



State Comptroller of Israel | Local Government
Audit Report | 2023

Follow-up Audit

Actions for Increasing Road Safety Within the Jurisdiction of Local Authorities in Arab Society – Follow-up Audit



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Background

According to the National Road Safety Authority (NRSA), although the Arab society is about one-fifth of Israel's population, the involvement rate of this population in fatal traffic accidents is significant compared to its rate in the general population – in the number of fatalities (about 2-fold) and those seriously injured in these accidents (about 1.5-fold) and the number of drivers involved (1.9-fold).

Several public bodies are entrusted with road safety. According to the law, the local authority is responsible for road safety within its jurisdiction. The National Road Safety Authority, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Transport and Road Safety (Ministry of Transport), and the Traffic Division of the Israel Police are working within their respective areas of authority and responsibility to increase road safety.

According to the National Road Safety Authority Law, 2006 (the National Road Safety Authority Law), the National Road Safety Authority should increase the funding of road safety actions by local authorities, including improvement of the transportation infrastructure and safety measures on municipal roads, and supervising the implementation of actions which were so financed.



Key Figures

33.3%

of the fatalities in traffic accidents in 2014–2020 were from the Arab society, compared to their rate in the population – 21% (in 2020 – 100 fatalities from traffic accidents in the Arab society)

1.9-fold

the involvement rate of drivers from the Arab society in traffic accidents in 2014–2020, compared to the involvement of drivers from the Jewish society

24.4%

of those severely injured in traffic accidents in 2014–2020 (3,840) were from the Arab society

**about NIS
17 billion**

the estimated cost of traffic accident damages to the Israeli economy per year

only 10%

the 6th graders' rate who were road safety crossroad attendants ('Zahav') in educational institutions in the Arab society in the 2021–2022 school year¹

**in only
17%**

of the traffic accidents from January 2019 to May 2022 (11 out of 64 accidents) in the examined authorities, did the police have a precise address of the accident site

33 km

the total length of the unlit roads in **Jatt, Kafr Qassem, and Tel Sheva**


75%

the decrease rate in the budget transferred by the NRSA to the Arab authorities in 2020 (NIS 2 million) compared to 2018 (about NIS 8 million)

¹ The school year begins in September and ends in August.




Audit Actions


 In 2020, the State Comptroller's Office published a report on "Actions for increasing road safety within the jurisdiction of local authorities in Arab society" (the previous report or audit). The previous audit examined the actions to increase road safety regarding road safety education and advocacy, road safety management, handling infrastructure of road safety, and enforcement.


From July to August 2022, the State Comptroller's Office followed up the rectification of the main deficiencies noted in the previous report (the follow-up audit). The follow-up audit was conducted in the **Kafr Qassem** municipality and the **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, and Tel Sheva** local authorities (the local authorities examined or the authorities examined). Completion examinations were conducted at the National Road Safety Authority, the Ministry of Education, Transport, and the Israel Police.

Key Findings










 **Pedestrian Crosswalks** – the previous audit raised that in the jurisdiction of **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, Kafr Qassem, and Tel Sheva**, there are pedestrian crosswalks whose paint has faded and it is difficult to distinguish them. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency was not rectified: in the examined authorities, the paint of a large part of the pedestrian crosswalks has faded, and sometimes, it is impossible to distinguish pedestrian crosswalks markings in these places.

 **Street Lighting** – the previous audit raised that entire streets in the jurisdictions of **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, Kafr Qassem, and Tel Sheva** were not adequately lit, and some had no lighting at all, including at the pedestrian crosswalks. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency was rectified to a small extent: in the **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, and Tel Sheva** local authorities, entire streets were not adequately lit, and some of them had no lighting at all.


 **Speed Bumps** – the previous audit raised that in the jurisdictions of **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, Kafr Qassem, and Tel Sheva**, there are unpainted speed bumps that are difficult to distinguish ahead of time during the day and even more so after dark. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency was not rectified: in the examined authorities, there are still areas with no speed bumps, such as near intersections and schools. Moreover, there are speed bumps that have not been painted or whose paint has faded and are, therefore, difficult to spot ahead of time.




