NIS 41.7 million

Reimbursed by NII to salaried employees who receive senior citizen benefits, for social security contributions deducted from their income in the years 2008-2017, because they did not notify the employer of receiving this benefit, and another NIS 15.9 million to the employers.

NIS 42 million

Reimbursed by NII to salaried employees employed by several employers in the years 2018-2019, for Social Security contributions paid in excess through Social Security fees coordination.

**96**

The number of municipalities where empowerment centers for the exercise of rights have been established since the previous report was published. Analysis of the distribution of empowerment centers according to the socio-economic ranking shows that they were established mainly in municipalities where a majority of residents are at a low socio-economic level.

0

Number of municipalities from the Arab sector, where citizen counseling service stations (CCS) have been established.

About 2%
submissions
of eligibility
applications

From the data that NII submitted to the Ministry of Construction in 2017 on 122,800 potential cases eligible for rent assistance, notifications were sent of possible eligibility to about 50,000 of them; about 2,200 of them (about 2%) submitted requests for rent assistance in 2017-2019.

10
Municipalities

Started a pilot of NII for the use of an online interface, which may allow municipalities to view relevant information for the purpose of providing property tax rebates to eligible persons.

Audit actions



In 2015, the Office of the State Comptroller published a report on the non-exercise of social rights (the previous report or the previous audit). From May to September 2020, the State Comptroller's Office conducted an audit of the correction of some of the deficiencies raised in the previous report, including to examine: what actions are taken by the NII, the Ministry of Defense and the IDF to ensure the rights of those entitled to reserve benefits are exercised; what actions are taken by the NII for reimbursement for the payment of excess social security contributions and for increasing the rates of exercise of rights; what the following bodies do to exercise the rights of recipients of benefits from the NII - the Ministry of Construction and Housing for the provision of rent assistance and the Ministry of the Interior and four municipalities for the granting of property tax rebates; what actions are undertaken by the Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Services to make information about social rights accessible to those entitled; and how the government acts to make information accessible to those eligible through the Internet, including through the Ministry of Cyber and Digital Matters.



Key findings

- Execution of reserve benefit** - In the previous audit, it was found that in the years 2008-2012, reserve servicemen or their employers did not exercise their right to receive payments from the NII for a value of NIS 670 million for about one million reserve duty days. The follow-up audit revealed that the NII, the IDF and the Ministry of Defense have not yet reached agreements on the amounts of reserve benefits to be paid, as well as on the extent of non-exercise of reserve benefits and the number of reserve duty days not claimed in those years; as a result, the NII has not yet transferred payment to the eligible persons for the reserve days made during the said period. The follow-up audit also showed that as for the years 2013-2019, the NII, IDF and the Ministry of Defense paid in 2020 NIS 19 million to non-salaried reservists, but according to the NII's estimate, another NIS 650 million are still required to be paid for reserve days that the reservists or their employers have not yet claimed for this period.
- Social Security contributions for salaried employees** - In the previous audit, it was found that the NII did not reimburse employees who worked in several jobs or received a senior citizen's pension, and were entitled to a reduced payment of social security contributions or exemption, an amount of NIS 164 million for years 2009- 2012. The follow-up audit found that the NII did not return all the social security contributions that were overcharged in 2009-2012 and that there are still social security contributions excesses that were not paid to salaried employees also with regard to the years 2013-2019.
- Drafting letters in clear and simple language** - In the previous audit, it was found that every year, the NII sends more than 1,000 different versions of letters to policyholders, which may make it difficult for the insured to understand his duties, rights and what is required of him. The follow-up audit found that in 2019, the NII began work on written communication, and 128 letters were reworded, but in May 2021, the development of the project was not yet completed due to the COVID-19 crisis, and the new versions of the letters were not distributed.
- Rent assistance** - In the previous audit, it was found that the Ministry of Construction does not have data from NII on the potential beneficiaries of rent assistance, and therefore it does not initiate contact with those who may be eligible. The follow-up audit revealed that the NII and the Ministry of Construction have not yet arranged a mechanism for transmitting information on potential beneficiaries.
- Reducing the bureaucratic burden in regard to granting a local tax rebate** - In the previous audit, it was found that some local municipalities do not utilize the latest information transmitted to them by the NII on those entitled to the rebate and do not grant the rebate automatically; an inter-ministerial team set up in 2012 to regulate the transfer of information from the NII to public entities in order to alleviate the bureaucratic



