



Report of the State Comptroller of Israel | March 2022

Israel Defense Forces

Aspects of the Activity of the Military Police Criminal Investigation Division – Follow-up Audit



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Background

The Military Police Criminal Investigation Division (MPCID) is a unit of the IDF designated to serve as an investigative body for the detection of military and non-military crimes committed by soldiers (regular, conscripted, or reserve) and others subject to it, according to the Military Justice Law 1955. The primary roles of the unit are to prevent crime in the army units and investigate crimes; operate an intelligence and investigation body for information gathering, research, and evaluation; gather and prepare evidence material for the prosecution of offenders; and cooperate with the Israel Police parallel investigation bodies. Most of MPCID's activity is focused on crimes committed by IDF conscript soldiers, usually without any criminal record (at least none significant). This requires its detectives to act with care and sensitivity to prevent mishaps and undesirable incidents. This constitutes a challenge for MPCID detectives and intelligence coordinators since they are relatively young, usually with no significant life experience.

Key figures

23,308 cases

handled by the MPCID unit in 2020

3,719 investigation files

opened by MPCID in 2020

8,923

involved in MPCID investigation in 2020

15 Intelligence coordinators

in initial regular service filled this role in the intelligence section at MPCID bases in June 2021 (out of 17 positions)

7.8%


of total MPCID activity in 2020 focused on the investigation of crime associated with weapons and firearms

53.7%

of total MPCID activity in 2020 focused on the investigation of drug offenses




Audit actions


 In May 2019, the State Comptroller of Israel published a report on the Activity of the Military Police Criminal Investigation Division (previous audit). From October 2020 to June 2021, the State Comptroller of Israel examined the rectification of the main deficiencies noted in the previous audit. The follow-up audit was conducted in the IDF, in the unit of the Director of Security of the Ministry of Defense, and at the National Center of Forensic Medicine.

Key findings




 **Staff work regarding the independence of MPCID** – in the previous audit, the State Comptroller recommended performing comprehensive staff work in cooperation with relevant military and civilian bodies to ensure the principles of professional investigation so that MPCID can optimally fulfill its mission and roles. It was further recommended that the staff work recommendations be presented for review and approval by the defense minister. The follow-up audit raised that the IDF had not conducted staff work regarding MPCID's independence, and no conclusions were presented for the defense minister's review and approval. The need for such review is significantly essential in light of the situation report presented by an external team regarding the recruitment of sources, according to which examination of topics connected with workforce planning is required.







 **Segmentation of MPCID investigations in 2020** – according to the segmentation of investigations, the ratio of drug offenses investigations is significantly higher than investigations in other areas. Although the 2020 MPCID summary indicates of growth in the theft of weapons and their parts.



 **Annual certifications regarding handling crime scenes** – in the previous audit, deficiencies were raised regarding the handling of crime scenes by MPCID detectives. The Ministry of Defense has decided on performing professional certification for the handling of crime scenes. The follow-up audit raised that deficiencies on this matter were partially rectified. In 2019, a two-day course was held (instead of the five days stated in the MPCID commander's guideline) that did not include most of the compulsory material determined in the guideline. In 2020, a three-day course was planned; however, according to MPCID, it was never held due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.



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Weapons tester position at the National Headquarters of the Israel Police – the previous audit noted that although MPCID had applied to the IDF Manpower Directorate to arrange this position, this was not arranged. This deficiency was not rectified in the follow-up audit – no weapons tester was employed. In the absence of a designated position, during the previous audit, MPCID had placed, by its initiative, a weapons tester at the Israel Police National Headquarters in a detective position to fill this gap.
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Intelligence Section at MPCID – training of intelligence coordinators – the previous audit raised several deficiencies in the training of intelligence coordinators: they lacked professional concepts; hence, they did not act in accordance with them, with many of them failed at their job. The follow-up audit raised that while the Southern District of MPCID assigned a personal mentor to each coordinator; the Northern District of MPCID did not prepare any orderly training plan in advance, including the mentors' names assigned to coach each of the new coordinators in the district. Even a week after the training period had begun, there was still no such plan.
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Intelligence section at MPCID – recruitment of Intelligence sources – the audit raised that the sources recruitment team recommended recruiting sources after at least two meetings. Still, a new MPCID guideline allows the recruitment of a soldier as a source based on one meeting only if he had previously been investigated as a suspect (at MPCID or the Israel Police); this, regardless of the investigation results or severity of the crime he was suspected of. Even a soldier who was once a suspect, following an intelligence information, whether the suspicion had been verified or not, can be recruited as a source for MPCID in one meeting only.
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The MPCID mechanized information system – MITCHAM (investigation and intelligence processes system) – the previous audit noted that due to recurrent malfunctions and lack of synchronization with the Manpower Directorate systems, the MITCHAM is not used as a reliable database. The follow-up audit pointed out that the MITCHAM remains an outdated, inadequate system aside from a few improvements. In addition, the MPCID upgraded the system; however, it is contingent upon Manpower Directorate resources for 2021, which had not yet been approved before the audit was over.



