



Report of the State comptroller of Israel | January 2024

Ministry of National Security

Mandatory Military Service in the Ministry of National Security Units



Mandatory Military Service in the Ministry of National Security Units

Background

About 5,500 female and male soldiers each year serve in the Ministry of National Security units, including the Israel Police, the Israel Border Police, and the Israel Prison Service (IPS). This audit examined various aspects of the service in the Ministry of National Security units, including the normative regulation of the mandatory service in the Police and the IPS, the implemented manner of this special mandatory service arrangement, the tasks assigned to the conscripts and their suitability for their duties, the medical care provided to the conscripts, the training for the duties, the conditions of the conscripts' service, their safety and their service's usefulness. The State Comptroller decided to prepare an interim report summarizing the findings about the safety of the soldiers serving in the Police, the Border Police, and the IPS, given the severity of the findings on this subject and other reasons detailed in the report. The said interim report was published in November 2022¹. The current report summarizes the audit findings concerning the additional aspects examined.

This unique service arrangement, which deviates from the format of regular service in the IDF, is regulated by legislation through temporary orders that are extended from time to time. In February 2023, the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee extended the validity of the temporary order allowing the placement of conscripts in the Police by about three years, until December 31, 2025. The Minister of Defense and the Minister of National Security decided to extend the validity of the temporary order that allows the placement of soldiers in the IPS until August 15, 2023, that is, for six months only, during which the Ministry of National Security will convert the HR standard of conscripts' positions in the IPS to the HR standard of permanent prison guards. As of July 2023, following the submission of this audit report and to enable the IPS to prepare for the conversion of the conscripts' positions into positions of permanent prison guards, the Ministry of National Security is promoting the legislation of a transition order that will allow the continued service of the soldiers stationed in the IPS while the temporary order was in effect (i.e., until August 15, 2023) and even after it has expired. Accordingly, the conscripts serving in the Israel Prison Service can continue their service in the IPS until the end of the mandatory service period or until December 31, 2024, the earlier dates.

Converting the conscripts' positions into positions of permanent prison guards in the IPS responds to some of the audit deficiencies and recommendations, both in the interim report and this report.

¹ <https://www.mevaker.gov.il/sites/DigitalLibrary/Pages/Reports/7553-1.aspx>.



Key Figures

1,045

conscripts serve in the Police, 74% are female soldiers. Most of the conscripts serve in patrol positions (42%), as call center operators (22%), and in administrative positions (12%)

about 570

conscripts serve in the Prison Service, most of them as guards in the prison facilities; About 35% (196) are females

28

years in which a temporary time order anchors the placement of conscript soldiers in the Ministry of National Security units

about 20%

of the patrol order of battle and about 25% of the order in the call centers and command centers in the Police are conscripts, although some are not suited for the performance of duties in these units

about 43%

(245 out of 574) the dropout rate of conscripts serve in the Police in 2021

about 25%

the average annual gap between the HR standard for conscripts in the Prison Service and the actual situation

64

the maximum medical profile of the conscripts in the Police; Nearly 40% of them (395 out of 1,027) have a medical profile of 64 or below, a profile that may hinder them from performing their duties optimally

about 46%

of conscripts in the IPS who responded to the State Comptroller's Office questionnaires stated that, in retrospect, they would have chosen not to serve in the organization



Audit Actions



From February 2022 to March 2023, the State Comptroller's Office audited the service of conscripts in the Police and the Prison Service. The audit was conducted at the Ministry of National Security, the Police, and the Prison Service. Completion examinations were conducted at the Ministry of Defense, the IDF, and the Ministry of Finance. In August 2022, the State Comptroller's Office distributed questionnaires among about 13,000 conscripts and discharged soldiers who served in the Police (including the Border Police) and the Prison Service. The questionnaires' findings were included in the interim report and this report.

