



Report of the State Comptroller of Israel |
October 2025

Systemic Issues

Ensuring the State of Israel's Food Security in an Emergency



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Background

"Food Security" refers to a state of affairs whereby all individuals, at all times, have reasonable physical and economic access to an adequate amount of safe and nutritious food that meets their preferences and their dietary and cultural requirements, enabling them to lead active and healthy lives¹. The assurance of a food supply is valid during routine times and is critical in emergency situations, as a consistent food supply is integral to human survival in the initial stages of the crisis. During emergencies, the provision of an adequate and balanced food supply poses a substantial challenge. Israel, characterized as an "island state" due to its limited capacity to depend on neighboring nations, bears the responsibility of ensuring the availability of sufficient food supplies over extended periods².

The supply of food during emergencies may originate from various sources: the maintenance of a national food stockpile to guarantee its uninterrupted provision to the populace, along with the capabilities for importing, producing, and transporting food, as well as fresh agricultural products and locally sourced food items. Ensuring functional continuity throughout the food supply chain³ is essential and is a vital component in securing access to food.

The responsibility for coordinating the supply of diverse food products during emergencies is divided among various governmental entities. The primary entities are the National Emergency Management Authority at the Ministry of Defense (NEMA), which operates as a staff unit under the Minister of Defense, whose objective is to assist the Minister in fulfilling his overarching responsibility for managing the home front during emergencies through the planning, coordination, guidance, direction, and oversight of the entities engaged in readiness and preparation of the civil space for emergency situations; the Ministry of Health, which is tasked with defining the amount and quality of the essential food product basket for emergencies; the Supreme Food Authority at the Ministry of Economy and Industry (the Ministry of Economy), which is responsible for coordinating the supply of both dry and fresh food products, defined by the Ministry of Health as essential food, from the producers, importers or strategic reserves to retail marketing chains and supermarkets; the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (the Ministry of Agriculture), which is responsible for maintaining the supply chain for fresh food products within the economy and for providing raw materials for the food industry.

On the Jewish holiday of Simchat Torah, October 7th 2023, the Hamas terrorist organization launched an assault on the State of Israel, with the bombardment of thousands of rockets and the infiltration of thousands of terrorists into Israel Defense Forces (IDF) bases, urban areas, and communities in the Negev region. The ensuing conflict, referred to as the Swords

1 Definition of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Food Summit Report, Rome, 1996.

2 In accordance with the established reference scenarios.

3 Starting from the stage of importing or producing basic raw materials, through food production, its transfer to chains and supply to consumers, as well as direct consumption of fresh agricultural produce through the import or production of local agricultural produce, its transportation and distribution to consumers.



of Iron War (also, the "war"), is marked by a sustained barrage of rockets aimed at Israeli communities, alongside concerns regarding the potential for a multi-front war of protracted duration, exceeding that of Israel's recent military engagements. The October 7 terrorist attack has had significant impact on the economic landscape of the State of Israel, particularly during the initial months following the attack, and has also impacted the daily lives of the nation's citizens. The damage inflicted on the home front during the conflict necessitates adequate preparation by government entities to ensure the provision of services that support the functional continuity of the economy and mitigate the adverse effects of the war on the populace.



Key Figures

16%

The rate of growth in import-based food supply in 2021 compared to 2011. Compared to a 1.5% increase in the supply of domestically produced food during the same period, indicating an increasing dependence on food imports

-1.3%

The rate of change in agricultural productivity between 2011 and 2021 is the lowest among OECD countries, with the exclusion of Costa Rica

93%

of the grains consumed in Israel in 2022 were imported. In 2020, 97% of the grains consumed in Israel were imported. Israel was ranked 149th out of 169 countries in the grain import dependency ranking in 2020

3 out of 6

major food suppliers are controlled by foreign-owned corporations, without consideration being given to the impact this has on food security and the national security of the State of Israel