-  **Sidewalks** – the previous audit raised that the sidewalks of **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, Kafr Qassem, and Tel Sheva** are blocked by garbage containers, goods sold by merchants, and vehicles parked on them. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency had not been rectified: sidewalks in the examined local authorities, which are typically narrow, are blocked by trees, electricity poles, scrap, construction waste, garbage containers, pits or sunken pavements, open drainage, sewage pits, and private vehicles and trucks.
-  **Traffic Signs** – the previous audit raised that in the jurisdiction of **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, Kafr Qassem, and Tel Sheva**, some traffic signs constituted a safety hazard and were not addressed by the local authorities. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency was not rectified: the examined authorities' traffic signs still constitute safety hazards, such as worn posted signs and crooked signs leaning towards the road. Additionally, traffic signs at intersections and roads are missing.
-  **Unpaved Road Sections** – the previous audit raised that there are many unpaved road sections in **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, Kafr Qassem, and Tel Sheva**. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency had not been rectified, and about 18 km or more of road sections were still unpaved.
-  **Road Safety Crossroad Attendants ('Zahav')** – the previous audit raised that the 6th graders' rate who were road safety crossroad attendants in educational institutions in the Arab society in the 2018–2019 school year was 8%, compared to 54% in the educational institutions in the Jewish society. The follow-up audit found that the 6th graders' rate of road safety crossroad attendants in educational institutions in the Arab society almost did not change, and in the school year 2021–2022, it was 10% compared to 56.7% in educational institutions in the Jewish society.
-  **Registration of Traffic Arrangements** – the previous audit raised that **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, Kafr Qassem, and Tel Sheva** did not keep a record of the traffic arrangements within their jurisdictions, including that of the traffic signs posted therein; therefore, it was impossible to know who decided on the implementation of the traffic arrangements and when. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency was not rectified: none of the examined local authorities recorded the traffic arrangements in their jurisdictions.
-  **Information in the Local Authorities About Traffic Accident Epicenters** – the previous audit raised that the examined local authorities – **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, Kafr Qassem, and Tel Sheva** – did not demand from the police data on traffic accident epicenters and did not regularly receive data on the accidents occurring within their jurisdiction. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency was not rectified: the local authorities receive reports from the police only if they request it, and in practice, they did not request it.
-  **Police Information on Traffic Accident Epicenters** – the previous audit raised that the police did not have data on the precise location of most of the traffic accidents that




occurred in 2015–2018 in **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, Kafr Qassem, and Tel Sheva** out of 192 traffic accidents, only 13 accidents (7%) had an exact address and 11 accidents (6%) only had the street name. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency was rectified to a small extent: the police do not have data on the precise location of most of the traffic accidents that occurred from January 2019 to May 2022 in the examined local authorities; Out of 64 traffic accidents, only 11 accidents (17%) had a precise address, and 8 accidents (12.5%) only had the street name, and therefore the authorities cannot handle traffic hazards to the extent that these were the cause of said accidents.

 **The Road Safety Committee** – the previous audit raised that in **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, Kafr Qassem, and Tel Sheva**, the committee did not convene as often as required – four times a year, at least. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency was rectified to a small extent: the committee did not convene as often as required in the examined authorities; in **Jisr az-Zarqa**, the committee convened twice a year; In **Jatt**, the committee convened only after receiving a budget for the marking of safety devices; In **Kafr Qassem** – once a year; In **Tel Sheva** – there is no committee.

 **Road Safety Center Managers** – the previous audit raised that the road safety center managers in **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, Kafr Qassem, and Tel Sheva** also held other positions in the same local authorities. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency was not rectified: the road safety center managers in the examined local authorities also held other positions in those local authorities, and only a tiny part of their working hours (about 10%) was devoted to managing the road safety center.

 **Transportation Master Plan** – the previous audit raised that there was no transportation master plan in **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, Kafr Qassem, and Tel Sheva**. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency was not rectified, and the examined authorities did not formulate a transportation master plan.

