General Summary
About the Ombudsman

The State Comptroller and Ombudsman fulfills his function as Ombudsman through the Office of the Ombudsman\(^1\), which investigates complaints against those bodies that are, by law, subject to auditing by the State Comptroller (hereafter - bodies against which complaints are filed).

At the head of the Office of the Ombudsman stands the director-general of the Office of the Ombudsman, who is appointed, at the recommendation of the Ombudsman, by the State Audit Affairs Committee of the Knesset. The director-general is subordinate to the Ombudsman and is directly responsible to him.

The Office of the Ombudsman has nine divisions: one records the incoming complaints, sorts them according to the criteria prescribed by law for investigation of the complaints, investigates some of the urgent complaints and channels the remaining complaints earmarked for investigation to the other eight divisions. Each of the other eight divisions investigates complaints involving certain bodies against which complaints are filed. The separation into divisions makes for a more effective investigation, as each division gains expertise in the laws and work procedures pursuant to which the relevant bodies complained against operate. A complaint involving more than one body is investigated jointly by the appropriate divisions.

\(^1\) Section 4 of the Basic Law: The State Comptroller states: "The State Comptroller will investigate complaints from the public about bodies and persons, as provided by law; in this capacity, the State Comptroller shall bear the title 'Ombudsman'."

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An organizational chart is included at page 233. The chart describes the organizational structure of the Office of the Ombudsman and the names of its senior officials.

The Office of the Ombudsman has offices and branch offices with public reception hours in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Nazareth, Beersheva, Lod and Kiryat Shmona. The dispersal of these offices in locations that are spread out throughout the country makes the Office of the Ombudsman more accessible, as an institution, and contributes to the more efficient investigation of complaints - especially the investigation of complaints directed against bodies located in the same areas as these branch offices, and of complaints the investigation of which requires visits to locations near the branch offices. (Examples would be complaints regarding safety hazards, environmental nuisances, deficient maintenance of buildings, etc.)

A description of the work of these public reception branches is presented at page 62 below.

The addresses of the offices and branch offices of the Office of the Ombudsman are provided at page 235 in the appendices. The listing also provides the public reception hours at these branches and their fax numbers, as well as the website and email address through which complaints can be submitted.

There are currently 75 attorneys and 2 social workers investigating complaints at the offices and branch offices. Some of them also receive the public during the public reception hours. Approximately ten percent of these workers are from the Arab sector, and there are also Russian workers and two workers who speak Amharic.
General Summary

The Haifa Office of the State Comptroller and Ombudsman

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Powers of the Ombudsman

Bodies against which Complaints may be Submitted

The Office of the Ombudsman is authorized to investigate complaints against government ministries, local authorities, and other municipal bodies, such as inter-city associations and water and sewage corporations, state enterprises or institutions, government corporations and other public bodies - as provided by law. The Ombudsman may also investigate complaints about employees and officeholders in those public bodies against which complaints are filed.

Upon receiving a complaint against a body that is not within the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman, the Office of the Ombudsman informs the complainant that the Office is not authorized to investigate his complaint and directs him, where possible, to a body that may be able to assist him.

Subjects of Complaints and Reasons to Intervene

In general, the Office of the Ombudsman will investigate a complaint if it concerns an act - including an omission or a delay in acting - that is directly injurious to, or directly withholds a benefit from, the complainant. In addition, the act must be either contrary to law, taken without lawful authority, contrary to good governance, or involve excessive inflexibility or flagrant injustice.
**Who is Entitled to Submit a Complaint**

Any person may file a complaint to the Ombudsman, free of charge. The complainant is required to state his name and address. Anonymous complaints are not investigated.

A complaint may be submitted on behalf of another person, if the Ombudsman is satisfied that the other person has agreed to the filing of a complaint on his behalf.

Members of the Knesset may also submit complaints about harmful acts affecting others.

**How to Submit a Complaint**

A complaint may be handwritten in the complainant's own words; no legal knowledge or background is necessary. The complaint does not have to be written in Hebrew; complaints written in foreign languages will be translated, if necessary.

For purposes of ease and the efficiency of the investigation, it is important that the complainant provide his identity number and a telephone number, as well as a precise address for sending letters, even when the complaint is sent by email.

It is important to attach copies of the documents needed to investigate the complaint, such as correspondence with the body complained against, decisions rendered and so forth. (Originals of the documents should not be sent.)

Complaints may be submitted in a number of ways: via special letter-boxes situated in the Ombudsman's branch offices, by mail, fax or email; by filling out a complaint form which can be found on the Ombudsman's website (www.nezivut.mevaker.gov.il); or orally, in
person, at the branch offices. Complaints may not be submitted over the phone.

**Complaint Investigation Procedure**

After a complaint has been submitted, the Ombudsman's office opens an investigation, unless it is found that the complaint does not meet the conditions established in the State Comptroller Law, 5718-1958 [Consolidated Version] (hereafter - "The State Comptroller Law" or "the Law"); or if it is frivolous or vexatious, or if the Ombudsman believes that the Office of the Ombudsman is not the proper body to investigate the complaint.

The Ombudsman may discontinue the investigation of a complaint if he is satisfied that one of the grounds justifying the non-initiation of an investigation exists or that the matter to which the complaint relates has been rectified or that the complainant has withdrawn the complaint, or if the complainant has not responded to the enquiries of the Office of the Ombudsman addressed to him.

The Office of the Ombudsman is authorized to investigate complaints in any manner it sees fit and is not bound by the rules of procedure or the rules of evidence. It may contact any person, if such contact can benefit the investigation, and it may require any person or body to answer any questions and provide any documents or information that are likely, in the opinion of the Ombudsman, to assist in the investigation of the complaint.

