



State Comptroller of Israel | Local Government  
Audit Report | July 2025

Conduct During Emergencies and the  
Iron Swords War

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# **The Handling of Public Inquiries and Complaints by Local Authorities in Routine Times and During the Iron Swords War**









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## Background

The actions of local authorities exert a considerable influence on residents, local businesses, visitors, and the environment. Local authorities play a pivotal role in the provision of both local and state services. Deficiencies in their service delivery, including in areas such as education, welfare, and health, along with inadequate budget management and conduct inconsistent with principles of good governance, can profoundly affect the daily lives of residents and the prospects of significant populations within society.

The effectiveness of a local authority's service is further evaluated by its capacity to respond to inquiries and complaints from those requiring its assistance, in both routine and emergency times. An inquiry is defined as a request for information or assistance, typically not necessitating a formal inquiry or investigation process. Conversely, a complaint is characterized as an allegation regarding an act or omission by the organization or its representatives, involving an element of dispute, appeal, or potential litigation. A complaint may pertain to omissions, acts conducted in contravention of legal power, breaches of organizational obligations, procedural violations, or instances of conduct in contravention of good governance. Additionally, complaints may involve actions deemed excessively punitive or manifestly unjust. During emergencies, the local authority is recognized as the primary entity maintaining direct and continuous engagement with residents within its jurisdiction, bearing the responsibility to ensure the ongoing provision of the majority of essential needs and services.





Key Figures

9 local authorities

Of the 259 local authorities (approximately 3.5%) have not appointed a public complaints officer as required by law<sup>1</sup> as of December 2024

27 local authorities

Of the 250 authorities that appointed a public complaints officer (about 10.8%) did not publish his details as required by law

57 local authorities

Of the 246 local authorities (approximately 23.2%) for which a detailed audit report was prepared by the Ministry of Interior for 2023, did not establish local authority service centers

58.5% of the authorities in Arab society

48 out of 82 authorities in Arab society do not have a local authority service center, while in Jewish authorities the existence of a local authority service center is more common – 94.1% (143 out of 152 authorities)

76 local authorities

Of the 189 local authorities that established a local authority service center (approximately 40.2%) did not publish a service charter

63 local authorities

Of the 189 local authorities that have established a local authority service center (approximately 33.3%) do not measure the waiting times for a response to a telephone call to the service center

64 local authorities

Of the 189 local authorities that established a local authority service center (approximately 33.9%) did not install a customer relationship management (CRM) system

59 local authorities

Of the 256 local authorities (about 23%) had no emergency service center after the outbreak of the Iron Swords War

1 The Local Authorities (Public Complaints Officer) Law, 2008.





About  
**21.4%**

The increase in the number of complaints received by the **Herzliya** Municipality in 2022–2023

About  
**50%**

The increase in the number of complaints received by the **Rahat** Municipality in 2022–2023

About  
**48.1%**

The decrease in the number of complaints received in the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council in 2023 compared to 2021. It should be noted that this figure is affected by the evacuation of residents at the beginning of the Iron Swords War

The **Rekhasim** Local Council does not have data regarding the number of complaints in the years 2021–2023

## Audit Actions

From August 2024 to January 2025, the Office of the State Comptroller undertook an examination of the processes involved in responding to public inquiries and complaints within local authorities, both during normal operations and during the Iron Swords War. The examination encompassed the following subjects: the activities of the Public Complaints Officer in local authorities and the handling of resident complaints; the functioning of the Ministry of Interior concerning the implementation of the Local Authorities (Public Complaints Officer) Law, 2008; the operation of the local authority service center during routine and emergency situations, and its efficacy in addressing residents' inquiries. A comprehensive audit was performed in four local authorities: the municipalities of **Herzliya** and **Rahat**, the **Rekhasim** Local Council, and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council (the local authorities examined in depth). Supplementary inspections were conducted at the Ministry of Interior and the Federation of Local Authorities in Israel. As part of the comprehensive audit, the audit team employed the "mystery shopper" method in which inquiries were made in a standardized format to the service centers managed by the aforementioned local authorities. The inspections were conducted via telephone, WhatsApp, and email, and additional nationwide inspections were carried out regarding the dissemination of information pertaining to public complaints officers. In the month following the onset of the Iron Swords War, and prior to the commencement of this audit, a review was undertaken to assess the availability of emergency service centers in local authorities across the country, the findings of which are detailed in this report. Furthermore, as part of the audit, data analysis was conducted utilizing a geographic information system (GIS) to present public inquiries on selected issues within the **Herzliya** Municipality and the **Rekhasim** Local Council.





## Key Findings



**Operation of an Emergency Service Center Following the Outbreak of the Iron Swords War** – An examination conducted in October–November 2023, subsequent to the outbreak of the Iron Swords War, revealed that 59 out of 256 local authorities (23%) lacked an emergency service center, while 12 local authorities (5%) provided only an online option for emergency contact. The **Rahat** Municipality and the **Rekhasim** Local Council do not have in place established procedures for the service center's operation during emergencies and the effects of emergency events on their functions. Furthermore, the **Rekhasim** Local Council operated an emergency service center that was not affiliated with the Council, and prior to the onset of the Iron Swords War in 2023, the **Rekhasim** Local Council had not conducted emergency drills involving the service center.



