

# The Ombudsman of Israel in a State of Emergency



A house in Kibbutz Be'eri destroyed in the attack on 7.10.23



A caseworker from the Office of the Ombudsman visits a center for displaced persons

## Visiting displaced persons

The staff of the Office of the Ombudsman visited the centers for displaced persons throughout the country, providing information about the rights of the displaced persons, giving assistance in real time and launching investigations of complaints with the relevant public bodies. The aim of the visits was to ensure that people were not falling between the cracks and that the needs of every individual were being met by the relevant public authorities.



Outreach activity for reserve troops

## Assisting reserve troops

The Ombudsman initiated a program for assisting reserve troops who had been forced to leave everything in order to go and fight in defense of their country. In light of the obstacles faced by this community in their interactions with the public bodies, the staff of the Office of the Ombudsman conducted visits to the centers where battalions of reservists that had returned to Israel from the front were concentrated, offering assistance in the take-up of civilian rights by the soldiers and their families.

## Publication of a special report



The Office of the Ombudsman was the first body in Israel to publish a special report on the emergency situation, which aimed at informing the public authorities in real time of the issues that required urgent attention. The report describes the handling of public complaints received by the Ombudsman during the first six weeks of the emergency situation. The report was presented to the Israeli parliament and all the relevant authorities were summoned to a discussion in the State Audit Affairs Committee of the parliament, where they were required to address the problems disclosed by the report.

## Examples of complaints

Complaints were filed with the Office of the Ombudsman on a number of issues: personal safety; health and mental fortitude; public service; education and transportation; grants and payments. These complaints were investigated swiftly due to their urgency.

- A resident of the town of Lod complained to the Ombudsman about the accumulation of sewage water in the shelter serving several residents. Following the intervention of the Ombudsman and in light of the urgency of the matter, the municipality pumped the sewage water out of the shelter.
- A resident of the town of Beitar Illit called the hotline and complained that in his neighborhood the siren alert in the event of rocket fire was inaudible. The Ombudsman impressed upon the Home Front Command the need to pay immediate attention to the matter and as a result the siren in the neighborhood was fixed.
- A resident of Sderot, a city situated one kilometer from the Gazan border, complained that due to the emergency situation she was unable to obtain a new supply of life-saving medicines for her epileptic son. She had been unable to contact her health fund and did not know what to do. The caseworker contacted the caller's health fund and within 24 hours the medicines were delivered to the caller's house.

**Wishing for a quick release of the hostages,  
and peace and tranquility in our region.**



Kibbutz Kfar Aza in the Gaza Envelope after 7.10.23

## The Ombudsman of Israel in a state of emergency

On the morning of Saturday, 7.10.23, the Jewish Sabbath and festival of Shemini Atzeret, the Hamas terror organization controlling Gaza launched a murderous attack on the communities of southern Israel, while simultaneously firing missiles and rockets over the south and center of the country. In the days following the attack, tens of thousands of people living in the Gaza Envelope were evacuated from their homes. Furthermore, as a result of the outbreak of fighting on the northern front, tens of thousands of residents were also evacuated from their homes in the communities along the northern border.

Following the barbaric massacre and the ensuing outbreak of war, the State of Israel was plunged into a state of emergency and the Ombudsman was at once required to meet the many needs of the civilian population.

## The actions taken by the Ombudsman in the emergency situation

- Onsite visits
- Emergency hotline
- Visiting displaced persons
- Assisting reserve troops
- Publication of a special report

## Key data from the special report - the first six weeks of the emergency situation



**503**

opening hours of the hotline



**1,843**

number of calls received on the hotline



**1,329**

number of inquiries relating to the emergency situation that were opened at the Office of the Ombudsman



**40%**

percentage of inquiries relating to the emergency situation that were handled immediately through the giving of advice and guidance



**43%**

percentage of all inquiries received by the Office of the Ombudsman that were from residents of southern Israel



**67.8%**

percentage of complaints that were rectified out of all the complaints whose investigation was completed



**64**

number of visits to centers for displaced persons, from Tiberias in the North to Eilat in the South



The Ombudsman visits Kibbutz Be'eri in the Gaza Envelope after 7.10.23

## Onsite visits

Two days after the outbreak of the war the Ombudsman, together with staff of the Office of the Ombudsman and the divisions of state audit, began visiting the devastated communities of the Gaza Envelope, towns on the border with Gaza, hospitals, municipalities etc.



A home in Kibbutz Kfar Aza in the Gaza Envelope after 7.10.23

## Emergency hotline

Five days after the outbreak of the war, an emergency hotline was established at the Office of the Ombudsman to provide immediate, professional assistance for the public. The hotline initially operated 24 hours a day, six days a week. The Office of the Ombudsman laid down special guidelines for receiving the calls and compiled a comprehensive document that furnished useful and continually updated information relating to the emergency situation.

The public was also able to contact the hotline via WhatsApp.