



The State Comptroller
and Ombudsman of Israel



State of Israel

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OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

ANOTHER ACTION-PACKED YEAR

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY IN 2019

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A MESSAGE FROM THE OMBUDSMAN AND THE HEAD OF THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN



The State Comptroller also acts as Ombudsman, and he fulfills this function by means of the Office of the Ombudsman. The Office is an objective, professional and accessible body that investigates complaints received from any person in order to protect his/her rights and to promote effective and just public service at all levels of society.

COMPLAINTS ARE HANDLED BY THE OFFICE IN VARIOUS WAYS AND EVERY COMPLAINT IS INVESTIGATED IN THE MANNER BEST SUITED TO IT. AMONG OTHERS, THE INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS MAKES USE OF THE "UNDERCOVER CLIENT" AND THE ON-SITE INSPECTION.

The Office carries out many important activities in order to increase its accessibility and expose its activities to the public in general and to populations deserving special attention in particular.

AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE OFFICE OPERATES REGIONAL RECEPTION BUREAUS IN NAZARETH, LOD AND BE'ER SHEVA, IN ADDITION TO THE RECEPTION BUREAUS LOCATED IN THE OFFICES OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER AND OMBUDSMAN IN THE THREE MAJOR CITIES - JERUSALEM, TELAVIV AND HAIFA. THE OFFICE'S BUREAUS COMPRISE STAFF MEMBERS WHO SPEAK HEBREW, ARABIC, ENGLISH, RUSSIAN, AMHARIC, FRENCH AND SPANISH. AS A RULE, PERSONS REQUIRING THE SERVICES OF THE OFFICE ARE RECEIVED IN THE BUREAUS BY STAFF MEMBERS WHO SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE AND WITH WHOM THEY CAN CONSULT AND FILE THEIR COMPLAINT VERBALLY.

THE LEGISLATOR ALSO GRANTED THE OMBUDSMAN AUTHORITY TO ISSUE A PROTECTION ORDER - PROVISIONAL OR FINAL - TO EMPLOYEES WHOSE RIGHTS HAVE BEEN INFRINGED BY THEIR SUPERIORS AS

A RESULT OF THEIR EXPOSING ACTS OF CORRUPTION. IN 2019, 57 COMPLAINTS WERE FILED BY EMPLOYEES ABOUT SUCH VIOLATIONS OF THEIR RIGHTS. THE INVESTIGATION OF 64 COMPLAINTS OF THIS KIND WAS COMPLETED BY THE END OF THE YEAR (INCLUDING COMPLAINTS FILED IN PREVIOUS YEARS).

WE WISH TO THANK ALL THE STAFF OF THE OFFICE, WHO WORK DILIGENTLY AND PROFESSIONALLY TO ASSIST COMPLAINANTS IN THE EXHAUSTION OF THEIR RIGHTS AND IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES.

ON A FINAL NOTE, WE ARE LOOKING AHEAD AND DOING EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO DIVERSIFY THE WAYS OF COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION, TO MAKE IT EASIER TO CONTACT THE OFFICE AND TO INCREASE ITS ACCESSIBILITY TO POPULATIONS WORTHY OF SPECIAL ATTENTION. WE INVITE THE GENERAL PUBLIC TO CONTINUE TO CONTACT THE OFFICE. KEEP ON SEEKING HELP FROM US WHENEVER YOU ENCOUNTER DIFFICULTY IN EXERCISING YOUR RIGHTS AND IN RECEIVING SERVICES FROM PUBLIC BODIES.



MATANYAHU ENGLMAN
STATE COMPTROLLER
AND OMBUDSMAN



ESTHER BEN-HAIM
HEAD OF THE OFFICE OF
THE OMBUDSMAN

JERUSALEM, JUNE 2020

IN THE STATE OF ISRAEL, THE STATE COMPTROLLER ALSO SERVES AS OMBUDSMAN. THIS INTEGRATION OF FUNCTIONS IS UNIQUE IN THE WORLD, AND IS OF GREAT BENEFIT. THE OMBUDSMAN PERFORMS HIS FUNCTION BY MEANS OF THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN (THE OFFICE).

THE GOAL OF THE OMBUDSMAN IS TO ACT AS A MOUTHPIECE FOR EVERY PERSON, AND IN PARTICULAR FOR POPULATIONS THAT DESERVE SPECIAL ATTENTION; TO ASSIST PERSONS, WHOSE RIGHTS HAVE BEEN INFRINGED, IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES. THE ACTIONS OF THE OMBUDSMAN HELP THE PUBLIC AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND THE STRENGTHENING OF THE DEMOCRATIC REGIME IN ISRAEL.