burden on the citizen seeking to exercise his right to benefits, did not reach an agreement with the Federation of Local Authorities in Israel on file transfer methods, privacy issues and discount granting methods. The follow-up audit revealed that the Ministry of the Interior, the NII, the Federation of Local Authorities and the municipalities did not establish mechanisms for all authorities to reduce the bureaucratic burden involved in granting a tax rebate to eligible persons and automatically granting a rebate in appropriate cases, and that some municipalities do not yet grant an automatic tax rebate in cases where this can be done. The follow-up audit partially examined the rates of exercising the right to a tax rebate for NII eligible persons, in a number of municipalities; a survey conducted by one of the municipalities found that out of 2,800 eligible, about 4% do not actually receive the discount.

-  **Exercising rights by social workers and in counseling service stations (CSS)** - in the previous audit it was found that the Ministry of Welfare did not establish rules in the Social Work Regulations (SWR) or in general circulars nor methods that would guide the social workers in social services departments in the municipalities (SSD) regarding ways to help their patients exercise their rights; the follow-up audit revealed that the Ministry of Welfare did not add such guidelines to the SWR, and that except for materials incorporated in professional meetings with social workers, there are no circulars or guidelines on this subject; regarding Counselling Stations for the exercise of rights, the previous audit found that only 57 of the 257 local authorities operated such stations; the follow-up audit found that the number of stations increased by 26%, however, the stations were established mainly in authorities with a medium-high socio-economic ranking, while no station was established in the Arab sector.



Monthly report from employers on the salaries of the insured - In the previous audit it was found that despite the obligation imposed on employers by the National Insurance Law¹ (NII Law) and regulations² to report to the NII every month on the wages they pay to each of their employees, the NII did not require all employers to report monthly on each employee individually. As a result, the NII did not have up-to-date information on the wages of about 3 million employees, who were about 85% of the employees in Israel. The follow-up audit revealed that following the State Comptroller's report on the state's treatment of the unemployed and jobseekers during the COVID-19 crisis³, an amendment was published to the

- 1 National Insurance Law [combined version], 1995.
- 2 Regulation 8 (a) of the National Insurance (Collection of Insurance Contributions) Regulations, 1954.
- 3 State Comptroller, **Special Report - Interim Findings** (2020), "State Treatment of the Unemployed and Jobseekers during the COVID-19 Crisis - Receiving reliable monthly data from employers on the wages of their workers", pp. 5-8.



NII Law⁴, stipulating that, as of April 2021⁵, employers will be required to submit, at the time of payment of the insurance premiums, an online monthly report on the wages, wage data, classification and scope of employment of each employee for whom there is an obligation to pay social security contributions.

Systematic treatment regarding the exercise of rights - in the previous audit it was found that the activities of the NII regarding the exercise of rights are lacking in systematic treatment, when only from 2008 did the Research and Planning Administration at the NII begin to conduct research on the occurrence of the phenomenon⁶, and in 2011-2013 the Research and Planning Administration conducted 75 studies, but only one of them dealt with measuring the rate of exercise of rights⁷. The follow-up audit revealed that in the years 2005 to 2021, NII carried out a number of studies on the exercise of rights on targeted populations, acted to apply the findings and conclusions from those studies and integrate them into the work plan; in addition, NII stated that during 2021-2023 it plans to conduct further research in the area of exercising the rights of populations receiving income support benefits, senior citizens and maternity benefits.

Child allowance - In the previous audit, it was found that the NII required families returning from abroad to file a claim for child allowance upon their return to Israel, even though they had data that allowed them to pay the allowance automatically. The follow-up audit revealed that as of the end of the audit, the NII significantly improved the exercise of the child allowance rights of those returning from abroad.

Empowerment centers for the exercise of rights - in the previous audit it was found that the Ministry of Welfare operated empowerment centers in only 17 of the 257 local authorities; the follow-up audit found that the ministry has increased the number of empowerment centers almost fivefold since 2015 (from 26 centers to 123 in 2020), and the number of authorities where centers operated in 2020 has increased to 113 (an increase of almost seven times). However, in about 26% of the authorities with a low socio-economic rating (1-5) there are no empowerment centers.