Key Findings



The Threshold Conditions for Service in the Police and Prison Service² – the IDF places conscripts not suited to the Police's needs and operational service therein. The characteristics of some of the conscripts, including their level of mastery of the Hebrew language, their profile, and their physical fitness level, are low, hindering them to perform their duties optimally: in 2021, most of the conscripts serving in the Police (525 out of 1,025, 51%) had an initial psycho technical rating (IPR) of 40 or less; About 71% (738 out of 1038) of the conscripts serving in the Police had a quality group rating of 51 or below. About 39% (401 out of 1038) had a low-quality group rating of 48 or below, and about 15% of them (159 out of 1024) had a score of 6 or below (on a scale ranging from 5 to 8), indicating low command of the Hebrew language. The decision to change the threshold requirements of soldiers for service in the Police rests exclusively with the IDF, and although the Police repeatedly raised these difficulties with the IDF, the latter did not change the threshold requirements in the list of military professions and adjust them to the needs of the Police, and the professional gaps remained unanswered. Similarly, despite the need raised by the IPS to improve the "quality characteristic" of the conscripts and adapt them to the requirements, the IDF did not change the conditions established in the list of military professions and adjust them to the IPS needs.

² The threshold conditions for placement in the Police, according to the list of military professions, include, among others: an initial psycho-technical rating (IPR) of 30, on a scale ranging from 10 (the lowest score) to 90 (the highest score); Hebrew level 5 – on a scale ranging from 5 (the lowest number) to 8 (the highest number), and a medical profile of 25, on a scale ranging from 97 (the highest profile) to 21 (the lowest profile, which means complete lack of eligibility). The threshold conditions for placement in the IPS, according to said list includes, among others, Hebrew level 5 and a medical profile of 45.



- 📌 Data on Return to the IDF from the Police and the Prison Service** – in 2020, about 45% (84 out of 187) of conscripts returning to the IDF from the Police did so at their request, and about 26% (49 out of 187) did so due to incompatibility or medical reasons. In the IPS, in 2020–2021, 606 conscripts were recruited, but 128 (about 21%) moved back to the IDF – about 38% of them due to incompatibility, adjustment difficulties, or medical limitations. Naturally, the police training given to these soldiers who returned to the IDF thereafter was lost. This figure is of particular importance given the high rate of return to the IDF.
- 📌 Suitability of Conscripts Serving in the Police to the Duty** – over the years, the performance of conscripts serving in the Police has been examined by various bodies. The findings continuously and systematically indicate a significant and structural incompatibility of the conscripts to perform their assigned tasks. Nevertheless, conscripts are still assigned to positions that do not correspond to their abilities and characteristics, and in particular, patrol positions (about 440, about 42%) and as dispatchers (about 230, about 22%) significantly adversely affect the conscripts themselves and the competence of the Police in handling its sensitive tasks. According to the analysis of the questionnaires, about a quarter of the conscripts serving in the Police (135 out of 559, about 24%) reported that they asked to change their assignment when the main reason for the request was incompatibility for the position (36 out of 118, 31%). About 47% of the respondents (258 out of 551) indicated the need for additional training. Consequently, the service provided to citizens, the Police's deterrence, and the degree of public trust in it may be affected.
- 📌 The Conscripts Rate Relative to the Danger Degree at the Station** – there is no equivalence between the degree of danger involved in service at a particular station or the scope of its activity and the rate of conscripts serving therein among all those serving in the patrol unit at the station. Thus, it was found that about 22% of conscripts in the patrol units are stationed at stations defined as "Arab" or "mixed" stations (115 positions out of 516). The Police also do not have a key for the HR standard of conscripts' positions or a criterion for their distribution.
- 📌 Temporary Arrangement** – in 2012–2018, the scope of HR standard of conscripts in the Prison Service was reduced by about 20% (from 961 to 760) and in the Police by about 40% (from 1,850 to 1,161). Since then, the HR standard of conscripts has not changed for either entity. The main conclusion of all the committees that dealt with the matter was that the placement of soldiers in units outside of the IDF should only be done in exceptional cases since the conscripts in the Police and the IPS were not intended to serve as cheap labor used as a substitute for the allocation of permanent positions. Nevertheless, the placement of soldiers in the Police continues (in the IPS, the service of conscripts, as mentioned, is expected to continue until December 2024). Furthermore, the arrangement of conscripts' service in these bodies is set in a temporary order under



the Defense Service Law [Consolidated Version], 1986 (the Law), whose effect, for 28 years, has been extended from time to time for fixed periods.