**Distinction Between Complaints and Inquiries** – As previously noted, an inquiry pertains to a request for information or assistance, whereas a complaint constitutes an assertion regarding an action or failure by the organization or its representatives. Those responsible for handling public complaints within local authorities may receive inquiries for which the most effective investigative channel is through the authority's service center. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Interior, serving as the regulatory body for local governance, has not provided explicit definitions in its guidelines for inquiries and complaints, nor has it clarified the distinction between the two. The development of guidelines on this matter could facilitate the accurate identification of the nature of inquiries or complaints, thereby enabling appropriate responses, enhancing public trust in the authority by informing residents in advance of how their inquiries will be categorized and addressed, and contributing to the optimization of work processes within the authority through systematic data management in dedicated information systems, ultimately reducing processing times.



**The Public Complaints Officer** – Legislation mandates that the local authority's council shall designate the local authority's auditor as the public complaints officer. Furthermore, it permits the appointment of another senior employee of the authority to this position for special justifiable reasons.

- **Job Description of the Public Complaints Officer** – Despite the legislative requirement for the appointment of a Public Complaints Officer (auditor, or in special circumstances, another senior employee), the Ministry of Interior has failed





to publish the Officer's job description within the Job Descriptions Compendium<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, there exists ambiguity regarding the responsibilities and activities incumbent upon the Officer, the requisite personal and interpersonal qualities and specialized skills, as well as the necessary professional coursework and training for the role.

- **Professional Entity for Guiding the Activities of the Officers and Their Training** – Concerns have been raised regarding the Ministry of Interior's failure to function as a professional guiding entity that supports public complaints officers within local authorities. Furthermore, during the years 2022 to 2024, the Federation of Local Authorities did not facilitate specialized training for public complaints officers.
- **Appointment of a Public Complaints Officer** – In nine local authorities (approximately 3.5% of all local authorities) the authority's council did not render an explicit decision, as mandated by law, regarding the appointment of a public complaints officer. Although the Ministry of Interior examined the appointment of public complaints officers in the detailed audit reports conducted between 2011 and 2023, it did not compel the nine local authorities that failed to appoint such officers to rectify this omission. In the **Rekhasim** Local Council and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council, the authority's auditor is addressing public complaints without a lawful decision from the authority's council appointing him to this position. Notably, this issue was not referenced in the detailed reports prepared by the Ministry of Interior in 2023 concerning both councils.
- **Publication of the Details of the Public Complaints Officer** – Among the 250 local authorities that have appointed a public complaints officer, 27 local authorities, or approximately 10.8%, including the **Rekhasim** Local Council, have not published the Officer's details on their official websites, in contravention of legal requirements.
- **Reports of the Public Complaints Officer – Discussion in the Authority's Council and the Reports' Structure** – The public complaints officers in the **Herzliya** and **Rahat** Municipalities and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council prepared annual reports on public complaints for the years 2021 to 2023. Nevertheless, despite the requirement that the local authority's council discuss the Officer's reports, it was identified that the Public Complaints Officer in the **Herzliya** Municipality did not present the reports for these years to the council; instead, they were submitted solely to the mayor and the CEO, resulting in the council not discussing them. The Public Complaints Officer in the **Rekhasim** Local Council did not prepare a report detailing the actions taken to address public complaints during

<sup>2</sup> In February 2014, the Director General of the Ministry of Interior issued Circular 1/2014. This circular pertains to the Job Descriptions Compendium; the Compendium encompasses 226 distinct positions within local government. Each description delineates the complete spectrum of tasks and activities pertinent to the area of responsibility of the position holder, in addition to the requisite education, work experience, professional qualifications, and personal and interpersonal attributes necessary for effective fulfillment of the position.





the years 2021 to 2023, precluding any discussions in the council. The Officer in the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council omitted information from the reports for the years 2021 to 2023 regarding the number of justified and unjustified complaints, providing only the number of complaints that were handled. It was also observed that the Ministry of Interior had not established guidelines concerning the essential components and data that must be included in the annual reports, as well as the extent of information and detail that should be presented therein. The absence of such guidelines is particularly notable given the significant discrepancies in the structure of the annual reports submitted by the public complaints officers in the local authorities examined in depth<sup>3</sup>, as well as the variation in the scope and depth of the data and the information presented.

- **Addressing Systemic Issues Arising from Complaint Investigations** – It was noted that the **Rahat** Municipality, the **Rekhasim** Local Council, and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council lack regular work processes or mechanisms to evaluate whether the investigation of public complaints in specific areas may indicate a systemic issue necessitating examination for potential solutions.
- **Information System for Managing Public Complaints** – It was discovered that the **Rahat** Municipality, the **Rekhasim** Local Council, and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council lack an information system that facilitates the documentation and management of the handling of complaints received from residents. The absence of such a system exposes the authority to the risk of information loss and hinders the monitoring of the status of handling and adherence to timelines associated with complaints. In the **Rahat** Municipality, complaints are centralized in an Excel file; in the **Rekhasim** Local Council, centralized documentation of complaints does not exist; and in the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council, complaints are managed using folders on the public complaints officer's computer.
- **Establishing Milestones and Timelines for Handling Complaints** – It was observed that the **Herzliya** Municipality has established a timeline for handling complaints, entailing an initial response to the complainant and a transfer for examination within three working days and the completion of complaint handling and provision of a response within 90 days, with the possibility of extending the handling time up to 365 days from its receipt. However, the Municipality had not incorporated the schedule into the customer relationship management information system, leading to manual monitoring of milestone achievement. The **Rahat** Municipality did not establish maximum timelines for handling complaints in accordance with the milestones set; similarly, the **Rekhasim** Local Council and the

3 For example, some of the local authorities examined presented the details of the process for investigating a complaint and some did not; some authorities presented details and a description of the handling of all complaints and some only of selected complaints; some authorities presented the change in the number of complaints annually and some did not.





**Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council did not establish milestones and timelines for handling public complaints.

- **Submission of Complaints via an Online Form on the Authority's Website** – Among the four local authorities examined in depth, only the **Rekhasim** Local Council does not allow for the submission of complaints via an online form. Additionally, it was found that the online form for complaints on the **Rahat** Municipality's website is available only in Hebrew and is not accessible in Arabic<sup>4</sup>.

### **The Local Authority Service Center**

- **Existence of a Local Authority Service Center and its Publication** – In 57 (approximately 23.2%) of the 246 local authorities for which a detailed audit report was prepared by the Ministry of Interior for 2023, no service center was established. In Arab municipalities, approximately 58.5% (48 out of 82) of the local authorities do not have a local authority service center.
- **Work Procedure for the Operation of the Local Authority Service Center** – It has been noted that the **Rahat** Municipality, the **Rekhasim** Local Council, and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council have not developed procedures for addressing residents' inquiries with agencies outside the local authority. The **Rahat** Municipality does not have procedures pertaining to interactions between the agencies within local authority units addressing residents' inquiries. Furthermore, the **Rahat** Municipality, the **Rekhasim** Local Council, and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council lack established procedures for operating the service center's devices and systems.
- **Timelines for Responding to Resident Inquiries to the Service Center (SLA) and Compliance Therewith** – The **Rekhasim** Local Council has set a Service Level Agreement (SLA), however, it is not integrated into the information system and no measures have been taken to ensure compliance, as the Council contends that the service center established standard timelines without the involvement of the council departments. Consequently, they are not obligated to adhere to them. In the **Herzliya** Municipality, approximately 17% of inquiries received from January 2022 to September 2024 did not conform to the standard timelines established by the Municipality, while in the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council, over a quarter (approximately 26%) of inquiries received at the service center during the same timeframe failed to meet the specified standard timelines.
- **Reports to the Local Authority Management** – The **Herzliya** Municipality service center has not submitted periodic reports to the authority's management or to department managers. Although the **Rahat** Municipality service center provides the mayor with a monthly breakdown of inquiries received, the report lacks a topic-specific breakdown. During the **Rahat** Municipality Council meeting in August 2024,

4 Rahat is a city whose population is predominantly Arabic speaking





a presentation was made regarding the breakdown of inquiries received in 2023 and the handling completion rate, but no comparative analysis was provided relative to a previous period. The **Rekhasim** Local Council service center has submitted monthly reports solely to the authority's management and has not provided quarterly and annual reports to management and division and department managers as mandated by the service center management manual. The **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council prepared a summary for 2022 detailing the volume of inquiries by locality and topic in comparison to previous years; however, it lacks documentation indicating a discussion of this summary, and monthly reports were not issued to management and division and department managers. Neither the **Rahat** Municipality nor the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council have established mechanisms that enable the utilization of data from public inquiries in budget planning processes and the formulation of development plans.

- **Information Systems for Managing the Local Authority's Service Center –** According to detailed reports from local authorities for 2023, 64 out of 189 authorities that instituted service centers (33.9%) have not installed Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems. The administration of both the **Rahat** Municipality and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council does not have a dashboard that provides real-time status updates on inquiries.
- **Unresolved (Open) Inquiries –** In the **Rahat** Municipality, the proportion of unresolved inquiries rose from approximately 10% of total inquiries in 2022 to roughly 15.3% in 2023, reflecting an increase in their total number (from 509 to 560). In the **Herzliya** Municipality, the rate of unresolved inquiries rose from approximately 0.06% (100 inquiries) in 2022 to roughly 0.3% (502 inquiries) in 2023; in the **Rekhasim** Local Council, unresolved inquiries increased from approximately 0.1% (3 inquiries) in 2022 to approximately 0.4% (13 inquiries) in 2023, while in the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council, their proportion decreased from approximately 0.7% (43 inquiries) to approximately 0.4% (26 inquiries) in 2023. The relatively high rate of unresolved inquiries in the **Rahat** Municipality may suggest deficiencies in the handling of resident inquiries, which could exacerbate unaddressed issues pertaining to environmental and infrastructure hazards, etc.
- **Use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for Analyzing Public Inquiries –** The inquiry management systems at the **Rahat** Municipality, the **Rekhasim** Local Council, and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council are not integrated with a GIS, thus limiting the capability to analyze inquiries through heat maps<sup>5</sup>. In contrast, the **Herzliya** Municipality allows for inquiries to be visualized on a GIS map; however, the Municipality does not routinely employ this system for analysis of inquiries.

5 Displaying the places for which inquiries were received on a map in color, highlighting areas for which there is a high concentration of inquiries.