Rights calculators - In the previous report, the State Comptroller's Office recommended to the ICT Authority, which currently operates in the Ministry of Cyber and Digital Matters, that it should work with government ministries to examine the integration of online calculators for the exercise of rights. The follow-up audit revealed that at the beginning of 2021, a National Rights engine was launched on a limited basis, relating to the rights of senior citizens.

4 Section 355 (a1) of the NII Law - Amendment No. 219 to the Law dated 19.11.20, published in the Book of Laws 2868, p. 89.

5 The amendment to the law applies to large employers with more than 180 employees as of April 2021 and to small employers with less than 180 employees as of October 2021.

6 And this also applies to five benefits - children, unemployment, income support, old age and maternity benefits.

7 Update on research on unemployment benefits in 2012.



Key recommendations

-  The Ministry of Defense and the IDF must reach an agreed assessment, in coordination with the NII, regarding the amount of unpaid payments to reservists and their employers for the years 2008-2012, and act to transfer them. In addition, the IDF and the Ministry of Defense must complete with the NII the actions to exercise the rights of the salaried reservists and their employers for the unclaimed reserve periods for the years 2013-2019; In order to bring an end to the situation in which reserve service periods are generated each year for which claims are not filed and the reserve benefits are not paid, it is recommended that the NII examine the simplification of the process of filing a claim for reserve benefits of employees and employers, computerization and mechanization, so that on the one hand, reporting to the NII on salaried reservists will be done online by the IDF, and on the other hand, the credit to employers for the reserve benefit of employees employed by them will be made automatically and online by the NII, subject to the consent of the reservist.
-  In view of the over-collected social security contributions, the NII should take the initiative to locate those from whom the insurance premiums were collected, whether he receives an old-age pension or other qualifying benefits such as a disability pension, or whether he receives income from several jobs, and will examine ways to automatically reimburse insurance premiums. It is also recommended that the NII examine the possibility of taking action that will prevent the collection of insurance premiums from employees who receive senior citizen benefits, which are exempt from this payment, and complete the development of the computerized system for updating employers regarding exemption from insurance fees for employees receiving senior citizens benefits, independently of receiving an update from the employee.
-  Following the said amendment to the NII Law, it is recommended that the NII use the monthly report to improve the exercise of the insured's rights, including initiating contact with those who are entitled to benefits contingent on income evaluations, initiating pension claims for insureds for whom information is available, and automatically paying benefits to beneficiaries when it is possible to do so.
-  In light of the importance of the project of simplification of the letters to the insured through a uniform template, it is recommended that the NII complete it and work to implement it.
-  It is recommended that the NII complete the organization of transfer of updated data files to the Ministry of Construction on citizens who may be eligible for rent assistance, and that these files include as up-to-date contact information as possible, without including information that infringes on their privacy. It is also recommended that the NII complete the production of letters to the population that may be eligible, in order to bring to their attention the possibility of contacting the Ministry of Construction for the purpose of checking eligibility for rent assistance. It is recommended that the Ministry of



Construction work online to locate up-to-date contact details of potential beneficiaries transferred to it in the NII files, initiate contact with the potential beneficiaries proactively and inform them of their possibility to contact them for eligibility according to housing thresholds.



It is recommended that the Ministry of the Interior, the Federation of Local Authorities, the NII and the municipalities draw lessons from the process carried out by municipalities that automatically grant the rebate and establish an effective and reliable mechanism for granting discounts to eligible persons, without infringing on their right to privacy, which will relieve the need for an application, and will ease the bureaucratic burden on those eligible. It is also recommended that each municipality carry out, from time to time, an individual cross-checking of the data obtained from NII with the data of eligible persons residing in its jurisdiction and will work to grant an automatic discount to residents who are entitled to it under the local tax rebate regulations.



It is recommended that the Ministry of Welfare expand the activities intended to provide the social workers in the social services departments with the "toolbox" that will allow them to help patients exercise their rights, include specific guidelines in the SWR and general circulars, and work to complete the development of a right exercising platform on the Internet ("Click for Welfare") and for its provision for the use by the public according to the milestones it has set. The ministry must work with local authorities to expand the deployment of CSS stations among populations from the social periphery, who especially need access to and receive assistance in the appropriate language, especially in the Arab sector, where there are currently no CSS stations.