- Placement in Units Under the Order and Reporting to the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee** – some of the conscripts are placed in police units that are not listed in the Defense Service Order, such as the Spokesperson and Communications Division and technology units, without legal authority. Furthermore, in various IPS units, conscripts are stationed in administrative positions, even though the Minister of Defense has not issued an order allowing it, as required by law. Moreover, as of the audit end date, for about 14 years, the Minister of National Security did not provide the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, as required by the Defense Service Law, reports on the number of conscripts assigned to the IPS, the roles they fulfill and the tasks they perform. In addition, in the years in which the effect of the temporary order was extended by law from time to time in the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, the economic impact of shortening the duration of the mandatory service on the economy was not presented or discussed.
- Updating the Arrangement Between the IDF and the Prison Service and the Police** – although the need to update the arrangement between the IDF, the Police and the IPS has increased over the years, from the time the IDF signed the two arrangements – about 16 years ago with the Police and about 18 years ago with the IPS – they have not been updated or amended, except for the issue of safety, for which an arrangement was signed in August 2022. The need to update the arrangement regarding the HR standard of conscripts and their gender mix, the "quality characteristic" and the military medical profile of the conscripts, the positions they will hold, and the medical care they will be given has arisen.
- The Staffing Rate** – from 2016 until 2022, there is a constant gap between the HR standard (1,474 to 1,161) and the number of conscripts serving in the Police (1,189 to 949) – an average annual gap of about 12%, and a constant gap between the HR standard (860 to 760) and the average number of conscripts serving in the IPS (716 to 511) – an average annual gap of about 25%. Staffing gaps inevitably affect the ability of the Police and the IPS to fulfill their duties optimally.
- Medical Care for Conscripts Serving in the Prison Service** – 54% of the conscripts in the IPS who responded to the questionnaires stated that they encountered difficulties when requiring medical care. The medical care of conscripts serving in the IPS is deficient in several aspects: it does not meet the accepted standards; The doctors in the IPS operate without having all the medical information necessary to provide proper care to the conscripts; There is an increased burden on the system due to the need to adapt the medical referrals to the format required by the IDF; There are considerable delays in the provision of care; There is difficulty in monitoring the results of the tests and identifying in real time the need for the provision of essential care. Alongside the above, there are no clear medical procedures for various essential matters, insufficient access to



information about medical services and the medical rights of conscripts in the IPS, and they are not provided with remote medical services. These deficiencies may result in actual harm to the health of the conscripts in the IPS. For example, according to the Prison Service, due to repeated postponements of the arrangement of outsourced medical care, the medical response to the conscripts serving in the IPS is insufficient and may even endanger lives and lead to tragedy.





📌 Exhaustion of Disciplinary Procedures and Drug Tests – when suspicion arises of the commission of a criminal offense by conscripts, the Police and the IPS return them to the IDF without disciplinary proceedings, and after their return to the IDF, no disciplinary measures are taken against them. Thus, in 2020–2022, the Police returned 84 conscripts to the IDF due to suspicion of committing a criminal offense, of which 68 were serving in the Border Police and 16 in the Police, and the IPS returned to the IDF 10 conscripts during that period due to offenses that were transferred to the Prison Personnel Investigations Department (Yahas) – before it has been decided whether to file an indictment against them in court for the acts attributed to them. Furthermore, despite the provisions of the Military Judiciary Law, 1955, in the IPS and the Police, no tests are carried out among the conscripts for the detection of the use of a dangerous drug or the possession of a dangerous drug.



Increasing the Motivation to Serve in the Police and the Prison Service – the Police and the IPS hold from time to time conferences designed to encourage candidates for mandatory military service to apply for placement in one of the bodies and reduce the dropout rate of service therein. At these conferences, information is conveyed about the service in the Police and the IPS, among other things, about the recruitment process, the experience of service, and the conditions of service and welfare.





