



State Comptroller Report | February 2023

Israel Defense Forces

Infrastructures & Living Conditions for Mandatory and Reserve Combatants



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Background

IDF soldiers' living conditions and infrastructures in military camps and outposts are a significant part of treating individual soldiers in the IDF. Proper living conditions and infrastructures are needed to guarantee the effectiveness of training, exercises, and operation employment tasks and appropriately address soldiers' needs. The IDF has set the term "Essential Infrastructures for Soldiers" (EIS), including barracks (including air conditioning), restrooms, showers (including hot water), kitchens, and dining rooms, mainly at three meeting points between the IDF and its combatants: (a) during the training period as soldiers stay in training bases; (b) during the exercise period as soldiers stay in exercise camps; (c) during operation employment as soldiers stay at outposts.



Key Figures

**NIS 676
million**

the IDF planned budget for EIS programs in 2016–2021: NIS 256 million for training bases (Oz LaChayal – "soldiers' might" program) and NIS 420 million for exercise camps ("the Machanot Imunim")

**NIS
492.6
million**

the actual budget for EIS programs in 2016–2021: NIS 202.6 million for training bases (Oz LaChayal program) and NIS 290 million for exercise camps ("the Machanot Imunim")

**29%–
40%**

rate of "partially satisfied" and "highly dissatisfied" with living conditions and infrastructures in exercise camps, according to State Comptroller Office's survey

**5%–
33%**

rate of appropriateness scores of living conditions and infrastructures in exercise camps indicating very bad and mediocre conditions according to IDF's statistics

**31%–
36%**

rate of "partially satisfied" and "highly dissatisfied" with living conditions and infrastructures in outposts, according to the State Comptroller Office's survey

**3%–
12%**

rate of appropriateness scores of living conditions and infrastructures in outposts indicating bad and mediocre conditions according to IDF's statistics

35%


rate of military health audits in 2019–2021 in which fungus, scale, or mold were found in restrooms and showers

25%

rate of combatants who reported on infrastructure malfunction and indicated it was not fixed according to the State Comptroller Office's survey



Audit Actions

 The State Comptroller's Office examined mandatory and reserve combatants' infrastructures and living conditions in August 2021 – April 2022. The audit focused on the infrastructures and living conditions of ground forces combatants. The audit was carried out in the IDF and included its plans to minimize gaps in infrastructures and living conditions in main training bases, exercise camps, and outposts. In January – February 2022, State Comptroller Office's representatives visited five training bases, four exercise camps, and eight outposts across the three military districts.


As part of the audit, the State Comptroller Office conducted a survey amongst 821 male and female combat soldiers (a fifth of the questionnaires were filled in by female combat soldiers) who, in November 2021 – April 2022, took part in operation employment and exercises.


Moreover, a special interim report on the above subject was issued on October 2nd, 2022. The report noted the findings of the State Comptroller Office's visit to the Kfir Brigade exercise camp in Jordan Rift Valley and the Yakir outpost in Samaria on August 4th, 2022. The interim report included findings and recommendations about living conditions, infrastructure, health care, food and water, readiness, equipment, etc. The visit was a "surprise visit." Thus, the relevant IDF officials were notified only several days before them.

The sub-committee of the State Control Committee of the Knesset decided not to submit the full report to the Knesset but rather to publish only short sections of it, for the sake of maintaining state security, under article 17 of the State Comptroller Law, 1958 [consolidated version].

Key Findings





 **Allocating and Implementing Budget to Improve Infrastructures and Living Conditions of Combatants** – the Oz LaChayal and Machanot Imunim programs are intended to improve combatants' infrastructures and living conditions in training bases and exercise camps. The actual budget for the programs was NIS 492.6 million – 27% lower than the planned budget of NIS 676 million, in 2016–2021. As a result, the ground forces did not implement some of the EIS plans in training bases and exercise camps.


 **Normative Foundation for Forming a Situational Assessment of Living Conditions and Infrastructures** – the Technological and Logistics Directorate has not





set a policy for establishing appropriateness scores of living conditions and infrastructures in IDF's bases. In practice, the appropriateness scores of living conditions and infrastructures in training bases, exercise camps, and outposts are not based on pre-defined standards, unified criteria, or a fixed formula but rather on the logistics team's experience and subjective opinion.


 **The Situation in Training Bases** – according to IDF's data, about 19% of the infrastructures' appropriateness scores indicate mediocre and very bad conditions. Furthermore, as part of the State Comptroller Office's representatives' visits to barracks, restrooms, showers, kitchens, and dining rooms at five training bases, dysfunctional or partially functional infrastructures were found in about 37% of the areas examined.