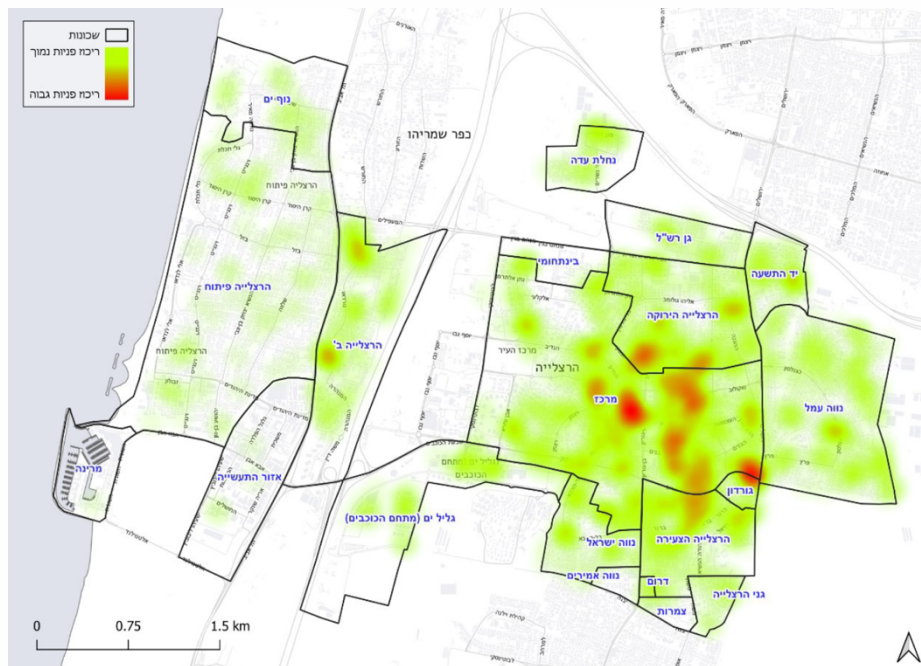


- **Analysis of Public Inquiries in the Geographic Information System** – The audit team conducted an analysis of inquiries in both the **Herzliya** Municipality and the **Rekhasim** Local Council, utilizing a geographic information system. This analysis, in conjunction with photographic evidence collected within these authorities, revealed specific areas characterized by a persistent accumulation of inquiries regarding particular issues (such as overcrowding). Moreover, certain regions in the **Herzliya** Municipality exhibited a consistently high concentration of deviations from established standard timelines for handling inquiries throughout the examined period. The findings suggested a correlation between the aggregation of calls depicted in the heat maps and identified deficiencies in maintenance, cleanliness, and urban aesthetics captured in field photographs. This indicates that areas reporting a high volume of calls over time may harbor ongoing deficiencies. The findings underscore the importance of monitoring call concentrations to identify systemic issues and develop effective remedial strategies; however, it was determined that the authorities do not utilize geographic information systems for inquiry analysis.





**A Summary Heat Map of Inquiries Regarding Physical Hazards Related to Trash Cans Received at the Herzliya Municipality Service Center and Found to Have Exceeded the Standard Handling Timelines for the Inquiry, January 2022 – September 2024, and Photos of Broken Trash Cans in the Downtown Neighborhood of Herzliya**

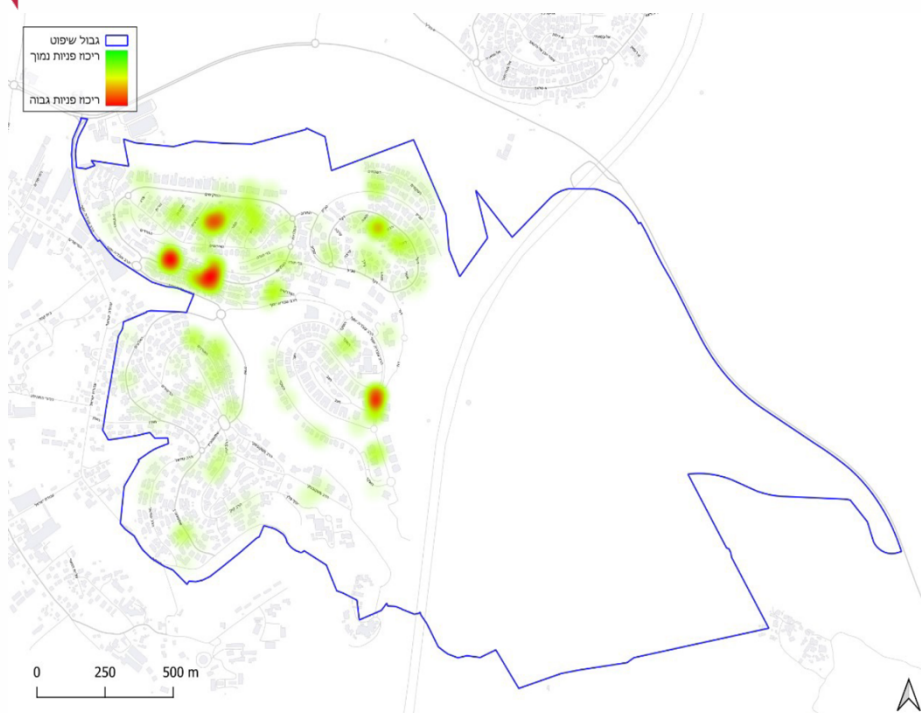


Map source: Survey of Israel background map and neighborhood layer, based on data from the **Herzliya** Municipality, processed by the Office of the State Comptroller.