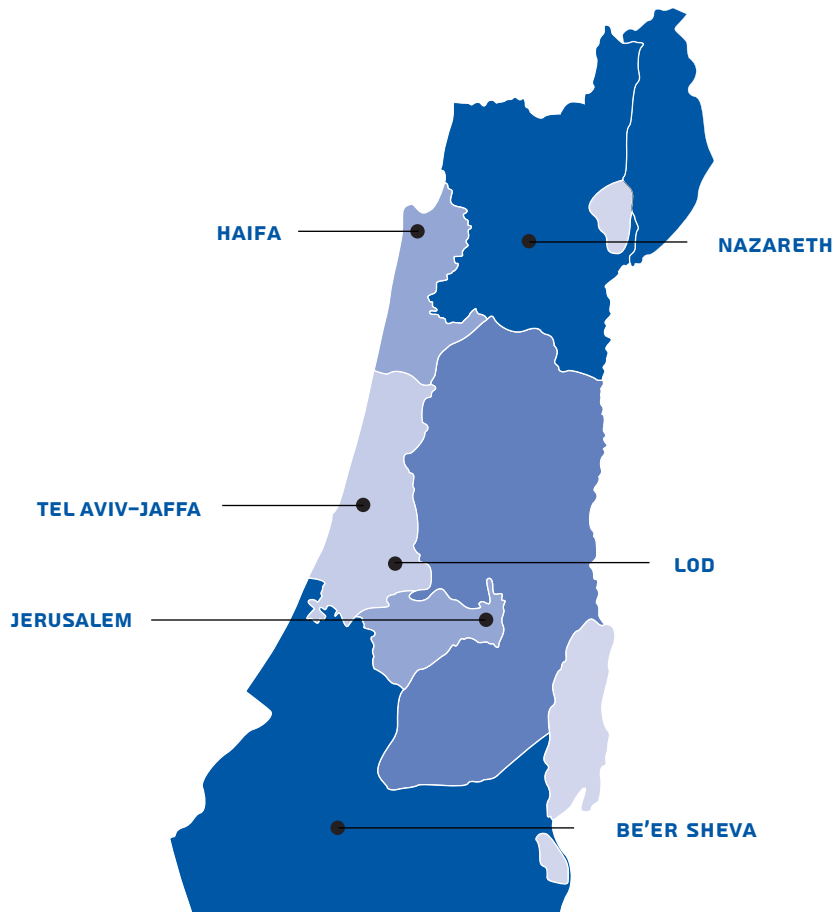
THE HEAD OF THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN WAS APPOINTED IN 2017 BY THE STATE AUDIT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF THE KNESSET (PARLIAMENT), UPON THE PROPOSAL OF THE OMBUDSMAN. AT THE END OF 2019, THE OFFICE COMPRISED 103 EMPLOYEES - 81 LAWYERS, 3 SOCIAL WORKERS AND 19 ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF MEMBERS WHO ASSISTED IN THE HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS.

EVERY YEAR THE OMBUDSMAN PRESENTS A REPORT ON HIS ACTIVITIES IN THE PRECEDING YEAR, INCLUDING A GENERAL REVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE AND A DESCRIPTION OF THE HANDLING OF SELECTED COMPLAINTS. THE REPORT IS TABLED IN THE KNESSET¹.

MAKING THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC

THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN ACTS IN MULTIFARIOUS WAYS TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF ITS EXISTENCE AND OF THE POSSIBILITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO RECEIVE ASSISTANCE FROM IT IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE EXHAUSTION

[1] [THE FULL REPORT](#) (IN HEBREW) CAN BE FOUND ON THE WEBSITE OF THE OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER AND OMBUDSMAN.



OF HIS OR HER RIGHTS. THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF THE WAYS IN WHICH THIS IS DONE:

Operation of reception bureaus

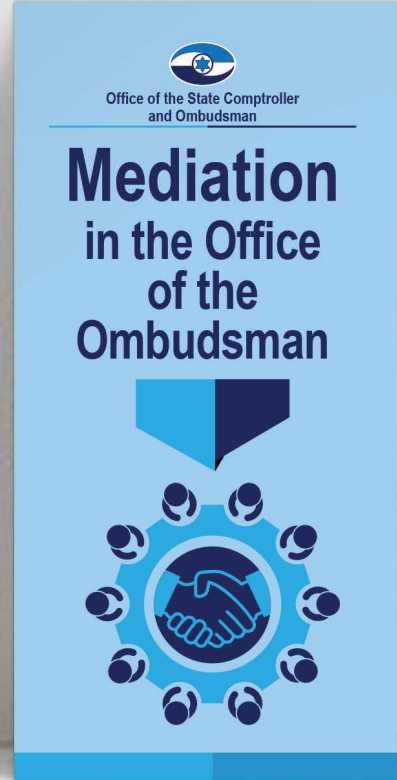
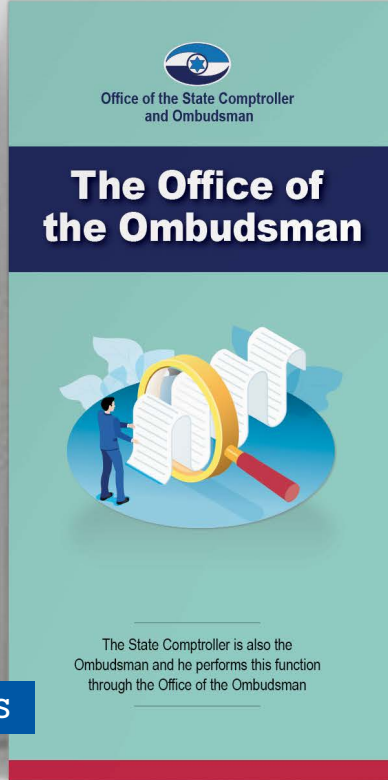
THE OFFICE OPERATES REGIONAL RECEPTION BUREAUS IN THE SOCIAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL PERIPHERY OF ISRAEL. THE ACTIVITY OF THE RECEPTION BUREAUS ENABLES THOSE WHO HAVE DIFFICULTY IN CONTACTING THE OFFICE BY DIGITAL MEANS TO FILE COMPLAINTS IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE EXHAUSTION OF THEIR RIGHTS.

Making the Office accessible to people speaking different languages

THE STAFF OF THE BUREAUS OF THE OFFICE SPEAK HEBREW, ARABIC, ENGLISH, RUSSIAN, AMHARIC, FRENCH AND SPANISH, THEREBY ASSISTING COMPLAINANTS WHO SPEAK THESE LANGUAGES.