Shortage of 3 essential products

The quantity of 3 essential products in the national emergency warehouses under the responsibility of the Ministry of Economy is lower than the quantity required according to the reference scenario. A shortage that ranged, in July 2024, between 12.2% and 56.8% in the various products

About 23%

The proportion of essential food enterprises that are only partially prepared for an emergency in terms of manpower. 12.3% of essential enterprises do not have standard protection

50%–100%

The gap between the required quantity of the various components of animal feed and the quantity required according to the reference scenario

100,000 dunams

The extent of agricultural areas where damage was detected as a result of the Sword of Iron War, as of July 2024– approximately 8.5% of the total agricultural areas in the State of Israel



Audit Actions



From January to October 2024, the Office of the State Comptroller conducted an examination of the preparedness and readiness of various government entities to ensure food supplies during emergency situations. The audit was conducted at the National Emergency Management Authority, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, and the Shipping Authority. Supplementary examinations were carried out at the Ministry of Labor, the Budget Division, and the Chief Economist Division at the Ministry of Finance, as well as at the National Security Council (NSC). Tours were conducted at several essential enterprises, emergency warehouses, and an "Iron Branch"⁴ under the jurisdiction of the Ministries of Economy and Agriculture.

Key Findings



Decentralization of Government Responsibility for Food Security in the State of Israel

– In the State of Israel, the responsibility and authority pertaining to food security are routinely divided among a multitude of entities, including the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Health, and others. In terms of emergency preparedness, the National Emergency Management Agency works in addition to these bodies. Unlike other countries such as Japan, Singapore, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, which have enacted legislation and designated an integrating body to address the issue of food, the domain of food in Israel – which is also a national objective in home front emergency preparedness – lacks regulation and an integrating governmental framework responsible for it, with the authority to ensure its preparedness. Consequently, each government ministry engaged in food-related issues manages independently emergency preparedness in the field within its purview, frequently without coordination with other ministries. In the absence of an integrating authority responsible for home front preparedness with powers to enforce its directives, and without a dedicated body to ensure food security in routine and emergency situations, there is concern that individual preparedness among entities in the field of food security will yield only a partial and uncoordinated response. Consequently, the economy's needs during emergencies will not be adequately met, potentially resulting in inefficient allocation of resources.

⁴ A branch of a marketing chain, which will be able to operate in an emergency, subject to Home Front Command policy.



📌 Absence of a Food Security Strategy – In contrast to numerous countries such as Ireland, Taiwan, the United Arab Emirates, and Switzerland, which have established food policies, prepared plans and taken measures to construct a long-term strategy for food security, and contrary to the recommendation of the Committee on Preparedness of the Food System for Climate Change, the State of Israel and its associated bodies in the food sector – including the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Health – have yet to formulate a strategic plan for food security. Such a plan is imperative given the unique characteristics of the State of Israel, which, being an "island state", is confronted with substantial security and geopolitical threats, high population density, limited agricultural land availability, one of the highest population growth rates globally, and its vulnerable geographical location in terms of climate change.

📌 Formulation of a Strategic Plan for Food Security by the Ministry of Agriculture during the Swords of Iron War – In the key points of the government's work plan for 2022, the Ministry of Agriculture set a goal to develop a concept of food security for the State of Israel, which would be implemented by formulating a policy document in the field of food security by December 2022; however, this objective was not achieved. This goal was reiterated in the government's work plan for 2023, wherein the Ministry of Agriculture laid down "developing the State of Israel's healthy food security concept" among its goals and objectives. To this effect, the Ministry proposed to formulate a food security policy plan for Israel by December 2023. In March 2024, the Ministry of Agriculture announced that the Minister of Agriculture intended to present "in the coming days" a proposal for governmental vote regarding a national food security plan, spearheaded by the Ministry of Agriculture, in collaboration with relevant government ministries, which would be formulated and submitted for governmental approval within 180 days. However, the Ministry failed to meet this deadline too, and the development of the plan remained incomplete even following the onset of the Swords of Iron War.