 **The Situation in Exercise Camps** – according to IDF's data, the rate of appropriateness scores indicating mediocre and very bad condition ranges between 5% to 33%, while according to the State Comptroller Office survey, the rate of partially satisfied and dissatisfied participants ranges between 29% to 40%. In addition, the appropriateness scores indicating very good conditions in exercise camps ranges between 40% to 79%, while according to the State Comptroller Office survey, the rate of combatants who are very satisfied with the condition ranges between 18% to 28%.

 **The Situation in Outposts** – according to IDF's data, between 3% to 12% of the appropriateness scores of infrastructures in outposts across the three commands indicate very bad and mediocre condition, while according to the State Comptroller Office survey, between 31% to 36% of the combatants are highly dissatisfied or partially satisfied with the infrastructures in barracks, restrooms, showers and dining rooms in the outposts.

 **Deficiencies Found in Military Health Audits in 2019–2021** – out of all the deficiencies found in kitchens, two main deficiencies stood out – leaks or standing water (54% of audits) and missing floor tiles (37% of audits). Out of all the deficiencies found in barracks, restrooms, and showers, three main deficiencies stood out: lack of windows or window insect screens (36% of audits), fungus, scale, or mold in restrooms and showers (35% of audits), and dysfunctional toilet seats in restrooms (32% of audits). These deficiencies compromise combatants' living conditions and may even damage their health. Thus, for example, leaks and standing water may lead to bacterial development and hazards that might come in contact with food. Moreover, mold and fungus on the walls and ceilings harm the quality of air the combatants' breath and may cause infections and diseases.

 **Combatants' Reports on Infrastructure Malfunctions** – soldiers report infrastructure malfunctions in different ways on different bases, rather than online, in a unified, centralized manner.

 **Infrastructures for Female Combatants** – as of February 2022, no work plans have been developed to optimize infrastructures for female combatants.



Plans Intended to Improve Living Conditions and Infrastructures in 2022–2023 – the IDF plans to proceed with the Oz LaChayal and Machanot Imunim programs in 2022, with a budget of NIS 65 million for each. Furthermore, the IDF has developed three additional programs to improve infrastructures and living conditions of combatants: (A) the Kav HaMaga ("contact line") program to improve the appropriateness of infrastructures in outposts in 2022–2023 with a budget of NIS 42 million; (B) the Mahapecha BaMitbach ("kitchen revolution") program to improve diners' experience upgrading dining rooms' infrastructures in outposts, exercise camps and training bases, in 2022 with a budget of about NIS 37 million; (C) the Tnufa BaGvulot ("border momentum") program to minimize EIS gaps in specific outposts in the central and southern commands, in 2022–2023, with a budget of about NIS 14 million.

Key Recommendations

- 💡 It is recommended that the Technological and Logistics Directorate set a policy for establishing appropriateness scores of infrastructures and living conditions in IDF's bases and define unified criteria for determining the appropriateness scores by the logistics teams in all IDF's bases.
- 💡 Given the condition of the infrastructure in training bases, exercise camps, and outposts and given the gap between the IDF appropriateness scores used in exercise camps and outposts and the combatants' level of satisfaction according to the State Comptroller Office survey, it is recommended that the IDF fixes the dysfunctional or partially dysfunctional infrastructures to provide the combatants with appropriate living conditions.
- 💡 It is recommended that the IDF implements the five programs intended to improve combatants' infrastructures and living conditions.
- 💡 It is recommended that the IDF consider using an app or any other tool to manage soldiers' reports on infrastructure malfunctions online in a unified, centralized manner.
- 💡 The IDF is recommended to improve female combatants' infrastructures and living conditions in different training bases, exercise camps, and outposts.



Pictures Taken in State Comptroller Office Visits



The dysfunctional kitchen at The School for Infantry Corps Professions and Squad Commanders



Dysfunctional shower at The School for Armored Corps



Residence area with no environmental development at an exercise camp in the Golan Heights

The source: pictures taken during visits conducted by representatives of the State Comptroller Office in training bases and exercise camps.



Summary

Proper and respectful living conditions and infrastructure affect the willingness and motivation of mandatory and reserve combatants to serve in the IDF. In addition, infrastructures in barracks, restrooms, showers, dining rooms, and kitchens impact the effectiveness of combatants' training, exercises, and operation employment tasks.

Appropriateness scores determined by the IDF's logistic unit, State Comptroller Office visits, and survey indicate that despite the importance of appropriate infrastructures and living conditions in training bases, exercise camps, and outposts, mandatory and reserve combatants still encounter dysfunctional or partially dysfunctional infrastructures, in barracks, restrooms, showers, dining rooms, and kitchens. It is recommended that the IDF conclude from the situation described in this report and contend with the gaps in infrastructures and living conditions of combatants.