Informational activities

THE OFFICE CONDUCTS CONTINUAL INFORMATIONAL ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, IN ORDER TO RAISE THE AWARENESS OF DIFFERENT POPULATIONS AS TO THE POSSIBILITY OF RECEIVING ASSISTANCE FROM THE OMBUDSMAN. IN 2019, THE STAFF OF THE OFFICE CONDUCTED INFORMATIONAL ACTIVITIES



THE NEW INFORMATION PAMPHLETS

FOR DIFFERENT BODIES, SUCH AS ASSOCIATIONS FOR RIGHTS EXHAUSTION, SCHOOLS AND SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENTS IN THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES, AS WELL AS INFORMATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN ARABIC AND RUSSIAN IN THE MEDIA AND SOCIAL NETWORKS. FURTHERMORE, THE OFFICE HELD MEETINGS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS AND WITH ACTIVISTS REPRESENTING DIFFERENT POPULATION GROUPS, IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FROM THEM IDEAS AND INSIGHTS AS TO HOW TO MAKE THE SERVICES OF THE OFFICE ACCESSIBLE TO PARTICULAR POPULATIONS. THE OFFICE HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO IMPLEMENT SOME OF THE IDEAS AND INSIGHTS GATHERED FROM THE MEETINGS.

Presentation of a catchy and concise explanatory video

THE VIDEO "[SIMPLY FILE A COMPLAINT](#)" IN HEBREW, ARABIC AND ENGLISH, DETAILS THE AUTHORITY OF THE OFFICE AND WAYS OF CONTACTING IT. THE VIDEO CAN BE VIEWED ON THE WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGE OF THE OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER AND OMBUDSMAN.

Publication of information pamphlets

THE OFFICE HAS ISSUED [TWO NEWLY DESIGNED INFORMATION PAMPHLETS](#) FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES: THE "OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN" PAMPHLET AND THE "MEDIATION IN THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN" PAMPHLET.

Cooperation with rights-exhaustion bodies

IN 2019, THE OFFICE LAUNCHED THE PROGRAMME "THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN IN THE COMMUNITY". IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PROGRAMME, A CALL WENT OUT TO BODIES DEALING WITH THE EXHAUSTION OF RIGHTS, WHICH HAVE RECEPTION BRANCHES IN THE PERIPHERY - INVITING THEM TO OFFER SUGGESTIONS FOR COOPERATION WITH THE OFFICE ON THIS SUBJECT. ACCORDING TO THE CALL, TEAMS OF THE OFFICE WILL GO TO THE RECEPTION BRANCHES OF THE SAID BODIES IN THE PERIPHERY, WILL MEET WITH THE RESIDENTS OF THE AREA AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO EXERCISE

THEIR RIGHTS, INCLUDING FILING A COMPLAINT. THE TEAMS OF THE OFFICE WILL ALSO INSTRUCT THE VOLUNTEERS OF THESE BODIES AND EXPLAIN TO THEM WHEN THEY CAN RECEIVE ASSISTANCE FROM THE OFFICE, OR TRANSFER TO IT COMPLAINTS THAT IT IS AUTHORIZED TO INVESTIGATE.

Adapting accessibility for a disabled person wishing to file a complaint

THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN ADAPTS ACCESSIBILITY TO THE NEEDS OF EVERY DISABLED PERSON WISHING TO RECEIVE ITS SERVICES, INCLUDING THE FILING OF A COMPLAINT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE LAW.

Running a website

[THE WEBSITE OF THE OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER AND OMBUDSMAN](#) ACTS AS AN IMPORTANT MEDIA CHANNEL FOR CONVEYING INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC AND RECEIVING INFORMATION FROM THE PUBLIC. THE WEBSITE CONTAINS ACCESSIBLE [ONLINE FORMS](#) FOR THE FILING OF COMPLAINTS.

CONTACT WITH THE PUBLIC BODIES²

IN 2019, THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN ORGANIZED A SPECIAL CONFERENCE, THE FIRST OF ITS KIND, ON THE THEME "MULTI-DIMENSIONAL PROTECTION OF SOCIAL RIGHTS IN ISRAEL". THE CONFERENCE, WHICH TOOK PLACE IN THE SHALVA NATIONAL CENTER² IN JERUSALEM, WAS ATTENDED BY SOME 300 GUESTS WHO DEAL WITH THE IMPORTANT TASK OF HANDLING PUBLIC COMPLAINTS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR OF ISRAEL. THE PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED PEOPLE IN CHARGE OF PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AND INTERNAL AUDITORS IN GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES, LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND OTHER PUBLIC BODIES, AS WELL AS REPRESENTATIVES OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS. THOSE ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE, WHICH DISCUSSED DIFFERENT DILEMMAS ARISING FROM THE INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE, RECEIVED PROGRESSIVE TOOLS FOR THE HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS.

IN 2019, THE HEAD OF THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN MET WITH THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT OF CENTRAL PUBLIC BODIES IN ORDER TO CLARIFY PROMINENT ISSUES ARISING FROM THE COMPLAINTS ABOUT THEM AND TO EXAMINE WAYS OF COOPERATING. THE HEAD OF THE OFFICE ALSO HEARD THE OPINIONS OF THESE BODIES AS TO HOW TO PRESENT IN THE OFFICE'S ANNUAL REPORT THE DATA



STATE COMPTROLLER AND OMBUDSMAN, MATANYAHU ENGLMAN, HEAD OF THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN, DR. ESTHER BEN-HAIM AND FORMER AUSTRIAN OMBUDSMAN AND IOI SECRETARY GENERAL, DR. GÜNTHER KRÄUTER.



EMANATING FROM THE COMPLAINTS, SO AS TO CONVERT THE REPORT INTO A USEFUL WORKING TOOL FOR THEM.

THE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT OF THE OFFICE ALSO MET WITH CENTRAL FIGURES IN THE BODIES CONCERNING WHICH THEY INVESTIGATE COMPLAINTS, IN ORDER TO CLARIFY THE ISSUES THAT HAD ARISEN IN THE COURSE OF THE INVESTIGATION OF THE COMPLAINTS.

IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT THE STAFF OF THE OFFICE GIVE LECTURES TO PUBLIC SERVANTS IN CHARGE OF PUBLIC ENQUIRIES AND COMPLAINTS IN THE DIFFERENT BODIES, AND MEET WITH THEM ON A REGULAR BASIS. AT THESE MEETINGS AND LECTURES, THE COOPERATION TIES ARE STRENGTHENED, AND THE STAFF OF THE OFFICE SHARE WITH THE BODIES PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE ACCUMULATED BY THE OFFICE RELATING TO THE HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS.