**Outcome of Complaints Investigation**

If the Ombudsman concludes that a complaint is justified, he notifies the complainant and the body against which the complaint was filed of
his decision and the reasons therefor. The Ombudsman may point out to the body the need to rectify a defect disclosed as a result of the investigation, and he may specify the method means and time period for doing so. The body complained against must then notify the Ombudsman of the steps it took to correct the defect.

If a complaint is found not to be justified, the Office of the Ombudsman notifies the complainant and the body against which the complaint was filed and explains the reasons for the decision.

Complaints that will not be Investigated

The State Comptroller Law determines which matters and which officials or authorities are not to be investigated. According to the Law, complaints against the President, Knesset and its committees or a Knesset member will not be investigated; in addition, the Ombudsman will not investigate complaints against the government and its committees, complaints against a Minister's actions performed in the discharge of his functions as a member of the government, as opposed to his actions as the person in charge of a ministry or sphere of activity, or complaints against the Governor of the Bank of Israel, except for complaints concerning actions taken by the Governor as the party in charge of the Bank. Also, the Ombudsman will not investigate complaints against judicial or quasi-judicial actions or complaints concerning matters pending in a court or tribunal or as to which a court or tribunal has reached a substantive decision.

The Ombudsman does not have the authority to investigate complaints filed by soldiers, police officers and prison officers concerning service procedures, terms of service, or disciplinary matters; nor can he investigate complaints of State employees and employees of other audited bodies on matters relating to their service as employees,
except for an act alleged to be contrary to any law or regulation, or which contravenes the Civil Service Regulations, a collective agreement or similar general agreements. Exceptions to this rule are specified in sections 45A-45E of the State Comptroller Law. These sections relate to the investigation of a complaint of an employee in an audited body whose rights have been violated as a result of his having exposed acts of corruption and to complaints submitted by an internal auditor regarding actions taken against him as a result of his carrying out his professional duties (see below).

The Ombudsman will not investigate complaints regarding a matter in which a decision has been rendered, against which decision a contestation, objection, or appeal can be or could have been filed under any law, nor will he investigate a complaint filed after a year or more has elapsed from the date of the act to which the complaint relates or from the date on which such an act became known to the complainant, unless there is a special reason justifying such an investigation.
The Era of Human Rights

We are currently living in the “era of human rights.” Respect for human and civil rights and the protection thereof has become an inseparable part of any activity - either governmental or private – and is now a key component of legal and political philosophy. The era of human rights began after the Second World War, as a lesson learned from the Holocaust and from the trampling of human rights that took place before and during the war. After the Second World War, many international covenants relating to human rights and their protection were signed - the first being the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in 1948. Treaties concerning civil and political rights were also entered into; these dealt with economic, social and cultural rights; the rights of the child and more. Human rights are now an inseparable part of any democratic regime and they have been anchored in the constitutions of many countries who view the protection of these rights as a supreme and binding normative principle. Former Supreme Court President Aaron Barak noted that “human rights are a key component of a modern democracy . . . they are the jewel in the crown of democracy. A democracy without human rights is meaningless and empty.”

Nevertheless, it is important to stress that democracy is based on the concept that life within human society requires a constant balancing of

the rights of the individual, on the one hand, and of the rights of other individuals and the general good of the public, on the other hand. It should also be noted that human rights are relative rights. No person has a permanent right to do whatever he chooses, and no one is entitled to require that the state realize all his rights in full. In the same way that democracy cannot be maintained without the protection of human rights, democracy can also not be maintained without some level of a limitation of those rights.

The Era of Human Rights and the Ombudsman Institution

Following the human rights revolution that took place following the Second World War, the responsibility for realizing these rights was primarily imposed on the governmental authorities, and in particular on the court system. However, since the 1970’s, and primarily since the 1990’s, many countries have established national human rights institutions. The United Nations has described these institutions as state institutions that are not courts, but which have a mandate to protect human rights and to promote the issue; and it has encouraged countries to establish these institutions. In 1991, the UN convened the Paris Conference, which established principles that serve as standards that national human rights institutions are required to satisfy. These principles have come to be known as the Paris Principles.

The protection of human rights was not originally the core of the work of the ombudsman institutions. These ombudsman institutions, which function in countries throughout the world, handle public complaints and were established for the purpose of protecting the concept of good

4 HCJ 88/10 Schwartz v. Attorney General, per Justice Joubran, at para. 18 (12.7.2010).
governance. Their other initial objectives were to prevent “maladministration” and the abuse of authority, and to increase the sense of accountability among public employees. However, since the 1980’s, these public ombudsman’s offices have, in many countries, adjusted themselves to the new legal and social reality in the field of human rights; they have begun to play an active and key role in the enforcement of the constitutional and international norms in this area. They have accomplished this through the use of a new interpretation of the statutes that apply to them, or through the promotion of legislative changes in such statutes. In some of the countries, the focus of these ombudsman institutions has clearly changed from protection of good governance to the defense of human rights vis-à-vis the authorities.

**The Work Done by the Office of the Ombudsman to Protect Human Rights**

The human rights revolution has arrived in Israel as well. The recognition of the importance of human and civil rights in a Jewish and democratic state has been a key element of Israeli law since the first days of the state. The matter was also expressed in the text of the Declaration of Independence. Over the years, the Knesset has enacted many statutes dealing with human rights, and the government has signed many international treaties and ratified many international covenants dealing with the subject. The courts have also recognized the centrality of the issue of human rights within the State of Israel and have expressed this recognition in their decisions. The significant change in the normative status of human rights took place in 1992,

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5 For example, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Australia, Ireland, Great Britain, Scotland, Norway and the Netherlands.
with the enactment of the Basic Laws dealing with human rights -
Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty; Basic Law: Freedom of
Occupation. In 1995, the Supreme Court held that these Basic Laws
have given rise to a “constitutional revolution” in the State of Israel.\(^6\)

The constitutional revolution and the accompanying significant
change in the normative status of human rights have affected the work
of the Office of the Ombudsman. Israel’s Office of the Ombudsman,
like other ombudsman institutions throughout the world, has
interpreted its powers with an updated perspective, and it views the
constitutional and legal norms regarding human rights in the State of
Israel as a key element in the handling of public complaints. It should
be noted that countries throughout the world have increasingly come
to recognize that the ombudsman’s offices are more suited than the
courts for the protection of social rights by the executive authority. In
Israel, the Office of the Ombudsman sees itself as the “agent for social
rights”, particularly with regard to the protection of the rights of the
more disadvantaged population groups within society - groups which
lack the ability to insist on the protection of their rights. In Israel, the
executive authority’s actions are also examined with respect to their
conformity to the international human rights treaties to which the
government has adhered.