 **Collection of the Street Paving Levy** – the previous audit raised that only the **Kafr Qassem** municipality collected a street paving levy (in 2017–2018 and the first half of 2019, the municipality collected a levy of about NIS 660,000, about NIS 674,000 and about NIS 207,000, respectively) while the **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt and Tel Sheva** local authorities did not collect it. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency was not rectified: the **Kafr Qassem** municipality collected in 2019–2021 about NIS 682,000, about NIS 673,000, and about NIS 675,000, respectively, while the **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, and Tel Sheva** local authorities do not collect a street paving levy.



Formulating a Plan with the Ayalon Highways Company – the previous audit raised that the Ministry of Transport is the planner and implementer of the transport projects in the local authorities. The follow-up audit found that the Ministry of Transport formulated a plan with the "Ayalon Highways" company (Netivei Ayalon) to close



infrastructure gaps between the Arab and Jewish local authorities, and for about three years (2018–2020), the Ayalon Highways company prepared strategic plans for all 133 local authorities in the Arab society in Israel.

Road Safety Coordinators – the previous audit raised that the road safety coordinators rate in Arab society is lower than in Jewish society. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency has been rectified to a large extent: there was an increase, over five years, in the rate of educational institutions in Arab society where road safety coordinators operated – from 61% to 74%.

Online Training – the previous audit raised that until the start of the previous audit, the Ministry of Education and the National Road Safety Authority (NRSA) did not provide online training for the Arab society, and during the previous audit period, an online class was held, the result of cooperation between the NRSA and the Ministry of Education. The class dealt with young drivers in Arab society, and its target audience was 10th–12th grade students. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency was rectified to a small extent: the Ministry of Education had formed several online networks in the Arabic language, such as establishing a database of driving theory questions to practice in the framework of traffic education in the 10th grade, and prepare for the driving theory exam; developing a dedicated study unit for 3rd graders in elementary schools in the Arab society; And developing an app for smartphones.








The Training of Road Safety Center Managers in the Local Authorities – the previous audit raised that the NRSA has no data about the lack of training of the road safety center managers in **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, Kafr Qassem, and Tel Sheva**. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency has been fully rectified: the NRSA has information on the matter.

The Local Authority's Annual Road Safety Work Plan – the previous audit raised that **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, Kafr Qassem, and Tel Sheva** did not prepare annual road safety work plans and that these had been prepared for them by the NRSA consultants. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency was fully rectified: the above annual work plans were prepared by the road safety center managers in the examined authorities in cooperation with the Regional Safety Manager.

Traffic Circles – the previous audit raised that there were traffic circles in **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, Kafr Qassem, and Tel Sheva**, but there was no record of their location and dimensions. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency had been rectified largely: **Jatt, Kafr Qassem, and Tel Sheva** had a record of their location and dimensions.

