



State Comptroller Report | February 2023

Israel Defense Forces

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# **Aspects of Building Up of the Force of the Armored Corps**





## Aspects of Building Up of the Force of the Armored Corps

### Background

The Armored Corps is a critical component of the IDF's maneuvering effort on the battlefield, expressing the combination between mobility and firepower of the 'Merkava' (Chariot) tanks, which is among the most advanced in the world from a technological standpoint. The reliance on the tank as a central element in combat requires both a high level of operational capability<sup>1</sup> of the fighters and commanders – in terms of qualifications and training, and a high level of qualification<sup>2</sup> of the tank, from the technical perspective, with an emphasis on the availability of spare parts. As part of the IDF's 'Momentum' Multi-Year Plan for 2020–2024, a decision was made on the scope of the order of battle of tanks. Accordingly, specific Armored Corps units were shut down. At the same time, the remaining order of battle of tanks in the IDF is being renewed.

### Key Figures

#### for about 6 years

the ministers of defense did not present to the government the qualification of the reserve array, including the reserve Armored Corps array (from 2016 to 2022)

## Audit Actions

From February to June 2022 (the audit completion date), the State Comptroller's Office examined the force buildup of the Armored Corps array. The audit included the following: the presentation to the government of the order of battle of tanks in the reserve Armored Corps array and its qualification; Emergency spare parts for tanks; And tank crew training. The audit was carried out mainly at the IDF – in the Ground Forces, the Chief Armor Officer Headquarters, the Ground Technology Division, the National Ground Training Center, the tank brigades; The Operations Directorate; the Planning Directorate;

- 1 Operational capability – the capability and readiness of a military body, of firearms, etc. to effectively fulfill operational tasks. The dictionary of IDF terms.
- 2 Qualification – the ability needed to fulfill some task or accomplish something. For example: reserve days, engine hours, ammunition coefficients and vehicle release are key input components for maintaining qualification in the reserves. The dictionary of IDF terms.



The Intelligence Directorate, the air and aerospace arm; At the Ministry of Defense – in the Merkava and Armored Personnel Carrier Directorate and the Directorate of Defense Research & Development; And the National Security Council in the Prime Minister's Office.

The Knesset State Audit Committee sub-committee decided not to bring this report in its entirety before the Knesset but to publish only parts thereof, to protect state security under Section 17 of the State Comptroller's Law, 1958 [Consolidated Version].

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## Key Findings



**Presentation of the Tanks' Order of Battle in the Reserve Brigades to the Government** – in 2020, the plan determining the tanks' order of battle began to be implemented without the Minister of Defense presenting it in advance to State Security Cabinet for examining its need, and in contravention of the Reserve Service Law and the Prime Minister's summary of the discussions from January 2020. At the State Security Cabinet meeting in November 2020, where the order of battle was presented after the change was made, the ministers were not asked to approve it.



**Presentation of the Reserve Armored Corps Array's Qualification to the Government** – although the Reserve Service Law requires the Minister of Defense to present the qualification level of the reserve array to the government once a year, from 2016 to 2022, the government was not presented with the reserve Armored Corps array's qualification level.

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## Key Recommendations



The Minister of Defense should ensure that any scope determination of the reserve array, including the Armored Corps array, is brought to the government's approval before it is carried out. Likewise, every year, the Minister should present to the government the required qualification level of the reserve array, including the Armored Corps array. The National Security Council should ensure that this topic is included in the government's agenda every year so the IDF's level of preparedness for war is brought to the government's attention for consideration in military moves decisions and approving of multi-year plans and their budgeting.



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## Summary

The audit raised that the IDF presented to the government retrospectively the tank order of battle determination and that for about six years, from 2016 to 2022, the ministers of defense did not present to the government the qualification level of the reserve array, including the qualification level of the reserve Armored Corps array.

The Minister of Defense should ensure that the scope of the reserve array is brought to the government's approval, and present every year to the government the qualification level of the reserve array. The National Security Council should ensure this topic is included in the government's agenda.