📌 Shortage of Essential Products Held in the Ministry of Economy's Emergency Stock – According to a joint procedure established by the National Emergency Management Authority and the Ministry of Economy in 2020 (the "Food Booklet"), the provision of food to the population during emergencies should include products overseen by the Ministry of Agriculture – fresh meat, fresh fish, eggs, vegetables, and fruits – alongside prepared and packaged items such as rice, sugar, baby food, and bread, which fall under the jurisdiction of the Food Authority within the Ministry of Economy. The audit found that out of the ten essential products under the aegis of the Ministry of Economy, engagements were not finalized with franchisees with respect to two products, to the extent required by the reference scenario, resulting in an engagements shortfall for said two products of 12.2% and 44%, respectively, as of July 2024. It was further found that the inventory level of another essential product in the warehouses was below the specified amount, with an approximately 15.9% shortage of this item as of July 2024. Ten months subsequent to the scenario update, and in light of the emergency status and the potential for its exacerbation, one would expect the deficiencies in essential products to have been addressed; however, the shortage of these products still exists. Shortages




of essential products are serious, and in times of emergency can adversely affect the functioning of residents and the economy. Rectification of these deficiencies is highly urgent, considering the likelihood of the continuation and possible escalation of the Swords of Iron War.

Formulating the Food Requirements of the Population During an Emergency

- The Ministry of Economy has not determined the sources of supply for all products within its purview, nor the necessary quantities in accordance with population growth rates and per capita recommendations. With the exception of certain products stored in emergency warehouses, the State of Israel depends on operational stockpiles within the economy; however, this stock is not being managed – the required quantities of products necessary for the economy at any given time have not been defined, and the Ministries of Economy and Agriculture do not engage in continuous monitoring of the operational stockpiles available in the market for each product.
- In contravention of the protocols set forth by the National Emergency Management Authority, in practice the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Agriculture have an updated status of the emergency stock in the emergency warehouses only, and they do not have a comprehensive overview of the operational food stockpiles of essential products in the economy, despite the dependence of public supply on this operational stock. The absence of data hinders the identification of discrepancies between the demand for food products and raw materials and their supply in the market, thereby complicating efforts to address these gaps.

 **Limited Geographical Distribution of Essential Products Stored in Emergency Warehouses** – Four out of the ten products designated for emergency warehouses under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Economy are concentrated in a single geographical area, while an additional four products are stored in only two areas. The remainder of the products is distributed across three areas. This means that the geographical allocation of the warehouses is suboptimal, thereby increasing the risk that, in the event of transportation disruptions, the products may either fail to be delivered or may not be delivered consistently to the various geographical regions.

 **Supervision of the Wheat Stockpiles and the Presence of Pests in Wheat Stored in the Emergency Warehouses Under the Purview of the Ministry of Agriculture** – The reports prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture following audits conducted at ten storage sites between January 2023 and August 2024, revealed that with the exception of one facility, which demonstrated a commendable level of cleanliness and adherence to pest control protocols, in all the other audited sites, some of the warehouses that store wheat, failed to adhere to the requirements. Among other things, some of the wheat stored was infested with insects, moths, and pigeon droppings; additional wheat was stored at elevated temperatures, rendering it "moldy";



and some was contaminated with dust. Moreover, while the quantity of wheat in the emergency warehouses satisfies the stipulated requirements for emergencies, the Ministry of Agriculture lacks a comprehensive assessment of the extent and quantity of compromised wheat. Consequently, the Ministry is reliant on a wheat stockpile that is present in the warehouses but is not immediately usable, thus failing to provide a reliable supply source to the public during emergencies. The magnitude of this issue remains indeterminate, exposing a deficiency in the preparedness of the economy for emergency wheat supply.