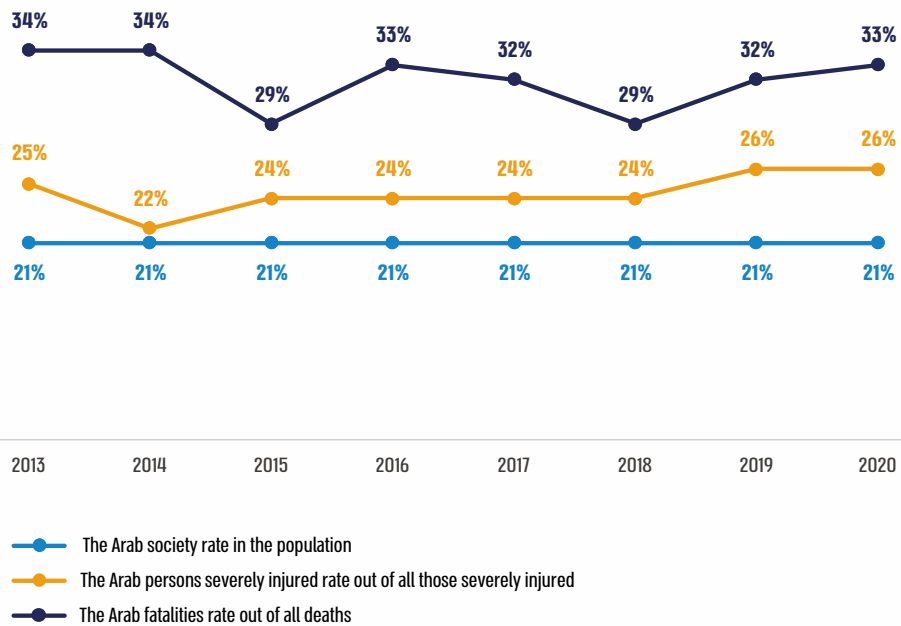


Key Recommendations

-  It is recommended that the examined local authorities prepare a transportation master plan, as it is an important planning tool with an all-inclusive and comprehensive view of their transportation and safety needs on which to base their annual work plans. It is further recommended that the examined local authorities prepare an approved traffic sign plan, place traffic signs in their jurisdictions, and repair and maintain the existing traffic signs.
-  The **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, Kafr Qassem, and Tel Sheva** local authorities must ensure that the road infrastructure is in good order to maintain the safety of the residents, including children, and operate the road safety crossroad attendant's system. The examined local authorities must ensure that the pedestrian crosswalks and speed bumps in their jurisdictions are clearly visible and in good condition.
-  It is recommended that the local authorities enlist the help of many volunteers to carry out advocacy activities on road safety among their residents and that the NRSA encourage the local authorities to allocate appropriate resources for this purpose. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Education increase the number of NRSA coordinators in educational institutions in the Arab society.
-  It is recommended that the heads of the **Jisr az-Zarqa, Jatt, Kafr Qassem, and Tel Sheva** local authorities stuff the position of road safety center manager with an employee who can fulfill the position professionally and entirely according to the scope of the position set for them. It is recommended that the Ministry of Interior and the heads of the local authorities consider strengthening the status of the road safety center manager in the local authority.
-  It is recommended that the examined local authorities regulate the street names and signage in their jurisdictions so that it is possible to indicate the precise location of traffic accidents within their jurisdictions.
-  It is recommended that the Ministry of Interior instruct the local authorities that have not enacted by-laws on street paving to enact and implement them and to collect the street paving levy, particularly authorities that receive Equalization Grants.
-  It is recommended that the Ministry of Transport implement the plan it formulated with the "Ayalon Highways" company to close infrastructure gaps between the Arab and Jewish local authorities and to examine the scope of the budgets allocated by the Ministry and the NRSA to the Arab authorities.



The Arab Society Rate Among Fatalities and Those Severely Injured in Traffic Accidents, 2013–2020 (in rate)



According to the NRSA data processed by the State Comptroller's Office.








The Extent the Key Deficiencies Noted in the Previous Report were Rectified

Audit chapter	The Audited Body	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	The Extent of Deficiencies Rectification in the Follow-up Audit			
			Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Road safety coordinators	The Ministry of Education	The rate of road safety coordinators in Arab society is lower than in Jewish society.				
Online training	The Ministry of Education and the NRSA	No online training was provided to Arab society.				
Road safety crossroad attendants	The Police and the Ministry of Education	The 6th graders' rate who were road safety crossroad attendants in educational institutions in the Arab society in the 2019 school year was small.				
Advocacy activity by volunteers	The local authorities examined	All the examined authorities, except for Kafr Qassem , did not initiate any advocacy activities through volunteers from the community.				
Budgeting of the local authorities for the advocacy programs of the road safety center	The local authorities examined	No authorities, except for Kafr Qassem , allocated resources from their budgets to finance advocacy activities.				





Audit chapter	The Audited Body	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	The Extent of Deficiencies Rectification in the Follow-up Audit			
			Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
The Road Safety Committee	The local authorities examined	In Kafr Qassem the Committee did not convene as often as required, and no road safety committee was established in the other three municipalities.				
The Road Safety Center	The local authorities examined	No minutes or other documents were found to indicate that the center convened or was active.				
Road Safety Center Managers	The NRSA	The NRSA did not have data regarding the appointment date of the road safety center managers in the examined local authorities.				
	The local authorities examined	The road safety center managers in the examined local authorities also held other positions in those authorities.				
Annual work plan	The local authorities examined	The examined local authorities did not prepare annual road safety work plans, and these had been prepared for them by the NRSA consultants.				