Key Recommendations

-  It is recommended that the Minister of Defense and the Minister of National Security examine, in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance and all the relevant bodies, the arrangement concerning the placement of conscripts in the Police and Prison Service, including the examination of the budgetary costs involved and the efficiency and usefulness of their placement, given the short period in which they serve in their positions. This examination must be conducted against the alternatives of placing permanent officers and their effect on the ability to carry out the Police and the IPS operational tasks. It is further recommended that the IDF and the Ministry of Defense check the data of the conscripts intended for placement in units outside the IDF and examine whether some of them can fill the unmanned positions in the regular array or bolster the reserve array. According to the results of said examinations, if necessary, it is recommended that the ministers regulate the matter permanently and not temporarily, with the adjustments needed.
-  It is recommended that the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee consider shortening the duration of the mandatory service. Moreover, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Defense, and the Ministry of National Security should present them the economic aspects involved in placing the conscripts in units outside of the IDF, as well as alternatives for placing them there given these costs, including the possibility of gradually reducing their number.
-  The Police, in cooperation with the IDF, should adjust the duties and types of tasks assigned to conscripts and analyze – given the difficulties that were raised over the years – the changes that must be made in the training and support provided to the conscripts, so that their suitability for the roles and tasks will increase. It is further recommended that the IDF, in cooperation with the Police, consider creating a scale of threshold conditions for candidates to serve in the Police according to the requirements of the various positions and to update the threshold conditions in the list of military professions. It is recommended that the Minister of National Security initiate a discussion in the government on the issue of the placement of conscripts in the Police in the event it is decided to continue the arrangement, to examine its consequences and the steps that must be taken to ensure that the integration of soldiers into the Police will meet its needs and fulfill its purpose. Suppose the assignment of conscripts to serve in the IPS continues, even temporarily. In that case, it is recommended that the IPS and the IDF jointly formulate the threshold conditions necessary to perform the various tasks in the organization and that these will be anchored in the list of military professions.
-  The Police must refrain from assigning conscripts to the Spokesperson and Communications Division, and technological units as long as they are not included in a Defense Service Order. It is recommended that the IDF compile with the Police the complete list of positions in the police units where the conscripts can be assigned, according to their needs and according to the provisions of the Law, and anchor their placement in



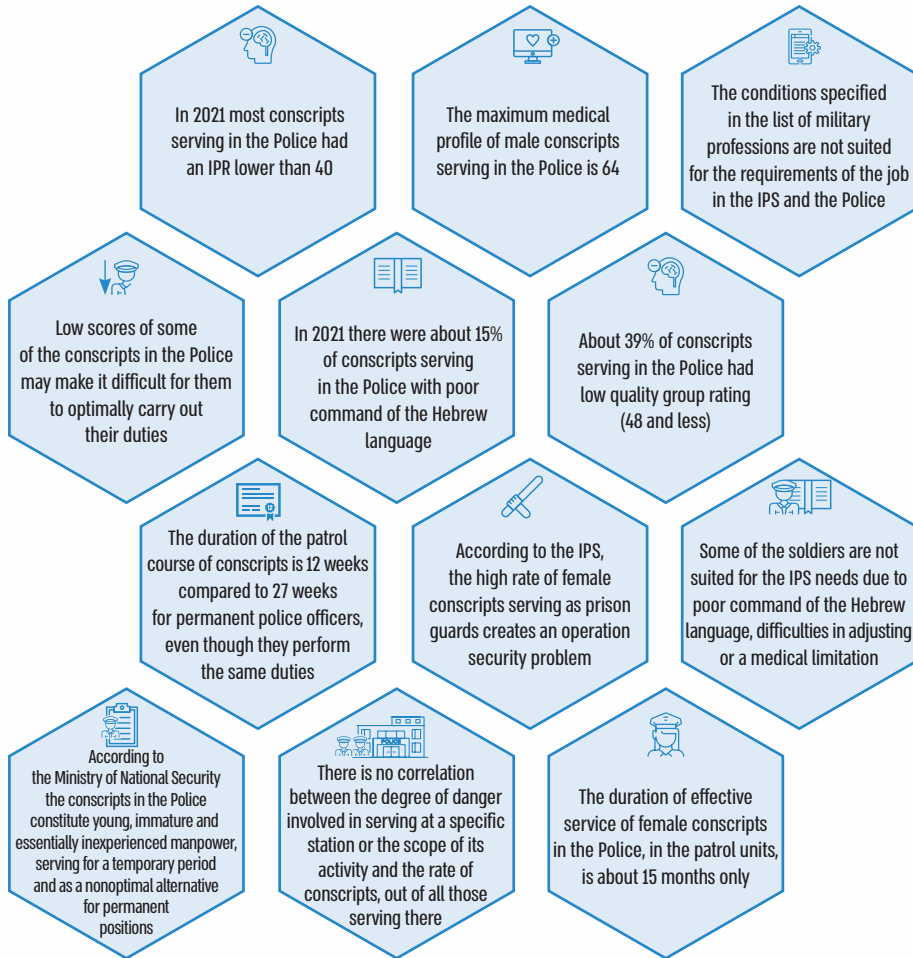
these units in the Defense Service Order after it has been submitted for approval by the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee. The IPS must formulate, refine, and improve the list of all the positions designated for conscripts and the tasks each of the positions entails. It is recommended that after the list of positions and functions has been compiled, these will be transferred to the Minister of National Security so, under the law, he will report to the Committee on the matter annually and regularly.