Shortage of Animal Feed in Emergency Warehouses – Although animal feed serves as sustenance for livestock, which in turn serves as a food source for the residents of the State of Israel, it was found that even prior to the outbreak of the Swords of Iron War, there was a substantial gap of approximately 50% between the available volume of animal feed stockpiles in warehouses and the quantity required per the reference scenario. This discrepancy intensified following the update of the NEMA reference scenario subsequent to the Swords of Iron War, necessitating an increase of 300% in existing quantities to attain the requisite amount. Furthermore, the current stock does not encompass essential components, such as liquid and solid oils and vitamins, which are required for the maintenance of animal health and without which the animal feed is unusable.

Ensuring the Import of Food Products and Raw Materials

- In 2021, the supply of imported food products (4,570 thousand tons), was approximately 16% higher than the supply in 2011 (3,955 thousand tons). In contrast, during the same timeframe, local food production experienced a marginal increase of approximately 1.5% (from 6,038 thousand tons to 6,129 thousand tons). The Ministries of Economy and Agriculture did not undertake a comprehensive risk assessment to evaluate the implications of reliance on food imports, particularly concerning essential products. Such an assessment would have facilitated the identification of critical products for which local production goals should be established, akin to practices in other countries, thereby ensuring availability during emergencies. The Ministry of Agriculture did not assess the supply sources of various products under its purview, nor did it analyze the quantity of supplies arriving from each country, etc.. Furthermore, the Ministries of Economy and Agriculture did not develop action plans or strategies to mitigate risks associated with reliance on foreign countries.
- It was found that Israel exhibits relatively high food independence in the sectors of chicken and turkey, dairy products, potato, vegetable, and fruit crops, with the majority of consumption derived from local production and only a small percentage from imports. Conversely, independence in the areas of legumes, oils and fats, fish, and sugar is comparatively low, resulting in significant reliance on imports for these products. Israel's dependence on grain imports and grain products is markedly greater than that of other countries such as the United States, Greece, Italy, Spain,



and France, with over 97% of grains consumed in Israel being imported. According to data from the Food and Agriculture Organization⁵ (FAO), only 29 countries (17% of the global total), exhibit such a high level of dependence on grain import. Israel ranks 149th out of 169 countries in this regard. Additionally, it was found that wheat imports are predominantly sourced from three countries: Russia, Ukraine, and Romania, some of which are situated in unstable regions. This situation poses a potential risk to the continuity of wheat imports.

📉 Weakening of the Agricultural Sector – The agricultural sector has exhibited a downward trend since the onset of the previous decade. This decline is evident in a reduction in productivity (an average annual decrease of 1.3% from 2011 to 2020), and stagnation in domestic production (a mere 0.96% increase from 2015 to 2021), despite the population growth and rising imports of fresh produce. The weakening of the agricultural sector adversely affects food security in the State of Israel, leading to increased dependence on agricultural imports, which are susceptible to risks.

📉 High Rate of Indirect Support in the Agricultural Sector – From the early 2000s until 2007, the volume of support allocated to the agricultural sector diminished gradually (by approximately 75%, from around \$2.17 billion to approximately \$550 million); there was also a significant reduction in the percentage of indirect support out of the total support. During this period, the financial scope of direct support, which could serve as a key mechanism for enhancing sector efficiency, also decreased. However, since 2008, the volume of support for the agricultural sector has increased, as has the rate of indirect support, which reached 89% of total support for the sector in 2022, in contrast to an average of 44% in OECD countries. The level of direct support during this period has remained low compared to the average levels observed between 2000 and 2007. The initiatives undertaken by the government, beginning in March 2022, to transition towards a reduction in indirect support for the agricultural sector have not been accompanied by an augmentation in direct support, which could have bolstered the profitability of local agricultural production, enhanced efficiency within the local agricultural sector, and improved the competitiveness of this sector relative to imports. Consequently, these measures have resulted in an outcome contrary to the one desired, as evidenced by the acceleration of the existing downward trend in local production over the last two years and the increase in imports. Ultimately, despite the increase in imports, prices for agricultural produce have failed to go down.