Within the field of the protection of human rights, the Office of the
Ombudsman must determine whether the body against which the
complaint is filed has done disproportionate harm to the rights of the
complainant, or whether it has acted toward the complainant with
excessive inflexibility or flagrant injustice. The test applied for this
purpose is not a subjective one - i.e., a test based on the perspective of
the authorized parties within the body against which the complaint is

\(^6\) See CA 6821/93 *Bank Mizrahi Hameuhad Ltd. v. Migdal Cooperative Village* [1995], IsrSC 49 (4) 221.
filed - but rather an objective one. The Office of the Ombudsman examines whether the body’s actions vis-à-vis the complainant are consistent with the standards that it has established. If it becomes apparent that the body did not act in accordance with these standards, the Ombudsman views such actions as illegal and critiques its wrongdoing. It is stressed that the authorized parties in the body against which the complaint is filed have discretion regarding the handling of issues that are within their field of authority, because such issues are within their area of expertise. The function of the Office of the Ombudsman is to examine the manner in which the discretion is exercised and the outcome of that exercise of discretion, in terms of law, justice and the protection of human rights.

The State Comptroller and Ombudsman has on several occasions emphasized that he views himself as the human rights commissioner of the State of Israel, and he therefore views the protection of human rights and the promotion of this issue as a central part of his work.

Protection of Whistleblowers

The Power of the Ombudsman to Issue a Protective Order

Sections 45A-45C of the State Comptroller Law set forth the power of the State Comptroller and Ombudsman to investigate complaints of employees who complain that they have suffered as a result of their exposure of corruption within the body in which they are employed, and establish the Ombudsman's authority to issue temporary or permanent orders to protect the rights of these employees. These sections of the law also authorize the Ombudsman to protect an internal auditor in an audited body against retaliation for acts performed in the course of his professional duties.

It should be noted that the legislature limited the power of the Ombudsman to investigate complaints related to employment issues as per section 38(8) of the Law, in order to prevent undue interference by the Ombudsman in labor relations. Nevertheless, due to the importance of protecting whistleblowers and internal auditors, the Legislature did authorize the Ombudsman to investigate the complaints of these particular categories of employees.

The Law's provisions regarding the protection of persons who expose corruption strike a balance between the rights of employers to make management decisions relating to their employees (promotions, dismissals, transfers, and so forth), on the one hand, and the need to protect employees who expose acts of corruption and who suffer harsh retaliation from their employers as a result, on the other.
Preconditions to Investigating such Complaints

In order for a complaint of a whistleblower or internal auditor to be investigated, the complaint must meet several conditions set forth in section 45A of the Law, as follows:

A) Whistleblower Complaints

1. The complaint must be made by an employee in an audited body, and must concern an action committed by the employee’s superior at his place of work, in retaliation for the employee’s exposure of corrupt actions committed in the audited body.

It should be noted that the term "corruption" is not defined in the State Comptroller Law or in any other statute. In light of the role of the institution of the State Comptroller - to preserve the integrity and the proper administration of the public sector and to protect employees who protest against highly improper actions committed at their place of work, especially those employees who suffer retaliation as a result - the term "corruption" has been interpreted broadly, as necessitated by the circumstances of each case.

2. The retaliatory act of the superior must have been directly injurious to the complainant and must be either contrary to law, taken without lawful authority, or it must have been contrary to proper administration or involved excessive inflexibility or flagrant injustice.

3. The complainant must have disclosed the acts of corruption prior to the commission of the retaliatory action that is the subject of the complaint.

4. The disclosure must have been made in good faith and in accordance with proper procedure. "Good faith" in this context means that the employee believed that the acts of corruption that he disclosed
were indeed committed, and he had a reasonable basis for this belief. Disclosure "in accordance with proper procedure" means that the disclosure was made to a person authorized to investigate the complaint either within the body itself (e.g., the employee's superior or the internal auditor) or outside of it (e.g., the State Comptroller or Israel Police). However, under section 45B of the Law, if the Ombudsman deems it justified, he may investigate the complaint even if the employee did not report the acts of corruption in accordance with proper procedure.

5. The act which is the subject of the complaint must have been carried out in response to the complainant's disclosure of corruption - i.e., there must be a causal connection between the action taken against the complainant and the disclosure of the acts of corruption.

**B) Internal Auditors' Complaints**

1. The complaint must relate to an act committed by a superior of the internal auditor, and the act must have been either contrary to the provisions of either the law or regulations; or contravened the Civil Service Regulations, a collective agreement, or similar general arrangements; or involved the removal of the internal auditor from his post.

2. The said act must have been committed in response to the actions of the internal auditor in the fulfillment of his functions.

**Protective Order or Other Remedy**

The Ombudsman may issue an order protecting the complainant pursuant to his authority under section 45C of the Law only if all the aforementioned conditions are met. It is particularly important that
there is a causal connection between the alleged retaliatory act and the disclosure of the corruption by the whistleblower or the actions of the internal auditor, as the case may be.

The legislator granted the Ombudsman broad discretion with respect to the content of the protective order, and he may issue any order that he deems just and correct, in order to protect the rights of the employee, while taking into account the need to minimize the disruption to the body employing the complainant, so that it can continue to function properly.