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- [2] BODIES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR THAT THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN IS AUTHORIZED TO INVESTIGATE COMPLAINTS ABOUT.
 - [3] THE SHALVA NATIONAL CENTER IS AN INSTITUTE THAT PROVIDES UNIQUE SERVICES TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND THEIR FAMILIES, IN A LOVING AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT.

DATA ON COMPLAINTS IN 2019

IN 2019, THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN RECEIVED 13,579 LETTERS OF COMPLAINT⁴ ABOUT PUBLIC BODIES WHICH MAY BY LAW BE SUBJECT TO INVESTIGATION BY THE OMBUDSMAN AND A FURTHER 684 LETTERS OF COMPLAINT ABOUT BODIES WHICH MAY NOT BY LAW BE SUBJECT TO INVESTIGATION BY THE OMBUDSMAN - IN TOTAL 14,263 LETTERS OF COMPLAINT (IN 2018, THE OFFICE RECEIVED 13,617 LETTERS OF COMPLAINT ABOUT BODIES WHICH MAY BE SUBJECT TO INVESTIGATION BY THE OMBUDSMAN AND A FURTHER 844 LETTERS OF COMPLAINT ABOUT BODIES WHICH MAY NOT BE SUBJECT TO INVESTIGATION BY THE OMBUDSMAN - IN TOTAL 14,461 LETTERS OF COMPLAINT).



14,263

letters of complaint
were received in 2019

[COMPARED WITH
14,461 IN 2018]

Breakdown of complaints by public bodies

THE OFFICE IS AWARE OF THE FACT THAT AS A RULE, THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT A PARTICULAR BODY AS OPPOSED TO OTHER BODIES DOES NOT NECESSARILY INFORM ABOUT

THE QUALITY OF SERVICE OF THE BODY. IT IS NATURAL THAT THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS FILED ABOUT A BODY PROVIDING SERVICES TO A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WILL BE HIGHER THAN THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS FILED ABOUT A BODY PROVIDING SERVICES TO A SMALL

NUMBER OF PEOPLE. HOWEVER, A MULTI-YEAR EXAMINATION OF THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED ABOUT THE SAME BODY CAN BETTER DEMONSTRATE THE FUNCTIONING OF THE BODY THROUGHOUT THE YEARS.

[4] LETTER OF COMPLAINT: A LETTER FROM A COMPLAINANT CONTAINING ONE OR MORE COMPLAINTS ABOUT A PUBLIC BODY. COMPLAINT: CLAIMS OF THE COMPLAINANT ABOUT A PUBLIC BODY. SOME OF THE COMPLAINTS MAY INCLUDE MORE THAN ONE COMPLAINT ABOUT A PUBLIC BODY.

THE FOLLOWING TABLE PRESENTS THE BODIES ABOUT WHICH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS WAS RECEIVED IN 2019; THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED ABOUT EACH BODY IN THE YEARS 2017 AND 2018 IS ALSO SHOWN.

THE FOUR BODIES CONCERNING WHICH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS WAS RECEIVED IN 2019 ARE: MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND ROAD SAFETY, MINISTRY OF HEALTH, NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE AND ISRAEL POSTAL COMPANY LTD.

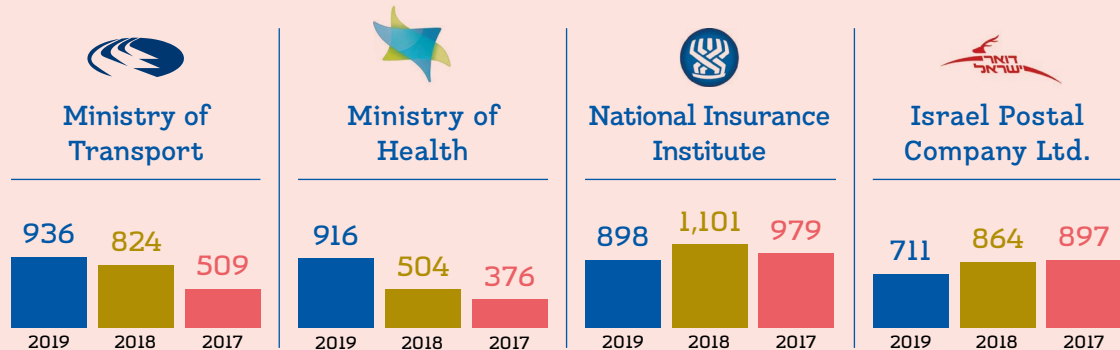
THE DATA SHOW THAT THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED ABOUT SOME OF THESE BODIES DURING THESE YEARS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND ROAD SAFETY (MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT) INCREASED IN THE SAID YEARS 1.8 TIMES, AND THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH INCREASED 2.4 TIMES; IN CONTRAST, THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE ISRAEL POSTAL COMPANY LTD. DECREASED IN THE SAID YEARS BY 21%.

Results of complaint handling in 2019



WERE FOUND JUSTIFIED OR THE MATTER OF THE COMPLAINT WAS RECTIFIED WITHOUT THE NEED FOR THE OFFICE TO REACH A DECISION

Number of letters of complaint about selected bodies received in 2017 - 2019



PHOTOGRAPH: SHUTTERSTOCK



Percentage of justified complaints

35.2%

of the total number of complaints investigated by the end of 2019 were found justified

The bodies concerning which the percentage of justified complaints exceeded the overall percentage of justified complaints



Israel Postal Company Ltd.