Right: 55 Sokolov Street, Herzliya; Left: 15 Hanit Street, Herzliya.



### A Summary Heat Map of All Inquiries Received at the Rekhasim Local Council's Service Center Regarding Waste Removal, January 2022 – September 2024, and Photos of Overflowing Trash Cans on Kalaniot Street in Rekhasim



Map source: Survey of Israel background map and a layer of jurisdictional boundaries of the Ministry of Interior, based on data from the **Rekhasim** Local Council, processed by the Office of the State Comptroller.

Right: 23 Kalaniot Street, Rekhasim; Left: 17 Kalaniot Street, Rekhasim.

Photos: The audit team, March 2025.





- **Telephone System** – The **Rahat** Municipality, **Rekhasim** Local Council, and **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council lack a telephone system that facilitates the monitoring of calls received at the authority's service center. It is pertinent to note that the **Rekhasim** Local Council employs an external service center that provides response 24/7, functioning concurrently with the Council's internal service center, which is equipped with a telephone system that enables the monitoring of incoming and answered calls. Furthermore, the call response rate in the **Rekhasim** Local Council (77% – 1,520 calls) is significantly lower than that of the **Herzliya** Municipality (91% – 155,228 calls). It is essential to highlight that 15,346 calls went unanswered in the **Herzliya** Municipality, which constitutes 9% of total incoming calls; nevertheless, this represents a substantial volume of unanswered calls.
- **Measuring Satisfaction with the Service Center's Operation** – An evaluation revealed that the **Herzliya** and **Rahat** Municipalities, along with the **Rekhasim** Local Council, did not conduct a comprehensive survey to assess residents' satisfaction with the services rendered by the service center. Additionally, it was determined that these entities do not solicit feedback from individuals contacting the service center upon completion of their inquiries to gauge satisfaction levels regarding their inquiries' handling. According to the findings of a satisfaction survey executed by the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council subsequent to the processing of a resident's service center inquiry, approximately one third (33.8%) of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the handling of their inquiry. This figure derives from survey participants, constituting only about 3.2% of total service center inquiries (542 respondents out of 16,892 inquiries received from January 2022 to September 2024).
- **"Mystery Shopper" Examination at the Authorities' Service Centers** – Within the **Herzliya** Municipality, a mystery shopper examination was carried out, albeit not on a consistent basis. In the **Rahat** Municipality, the service center manager and other employees of the authority initiated phone calls to evaluate the service center's service, though these calls were not recorded. Conversely, the **Rekhasim** Local Council and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council did not perform a mystery shopper examination at the local authority's service center.
- A telephone mystery shopper examination carried out by employees of the Office of the State Comptroller indicates that the most rapid response time (10.1 seconds) was observed in the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council, whereas the slowest response was noted in the **Herzliya** Municipality (44 seconds). The representatives from the four authorities examined in-depth did not introduce themselves, with the exception of a single phone call in the **Herzliya** Municipality. The **Rekhasim** Local Council service center successfully addressed four out of five calls, while the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council service center managed to respond to only three out of five calls, with the remaining two calls going unanswered and lacking the option to leave a message. In an email-based mystery shopper examination conducted by the audit team, the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council service center did not respond by the





end of January 2025 to two inquiries dispatched in December 2024 and January 2025. At the same time, the **Herzliya** Municipality service center provided a response after four hours to only one of the two inquiries sent to it. In the **Rekhasim** Local Council, the representative who replied to the email did not identify themselves by name or position; the response to one inquiry was received after six minutes, and the second inquiry was addressed approximately two days later. In a mystery shopper examination executed by the audit team via WhatsApp, the **Herzliya** Municipality provided a human response on one occasion two minutes subsequent to the automatic reply, and on another occasion after eleven minutes; in contrast, both attempts at the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council yielded a response after one minute. It was also noted that the representative of the **Herzliya** Municipality identified themselves by name in response to each of the two inquiries, while the representative of the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council did not identify themselves by name in response to the two inquiries directed to the Council's service center.

- **Addressing Inappropriate Conduct and Repeated Inquiries** – Within the municipalities of **Herzliya** and **Rahat**, as well as the **Rekhasim** Local Council and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council, there exist no established procedures instructing service center personnel on how to handle residents making repeated calls or who display inappropriate conduct towards authority employees during phone interactions. Additionally, it was determined that the service center management manual issued by the Ministry of Interior failed to provide guidance to local authorities regarding the appropriate courses of action in such situations, with the sole exception of recommending the development of conversation scripts.
- **Monitoring the Service Center Activity** – In three of the four local authorities examined in depth – the **Rahat** Municipality, the **Rekhasim** Local Council, and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council – there is a lack of controls regarding the quality of service rendered by the service center, as well as a lack of oversight of operations as stipulated by the service center management manual.



**Reinforcement of the Service Center during the Iron Swords War** – The municipalities of **Herzliya** and **Rahat**, along with the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council, augmented the service center at the onset of the Iron Swords War with additional personnel from the authority, including social workers.

**Addressing Systemic Issues Arising from the Investigation of Complaints** – The **Herzliya** Municipality instituted a mechanism for the identification and management of systemic problems stemming from inquiries and complaints lodged by the public.





