



STATE OF ISRAEL



OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER  
AND OMBUDSMAN OF ISRAEL

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# THE OCTOBER 7<sup>TH</sup> TERROR ATTACK AND THE IRON SWORDS WAR

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STATE COMPTROLLER REPORT

# Management of Essential Infrastructure and Services in Times of Emergency

## Part Two

April  
2026

Special  
Report

# Foreword

The special audit report presented to the Knesset today is a further publication of the Office of the State Comptroller addressing the murderous terrorist attack on the festival of Simchat Torah, October 7, 2023, and the Swords of Iron War. This report constitutes the second part of the report concerning the management of infrastructure and essential services in times of emergency, as published on February 17, 2026. The audit findings in the chapters of this report relate to the Iron Sword War, but are also true for Operation Roaring Lion," and emphasize the need to be optimally prepared for times of emergency.

The special report is comprised of two chapters:

## **Aspects of Maintaining Continuity of Aviation Services in Times of Emergency**

Air transport constitutes an essential element of the national economy and the resilience of the State of Israel, particularly during periods of emergency. Aviation services facilitate critical international movement for both citizens and the military, thereby playing a pivotal role in sustaining connections with countries worldwide. Nonetheless, the Swords of Iron War (commencing in 2023) and Operation Rising Lion (2025) posed substantial challenges to the Israeli civil aviation system; these included a drastic decline in passenger volumes (with over 21 million passengers traveling to and from Israel in 2023 prior to the onset of the Swords of Iron War, a number plummeting to approximately 13.9 million in 2024 and culminating in a complete suspension of operations during Operation Rising Lion), the cessation of operations by foreign airlines, and stringent restrictions on air traffic. In spite of these challenges, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) successfully maintained regular aviation

services by means of the Israeli airlines, demonstrating adaptability and effective crisis management.

The audit identified deficiencies in the governance of the aviation sector during emergencies, particularly regarding preparedness for an extended conflict, the absence of prioritization plans for the return of Israeli citizens, and the lack of comprehensive procedures to assist affected passengers. Additionally, it was noted that the government had limited influence over the operations of civil airlines during emergencies and did not demand adequate compensation for the support provided to these companies. Compounding these issues were challenges related to passenger transport, an unregulated surge in flight fares, and difficulties in system management following a reduction in the Airports Authority's revenue.

The relevant entities should make the necessary amendments in light of the report's findings, including the revision of scenarios and procedures within the civil aviation sector, the formulation of a comprehensive aviation policy applicable in both routine and emergency situations, and the establishment of an airport complementary to Ben Gurion Airport. It is advisable that the aviation policy consider the development of the aviation system in the future, regulating, among other aspects, the relationship between the state and the airlines, as well as the interactions between the civil aviation system and the military aviation system. This policy should also regulate air transport and define, inter alia, the status of Israeli airlines within the national transportation framework, outlining the characteristics of their operations during both routine and emergency periods, as well as the operational arrangements and methods of economic support available to them. Establishing such regulatory

measures will enable the functioning of a robust and efficient aviation system during routine operations and, critically, during emergencies such as Operation Roaring Lion, which is currently ongoing.

### **Employment of Non-Israeli Workers Before and during the Swords of Iron War**

Non-Israeli workers constitute an essential segment of the Israeli labor market, particularly within sectors such as construction, nursing, and agriculture, where a substantial percentage of the workforce comprises non-Israeli individuals. The commencement of the Swords of Iron War resulted in an immediate shortfall of approximately 110,000 non-Israeli workers, predominantly Palestinians, whose employment in Israel was terminated for security reasons. These shortages, coupled with the departure of foreign workers from Israel, had a direct impact on the national economy, especially within the construction and agricultural sectors.


The audit highlighted the government's inadequate preparedness to address the shortage of non-Israeli workers both prior to the onset of the war and during the crisis itself: a lack of strategic preparedness on the part of governmental agencies; the absence of tailored emergency scenarios; and a convoluted process for securing quotas for foreign workers. Even after the outbreak of the war, no clear objectives were established for the recruitment of foreign workers, nor was any effective mechanism devised for the economic rehabilitation of this sector.

The relevant government ministries should take measures to dismantle barriers pertaining to the recruitment of foreign workers, continuously update policies, and

adequately prepare for potential shortages of manpower in both routine and emergency scenarios. Additionally, it is recommended that the government formulate a long-term strategy to assist in coping with the deficit of non-Israeli employees, in activating mechanisms for monitoring and promoting bilateral agreements, and in safeguarding the rights of workers during emergencies

In conclusion, I wish to thank the staff of the Office of the State Comptroller in the Division of Economics and National Infrastructures and the Staff Division for their efforts in carrying out inspection and audit processes with the utmost thoroughness, professionalism and integrity and in publishing clear, effective and relevant audit reports.

We wish and pray for the swift recovery of the injured, for the rehabilitation of the released hostages and their families, for the return home of all the evacuees, and for the success of the defense forces in protecting our country.



**Matanyahu Englman**

Jerusalem,  
April 2026

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and Ombudsman**