



OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER
AND OMBUDSMAN OF ISRAEL

THE OCTOBER 7TH TERROR ATTACK AND THE SWORDS OF IRON WAR

STATE COMPTROLLER REPORT

Aspects of the Medical Response and Civilian Home Front Management

June
2026

Special
report

Foreword

This State Comptroller's report, presented today to the Knesset, is an additional publication in the series of reports dealing with the murderous terrorist attack on the Jewish festival of Simchat Torah, October 7, 2023, and the Swords of Iron War. It includes audit findings addressing the medical response and the management of the civilian home front during the war:

- **Evacuation of casualties to hospitals on October 7, 2023**
- **Medical rehabilitation of casualties from the Swords of Iron War**
- **Coordination between the government system and donor and volunteer organizations during the Swords of Iron War**
- **Protected spaces in public institutions - a Surprise Audit**

The following is an overview of the report's chapters:

Evacuation of Casualties to Hospitals on October 7, 2023

The terrorist attack that occurred on October 7 caught the State of Israel by utter surprise. On that day, the healthcare system treated approximately 1,340 casualties who were evacuated to hospitals throughout the day. The responsibility for evacuating the wounded from the combat zones on October 7 lay with the

Southern Command and the Gaza Division, as they are the military entities responsible for the area of the Gaza Envelope communities. Without detracting from the efforts of the IDF forces, Magen David Adom (MDA) [Israel's national emergency medical, disaster, and blood bank service], and all those present on the ground—members of the emergency standby squads, community emergency teams, volunteers, and civilians—who acted bravely to evacuate the wounded, and some of whom paid with their lives, the root cause of the failure in casualty evacuation lies in the IDF's failure to defend the southern communities on October 7. The events of October 7 were on a scale that departed radically from national reference scenarios, and the operational situation on the morning of October 7, prior to the start of the attack, was defined as routine. Against the backdrop of the IDF's failure to protect the southern communities, significant deficiencies also emerged in the casualty evacuation system: the evacuation of casualties was characterized by the absence of an orderly evacuation response by the IDF, a lack of regulation regarding command and control between the IDF and MDA, and delayed coordination of casualty transfer points with MDA—nearly eight hours after the start of the terrorist attack. Evacuation of casualties by military entities was partial, due in part to a lack of complete information regarding the location of civilian casualties and their condition. The evacuation of wounded individuals who required medical treatment at hospitals was delayed during the critical hours

of October 7. The failures concerning medical evacuation are intensified given the number of persons injured and murdered in these events. The State Comptroller's Office views with severity the fact that the Ministry of Health did not regulate cooperation between MDA and United Hatzalah [Israel's largest independent, non-profit volunteer emergency medical service] during emergencies. A gap also emerged in the command and control capabilities of the Supreme Hospitalization Authority and the National Health Operations Center regarding the national management of casualty evacuation and the provision of an appropriate response to a major emergency occurring without prior warning. The IDF and MDA, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, should conduct full operational debriefings regarding the evacuation of casualties during the events of October 7, in order to draw lessons concerning casualty evacuation from civilian combat zones and to guarantee the rapid, orderly evacuation of wounded individuals to hospitals.

In light of the deficiencies raised in the report, the IDF and the healthcare system should significantly improve their preparedness in terms of command and control for managing emergency events, particularly mass-casualty incidents, with regard to casualty evacuation. It is necessary to ensure that the National Health Operations Center is capable of forming a situational picture and that it is prepared and drilled for managing emergency events. The Supreme Hospitalization

Authority and the Ministry of Health should also take immediate action to adapt their command and control systems to manage emergencies in accordance with various reference scenarios, thereby ensuring proper functioning in emergencies, including the efficient utilization of all healthcare system resources.