📉 Functional Continuity of the Food Industry in Emergencies

- It was found that although Government Resolution 1716 of 1986 and Government Resolution 2017 of 2016 empowered government ministries and various authorities, including NEMA, the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Agriculture, to prepare

⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Since 2000, the organization has been publishing a Suite of Food Security Indicators for 200 countries, including Israel.



the economy for emergencies in their respective areas, such as the food sector, they lack enforcement mechanisms or the capacity to provide adequate incentives. Notwithstanding the observations made in the State Comptroller's reports⁶ and the proposals put forth in the preceding decade for the regulation of emergency preparedness, the relevant sector remains inadequately regulated. In the absence of suitable legal provisions concerning economic preparedness, this domain has yet to be properly regulated. In the absence of appropriate legal regulation concerning emergency preparedness, or, at the very least, the preparation of essential enterprises for emergencies, which would include instruments to ensure adequate readiness, the responsibility for compliance with directives is contingent upon the willingness and capability of the essential enterprises involved to comply with the instructions given them.

- Although government resolutions have authorized ministries to prepare the economy in their areas of responsibility for emergencies, the Office of the State Comptroller's examination revealed that the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Agriculture, which oversee the food sector in emergencies, depend on the operational capabilities of essential enterprises that lack the requisite resources for proper functioning during an emergency. It was also found that certain enterprises designated as essential were approved as such without their possessing the full resources necessary for operating in emergency scenarios. In the absence of a mechanism that compels or incentivizes essential enterprises to fulfill the operational requirements needed for emergency situations, it is impossible to ensure the preparedness of these enterprises, consequently jeopardizing the provision of services or products during emergencies. Moreover, the designation of an enterprise as essential, or as one providing essential services⁷, enables the Ministry of Labor to issue work call-up orders for the enterprise employees during emergencies, mobilize equipment, etc. Without any guarantee that the enterprise will be capable of functioning and delivering outputs during emergencies, this is liable to result in a waste of resources in such situations.


Supervision of Functional Continuity of Essential Enterprises Under the Responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture – Despite the Ministry of Agriculture's responsibility for preparing essential enterprises within the agricultural sector for


6 See, for example, the State Comptroller, Special Audit Report (2021), "Preparation for and Protection from Floods"; and a collection of audit reports on the subject of emergency preparedness and readiness (2015), "National Preparedness for Handling Emergency Events in the Home Front".

7 According to the arrangement in the Emergency Labor Service Law, 1967, the Minister of Labor is authorized to approve by order an "enterprise for the provision of essential services" for the purpose of a special situation in the home front or a civil emergency. An essential service is one of the following: the supply of water, food, electricity, health and hospitalization services, sanitation services, and communication and postal services; a service that must be provided in order to prevent serious harm to the population or to an area in respect of which a special situation in the home front or a civil emergency has been declared; a service that, in the opinion of the Minister, is essential for the survival or care of the population or the cessation of which is liable, under the circumstances, to inflict considerable damage to the economy affecting the entire market.



emergency situations, the Ministry of Agriculture headquarters does not monitor the performance of inspections conducted on these essential enterprises by district authorities. Furthermore, the Ministry lacks an updated and comprehensive overview of the frequency and results of inspections carried out at the district level. Additionally, the Ministry does not possess data concerning the basic inputs required for emergencies in a significant proportion of the essential enterprises it inspects, with approximately 13% to 21% of these enterprises lacking essential elements such as generation capability, water collection systems, emergency preparedness portfolios, and supplier lists. Consequently, the Ministry lacks mapping of the preparedness of essential enterprises at the aggregate level, which impedes its capacity to identify gaps, if any, and root problems related to their emergency preparedness, and its ability to formulate appropriate solutions. Even in instances where inspections of essential enterprises have been performed, significant deficiencies have been identified relating to existing basic inputs.