73.5%



Ministry of Health

69.2%



Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Social Services

53.4%



Ministry of Transport

42.6%



Israel Tax Authority

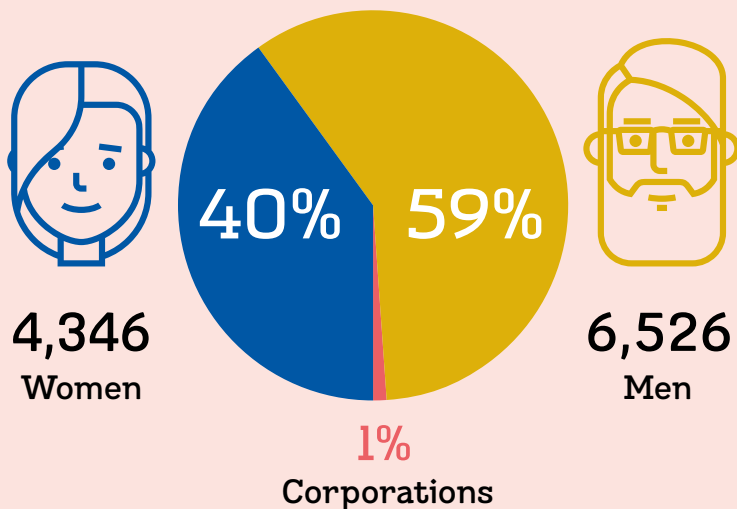
41%



Ministry of Education

38.2%

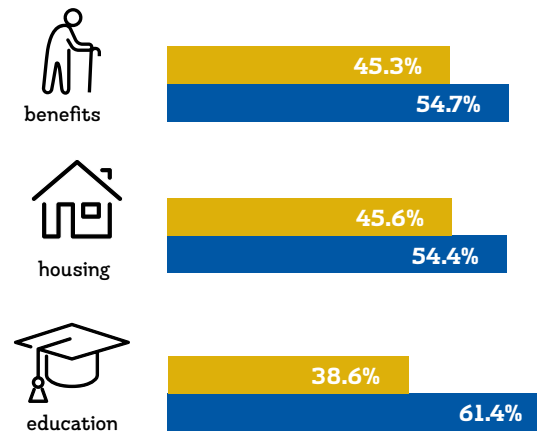
Breakdown of complainants by gender



Total 10,977⁵

[5] COMPLAINANTS WHO FILED SEVERAL COMPLAINTS IN 2019 WERE COUNTED ONCE ONLY.

The percentage of complaints of women concerning benefits, housing and education was higher than the percentage of complaints of men.



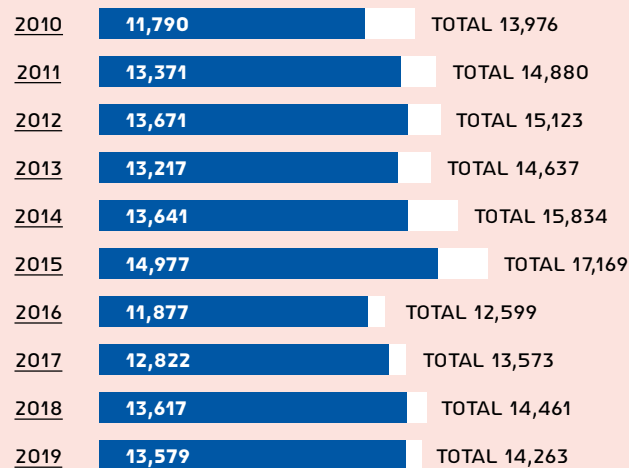
Breakdown of complaints by complainant's place of residence


IN THE SOUTHERN REGION AND THE TEL AVIV DISTRICT, THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS PER 10,000 RESIDENTS WAS THE HIGHEST, WHEREAS IN THE NORTHERN REGION AND THE HAIFA DISTRICT, THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS PER 10,000 RESIDENTS WAS THE LOWEST.


DATA ON COMPLAINTS IN THE LAST DECADE (2010 - 2019)

WITH THE CLOSURE OF THE DECADE, THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN HAS FOUND FIT TO PRESENT HERE A SPECIAL SUMMARY OF PROMINENT DATA RELATING TO THE COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY THE OFFICE DURING THIS PERIOD.

AS THE FOLLOWING TABLE SHOWS, FROM 2010 TO 2015 THERE WAS AN UPWARD TREND IN THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT PUBLIC BODIES; THE YEAR 2016 SAW A DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS; AND IN THE YEARS 2017 - 2018 THERE WAS AGAIN A SIGNIFICANT RISE IN THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS. IN 2019 THERE WAS A SLIGHT DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS.

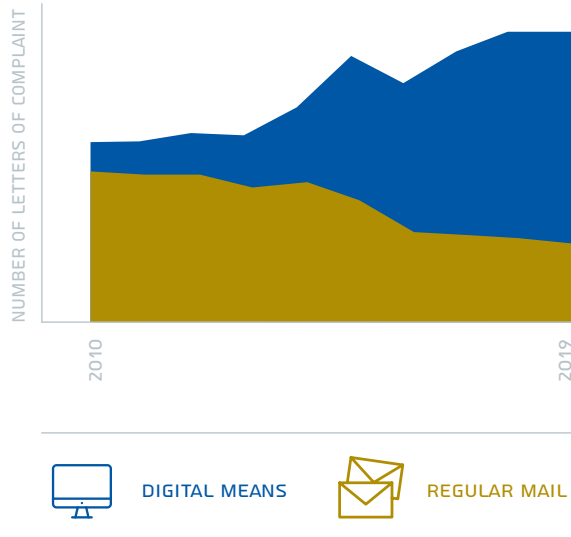


 BODIES WHICH MAY NOT BY LAW BE SUBJECT TO INVESTIGATION BY THE OMBUDSMAN

 BODIES WHICH MAY BY LAW BE SUBJECT TO INVESTIGATION BY THE OMBUDSMAN

How complaints were received

FROM 2010 TO 2019 THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS FILED ANNUALLY BY DIGITAL MEANS⁶ INCREASED BY 90% WHILE THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS SENT ANNUALLY BY REGULAR MAIL DECREASED BY 80%.