The Ombudsman may issue a temporary protective order that is valid until the completion of the investigation or until the Ombudsman has reached a further decision regarding the matter. The purpose of the order is to prevent additional injury to the complainant during the course of the investigation and to forestall changes to the employee’s status, salary and working conditions, especially where there is cause for concern that it will not be possible to undo any changes made or to restore the employee to his current situation after the investigation is completed.

If the complaint is made by an employee whose employment has been terminated, the Ombudsman may order that the termination be revoked; alternatively, if the Ombudsman believes that restoring the employee to his position may impair the proper functioning of the public body, he may award the employee special compensation, financial or otherwise. The Ombudsman may also order that the employee be transferred to another position in the service of his employer.
Results of Issuing a Protective Order

To date, every protective order issued by the Ombudsman has been honored. Under section 45D of the Law, the Attorney General, the Civil Service Commissioner, or the head of the body against which the complaint was filed may ask the Ombudsman to review his decision. If the audited body raises objections to the outcome of the investigation or to the issuance of the order, or if it provides the Ombudsman’s Office with new information that it did not have at the time of the investigation, the objection is brought before the Ombudsman for review, so that he can determine whether he should re-examine the underlying decision. The same procedure is followed if a complainant objects to the decision of the Ombudsman not to issue a protective order.

If a whistleblower is returned to his position, with the employer against whom he complained, the situation may be uncomfortable for both parties. Generally, however, the parties are able to resume working cooperatively together. If they are unable to do so, the complainant may apply again to the Office of the Ombudsman which then investigates this petition as well.

Reasons for Not Issuing a Protective Order

Many complaints are received at the Office of the Ombudsman from employees who allege that their employers retaliated against them because they disclosed corruption in the workplace. The Ombudsman does not necessarily issue a protective order in each and every case, for the following reasons:

1. The primary reason for the non-issuance of a protective order is that the conditions specified in the Law for issuing an order have not
been met. Thus, protective orders will not be issued in the following circumstances:

(a) The investigation has revealed that the employee requested the Ombudsman's protection even though he did not disclose acts of corruption, or that the acts disclosed did not constitute corruption, but instead indicated, at the most, an instance of improper administration. It should be noted that the Office of the Ombudsman does not examine whether the acts of corruption disclosed by the complainant were actually committed, but rather whether the complainant believed in good faith that they were committed, and whether he had an apparently reasonable basis for his belief. The authority and responsibility to carry out an audit of the body against which the complaint was filed, including an investigation as to whether acts committed at the body were corrupt, are held by the Office of the State Comptroller. The Office of the Ombudsman therefore forwards the allegations of corruption to the relevant audit unit at the Office of the State Comptroller. The topics to be examined in a given year by the Office of the State Comptroller are determined according to an array of considerations and constraints, including the statutory framework, public interests, manpower constraints and constraints relating to the resources that are at the disposal of the State Comptroller. Consequently, the allegations of corruption arising from a particular complaint are not necessarily examined by the Office of the State Comptroller in tandem with the investigation of the complaint by the Office of the Ombudsman. However, even if the State Comptroller's Office cannot commit to including a certain issue in its agenda, the

8 By the time of the translation of the Report, the Law has been amended, and a protective order may also be issued to an employee who reported the commission of a serious breach of a legal norm or of a rule of proper administration within the body in which he is employed, or to an employee who assisted another in making such a report.
State Comptroller believes that information provided by the public makes a significant contribution to state audit.

(b) In a substantial portion of complaints that have been investigated and which involved allegations of retaliation for whistleblowing, no causal connection was found between the disclosure of corruption by the complainant and the actions complained about - the employee’s dismissal or some other infringement of his rights as an employee. For example, in some cases, the employee was dismissed or disciplinary proceedings were initiated against him prior to his disclosure of corrupt activities. It is possible that some of these complainants sought to take advantage of the protection given by the Law to persons who expose corruption, and therefore claimed that the basis for their dismissal was their exposure or awareness of the corrupt activities, or their attempts to prevent them.

It should be noted that section 45E of the Law states that it is a disciplinary offense to submit a complaint under section 45A or 45B of the Law other than in good faith, or for purposes of harassment.

2. Another reason for not issuing a protective order or for discontinuing the investigation of a complaint is that the complainant filed an action in court or in the Labor Tribunal regarding the same matter; under section 38(5) of the Law, the Office of the Ombudsman may not investigate a complaint concerning a matter pending in a court or tribunal, or a complaint regarding which a court or tribunal has rendered a decision on the merits.

3. A protective order will not be issued if the complainant and the employer reach a mutually acceptable agreement during the course of investigation of the complaint.
Expanding the Scope of Protection of Whistleblowers

Despite the great contribution of whistleblowers in exposing and eliminating public corruption, the experience garnered in handling employees’ complaints shows that not enough - in terms of either legislation or changes in the socio-cultural attitude toward whistleblowers - has been done to protect them.

The State Comptroller and Ombudsman views protection of whistleblowers as a national interest; he has therefore made extensive use of the powers granted him in the State Comptroller Law to issue protective orders for those employees. Simultaneously, he has acted to extend the scope of protection given them, whether by way of promoting legislative amendments to expand the population of employees entitled to protection and the scope of such protection, or by obtaining assistance from bodies that can help to protect these employees, as can be seen from the following examples:

- Whistleblowers often suffer from threats that are made against their lives and their property. They also often suffer real harm that is done to them because of their exposure of corruption. Because the Office of the Ombudsman does not have tools to deal with this phenomenon, the Ombudsman has approached the Ministry of Internal Security’s Witness Protection Authority to enquire about the possibility of the Authority providing assistance in protecting and supporting whistleblower employees. It should be noted that employees who expose corruption may be considered to be “threatened witnesses” as defined in the Protection of Witnesses Law, 5769-2008.