 **Supervision of Essential Enterprises** – The oversight conducted by designated authorities of essential enterprises in the food sector is deficient. The designated authorities (the Ministry of Labor⁸, Ministry of Economy, and Ministry of Agriculture) do not perform inspections with the frequency required or, when deficiencies are identified, do not insist on their rectification. Inspections of all essential enterprises have not been carried out by said designated authorities, resulting in an incomplete assessment of the situation. Furthermore, NEMA, on its part, has not conducted regular inspections of the designated authorities, leading to a further inadequacy in NEMA's oversight of the designated authorities and a lack of a comprehensive assessment of the readiness of essential enterprises for emergencies. This situation reveals a concerning landscape regarding the preparedness of essential enterprises for emergency conditions. Noncompliance with operational standards required for functional continuity, insufficient provision of necessary inputs, and failure to adhere to manpower regulations, as well as the absence of protected spaces, etc. will prevent the functionality of essential enterprises during emergencies.

 **Preparing the Population for Times of Emergency** – Despite the service goals delineated by the National Emergency Management Agency, according to which the transmission of essential information, awareness-raising and guidance of the public are among the goals for ensuring economic continuity during emergencies and enhance preparedness for such situations, prior to the outbreak of the Swords of Iron War, no instructions or information were disseminated to the public regarding the preparation for potential emergency events and their impact on food availability. Furthermore, it was found that the Ministry of Health had formulated documents in July 2022 containing instructions regarding a "community food basket for emergencies and non-routine situations". However, these documents were not made publicly available, despite the

⁸ It should be noted that the Ministry of Labor is responsible for ensuring the continuity of operations of essential enterprises in terms of manpower, and in this aspect as well, gaps were discovered, whereby the Ministry's supervision and monitoring were incomplete.



significant potential for risks, including security incidents, earthquakes, etc., which are liable to occur with little or no warning. The Ministry of Health did not furnish these instructions to the Home Front Command, and consequently, they were not published by the Home Front Command. The Ministry of Health's updated instructions from April 2024 were also withheld from publication in an effort, according to the Ministry, to avoid inciting public panic. Advance preparation of the public during routine periods for emergency events is essential and can substantially enhance public resilience, augment readiness for emergencies, maintain public order, prevent panic among the populace, and allow for proper and better regulation of food products within marketing chains.



The "Iron Branches" Program – The Office of the State Comptroller commends the initiative of the Ministry of Economy, in collaboration with the National Emergency Management Agency and marketing chains, to establish a national program that includes a network of 555 "iron branches"⁹ designed to provide service even in times of severe conflict, as well as to define the requisite conditions for those branches and conduct audits to ascertain compliance with these conditions.

Key Recommendations



The absence of legislative regulation concerning home front emergency preparedness, along with the lack of an integrating body for emergency management in general, and pertaining to food in particular, underscores the need for the National Security Council, working in collaboration with the National Emergency Management Agency, to evaluate the establishment of an integrating body endowed with authority in the domain of food during emergencies, and subsequently present its findings to the government for decision-making. It is recommended that this body have a strategic vision, enabling it to formulate a long-term policy for food emergency preparedness and the authority to execute it.







It is advisable that the Ministry of Agriculture, in conjunction with relevant entities – including the National Security Council, the National Emergency Management Agency, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Finance – along with consultations with the Home Front Command, finalize the national food security plan and pursue its approval from the government. The plan should be predicated on a thorough risk analysis and should incorporate the establishment of long-term objectives. Among other components, the plan should delineate essential products that will form the basis of the food security concept, an optimal combination of local production and imports, a risk analysis regarding supply, and action plans addressing the various fields of agriculture, the food industry, and emergency food stockpiles. Furthermore, when designating an entity responsible for the execution of the plan, it is recommended that budgets and financing

