



State of Israel

State Comptroller

Special Audit Report



Foreword

Mixed Cities







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Mixed cities are part of the Israeli scene and they are a microcosm of the entire Israeli society complex. This special report presents the findings of the audit conducted on two issues related to mixed cities: **Policing and Law Enforcement in Mixed Cities - during Guardian of the Walls' Operation and in General; Municipal Services in Mixed Cities.**

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, a mixed settlement in Israel is a settlement where a significant majority of Jewish residents lives alongside a significant minority of Arab residents. In Israel there are nine settlements defined as "mixed settlements", eight of which are urban settlements (Jerusalem, Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Haifa, Acre, Ramle, Lod, Ma'alot-Tarshiha, Nof HaGalil) and one is a rural settlement (Neve Shalom). In 2020, approx. 2,000,000 residents lived in mixed cities, of whom 500,000 were Arab residents - 370,000 in Jerusalem and 130,000 in other mixed cities.

In May 2021, serious riots erupted in several mixed cities including Haifa, Lod, Acre and Tel Aviv-Jaffa. During the riots three Israeli citizens were killed, dozens were wounded, and there was massive property damage. These incidents raised hidden tensions between the various population groups, emphasizing the need to take action at the national and local levels to form a shared, tolerant public space and to prevent reoccurrence of similar incidents. The incidents also demonstrated the challenges of maintaining personal security and ensuring public order in mixed cities and emphasized the need to review the aspects of policing and law enforcement in these cities.

The audit on **Policing and Law Enforcement in Mixed Cities - during Guardian of the Walls' Operation and in General**; indicates deficiencies in police activities before and during the riots, as well as in police preparedness for multi-frontal civil disorders in general and in mixed cities in particular. The Guardian of the Walls incidents reflected significant weakness and inadequate preparedness of the Border Police reservist system. Gaps were found in division of responsibility and the interrelations between Israel Police and the General Security Service regarding public order intelligence, which significantly increased the intelligence gaps manifested while contending with Guardian of the Walls' incidents. The audit found that at the peak of Guardian of the Walls' incidents in Lod thousands of residents called (approx. 2,836 calls between 11-13 May 2021) the police call center due to distress or to report an incident they witnessed - and received no police response. Thousands of other calls (approx. 4,059 incidents) were answered and even documented but were not handled appropriately by the police. It should be noted that in the course of the Guardian of the Walls' events, the "100 call center" across the country was overloaded and it was difficult to provide efficient response to the callers.

The audit also found gaps in police preparedness for policing and law enforcement challenges in mixed cities and in the extent to which the police routinely meets these challenges. It was



also found that as part of dealing with policing and law enforcement challenges in general and in mixed cities in particular, the unit reinforcement model was widely applied as a solution to the inability of local units to handle various incidents. The constant need for reinforcement raises the question whether the resources allocated to the local units correspond with the challenges they face.

The physical and property damages caused by the riots are estimated at tens of millions of NIS. It was found that in approx. 880 events the total compensation the victims received was NIS 33 million, followed by the indictment of 574 rioters. Despite the damages amounting to tens of millions Israeli NIS, it was found that according to the position of the Civil Enforcement Department, at the time of completion of the audit, the scope of damages that could be claimed in a civil suit from the 55 rioters was NIS 4.5 million. However, at the time of the audit completion, no civil law suits had yet been filed for damages to state property or recovery of compensation funds paid to the victims.

The findings of this audit and the overall circumstances under which the police operates requires the Prime Minister and the Minister of Public Security, and through them, the Israel government, Israel police, General Security Service and the entire security establishment, to consider the aforementioned issues. It is recommended that the Israel Police and the General Security Service optimize their activities in mixed cities routinely and improve their preparedness for extreme situations in accordance with the reference threats and scenarios. It is further recommended that the State Attorney's Office form a deterrent policy and apply civil procedures, especially against offenders in terror events and in hate and racist crimes - advances the necessary measures to exhaust the investigation and consider the possibility of filing civil law suits in these cases.

It should be Noted that the deficiencies and gaps raised in this audit do not undermine the appreciation for the dedication of the Israel Police officers and commanders, Border Police troops and commanders, and members of the General Security Service who work under complex conditions, involving risks and self-sacrifice, to prevent human and property damage and enforce the law.

In the chapter on **Municipal Services Provided in Mixed Cities**, it was noted that mixed cities' municipalities in Israel face multiple challenges. The history of the relations between Jewish and Arab residents requires that both sides make great efforts to establish and promote coexistence. The municipalities should provide all population groups with equitable municipal services, considering their special characteristics, and increase their sense of belonging and integration. Nevertheless, mixed cities also demonstrate positive trends such as collaboration between Jewish and Arab residents and a great potential for acquaintance and dialogue, tolerant and respectful public space and coexistence.

The audit indicated gaps between municipal services provided to the Jewish residents and those provided to Arab residents in the mixed cities that were audited, such as: out of the 500 properties allocated by the mixed cities that were audited in 2021, only 5 were allocated to Arab population entities; the rate of financial support given to Arab entities out of the entire support budget of Haifa, Nof-HaGalil, Acre and Ramle municipalities was lower than 6%. The audited mixed cities' municipalities failed to review the needs of the Arab population in their jurisdiction, including regarding religion, welfare, youth and culture issues; and the barriers



and reasons to the scarcity of support applications submitted by it. On the other hand, it was found that the rate of municipal taxes collected in the Arab neighborhoods of Ramle in 2020 was only 26% while the general rate was 87%.

As part of the multi-year plan for mixed settlements composed by the Ministry for Social Equality and the Prime Minister's Office, it is recommended that practical measures be applied to minimize the gaps between the different population groups and that designated budgets be allocated for that purpose. It is further recommended that the mixed cities' municipalities review their municipal services and provide adequate responses to each population group, while meticulously collecting municipal taxes from all residents, thus creating a solid infrastructure for coexistence. All local authorities should study the findings of this report, especially in light of the demographic changes expected to occur in the near future in population composition in various local authorities, and adjust their services to the emerging population mix.

The state is obligated to provide its citizens and residents with various basic services, some through the ministries and some through local authorities and statutory entities. In addition, the state must ensure that the citizens fulfill their civil duties and that enforcement entities ensure this fulfillment. It is hereby emphasized that the gaps found regarding municipal services provided in mixed cities do not justify any form of violence.

To sum up, there are possible measures at the governmental, municipal, communal and personal levels in mixed cities that investing in them may relieve internal tensions and establish close relationships among residents of mixed cities. I hope that this report and its recommendations facilitate the advancement of issues pertaining to mixed cities and motivate the audited entities to take action.

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I am pleased to express my gratitude to the State Comptroller staff from the Government Ministries and Institutions Division, the Local Government Division and the Headquarters Division, who worked professionally, thoroughly, impartiality and meticulously preparing this report.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matanyahu Englman'.

Matanyahu Englman
State Comptroller
and Ombudsman

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