- The State Comptroller and Ombudsman has recently appointed a special work team, headed by the Director of the Ombudsman, and charged it with developing a model for the holistic treatment of
whistleblowers. With the cooperation of the Witness Protection Authority, the team has developed a program for accompanying and assisting whistleblowers. The main part of this program is the involvement of a psychologist or clinical social worker in the investigation of the complaints, in order to provide, if necessary, pinpointed assistance to whistleblowers, from various perspectives.

- As a result of the team’s suggestions and the discussions that it held with the Legal Assistance Division at the Ministry of Justice, the Government recently submitted a draft Amendment of the Legal Assistance Law, 5732-1972. The draft amendment enables the provision of legal assistance to whistleblower complainants, without requiring an examination of the level of their economic need; the current language of the Law requires that such an examination be conducted before aid can be provided.9

- The State Comptroller’s Law protects the internal auditor of a body against which complaints can be filed, against retaliation from the employer for acts taken in the course of the execution of his function as auditor. The Office of the Ombudsman occasionally receives complaints from other “gatekeepers” - legal advisors, treasurers and chief accountants - who suffer from hostile encounters with their supervisors in the framework of their positions. These gatekeepers ask the Office of the Ombudsman for protection from their supervisors who seek to infringe upon their rights, or to retaliate against them by filing complaints with the Police or by taking disciplinary measures against them – so as to prevent them from doing their jobs properly. Section 45A(2) of the State Comptroller’s Law, as currently worded, does not allow for

9 By the time of this translation of the Report, the Law was amended, and legal assistance is now provided to whistleblowers regardless of their financial condition.
protection of these gatekeeper officials (only the internal auditor is given such protection); the Office of the Ombudsman therefore investigates these complaints pursuant to the provisions of section 45A(1) of the Law, which deal with protection for whistleblowers. However, the Ombudsman sometimes cannot provide protection within this framework, when these gatekeeper officials have not exposed corruption but have instead “only” done their jobs, and have suffered retaliation from their employer as a result. The Ombudsman believes that the provisions of section 45A(2) should be changed so that the protection it offers can be extended not only to internal auditors, but also to other gatekeeper officials.

- The State Comptroller Law does not empower the Ombudsman to order the indemnification of an employee for legal expenses incurred in connection with the investigation of his complaint, even if his complaint is found to be justified and he was given a protective order. Unlike an employer, who receives legal advice from the body against which the complaint was filed, and sometimes from attorneys of the first rank who charge very high fees, the employee must pay, out of his own pocket, the cost of retaining an attorney to aid him in dealing with the employer’s harassment following exposure of the corruption.

- Some time ago, the State Comptroller and Ombudsman asked the Attorney General, the Minister of Justice, and the State Audit Affairs Committee of the Knesset to consider amending the State Comptroller Law such that the Ombudsman would be authorized to require that the employer reimburse an employee who has filed a justified complaint, for legal expenses incurred in the context of the filing of the complaint.

- Under the State Comptroller Law as it stands today, employees’ organizations and trade unions are subject to state audit in certain
matters, but they are not subject to the Ombudsman’s authority to investigate complaints. The State Comptroller has asked the State Audit Affairs Committee of the Knesset to consider amending the State Comptroller Law to expand the powers of the Ombudsman, so as to allow him to investigate complaints against employees’ organizations and trade unions and to issue protective orders in favor of whistleblowers employed by these bodies.

**Raising Awareness of the Activity of Whistleblowers**

The experience accumulated in handling complaints of whistleblowers has shown that, in addition to the possible infringement of their rights as employees, whistleblowers also suffer in other spheres, for which no sufficient or effective solution exists under existing legislation. For example, although, under the State Comptroller Law, the failure to carry out a protective order issued by the State Comptroller is a disciplinary offense, the harassment of the whistleblower at work does not necessarily cease even when a protective order has been issued. It sometimes happens that, following the exposure, the employee turns from "accuser" to "accused": complaints are submitted against him alleging disciplinary offenses, and complaints may even be filed with the police. If the whistleblower continues to work under the superiors against whom he complained, they are liable to continue harassing him by means of “organizational changes”: his authority is diminished, his position is stripped of content, or he is denied the tools needed to carry out his regular tasks.

Generally, the protective order does not serve to relieve the social isolation and emotional tension an employee suffers from having to cope with his colleagues at work, who may ignore him, banish him, or view him as a traitor because he exposed corruption. Even in cases in
which the whistleblower leaves his workplace, while he may be given increased severance pay, he may still – despite his entitlement to increased severance pay - encounter difficulty finding other work, due to his advanced age or because he is tagged as a “troublemaker”.

The negative attitudes of both the general public and of the audited bodies toward whistleblowers can only be changed through increased public awareness of the contribution made by these employees to the upholding of the integrity of public service. The public must also be made aware of the fact that these employees are willing to place their jobs on the line in order to expose corruption in their places of employment.

One way to increase awareness of the subject is by issuing certificates of findings and certificates of appreciation to employees whose complaints are substantiated, in accordance with the provisions of the Encouragement of Integrity in the Public Service Law, 5752 - 1992. Under section 2(a) of the said law, if a public employee complains, in good faith and according to proper procedures, of an act of corruption or of any other violation of public integrity committed at his place of work, and if his complaint is substantiated, the person heading the body to which the complaint was submitted must inform the complainant that he is entitled to receive a certificate of findings. This law also provides that the President of the State is authorized to grant such a complainant a certificate of appreciation for his contribution to integrity in public institutions.