[6] BY MEANS OF AN ONLINE FORM FOUND ON THE WEBSITE OR BY EMAIL.

Breakdown of complaints by subject in the last decade



30%

OF THE COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY THE OFFICE IN THE LAST DECADE RELATED TO PUBLIC SERVICE.

The investigation of **49%**

OF THE COMPLAINTS ON THIS SUBJECT WERE FOUND JUSTIFIED OR THE MATTER OF THE COMPLAINT WAS RECTIFIED WITHOUT THE NEED FOR THE OFFICE TO REACH A DECISION.



OTHER MATTERS THAT WERE THE SUBJECT OF MANY COMPLAINTS IN THE LAST DECADE WERE CONSUMER ISSUES, COLLECTION AND EXECUTION, BENEFITS, HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION, TAXES, MONIES, WELFARE AND EDUCATION.



CONSUMER
ISSUES



COLLECTION AND
EXECUTION



BENEFITS



HOUSING AND
ACCOMMODATION



TAXES



MONIES



WELFARE



EDUCATION

Changes in the number of complaints per 100,000 persons that were received in the last decade concerning public bodies

MEASURING THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS FILED ANNUALLY PER 100,000 PERSONS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NUMBER OF RESIDENTS REGISTERED IN THE POPULATION REGISTRY OF ISRAEL IN THAT YEAR, CAN PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT THE FUNCTIONING OF THE PUBLIC BODY THROUGHOUT THE YEARS.

THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT ARE THE TWO PUBLIC BODIES CONCERNING WHICH IN THE YEARS 2010 TO 2019, THERE WAS THE HIGHEST INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS PER 100,000 PERSONS [A THREEFOLD INCREASE]. IN CONTRAST, THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED PER 100,000 PERSONS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL INSURANCE INSTITUTE IN THE SAME YEARS DECREASED BY 42%, AND CONCERNING ISRAEL POLICE BY 23%.

Percentage of justified complaints

THE OVERALL PERCENTAGE OF JUSTIFIED COMPLAINTS ROSE IN THE LAST DECADE. IN 2010 THE OVERALL PERCENTAGE OF JUSTIFIED COMPLAINTS WAS 28% AND IN 2019 - 35%.

THE HIGHEST INCREASE IN THE PERCENTAGE OF JUSTIFIED COMPLAINTS IN THE LAST DECADE RELATES TO THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH (MORE THAN THREEFOLD) AND THE ISRAEL POSTAL COMPANY LTD. (DOUBLE).

INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS

THE OFFICE'S TOOLKIT

THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN IS AUTHORIZED TO INVESTIGATE COMPLAINTS IN ANY WAY IT SEES FIT, AND IS NOT BOUND BY RULES OF PROCEDURE OR LAWS OF EVIDENCE.

THE OFFICE MAY REQUEST FROM ANY PERSON OR BODY INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS LIKELY TO ASSIST IN THE INVESTIGATION OF THE COMPLAINT.

THE OFFICE HAS AN EXTENSIVE TOOLKIT FOR INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS, AND THE MODE OF INVESTIGATION OF EVERY COMPLAINT IS ADAPTED TO ACHIEVE THE OPTIMAL RESULT IN THE OPINION OF THE OFFICE. THE FOLLOWING ARE A FEW OF THE TOOLS USED BY THE OFFICE IN THE INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS:

Employees of the Office as "undercover clients"

THIS MODE OF INVESTIGATION IS ADOPTED TO ESTABLISH FIRSTHAND IF INDEED THE SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE BODY WAS DEFECTIVE.

On-site inspections

EXPERIENCE TEACHES THAT NOTHING EXCEEDS ACTUALLY SEEING THINGS, AND THUS THE STAFF OF THE OFFICE VISIT SITES IN ORDER TO ASCERTAIN QUICKLY AND ON THE SPOT THE IMPEDIMENT COMPLAINED ABOUT AND TO BRING ABOUT THE RECTIFICATION OF THE MATTER WITHIN A SHORT SPACE OF TIME.

Mediation procedures

OVER ALMOST A DECADE, AND EVEN MORE SO IN RECENT YEARS, THE OFFICE HAS BEEN UTILIZING MEDIATION PROCEDURES IN COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION.

THE MEDIATION PROCESS, WHICH IS CONDUCTED BY STAFF MEMBERS OF THE OFFICE WHO ARE CERTIFIED MEDIATORS, ENABLES THE PARTIES TO VOICE THEIR INTERESTS RELATING TO THE ISSUE IN DISPUTE, THEREBY PROMOTING IN AN OPTIMAL WAY THE RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE PARTIES. 78% OF THE MEDIATION SESSIONS THAT TOOK PLACE IN 2019 LED TO THE SUCCESSFUL TERMINATION OF THE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE PARTIES.

Investigation with several public bodies

WHEN THE OFFICE PERCEIVES THAT ALL THE PUBLIC BODIES INVOLVED ARE RENOUNCING THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO HANDLE THE MATTER OF THE COMPLAINT, OR THAT THE HANDLING OF THE COMPLAINT REQUIRES THE COOPERATION OF ALL THE BODIES, IT INITIATES A MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BODIES TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HANDLING OF THE COMPLAINT AND TO WORK TOGETHER ON THE MATTER. THE OFFICE ALSO MONITORS THE HANDLING OF THE ISSUE BY THE BODIES, IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE MATTER OF THE COMPLAINT IS BEING DEALT WITH IN THE BEST WAY.



THE OMBUDSMAN VISITS A SCHOOL IN LOD



The Office is often happy to find that when the public body discovers that it was faulty in its manner of acting or deems that in the circumstances of the case it should have acted differently, it decides on its own initiative to rectify the defect or act *ex gratia*. The Office of the Ombudsman has decided to highlight these bodies in the report and commend them.