Medical Rehabilitation of Casualties from the Swords of Iron War

The Swords of Iron War, which broke out following the October 7 attack, has been characterized by prolonged fighting compared with Israel's recent wars, and by a large number of fatalities and casualties among both the security forces and civilians. According to Ministry of Defense data, as of September 2025, approximately 20,000 soldiers and security personnel were wounded during the war, and as of April 2025, approximately 1,600 civilians were injured. As of July 2025, about 1,600 of all casualties were hospitalized in hospital rehabilitation departments. On the eve of October 7, there was a shortage of thousands of workers in the fields of physiotherapy, speech therapy, and occupational therapy within the public service, and hospital staffing quotas did not meet the population's needs even during routine times. With the outbreak of the war, the healthcare system mobilized for the rehabilitation of war casualties, and approximately 320 beds were added to the rehabilitation system during the conflict. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Health lacks a

written concept of operations and an operational plan for managing the national rehabilitation system during a mass-casualty emergency. Furthermore, the Rehabilitation Department within the Ministry of Health lacks data regarding waiting times for rehabilitation departments and day-rehabilitation frameworks. All of these factors prevented optimal management of the system and hindered the best possible utilization of the medical rehabilitation resources. Regarding the activities of the Ministry of Defense, alongside the positive aspects of the adjustments made by the Rehabilitation Department within the Ministry of Defense in its operations, the audit also identified negative consequences, delays in receiving certain benefits, a prolonged state of uncertainty among the wounded regarding their rights, and deficiencies in the take-up of their rights.

In light of the shortcomings arising from this audit, it is recommended that the Ministry of Health, the hospitals, the IDF, and the Ministry of Defense establish procedures to regulate their actions for providing information to the wounded about the rehabilitation options available to them, including information regarding rehabilitation departments close to their place of residence. It is further recommended that the Ministry of Health formulate an operational plan for managing the national rehabilitation system during emergencies requiring the treatment of numerous casualties, which will include principles, rules, and processes, in addition to completing the establishment of a computerized system to support decision-

making regarding the management of the national medical rehabilitation system. Additionally, it is recommended that the Rehabilitation Department within the Ministry of Defense begin as soon as possible to summon all casualties of the Swords of Iron War to medical boards, take measures to ensure that disabled individuals fully exercise their rights, and construct a work plan to address requests for disability recognition where applicants are still awaiting a decision. It is also recommended that the Director-General of the Ministry of Defense, in cooperation with the Rehabilitation Department, the Digital Directorate, and the Planning Directorate within the Ministry of Defense, establish a work scheme for meeting the computerized needs of the Rehabilitation Department within optimal timelines, in order to bring about a substantial improvement in all matters related to the care and service provided to disabled IDF veterans and to ease the take-up of their rights.

Coordination Between the Government System and Donor and Volunteer Organizations during the Swords of Iron War

One of the hallmarks of the Swords of Iron War, which broke out following the terrorist attack of October 7, 2023, is the widespread wave of civilian mobilization from all sectors of society to fulfill the economic and individual needs that arose. The findings of the current audit lend added weight to the fact that, at least during the initial months

of the Swords of Iron War, donor and volunteer organizations played a decisive role in meeting the needs of the home front and the front line in key areas of activity under the responsibility of government authorities—foremost among them being the evacuation of residents from targeted areas and the supply of food and basic equipment to the civilian population affected by the war and to the security and rescue forces. The financial value of volunteer activity and contributions in cash and in-kind during the first three months of the war is estimated, according to conservative assessments by the State Comptroller's Office, at approximately NIS 14.78 billion; this amount is equivalent to about half of the state budget allocated for the war, which totaled approximately NIS 28.8 billion during this period. The State Comptroller's Office wishes to note the commendable activities of the donor and volunteer organizations during the Swords of Iron War, which aided the security forces and civilians. The extensive and critical response provided by these bodies illustrates the unique Israeli solidarity and the vital role of these bodies in the assistance apparatus and the strengthening of national resilience.