In July of 2007, the Encouragement of Integrity Law was amended to require the head of any body against which complaints are submitted alleging corruption or other failure to act with integrity, to deliver to the Ombudsman a report concerning the number of such complaints that have been submitted or forwarded to the body and regarding the matters that were the subjects of those complaints. (This last requirement will not
apply if disclosure is liable to obstruct the examination or investigation). The head of such a body must also report on and provide copies of certificates of findings that were issued to complainants. Under the statute, the Ombudsman is required to submit to the Knesset, on the 15th of the Hebrew month of Shvat [roughly equivalent to January/February] of each year, a comprehensive statement of the reports that were delivered to him that year.

Since the amendment was enacted, the Office of the Ombudsman has received very few reports on certificates of findings that were given to whistleblowers. This may be because the audited bodies do not provide certificates of findings to whistleblowers, or because they are not aware of the statutory obligation to deliver a report, or because regulations regarding the manner of reporting pursuant to the statute and the contents of the reports have been enacted only recently.

The Ombudsman requested the Ministry of Justice, which is the ministry charged with implementing the statute, to take measures to bring to the attention of the various authorities the importance of the statute, and the obligation to provide reports thereunder.

In March of 2014, the then Minister of Justice approached the parties authorized by the statute to issue certificates of findings, and asked them for recommendations of particular employees whose complaints had been substantiated and who were therefore deserving of certificates of appreciation. The recommendations will be examined by the Ministry of Justice, and the Minister’s opinion regarding each recommendation will be submitted to the President of the State for his final decision.  

10  As of the date of the translation of this report, the Minister of Justice has recommended that certificates of appreciation be granted to three whistleblowers.
Data on the Complaints in 2013
General Data

Number of Complaints Received

The Office of the Ombudsman received 14,637 complaints in 2013, dealing with 15,471 subjects.

The chart indicates that the number of complaints received in 2013 is almost double the number received in 2005.
**Breakdown of Complaints According to Types of Bodies that are the Subject of the Complaints.**

4,196 (28.7%) of the complaints were against State institutions: the National Insurance Institute, the Israel Police, the IDF, the courts, the Population and Immigration Authority, the Enforcement and Collection Authority, the Israel Lands Authority and other institutions.

3,793 (25.9%) of the complaints were against Government ministries.

3,551 (24.2%) of the complaints were against local authority bodies: local authorities – municipalities, local councils and regional councils – local committees and other municipal entities, such as Local Planning and Building Commissions, city associations and water and sewage corporations.
1,677 (11.5%) of the complaints were against other public bodies: infrastructure and transportation companies, educational and scientific institutions, health maintenance organizations and more.

1,420 (9.7%) of the complaints were against bodies regarding which the Office of the Ombudsman is not authorized to investigate complaints, such as banks and telephone companies.

The following table presents the bodies against which at least 100 complaints were submitted to the Office of the Ombudsman during the year 2013. Note that the number of complaints received regarding each body does not necessarily indicate the percentage of the complaints that were justified.
Name of report: Data on the Complaints in 2013
Publication framework: State of Israel - The Ombudsman - Annual Reports 39 and 40
Year of Publication: 2015
Breakdown of Complaints According to Subjects

The following chart presents a breakdown of the complaints received in 2013, according to the main subjects of the complaints, and the table that follows it presents a description of the subjects of the complaints and the breakdown thereof:
Name of report: Data on the Complaints in 2013
Publication framework: State of Israel - The Ombudsman - Annual Reports 39 and 40
Year of Publication: 2015
### Breakdown of Complaints by Principal Subjects, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Breakdown (percentage)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service to the public</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>Lack of reply or delay in reply to requests and complaints, improper behavior of public employees, failure to handle complaints or delayed handling and the like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory and other payments</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>Demands for mandatory payments, such as taxes, fees, and levies; the assessment thereof; the failure to reduce or grant exemption from the payment thereof; and demands for non-mandatory payments, such as payments for non-required services that are rendered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health, welfare, and rehabilitation</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Entitlement to medical care, medical treatment and hospitalization; social service matters; material, financial and legal assistance; placement in institutions; adoption, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumerism and purchases</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>Quality of services from companies providing water, electricity, public transportation, postal service, and other types of services, and the tariffs charged for them; and commercial transactions to which the state is a party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection and execution procedures</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Debt collection procedures of authorities, including local authorities, the Enforcement of Judgments Office; the Fines, Fees and Expenses Collection Center; and the Police.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrest and investigative procedures, judicial and other hearings</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Procedural issues arising in investigations, objections to arrest proceedings, conduct of hearings before judicial bodies (courts and tribunals) and quasi-judicial bodies such as appeals committees and medical appeal committees of the National Insurance Institute.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Name of report: Data on the Complaints in 2013
Publication framework: State of Israel - The Ombudsman - Annual Reports 39 and 40
Year of Publication: 2015
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Breakdown (percentage)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pensions and allowances</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Pensions and allowances of the National Insurance Institute, allowances paid to Holocaust survivors and the like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure, zoning and building</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Treatment of defects in infrastructure, such as sewage, electricity, water and transportation - and treatment of applications for building permits and the like, enforcement and monitoring of zoning and building laws, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Entitlement of the indigent to state assistance for housing, including entitlement to public housing and rental assistance, conditions in public housing, and so forth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees and employment</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Wages, dismissal from work, improper conduct of supervisors and requests for protective orders of employees who expose corruption, and matters relating to placement and training of jobseekers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Traffic offenses, including parking violations, parking arrangements in public places, traffic signs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental quality</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Treatment of air pollution, odor and noise nuisances, garbage disposal, prohibited smoking, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>Registration at educational institutions and transfer from one institution to another, supervision of institutions, parental payments, treatment of students with special needs, and so forth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military and defense</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>Maintaining public order, traffic delays and restrictions, Home Guard arrangements, enlistment in the IDF, and so forth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil status</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Grant of citizenship, residency permits, and more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name of report: Data on the Complaints in 2013
Publication framework: State of Israel - The Ombudsman - Annual Reports 39 and 40
Year of Publication: 2015
Breakdown of Complaints According to Manner in which Complaints were Received

