



—— **State Comptroller of Israel** Special Report ——

Prostitution and Human Trafficking for the Purpose of Prostitution

Aspects of Enforcement and the Protection of Victims

Abstract



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Foreword

The constitutional duty to protect human dignity, liberty, and bodily integrity lies at the core of the State's obligations. The phenomena of prostitution and human trafficking for the purpose of prostitution result in severe violations of fundamental human rights and reflect profound social vulnerability, economic inequality, and, in most cases, gender inequality, as well as criminal activity that is often organized and transnational. Accordingly, the manner in which the State authorities address these phenomena is a key measure of the State's commitment to its declared values, the rule of law, and the effective implementation of legislation intended to protect populations deserving special attention. Enforcement actions in this field are of the highest moral and social importance, as is also reflected in the State's obligations under the international conventions to which it is a party.

In 2014, approximately 12,000 women and men were involved in prostitution (95% of whom were women), including approximately 1,300 minors. The average age of entry into prostitution was 13–14 years, and the estimated total payments for the purchase of prostitution services during that year amounted to approximately NIS 1.3 billion. Organizations working in this field estimate that, in 2025, the number of minors involved in prostitution ranged from 3,000 to 5,000.

The audit identified deficiencies in the activities of the principal bodies responsible for addressing prostitution and human trafficking for the purpose of prostitution. The conclusion arising from the audit findings, six years after the Prohibition on Consuming Prostitution

Services Law entered into force in 2020, is that the enforcement measures undertaken have not been sufficient to significantly reduce the scope of the phenomenon. Deficiencies were also identified in the measures taken to combat human trafficking and to protect and assist victims. Among other findings, it was determined that, in some cases, the Population Authority's handling of the issuance of residence permits to individuals recognized as victims of human trafficking was carried out in a manner that exceeded its authority and was contrary to procedures. The deficiencies identified in the audit point to substantial gaps in the implementation of the Prohibition on Consuming Prostitution Services Law, as well as a concern regarding significant under-enforcement of offences related to prostitution and human trafficking, despite the fact that these constitute criminal offences involving serious violations of fundamental human rights.

The Israel Police and the Ministry of Justice should take measures to strengthen the enforcement of the laws relating to prostitution offences and human trafficking and to ensure effective and consistent enforcement, including by making greater use of existing police intelligence and enhancing collaboration. This should be done in view of the seriousness of these offences and the vulnerability of the victims, whose lives may be placed at genuine risk, as well as in light of the State's international obligations in this area and the consequences of failing to fulfill them. It is proposed that the Supreme Team, chaired by the Attorney General and responsible for formulating policy and providing overall direction in the fight against serious and

organized crime, consider establishing law enforcement targets concerning offences of human trafficking and related offences, and, within the framework of its responsibilities, promote integrated enforcement in this field among the law enforcement authorities.

Strengthening the enforcement of the Prohibition on Consuming Prostitution Services Law is essential to achieving its intended purpose. The implementation of these recommendations, together with the additional recommendations set out in this report, will improve the enforcement of the law, enhance the protection of victims of prostitution and human trafficking, and assist the State in fulfilling its moral, legal, constitutional, and international obligations.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the staff of the Office of the State Comptroller in the Division of Government Ministries and Institutions and the Staff Division for their hard work in conducting dedicated, professional, and thorough examination and audit processes and in publishing the report presented before you.

We will continue to pray and hope for the success of the Israel Defense Forces and the security establishment, for the recovery of the wounded, and for peaceful and tranquil days ahead.



Matanyahu Englman

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State Comptroller
and Ombudsman