It is recommended that the Ministry of Cyber and Digital Matters continue to work to expand technological innovation and complete the establishment of the National Rights Engine in a way that will allow all who apply to it full accessibility and ease of use for the purpose of exercising their rights.



Non-exercise of social rights - main findings of the follow-up audit

Audit chapter	The defect / finding in the previous audit report	The degree of correction of the defect as indicated in the follow-up audit			
		Not corrected	Corrected to a small extent	Corrected to a significant extent	Fully corrected
Non-exercise of reserve duty payments	The NII and the IDF have not yet paid reserve benefits in the amount of NIS 670 million for the years 2008-2012.				
Non-reimbursement of National Insurance contributions to salaried employees	The NII informs relevant parties regarding the need to coordinate social security contributions for employees employed by several employers, but does not cross-reference existing data in its databases for the purpose of locating employees who are entitled to a refund of social security contributions.				
	The NII did not reimburse the full amounts of social security contributions excessively collected from employees employed by several employers in the years 2009-2012				
	The NII did not act to locate employees who receive senior citizen benefits who have been deducted Social Security contributions, even though they are exempt from this payment, by cross-referencing data from its databases.				
	The NII did not reimburse all Social Security contributions collected in excess from employees who received senior citizen benefits in 2009-2012				



Audit chapter	The defect / finding in the previous audit report	The degree of correction of the defect as indicated in the follow-up audit			
		Not corrected	Corrected to a small extent	Corrected to a significant extent	Fully corrected
Deficiencies in actions to increase rates of exercise of rights in the NII	The NII actions regarding the exercise of the rights suffered from the absence of systematic treatment, including conducting up-to-date research.				
	The NII did not require all employers to submit a regular monthly report on each employee individually				
	The NII stated that the existing wording of the letters constituted a risk in light of ambiguity and inconsistency and that a project should be launched to simplify and unify the letters, but did not begin carrying out the said project.				
Exercising the right to child allowance	The NII demanded that families returning from abroad file a child benefit claim upon their return to Israel, even though it had data in his possession that allegedly allowed it to pay the families automatically.				
Rent assistance	The Ministry of Construction did not have up-to-date data on recipients of NII allowances who are entitled to rent assistance, and it does not initiate inquiries into who may be eligible.				
Reducing the bureaucratic burden in granting of a local tax rebate	No mechanisms have been put in place for all the municipalities to reduce the bureaucratic burden and to provide an automatic tax rebate in appropriate cases.				



Audit chapter	The defect / finding in the previous audit report	The degree of correction of the defect as indicated in the follow-up audit			
		Not corrected	Corrected to a small extent	Corrected to a significant extent	Fully corrected
	Although the NII transferred information files to the municipalities about those entitled to a local tax rebate several times a year, some municipalities did not grant the rebate automatically to eligible people:				
	Be'er Sheva; Acre;				
	Holon; Herzliya.				
Making information accessible through the Ministry of Welfare and municipalities	The Ministry of Welfare has not established rules and methods, nor has it developed computerized tools that will assist social workers in social services departments in municipalities, to help those who apply to them exercise their rights.				
	Only 57 of 257 municipalities operated citizen counseling service stations (CSS) for the exercise of rights.				
	Only 17 of the 257 local authorities had empowerment centers for the exercise of rights.				
Access to rights through the Internet	In Israel, there was no dedicated government website that centralized information to citizens about their rights				
	The ICT Authority (Ministry of Cyber and Digital Matters) did not act to integrate rights calculators in the scope of a unified government website.				



Summary

Failure to exercise rights, and especially the type of benefits provided by the NII, harms the entire population and especially the disadvantaged sectors. The findings of this follow-up report indicate that some of the deficiencies in the actions of the audited entities pointed out in the previous report have been corrected in full or significantly, but a considerable part have not been corrected at all or have been corrected to a small extent. The NII and the other audited bodies that this report deals with must act to correct the deficiencies it specifies. They must take all necessary steps to reduce the bureaucratic burden on the public and help those entitled to exercise their rights.