The Office of the Ombudsman receives complaints sent to it by mail, by fax, by email or through the special complaint form on the Office’s website. At the Ombudsman’s branch offices, complaints can be submitted verbally. The following table presents a breakdown of complaints received in 2013, according to the manner in which they were received:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manner in which the complaint was received</th>
<th>Number of subjects</th>
<th>Percentage of all subjects of complaints</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>6,127</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular mail</td>
<td>3,232</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax</td>
<td>3,617</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbally</td>
<td>2,495</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,471</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A comparison of the data presented in this table with parallel data for the year 2012 indicates that in 2013 there was a 17.5% growth in the percentage of complaints submitted to the Office of the Ombudsman verbally (13.7% of complaints in 2012, as compared to 16.1% in 2013). Presumably, this increase results from the increase in the accessibility of the Office of the Ombudsman, due to the establishment of the branch offices throughout the country, to groups within the public for whom the other methods for accessing the Office of the Ombudsman - regular mail, email, or fax - are unavailable.

This comparison of these data also indicates that there has been a significant increase in the number of complaints submitted by email.
(38.9% in 2012, compared with 39.6% in 2013) - an increase which is paralleled by a decrease in complaints submitted by regular mail and fax (regular mail: 22.1% in 2012 compared to 20.9% in 2013; fax: 25.3% in 2012, compared with 23.4% in 2013). The reason for this appears to be that the increasing availability of email for broader portions of the population is reducing those groups’ use of regular mail and fax.
Outcomes of the Investigation of the Complaints

In 2013, the Office of the Ombudsman completed the investigation of approximately 14,090 complaints. Some of these were complaints which were received in 2012. It should be noted that approximately 50% of the complaints that were still being investigated as of the beginning of 2014 were received during the last quarter of 2013.

Those complaints the investigation of which was completed dealt with approximately 14,928 subjects. The following chart presents the results of the investigation of these subjects:

* A decision was reached as to whether or not the subject of the complaint was justified.
** The subject of the complaint was rejected as a threshold matter, in accordance with the State Comptroller Law.
*** Investigation was stopped at one stage or another in accordance with the State Comptroller Law.
Justified Complaints

It appears that 1,972 (31.6%) of the 6,253 subjects of complaints for which final substantive resolutions were reached in 2013 were justified complaints. This is an increase of 16.2% in the justified complaint rate, as compared to the rate in 2012 (which was 27.2%). It should be noted that as a practical matter, the percentage of justified complaints in 2013 was actually higher, since the above statistic does not include the 2,290 subjects, the investigation of which was discontinued because the underlying matter was rectified. The underlying matters in a significant portion of these subjects were settled only as a result of the involvement of the Office of the Ombudsman.

The bodies regarding which the percentage of justified complaints was higher than the average are described below:

Government Ministries

Prime Minister’s Office - 51.7% of 60 subjects regarding which final decisions were reached on the merits were found to be justified (this percentage also reflects complaints brought against the auxiliary bodies of the Prime Minister’s Office); Ministry of Transportation and Road Safety - 49.4% of 269 subjects; Ministry of Education - 46.6% out of 191 subjects; Ministry of the Economy - 44.1% of 220 subjects; Ministry of Defense - 38.6% of 79 subjects; Ministry of Health - 31.7% of 167 subjects.

State Institutions

1 Of the bodies regarding which decisions on the merits were reached concerning at least 50 subjects of complaints.
Israel Broadcasting Authority - 54.7% of 234 subjects regarding which final decisions were reached on the merits were found to be justified; Israel Police - 36.8% of 332 subjects; IDF - 37.8% of 90 subjects.

Local Authorities
Municipality of Lod - 48.7% of 78 subjects regarding which final decisions were reached on a substantive level were found to be justified; Jerusalem Municipality - 43.3% of 90 subjects; Haifa Municipality - 41.5% of 53 subjects.

Other Public Bodies
Israel Postal Co., Ltd. - 56.4% of 149 subjects regarding which final decisions were reached on the merits were found to be justified. Israel Electric Corp. Ltd. - 34.3% of 73 subjects.
Rate of Justified Complaints for each Body against which Complaints were Filed, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Israel Postal Co. Ltd.</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel Broadcasting Authority</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister's Office</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Transportation and Road Safety</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality of Lod</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of the Economy</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality of Jerusalem</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality of Haifa</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Defense</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel Defense Forces</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel Police</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel Electric Corp.</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Finance</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clalit Health Services</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel Lands Authority</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality of Beersheva</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Insurance Institute</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel Prison Service</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforcement and Collection Authority</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Justice</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population and Immigration Authority</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality of Tel Aviv-Jaffa</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amidar - National Housing Company</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Construction and Housing</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Immigration and Absorption</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average rate of justified complaints (31.6%)

* Of the bodies regarding which decisions on the merits were reached concerning at least 50 subjects of complaints.

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Complaints from Knesset Members

The Knesset has special status regarding the submission of complaints. Pursuant to section 37 of the State Comptroller Law, Knesset members may submit a complaint even regarding incidents concerning harm that has been done to parties other than themselves. In 2013, Knesset members submitted 19 complaints to the Office of the Ombudsman.

In November of 1976, the State Audit Affairs Committee of the Knesset decided that the Office of the Ombudsman annual report should include a list of the names of the Knesset Members who have submitted complaints to the Office of the Ombudsman. The following are the names of the Knesset members who submitted complaints to the Office of the Ombudsman in 2013, and the numbers of complaints that each of them submitted.