**Monitoring of Service Center Operations** – The **Herzliya** Municipality undertakes audits to assess the quality of service provided by the service center and the performance of the service center operators.

**Response Timelines for Resident Inquiries (SLA)** – The municipalities of **Herzliya** and **Rahat**, along with the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council, established standard response times for resident inquiries within the service center's information system.

**Emergency Protocols for Service Centers in the Local Authorities Examined** – The **Herzliya** Municipality and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council developed a procedure governing the operation and function of the authority's service center during emergencies.

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## Key Recommendations



The Office of the State Comptroller recommends that the Ministry of Interior assess methods to ensure the establishment of emergency service centers across all local authorities in Israel during emergencies. It is imperative that all local authorities either establish dedicated emergency service centers or enhance existing ones to adequately prepare for emergencies, facilitating immediate human response rather than relying solely on online communication options. Moreover, it is advisable for the **Rahat** Municipality and the **Rekhasim** Local Council to formulate a procedural framework for service center operation during emergencies. This framework should delineate the resources necessary for service center operation in various emergency scenarios, including natural disasters, warfare, earthquakes, fires, serious accidents, and hazardous materials incidents. Additionally, it should specify the personnel responsible for staffing the service center during emergencies and detail the integration of the service center with relevant departments within the authority. Furthermore, it is recommended that the **Rekhasim** Local Council conduct emergency drills addressing various issues that incorporate the functioning of the local authority's service center, thereby enhancing its efficacy in diverse emergency contexts, not limited to wartime scenarios.



It is suggested that the Ministry of Interior develop guidelines for local authorities distinguishing between complaints and inquiries, incorporating clear definitions to assist authorities in identifying and characterizing the nature of submitted requests. Additionally, the Ministry is urged to include in the Job Descriptions Compendium a comprehensive definition of the role of the Public Complaints Officer. This definition should encompass the Officer's responsibilities and required qualifications. It is further recommended that the Ministry of Interior, in collaboration with the Federation of Local Authorities, organize specialized training sessions for public complaints officers to support them in fulfilling their obligations. Lastly, the Ministry of Interior should act as a





professional guide for public complaints officers within local authorities, offering necessary support in their professional capacities.



The Ministry of Interior should exercise its authority to ensure that each local authority appoints a public complaints officer. In the event of non-compliance, the Ministry must issue an order requiring the appointment of a public complaints officer within a specified timeframe and designate a public complaints officer for any local authority that fails to act accordingly. The **Rekhasim** Local Council and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council are required to appoint a public complaints officer through a council resolution, in compliance with legal mandates. Furthermore, all local authorities that have not published the details of their public complaints officer, including the **Rekhasim** Local Council, must disseminate this information on their websites, including contact methods and procedures for submitting complaints.



The Public Complaints Officer in the **Rekhasim** Local Council is mandated to prepare an annual report regarding his activities and submit it to the authority's council as stipulated by law. The council is also required to discuss this report during its meetings and make it available for public review. Additionally, the Public Complaints Officer in the **Herzliya** Municipality is obligated to submit the annual report for council discussion, concurrently providing it to the mayor and the CEO of the municipality, which must also be reviewed in accordance with legal requirements. It is advisable for the Officer in the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council to include in the annual reports the number of justified and unjustified complaints. Given the significant variation in the format and content of annual reports submitted by public complaints officers, the Office of the State Comptroller recommends that the Ministry of Interior contemplate the establishment of guidelines for these officers concerning the structure and requisite information to be incorporated in the annual reports.



It is recommended that the **Rahat** Municipality, the **Rekhasim** Local Council, and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council take steps to establish a mechanism for identifying systemic issues stemming from complaints received by the Public Complaints Officer, appoint a designated individual responsible for their resolution, and conduct periodic monitoring of their handling. Furthermore, it is advisable for these entities to implement an information system to effectively manage the public complaints process.



It is recommended that the **Herzliya** Municipality incorporate the timelines for addressing public complaints within the information system and establish automated oversight to ensure compliance. The **Rahat** Municipality should define maximum timelines for key milestones in the processing and resolution of complaints. It is also suggested that the **Rekhasim** Local Council and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council establish specific milestones and a timeline for the handling of complaints. In light of the findings from the local authorities examined, it is further recommended that the Ministry of Interior determine appropriate handling durations for public complaints based on their complexity, with timelines that reflect the milestones in the complaint resolution process.





It is advisable that the **Rekhasim** Local Council enable the submission of complaints through an online platform. Furthermore, it is advisable that the **Rahat** Municipality provide the online form on its website in Arabic, ensuring that the forms encompass all legally mandated details.



It is recommended that local authorities lacking a service center establish one to enhance services for their residents. Additionally, it is suggested that the Ministry of Interior assess the establishment of a service center in those authorities identified in the audit as lacking such a service.



It is recommended that the **Rahat** Municipality and the **Rekhasim** Local Council devise a procedural framework for managing inquiries that necessitate intervention by external parties. Moreover, it is advisable that the **Rahat** Municipality formulate a procedure for addressing inquiries that require attention from internal parties. It is also recommended that the **Rahat** Municipality and the **Rekhasim** Local Council develop a procedure for the operation of the service center's devices and systems. Furthermore, it is recommended that the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council establish documented work procedures aimed at facilitating the effective management of inquiries requiring coordination with external parties and the operation of the devices and systems at the service center.