Audit chapter	The Audited Body	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	The Extent of Deficiencies Rectification in the Follow-up Audit			
			Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Information on traffic accident epicenters	The local authorities examined	The examined local authorities did not demand data from the police on the traffic accident epicenters, and they did not regularly receive data on the accidents in their jurisdiction.				
Transportation master plan	The Police	The police did not have data on the precise location of most traffic accidents.				
	The local authorities examined	The examined local authorities did not have a transportation master plan.				
Traffic signs	The local authorities examined	Some traffic signs were a safety hazard within the jurisdiction of the examined local authorities, but the local authorities did not address these.				
Pedestrian crosswalks	The local authorities examined	Within the jurisdiction of the examined local authorities, some pedestrian crosswalks whose paint has faded to such an extent that it is difficult to distinguish them.				



Audit chapter	The Audited Body	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	The Extent of Deficiencies Rectification in the Follow-up Audit			
			Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Speed bumps	The local authorities examined	Within the jurisdiction of the examined local authorities, some speed bumps are unpainted, and it is difficult to notice them ahead of time during the day and even more so after dark.				
Sidewalks	The local authorities examined	Sidewalks in the examined local authorities are blocked by garbage containers, goods sold by merchants, and vehicles parked on them.				



Summary

In 2020, the State Comptroller's Office published a report on "Actions for increasing road safety within the jurisdiction of local authorities in Arab society." Following the publication of the previous audit report, it was found that even after 2020, the involvement rate of the Arab society in traffic accidents is, unfortunately, relatively large compared to its rate in the general population.

The follow-up audit found that some of the deficiencies were fully or partially rectified: the Ministry of Transport authorized the Ayalon Highways company to prepare and implement plans to close infrastructure gaps in the Arab communities; The examined local authorities prepared regular annual work plans in collaboration with the National Road Safety Authority (NRSA); Managers of the road safety centers received training (except for the **Jisr az-Zarqa** local authority), and they worked regularly with the NRSA.

However, some deficiencies were rectified to a small extent, including the minimal improvement in the employment of road safety crosswalk attendants in Arab society, mainly due to the state of the infrastructure and the existing hazards around the schools and due to the lack of training on the subject on the part of the police (except for the **Kafr Qassem** municipality); The informative publications on social networks and the NRSA website and the advocacy through volunteers require real improvement.

Some deficiencies were not rectified: all the examined authorities do not have a transportation master plan, they do not operate according to a traffic signs plan, and they do not ask the police for information about traffic accident epicenters within their jurisdiction; There are unpaved roads and sidewalks, and there are traffic arrangements and safety devices deficiencies, which adversely affect the safety of road users, including dangerous deficiencies in the vicinity of educational institutions. Regarding enforcement, except for the **Kafr Qassem** municipality, which enforces and imposes fines in the new industrial zone "Heart of the Land" (Lev Haaretz), all the examined authorities do not carry out enforcement activities because they have not enacted a by-law or due to the lack of a traffic signs plan. The **Tel Sheva** local authority has not enacted a by-law and does not collect levies; therefore, there are no official funding sources for regulating the infrastructure.

To reduce the number of traffic accidents and casualties in the jurisdiction of the Arab local authorities, all local authorities must place road safety at the top of their priorities, including **Jisr az-Zarqa**, **Jatt**, **Kafr Qassem**, and **Tel Sheva**, despite the financial difficulties and the constant struggle with the increasing violence, and with the multitude of problems facing the Arab authorities, which they pointed to as an obstacle to their activity in road safety. Greater involvement of the local authorities in Arab society in promoting road safety is also required. In addition, the NRSA and the Ministries of Transport and Interior should rectify the deficiencies noted in the report, monitor their rectification by the authorities, complete the required development within the authorities' jurisdiction, and supervise and enforce road safety.