9 A branch of a marketing chain, which will be able to operate in an emergency, subject to Home Front Command policy.

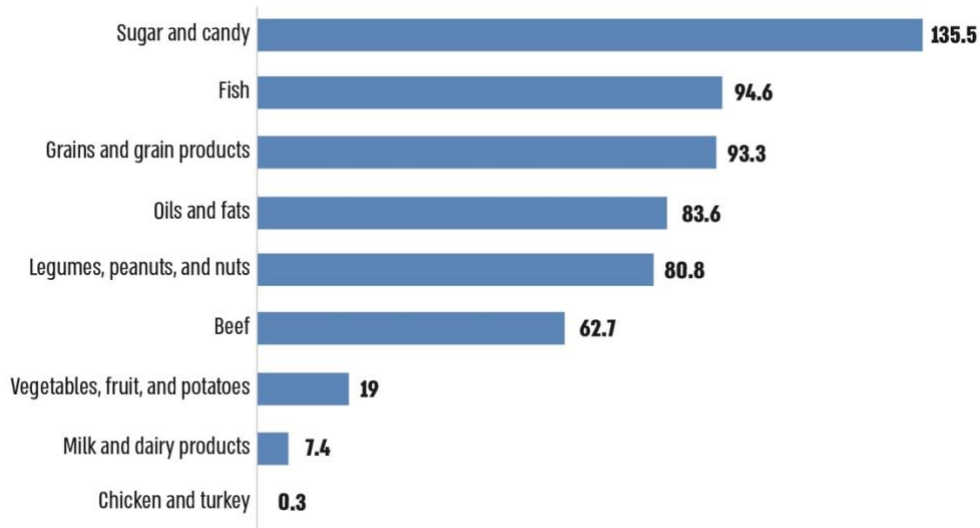


sources be established, alongside performance indicators for assessing compliance with and the effectiveness of the plan.

-  The Ministry of Economy must promptly address the deficiencies in the emergency stockpiles. The Ministry of Agriculture is required to ensure that wheat is stored in compliance with quality standards at all times and to take immediate measures to enhance its quality or replace it as necessary. It is also advisable for the Ministry of Agriculture to expedite the replenishment of animal feed stockpiles in the warehouses, on all of its components.
-  It is recommended that the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Economy assess, within the framework of the strategic food security plan, the risks related to the State of Israel's significant reliance on imports, particularly for products deemed essential by the Ministry of Health, and to develop strategies to mitigate these risks and their potential impacts.
-  The Ministry of Agriculture, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, must delineate methods to bolster the agricultural sector's standing as part of a food security strategy, and sustain agriculture as a strategic sector essential for the State of Israel's food security, with its multiple benefits in protecting state lands and securing borders, as well as aesthetic, environmental and other advantages. It is recommended that the Ministry of Agriculture establish objectives for the agricultural sector, and accordingly, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, develop a strategy aimed at reducing distortions, enhancing efficiency within the sector, and preserving its strategic importance in maintaining the nation's resilience during both emergency and routine times.
-  The designated authorities within the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Agriculture are required to collaborate with the National Emergency Management Agency and the Ministry of Labor to develop a comprehensive, detailed, and current assessment of the preparedness of essential enterprises for emergency situations. This assessment should identify the deficiencies in their preparedness and initiate actions to address these gaps utilizing the available resources. It is advisable for the designated authorities, in conjunction with the enterprises, to devise plans for mitigating the identified deficiencies in accordance with the procedures established by the National Emergency Management Agency, ensuring the implementation of these plans. In light of existing obstacles arising from lack of authority, the absence of enforcement mechanisms or sufficient incentives, as well as budgetary and other limitations, the designated authorities should collaborate with the National Security Council and the Ministry of Finance to develop solutions, including through legislative measures, to ensure the operation of these enterprises during emergencies.