The **Rekhasim** Local Council ought to establish standard timelines for the handling of public inquiries, mandating compliance from all municipal departments and ensuring these standards are integrated into the service center's information system. It is advisable that the **Herzliya** Municipality and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council exercise diligence in adhering to their established standard timelines and conduct periodic reviews in collaboration with departmental entities to assess the necessity for updates.



It is recommended that the **Herzliya** Municipality, the **Rekhasim** Local Council, and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council implement a systematic procedure for the submission of periodic reports to the authority's management and department heads. These reports should encompass the information required as outlined in the Service center Management Guide. Moreover, it is suggested that the **Rahat** Municipality service center submits periodic reports to the authority's management and department heads, thereby facilitating informed decision-making in accordance with the guidelines stipulated in the service center management manual. It is also advised that the **Rahat** Municipality and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council incorporate an analysis of calls received at the authority's service center during the formulation of development plans and annual budget considerations, particularly in identifying systemic issues that necessitate intervention. Additionally, it is recommended that the **Herzliya** Municipality, the **Rahat** Municipality, the **Rekhasim** Local Council, and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council regularly utilize heat maps derived from service center call data to identify problem areas, facilitate data-driven decision-making, prioritize call handling, enhance resource





allocation for responding to inquiries, and ensure compliance with established handling times.



It is advised that all local authorities implement a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system for documenting service center calls and monitoring their resolution. Furthermore, it is recommended that the **Herzliya** Municipality, the **Rahat** Municipality, the **Rekhasim** Local Council, and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council actively engage in the effective management of unresolved (open) calls within the service center's information system. Additionally, it is suggested that the **Rahat** Municipality and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council develop a real-time dashboard displaying the calls received at the authority's call center along with the status of their handling, enabling local authority management to independently monitor call statuses.



It is recommended that the **Rahat** Municipality and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council implement a telephone system in the service center that facilitates the measurement and control of incoming calls. Furthermore, it is advised that the **Rekhasim** Local Council also establish a telephone system within its internal service center to measure and control calls effectively. There is an additional recommendation for the **Rekhasim** Local Council to investigate the reasons for the low rate of calls answered at the external service center and to implement strategies aimed at reducing the incidence of unanswered calls.



It is further recommended that the **Herzliya** and **Rahat** Municipalities, along with the **Rekhasim** Local Council, develop a systematic process for assessing resident satisfaction following interaction with the service center, and for collecting feedback once inquiries have been resolved. In this regard, it is advised that the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council analyze the findings from satisfaction surveys, monitor for trends that may necessitate attention, and encourage greater participation in these surveys. It is recommended that the **Herzliya** and **Rahat** Municipalities, the **Rekhasim** Local Council, and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council conduct periodic evaluations using mystery shoppers to assess the quality of service offered by service center personnel. This evaluation will enable the local authority to scrutinize the responses encountered by residents during their interactions with the authority's service center. Additionally, it is recommended that representatives from the **Herzliya** and **Rahat** Municipalities, the **Rekhasim** Local Council, and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council consistently introduce themselves at the commencement of every interaction across all communication platforms regarding the service center. Moreover, the **Rekhasim** Local Council and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council are advised to ensure that telephone responses are provided and that they enable leaving a message when phone lines are busy, or ensure call-backs in such instances. It is recommended that the **Herzliya** Municipality and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council guarantee responses to all e-mailed inquiries directed to the local authority's service center. Furthermore, it is suggested that the **Herzliya** Municipality reduce the time taken to provide a human response to inquiries submitted via WhatsApp.





It is recommended that the **Herzliya** and **Rahat** Municipalities, the **Rekhasim** Local Council, and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council formulate a procedural guideline for service center employees regarding the handling of inappropriate conduct or recurrent inquiries. This procedural guideline is intended to serve as a resource and training tool to enhance the handling of such situations by service center personnel. Furthermore, it is recommended that the Ministry of Interior revise the service center management manual to encompass regulations pertaining to the coping of local authorities in these circumstances.