For example, a "kind word" was given to the Central Elections Committee, which acted swiftly to help the complainant who claimed that the polling station to which he had been allocated was situated at a long distance from his home and the way to it was unsuitable for pushchairs - for these reasons it was difficult for him to exercise his right to vote. The Central Elections Committee examined whether the transfer of the polling station to another location would benefit the majority of the residents of the neighbourhood in which the complainant lived and following its examination, decided to transfer the polling station to the location requested by the complainant.

Accelerated investigation

THE OFFICE ACTS TO LOCATE COMPLAINTS THAT CAN BE INVESTIGATED AND SETTLED QUICKLY, SUCH AS BY A TELEPHONE CALL. THE ACCELERATED INVESTIGATION ENABLES THE OFFICE TO INFORM THE COMPLAINANTS ABOUT ITS FINDINGS WITHIN A SHORT SPACE OF TIME.

Basket of remedies

UPON COMPLETING THE INVESTIGATION OF A COMPLAINT, THE OFFICE NOTIFIES THE COMPLAINANT AND THE BODY COMPLAINED ABOUT AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THE COMPLAINT HAS BEEN FOUND JUSTIFIED. IF THE INVESTIGATION OF THE COMPLAINT DISCLOSES A DEFECT IN THE ACTION OF THE BODY THAT REQUIRES RECTIFICATION, THE OFFICE NOTIFIES THE BODY HOW IT MUST RECTIFY IT AND BY WHEN IT MUST DO SO, AND MONITORS THE RECTIFICATION OF THE DEFECT.

COMPLAINANTS WHOSE COMPLAINTS HAVE BEEN FOUND JUSTIFIED CAN RECEIVE VARIOUS REMEDIES, ACCORDING TO THE DEFECTS DISCLOSED BY THE INVESTIGATION OF THEIR COMPLAINTS, INCLUDING:

- + TERMINATION OF THE ACT THAT IS HARMFUL TO THE COMPLAINANT
- + EXHAUSTION OF THE RIGHT OF THE COMPLAINANT THAT HAS BEEN INFRINGED
- + RESTITUTION OF MONIES COLLECTED ILLEGALLY
- + PAYMENT OF MONETARY COMPENSATION TO THE COMPLAINANT
- + WRITTEN APOLOGY OF A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BODY
- + REGULATION OF THE MATTER OF THE COMPLAINT IN A WRITTEN PROCEDURE OR THE REFRESHMENT OF EXISTING PROCEDURES WITH THE STAFF OF THE BODY
- + PROVISION OF ANY ORDER DEEMED FIT AND JUST BY THE OMBUDSMAN, INCLUDING A PROVISIONAL ORDER, IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF AN EMPLOYEE WHO HAS EXPOSED AN ACT OF CORRUPTION IN THE BODY IN WHICH HE WORKS, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE APPROPRIATE FUNCTIONING OF THE BODY.



From the specific to the general -
rectification of a widespread defect

The investigation of a complaint often discloses a general defect in the manner in which a public body has acted. In such cases, the Office does not suffice with providing a remedy to the complainant, but also points out the need to rectify the general defect, to prevent it from harming others. In this way, the Office not only assists the complainant himself, but also contributes to an improvement in the actions of public administration and to the protection of all those requiring public service.

This year, the investigation of

142
complaints

led to the rectification of
general defects

FOR EXAMPLE, A COMPLAINANT IN THE ADVANCED STAGES OF PREGNANCY COMPLAINED THAT THE STAFF OF AN INCOME TAX OFFICE OF THE ISRAEL TAX AUTHORITY (TAX AUTHORITY) DID NOT EXCUSE HER FROM STANDING IN LINE, AS REQUIRED BY LAW. FOLLOWING THE INTERVENTION OF THE OFFICE, THE TAX AUTHORITY NOTIFIED IT THAT IT WOULD ISSUE A PROCEDURE TO ALL ITS EMPLOYEES RELATING TO THE ELIGIBILITY OF CERTAIN PERSONS TO EXEMPTION FROM STANDING IN LINE WHEN RECEIVING SERVICE, INCLUDING PREGNANT WOMEN AND SENIOR CITIZENS AGED OVER 80. THE WORK OF THE OFFICE IN THIS MATTER IS NOT OVER, AND IT IS PRESENTLY INVESTIGATING SIMILAR COMPLAINTS CONCERNING OTHER BODIES, ITS INTENTION BEING TO ENSURE THAT THESE BODIES ALSO CONFORM TO THE LAW.

EXAMINATION OF COMPLAINTS "FROM A WIDE PERSPECTIVE"

SOMETIMES THE OFFICE RECEIVES A LARGE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT A PARTICULAR MATTER OR PERCEIVES, FOLLOWING THE INVESTIGATION OF A SPECIFIC COMPLAINT, THE EXISTENCE OF A WIDE-RANGING PROBLEM WHICH IS NOT RELATED TO THE COMPLAINANT'S MATTER. IN THESE CASES, THE OFFICE EXTENDS THE INVESTIGATION AND DELVES DEEPER INTO THE ISSUE, IN ORDER TO EFFECTUATE THE RECTIFICATION OF THE GENERAL DEFECT DISCLOSED BY THE COMPLAINT.

THE FOLLOWING ARE ISSUES ARISING FROM COMPLAINTS THAT THE OFFICE CHOSE TO EXAMINE "FROM A WIDE PERSPECTIVE" IN 2019:

The handling of applications for subsidies in tuition fees for the children of working mothers

IN 2019, THE OFFICE RECEIVED 142 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT FOR DAYCARE CENTRES AND NURSERIES IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND SOCIAL SERVICES (MINISTRY OF LABOUR). 61% OF THE COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATED BY THE OFFICE WERE FOUND JUSTIFIED, OR THE MATTERS RAISED IN THEM WERE RECTIFIED. THIS PERCENTAGE IS HIGHER THAN THE OVERALL PERCENTAGE OF COMPLAINTS THAT WERE FOUND JUSTIFIED, OR IN WHICH THE MATTER OF THE COMPLAINT WAS RECTIFIED (41%). 64% OF THE COMPLAINTS FILED ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

PHOTOGRAPH: SHUTTERSTOCK



FOR DAYCARE CENTRES AND NURSERIES CONCERNED THE LEVEL OF ELIGIBILITY FOR SUBSIDIZATION OF TUITION FEES BY THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR. REGARDING THESE COMPLAINTS, 73% WERE FOUND JUSTIFIED, OR THE MATTER WAS RECTIFIED.