Binyamin Ben-Eliezer  1  Yaakov Margi  1
Shelly Yachimovich  1  Orit Struk  1
Eitan Cabel  1  Micky Rosenthal  1
Amnon Cohen  10  Nachman Shai  1
Yaakov Litzman  1  Itzik Shmuli  1

The chapter entitled “Complaints Relating to the Rights of Prisoners and Detainees” presents a description of the complaint submitted by Knesset Member Orit Struk (Complaint 1, p. 85)
Work of the Branch Offices with the Public

The branch offices in the periphery areas (Beersheva, Lod, Nazereth-Upper Nazareth and Kiryat Shmona), at which the Office of the Ombudsman has public reception hours, help to make the Office more accessible to the residents of these areas. These branch offices work in the areas in which they are located to make it possible for the more disadvantaged population groups who live there to reach the branch offices, to consult with the offices’ employees, and to submit complaints to them. (These are population groups for whom the standard methods of appeals to the Office of the Ombudsman, such as the online form, standard mail, email or fax, are not always available.) There are Russian speakers and Arabic speakers in these branch offices, and they help those who are not fluent Hebrew speakers to make their appeals to the Office of the Ombudsman and to either submit complaints or receive information. The Beersheva branch office has on its staff an Amharic-speaking lawyer, who helps immigrants from Ethiopia who live in the southern part of the country to be in contact with the office.

During 2013, as in previous years, the branch offices worked to increase the level of their accessibility to disadvantaged population groups who live in the areas under their charge, and to make the residents aware of the existence of the Office of the Ombudsman, of its powers regarding the handling of complaints, and of the various methods that may be used for submitting complaints. In order to achieve this goal, the branch offices have engaged in wide-spread publicity work among the local welfare offices and the various aid organizations; they have also placed advertisements in local
newspapers, describing the work of the Office of the Ombudsman and the location of its branch offices. The branch office employees were interviewed on radio programs and on a program on one of the regional television stations, and spoke about the work done by the branch offices.

It should be noted that this publicity work has produced results. Many individuals have approached these branch offices since they were opened throughout the country - primarily members of population groups who had rarely approached the Office of the Ombudsman before the branch offices were opened, or who had not even been aware of its existence.

Approximately 7,000 people contacted the Ombudsman’s branch offices throughout the country in 2013. Some of these people submitted complaints, and some received assistance in resolving problems that they had encountered. In many cases, this assistance meant that there was no need to submit a complaint. Individuals whose complaints could not be investigated within the framework of the Office of the Ombudsman received information about the bodies that were authorized to deal with their matters. Approximately 27% of the complaints that the Office of the Ombudsman received in 2013 came through these branch offices.

The following are the numbers of enquiries made with the branch offices and in the Haifa office, during 2013:
As stated, the goal of the branch offices’ work is to enable the disadvantaged population groups to submit complaints in the languages that they speak, and these offices therefore employ workers who speak Russian, Arabic and Amharic. The following data indicate the breakdown of the population sectors of those who contact the branch offices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beersheva Office</th>
<th>Haifa Office</th>
<th>Lod Office</th>
<th>Nazareth-Upper Nazareth Office</th>
<th>Kiryat Shmona Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of requests</td>
<td>2,190</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>1,071</td>
<td>1,594</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of requests that rose to the level of complaint cases</td>
<td>1,310</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beersheva Office</th>
<th>Haifa Office</th>
<th>Lod Office</th>
<th>Nazareth-Upper Nazareth Office</th>
<th>Kiryat Shmona Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long-time residents [of Israel]</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants from CIS countries</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants from Ethiopia</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority groups</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
International Contacts

1. In June 2013, the Association of Mediterranean Ombudsmen held a conference in Amman. Representatives of 21 countries and bodies – including Jordan, Albania, Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Malta, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Portugal, the European Union and the Venice Conference (the consulting body for the European Council dealing with constitutional law) – participated. The conference, sponsored by King Abdullah II of Jordan, dealt with “Efficient Investigation of Complaints.” The professional sessions dealt with, inter alia, the following topics: increased cooperation between ombudsman’s offices and the bodies against which complaints are submitted; increasing awareness and accessibility of these institutions; increasing work efficiency and the training of employees; and the impact of the economic difficulties in Europe and Africa on the work of the ombudsman’s offices.
Amman Conference

Israel was represented by the Legal Advisor to the Ombudsman, Attorney Miri Ella, and the Senior Head of Division at the Office of the Ombudsman, Attorney Johnathan Marcovitch. Attorney Marcovitch spoke to the conference participants about the Israeli Ombudsman’s experience in using mediation proceedings as a method for resolving disputes between citizens and government authorities. During the conference, the Israeli representatives met with Israel’s ambassador to Jordan.

During the course of the conference, the Association’s Management Committee (of which Israel’s State Comptroller and Ombudsman is a member) was convened; the application of Catalonia to join the Association as a regular member was discussed at the meeting. The Spanish Ombudsman objected, and the request was submitted for legal review.
2. In October 2013, the Fourth Seminar for Professionals of the Association of Mediterranean Ombudsmen was held in the capital of Morocco - Rabat. The Seminar was organized by the Ombudsman’s Institution of Morocco, with the cooperation of the Ombudsman of France. Participants included representatives of the ombudsman’s offices in all the members of the Association, including Jordan, Algeria, Morocco, France, Malta and the Palestinian Authority - as well as representatives of the Ombudsman of the European Union. Representatives of the ombudsman’s offices of Belgium, Denmark and Sweden spoke at the Seminar as well.

Seminar in Rabat

Israel’s representative at the Seminar was Attorney Ronen Karavany, Senior Deputy Division Head at the Office of the Ombudsman.

The Seminar dealt with the contribution made by the public ombudsmen to the simplification of administrative proceedings and the increased accessibility of public services. Attorney Karavany presented Israel’s unique integrated model, according to which the
State Comptroller is also the Ombudsman. He also described to the seminar the work of the branch offices, which have been operating successfully in Israel for several years, and noted that their work helps to increase awareness of the work of the Office of the Ombudsman among the disadvantaged population groups, and increases that institution’s accessibility for them.