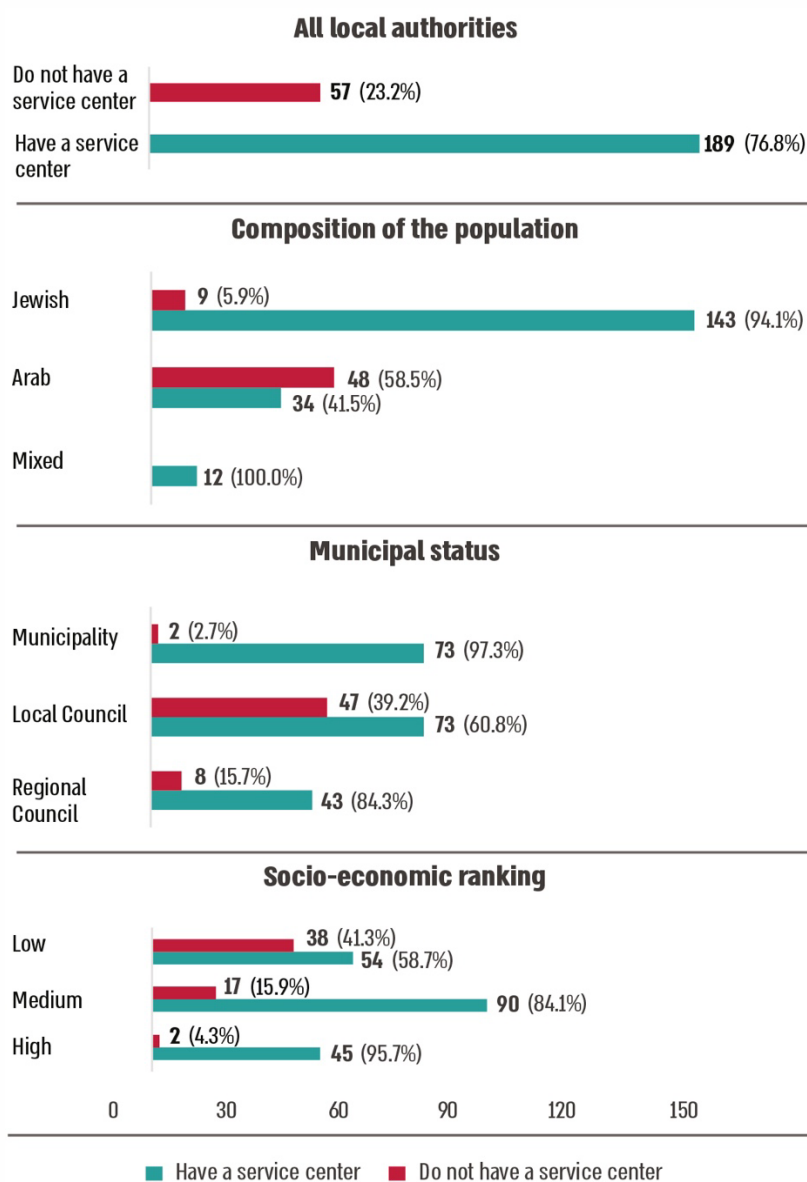


It is recommended that the **Rahat** Municipality, the **Rekhasim** Local Council, and the **Hof Ashkelon** Regional Council monitor the quality of inquiry handling and operational control in accordance with the guidelines of the service center management manual.





## Local Authorities Having a Service Center, by Sector, Municipal Status, and Socio-Economic Ranking



According to the detailed report data prepared by the Ministry of Interior in 2023, processed by the Office of the State Comptroller.

- \* The division based on the socio-economic ranking of the Central Bureau of Statistics is as follows:  
Low – authorities in levels 1–4; Medium – authorities in levels 5–7; High – authorities in levels 8–10.





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## Summary

Local authorities play a pivotal role in the provision of both local and state services. Deficiencies in their service delivery can profoundly affect the daily lives of residents and the prospects of significant populations within society. The effectiveness of a local authority's service is further evaluated by its capacity to respond to inquiries and complaints from those requiring its assistance, in both routine and emergency times. Such public inquiries and complaints pertain to the authority's operations, primarily related to the elimination of hazards and nuisances, as well as the receipt of municipal services. In emergency situations, the authority emerges as a central entity for all matters involving direct and sustained interaction with the public within its jurisdiction.

The audit report findings indicate deficiencies in the implementation of the Public Complaints Officer Law and the Local Authority Service center Management Manual published by the Ministry of Interior, which adversely impact the quality of service provision to residents and the handling of complaints and inquiries from the public, including the failure to appoint a public complaints officer in certain local authorities, as well as the operation of officers who were not authorized in accordance with legal provisions. Furthermore, there is a failure to maintain a local authority service center designated to receive resident inquiries, as well as a failure to establish an emergency service center designed to respond to residents in critical situations, including scenarios posing a risk to human life, such as the Iron Swords War. The Ministry of Interior, as the regulatory body overseeing local government operations and responsible for law enforcement, has not undertaken action against authorities that have not appointed officers in compliance with the law, nor does it provide professional guidance to the officers in local authorities.

To enhance the handling of public complaints and inquiries and improve the associated quality and effectiveness, the Ministry of Interior must ensure that all local authorities appoint public complaints officers and establish dedicated service centers for inquiries. Additionally, the Ministry should function as a professional guiding entity for these officers, providing support to enhance their independence and professional development. This would facilitate the incorporation of public inquiries into local authorities' planning processes and policy-making. Furthermore, the Ministry of Interior must guarantee that in situations of emergency and crisis, all local authorities offer an emergency service, ensuring immediate human response at all hours through professionally established service centers specifically designed for emergencies. Moreover, local authorities must address the deficiencies identified in the audit to comply with the Public Complaints Officer Law and the Local Authority service center Management Manual issued by the Ministry of Interior, thereby streamlining the handling of public complaints and inquiries to augment its effectiveness.

The entities tasked with managing complaints and inquiries from the public within local authorities occupy a central role in the operational framework of these authorities; therefore, it is imperative that they remain responsive to public needs. In light of the pivotal nature of





these entities, the Office of the State Comptroller recommends the Ministry of Interior collaborate with local authorities and the Federation of Local Authorities to develop systematic work processes pertaining to the handling of public complaints and inquiries, as well as the interrelations among various entities within local authorities, to ensure that these authorities deliver effective responses to residents during both routine and emergency situations. Furthermore, these processes would facilitate the prompt identification of issues necessitating systemic intervention within minimal timeframes, particularly during emergencies such as the one brought by the Iron Swords War to the country's citizens.