 It is recommended that the Ministry of National Security and the Police examine, in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance, how to contend with staffing gaps without deepening other problems related to the use of the workforce, and in particular, increasing the reliance on conscripts who have no experience in dealing with the Police's tasks.

 It is recommended that the IDF, the Police, and the IPS, in consultation with the Ministry of Justice, determine the proper handling of disciplinary offenses by conscripts serving in the Police and the IPS, ensuring the exhaustion of the disciplinary procedures against them, before or after their return to the IDF. Furthermore, as required by law, the Prisons Service Commissioner must authorize an appointee to perform drug testing for dangerous drugs or their use and ensure that such testing is carried out in practice. In addition, the Police Commissioner must ensure that the above appointee (deputy commander of the Border Police) will carry it out among all conscripts, not just in the Border Police.



The Key Findings on the Suitability of the Conscripts for Their Duties in the Police and the Prison Service





Summary

Mandatory military service in the Police and Prison Service is a unique service arrangement that deviates from the format of regular service in the IDF. Recently this arrangement has been on the public agenda, among other things, following the disclosure of the events that became known to the public as the "Pimping of female prison guards at Gilboa Prison." Over the years, various bodies have examined the placement of soldiers in units outside the IDF, and many reports dealt with the topic, including the State Comptroller reports.

In 2021, the State Comptroller examined the mandatory service in the Ministry of National Security units. In 2022, due to the severe findings from the audit and other detailed reasons, he published a special interim report about the safety of conscripts (female and male soldiers) in the Ministry of National Security units.

The interim report raised many deficiencies of safety and the sense of personal security experienced by many of the conscripts serving in the Police and the IPS. The current report deals with complementary aspects of the mandatory military service in the Ministry of National Security units, and it raises significant gaps in three areas:

1. The normative regulation of the unique service arrangement of IDF soldiers in the Police and Prison Service is lacking, and it has been based for decades on temporary orders that are renewed from time to time.
2. Some conscripts are not suited for their duties in the Police and Prison Service.
3. There are deficiencies in the arrangement implementation, including missing work interfaces with the IDF and incompatibility between the implementation of the arrangement and the obligations of the bodies (the IDF, the Police, and the Prison Service) in the joint working procedures signed between them in this matter; A noticeable and continuous gap between the HR standard and reality; Serious deficiencies in the medical care provided to the conscripts in the IPS; And non-exhaustion of disciplinary procedures against conscripts sent back to the IDF.

It is appropriate that the findings of the interim report and this audit report be presented to the Minister of Defense and the Minister of National Security and serve as input to any examination and decision procedure regarding the very existence of a legal arrangement that allows the placement of soldiers in units outside the IDF and the manner of its implementation.