Crime scene kits – in the previous audit, the kits were in poor condition, many with missing or faulty equipment items. In the follow-up audit, these deficiencies were rectified: MPCID purchased new kits and improved the ongoing maintenance of the crime scene kits.

Handling of exhibits – the previous audit raised deficiencies in the handling of exhibit rooms at four MPCID bases. In the follow-up audit, deficiencies concerning the handling of exhibits at MPCID bases were fully rectified and were under frequent supervision.

Receiving of medical-legal opinion from the National Center of Forensic Medicine – the previous audit raised that in about 54% of the cases examined in 2017, the National Center of Forensic Medicine did not meet deadlines for submitting of medical-legal reports on autopsies of soldiers, which led to a considerable prolonging of MPCID investigations. The follow-up audit raised that these deficiencies were considerably rectified. A special team was established to handle cases of non-operational fatalities. The team improved work interfaces with the National Center of Forensic Medicine and the accuracy of tests conducted for MPCID. In addition, the number of cases (from all non-operational fatalities) in which the Center of Forensic Medicine met deadlines for submission of medical-legal opinions increased.

National Fraud Investigation Unit – the previous audit raised that the unit's workforce had been cut back, resulting in a considerable decline in the unit's number of fraud investigation files. Furthermore, no specific professional training courses were held in MPCID for intelligence staff in the fraud investigation area. The follow-up audit raised that the deficiencies had been rectified: MPCID had improved the professional level of the unit by certificating the detectives, increasing the workforce, and cooperating with other investigation bodies enhancing the unit's professional level. All the above have increased the number of fraud files handled by the unit.

MPCID Intelligence – the previous audit noted deficiencies in the professional level of the intelligence section, based mainly on conscript soldiers, including training and supervision of this section. The follow-up audit raised that MPCID established its intelligence section only on regular army personnel to create a professional, experienced and mature intelligence section while providing it with specialized training. It was also raised that MPCID improved the professional level of base commanders in intelligence, thus strengthening the involvement of commanders in this discipline.