The State of Israel's Dependency Ratio on Imports of Major Food Products, 2022



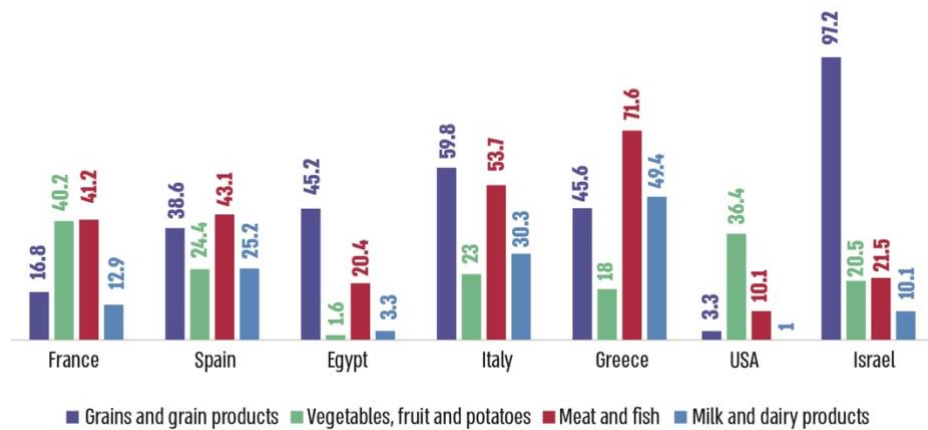
According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), press release, the Food Supply Balance for 2022, March 2024, processed by the Office of the State Comptroller.

* The index delineates the ratio between the imported quantity of a particular product and the total supply of that product (calculated as the quantity produced domestically plus the imported quantity, minus the quantity exported). An import dependence index exceeding 100% signifies that exports are contingent upon imports. This situation typically arises when a specific component of the export commodity is sourced from imports. For instance, the export of jams is reliant on the import of raw sugar utilized in their production.

** A distinction has been made between potatoes and vegetables due to variations in nutritional values.



Import Dependency Ratio for Selected Products in Israel and Selected Countries, 2020



According to CBS data, Food Supply Balance 1950–2021, May 2023, processed by the Office of the State Comptroller.

- * The index describes the ratio between the imported quantity of a particular product and the total supply of that product (the quantity produced in the country and the imported quantity, minus the exported quantity).



Summary

Ensuring a long-term food supply during both routine and emergency situations necessitates early preparation and planning through the formulation of a food management strategy and the implementation of actions prior to the emergence of the reference scenario. The current audit revealed that the Israeli government lacks sufficient preparedness to sustain functional continuity in food supply during emergencies. It was found that Israel does not possess an integrating governmental framework responsible for the State of Israel's emergency preparedness, which encompasses overall authority and responsibility for the matter. Furthermore, there is no integrating entity that sees the overall picture pertaining to food, in both routine times and emergencies. Additionally, the State of Israel lacks a long-term strategy for food security. In the absence of an integrating body and long-term planning, in practice each government ministry responsible for aspects of food security manages its designated area in both routine and emergency contexts based on individual vision and practices concerning emergency preparedness. Consequently, there are deficiencies in the inventory of certain products stored in emergency warehouses, there is inadequate supervision of essential food production enterprises, and insufficient preparedness of these enterprises for emergency situations. The Ministries of Economy and Agriculture are bereft of the necessary enforcement mechanisms or incentives to ensure the rectification of existing gaps and lack a comprehensive overview of the preparedness of food enterprises for emergencies, which would enable the formulation of an actionable plan to address these deficiencies. The Israeli agricultural sector, which serves as the foundation for food security, also remains stagnant, with local production exhibiting a downward trend, partially attributable to governmental policies that incentivize the sector through indirect support, which creates distortions.

It is recommended that, pending the formulation of legislative measures pertaining to home front emergency preparedness, the National Security Council, NEMA, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Finance collaborate to immediately integrate and strategize Israel's food policy for both routine and emergency contexts, and undertake necessary actions to secure regular food supplies during emergencies, prepare various entities within the food sector for emergencies, identify existing gaps and implement corrective measures to address them.