The audit revealed that although this extensive and unprecedented activity by donor and volunteer organizations necessitated coordination between them and the government, as well as government leadership and guidance to ensure optimal, efficient, and beneficial utilization of the assistance from a comprehensive and integrated perspective—the government apparatus during

the Swords of Iron War was deficient regarding the management of coordination in these key pillars: the appointment of an integrating body, the centralization and accessibility of essential information, and the existence of adequate infrastructure and personnel. Under these circumstances, despite the immense mobilization of donor and volunteer organizations to assist in the war effort, many of them operated without cooperation with government ministries or maintained only minimal to moderate cooperation with them. Leading a coordinated, multi-sector response by the government system during emergencies is essential for guaranteeing an optimal, efficient, and rapid response to the population's needs in such situations. Implementation of all the recommendations presented in this report will enable the government system to improve its capabilities for maximizing cooperation with donor and volunteer organizations during emergencies in accordance with the policy established by the government on the matter, and will allow these bodies to integrate into national assistance efforts in a beneficial manner during emergencies, should they so wish.

Protected Spaces in Public Institutions - A Surprise Audit

The State of Israel is subject to various security threats, including the threat of missile and rocket attacks (the rocket threat). This threat is likely to include a wide variety of weaponry, such as

ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, rockets, explosive drones, and explosive UAVs. From October 7, 2023, until October 2025, approximately 28,900 missiles and about 3,550 explosive UAVs were fired toward Israel from various arenas (Gaza, Lebanon, Iran, and Yemen). Coping optimally with emergency situations depends on the degree of preparedness for them during routine times; within this context, protected spaces in public institutions are a central component of national preparedness for periods of emergency and an important element in the continuous provision of essential services to the public, maintaining functional continuity and minimizing disruption to economic activity. The surprise audit, within the framework of which protected spaces were inspected in 16 buildings of public institutions—the National Insurance Institute, the Employment Service, Clalit Health Services, Maccabi Healthcare Services, and family health stations of the Ministry of Health—revealed that the condition and maintenance of the inspected spaces were deficient. Deficiencies were identified regarding the lack of free and accessible entry to the protected spaces, deficiencies affecting safe occupancy of the protected space, such as a lack of sealing on blast doors and windows and defective locking mechanisms, and deficiencies in the means allowing for prolonged stays in the protected space and communication with the outside world.

The National Insurance Institute, the Employment Service, Maccabi, Clalit, and the Ministry of

Health should rectify the deficiencies revealed by the audit in the inspected protected spaces. Furthermore, the inspected institutions are required to act to locate deficiencies in the protected spaces and examine whether the defects raised in this report, across all areas, also exist in the rest of the protected spaces under their responsibility, and they should act to correct them as necessary.

In view of the anticipated continuation of the rocket threat against the State of Israel and the importance of safeguarding human life and public safety, and ensuring the functional continuity of the economy during emergencies—and taking into account changes and damages that are likely to occur over the years due to sudden failures, natural wear and tear, or renovations—public institutions should routinely maintain the protected spaces under their responsibility, ensure their proper functioning, and verify that these spaces serve as a protected and safe environment that also permits prolonged occupancy during emergencies. It is further recommended that they formulate a multi-year plan to perform periodic and comprehensive monitoring of the maintenance status of the protected spaces under their responsibility and their functionality, and ensure that this monitoring indeed takes place and that the deficiencies arising from it are rectified.

This report joins the series of reports addressing the murderous terrorist attack on Simchat Torah, October 7, 2023, and the

Swords of Iron War. The State Comptroller institution fulfills its legal obligation to conduct state auditing and investigate public complaints in routine times and emergencies, and especially during wartime. In my view, the results of the terrorist attack, the horrific massacre, and the Swords of Iron War underscored the public and ethical obligation of the State Comptroller's Office to conduct an audit examining the conduct of all echelons on October 7.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the staff of the State Comptroller's Office in the Social and Welfare Audit Division, the Defense Establishment Audit Division, the Audit Division of Government Ministries and Institutions, and the Staff Division for their intensive work in executing thorough, professional, and fair examination and audit processes, and for publishing clear, effective, and relevant audit reports.

We shall continue to pray and hope for the success of the IDF and the security establishment, for the recovery of the wounded, and for quiet and peaceful days ahead.



Matanyahu Englman

Jerusalem,
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and Ombudsman**