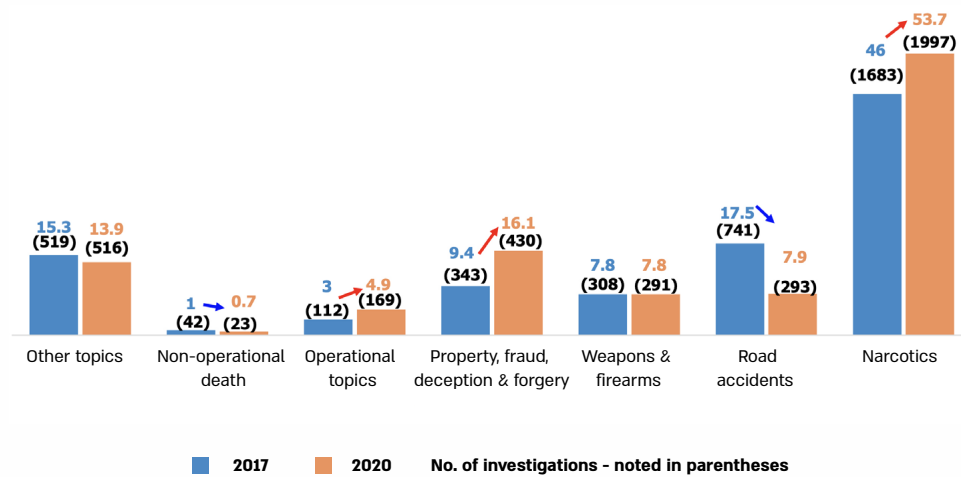


Key recommendations

- 💡 The State Comptroller of Israel recommends that the deputy chief of staff implement professional investigation principles to which MPCID must adhere to optimize its roles and activities. Furthermore, it is essential to properly plan and build the unit to ensure the stability of the resources vital to MPCID and enable it to perform its tasks at the required professional level.
- 💡 It is recommended that MPCID increase its efforts to thwart and prevent other serious crimes aside from narcotics crimes, of which repercussions are significant and go beyond IDF limits; for example, theft of weapons. It is further recommended that MPCID examine whether it should handle new crime fields, such as illegal online activity and cybercrime.
- 💡 It is recommended that the deputy chief of staff consider alternative methods of recruiting intelligence sources to reduce drug abuse in the IDF, such as increasing commanders' involvement.
- 💡 It is recommended that the Head of the Manpower Directorate and Chief Military Police Officer track the implementation of the recommendations given by the committee for examination of sources recruitment and verify that explicit metrics have been established for examination of the effectiveness of actions performed to promote the intelligence section and verify compliance with them. This is in light of the unit's importance and the need to maintain its professional level and prevent fatal errors.
- 💡 It is recommended that the MPCID commander maintains professional handling of crime scenes and professional certification of the investigators; provide that each intelligence coordinator receive training according to the guideline on this matter; enhance the professional level of MPCID base commanders in the sensitive area of intelligence and recruitment of sources, including the extension of the training undergone by commanders to a period longer than three days.
- 💡 It is recommended that the Head of Manpower Directorate recruit intelligence sources according to the recommendation of the external team for examination of sources recruitment and recruit each intelligence source after at least two meetings.
- 💡 Since the transition to intelligence coordinators in regular service is in its initial stage, it is recommended that the commander of MPCID improve the control over one on one meetings between coordinator and intelligence source.
- 💡 It is recommended that the Head of the Manpower Directorate put a designated advanced information system at the disposal of MPCID to meet the needs of the investigation and intelligence section management.



The MPCID's annual activities, rate and numbers



The State Comptroller's office arranges the MPCID annual activity reports.



Findings of follow-up audit of rectification of deficiencies noted in the previous audit

Audit chapter	Deficiencies in previous audit reports	Degree to which deficiencies have been rectified according to follow-up report			
		Not rectified	Slightly rectified	Considerably rectified	Fully rectified
Ensuring the independence of MPCID activity	MPCID officers expressed their concern to the auditing team that the participation of senior officers in sensitive investigations might harm their future promotion. The State Comptroller recommended undertaking comprehensive staff work, including involvement of non-military bodies, to examine ways to ensure MPCID's ability optimize its mission and roles. The IDF Military Prosecution has joined in this recommendation, noting that it would be worthy of considering reinforcing MPCID.				
	Deficiencies were found in MPCID handling of crime scenes, including failure to document various details from the scene.				
Investigation management and exhibit handling	Crime scene kits were in poor condition, many with missing or faulty equipment.				
	Faulty or partial arrangement of exhibit rooms; incorrect handling of special exhibits; and deficiencies in documenting the exhibits.				
Outsourced services	The IDF has failed to employ weapons tester. In the absence of a designated position, MPCID has allocated a weapons tester to the lab at the National Headquarters of the Israel Police in the position of an MPCID detective.				
	Delays occurred in the submission of legal-medical opinions from the Center of Forensic Medicine to MPCID, which led to a considerable prolonging of MPCID investigations.				



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National Fraud Investigation Unit	In 2017, after organizational changes were made in MPCID, a considerable decrease occurred in the number of fraud files handled in the National Fraud Investigation Unit compared to an average number of files dealt with during 2016–2020.				
	No specific professional training in fraud investigations had been held at MPCID, and the fraud detectives at MPCID were without specialization.				
MPCID Intelligence	Deficiencies were found in the professionalism of the intelligence section, including the training process and the supervision of this section.				
The investigations and intelligence processes system does not constitute a reliable database	Due to the multitude of malfunctions and lack of synchronization with the Manpower Directorate systems, the system cannot be considered a reliable database.				



Summary

MPCID is a designated unit for detecting and investigating delinquency and crime within the IDF, and it faces many challenges in its activity. MPCID detectives and intelligence coordinators, despite their high-quality attributes, are relatively young and usually without rich life experience. Nevertheless, they must exercise discretion and highly developed emotional capabilities dealing with complex, sensitive situations.

The findings of this audit indicate that MPCID has rectified many deficiencies noted in the previous audit. For example, in the intelligence field, MPCID has enhanced professionalism in the section, which is currently based on regular service members only. A new certification course has been launched for coordinators, and the involvement of base commanders in the intelligence section's activity has been increased. Nevertheless, it is recommended that the MPCID commander enhance the training and control regarding the sensitive issue of source recruitment.

Regarding several fields that IDF bodies other than MPCID are in charge of, connected mainly with MPCID resources, deficiencies noted in the previous audit were not rectified. Mostly, no staff work has been done to examine MPCID's ability to optimize its roles and activities.

The State Comptroller's office recommends that the deputy chief of staff examine the resources vital to MPCID, emphasizing the workforce to perform its tasks with the appropriate professionalism in light of its mission and roles.