IN THE COURSE OF THE YEAR, THE OFFICE POINTED OUT TO THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR DEFECTS IN MATTERS SUCH AS THE UNREASONABLE DELAY IN MONETARY REIMBURSEMENTS AND THE DELAY IN EXAMINING APPLICATIONS FOR A DISCOUNT IN AFTERSCHOOL TUITION FEES FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL IMPEDIMENTS.

Handling of applications for disabled parking permits

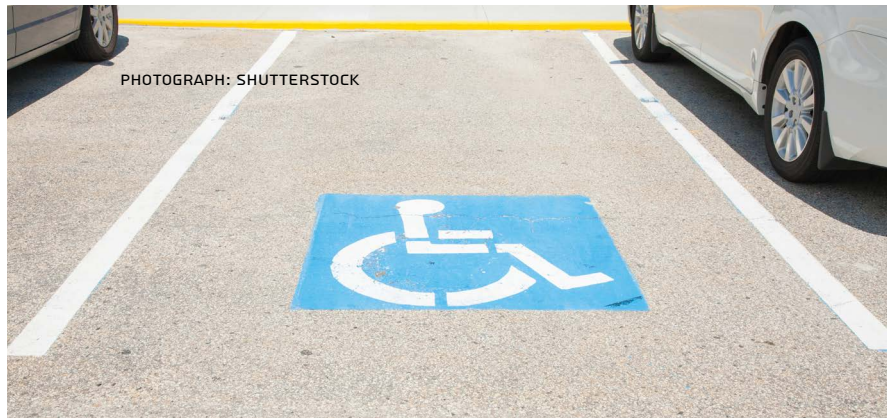
IN 2019, THE INVESTIGATION OF 181 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE UNIT FOR THE HANDLING OF THE MOBILITY DISABLED IN THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT WAS COMPLETED. THESE COMPLAINTS CONCERNED THE UNIT'S HANDLING OF APPLICATIONS FOR DISABLED PARKING PERMITS. 79% OF THE COMPLAINTS THAT THE OFFICE WAS AUTHORIZED TO

INVESTIGATE WERE FOUND JUSTIFIED OR THE MATTER OF THE COMPLAINT WAS RECTIFIED. THE OFFICE POINTED OUT TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE LICENSING DIVISION, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE NEED TO IMPROVE THE WORK PROCEDURES OF THE UNIT FOR THE HANDLING OF THE MOBILITY DISABLED IN THE LICENSING DIVISION. THE OFFICE ALSO POINTED OUT TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE LICENSING DIVISION THE NEED FOR DOCTORS WORKING ON BEHALF OF THE UNIT TO CHECK CAREFULLY THE DOCUMENTS ATTACHED TO THE APPLICATIONS FOR DISABLED PARKING PERMITS, IN ORDER TO PREVENT ERRONEOUS DECISION-MAKING, DELAYS IN RECEIVING THE PERMITS AND ANGUISH TO THE DISABLED PERSONS IN NEED OF THEM.

Functioning of the Medical Cannabis Unit in the Ministry of Health

IN RECENT YEARS, THE NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC FOR MEDICAL CANNABIS HAS INCREASED. DATA GIVEN TO THE OFFICE BY THE MEDICAL CANNABIS UNIT (THE UNIT) REVEALED THAT IN THE YEARS 2018 AND 2019 THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE HOLDING PERMITS DOUBLED (SOME 32,000 IN 2018 AS COMPARED WITH SOME 65,000 IN 2019).

IT WAS FOUND THAT IN THE YEARS 2017 AND 2018 THERE WAS A 235% INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED IN



THE OFFICE ABOUT THE UNIT (74 LETTERS OF COMPLAINT IN 2017, AS COMPARED WITH 174 LETTERS OF COMPLAINT IN 2018), AND IN 2018 -2019 THERE WAS A 307% INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS (534 LETTERS OF COMPLAINT IN 2019). IN TOTAL, IN THE YEARS 2017 - 2019 THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS FILED WITH THE OFFICE ABOUT THE UNIT INCREASED DRASTICALLY BY OVER 700%.

THE OFFICE MADE OBSERVATIONS TO THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, AMONG OTHER THINGS, ABOUT THE DELAYS IN THE UNIT'S HANDLING OF APPLICATIONS FOR PERMITS FOR THE USE OF MEDICAL CANNABIS AND THE RENEWAL OF THE PERMITS, ABOUT THE FAILURE OF THE UNIT TO REPLY TO EMAILS SENT TO IT BY PATIENTS AND ABOUT DIFFICULTIES IN TRANSFERRING APPLICATIONS AND DOCUMENTS TO THE UNIT AND IN RECEIVING DOCUMENTS FROM IT THROUGH THE COMPUTERIZED SYSTEM.

AFTER THE "MEDICALIZATION REFORM" CAME INTO FORCE IN APRIL 2019, MANY COMPLAINTS ON THE SUBJECT WERE FILED WITH THE OFFICE. THE OFFICE POINTED OUT TO THE



UNIT SYSTEMATIC DEFECTS DISCLOSED BY THE INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFORM, SUCH AS THE FACT THAT IT AFFECTED THE SEQUENCE OF TREATMENT OF THE PATIENTS AND THE FACT THAT THE LIST OF DOCTORS SUPPOSED TO GRANT PERMITS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE REFORM, WHICH APPEARS ON THE WEBSITE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, INCLUDES DOCTORS THAT DO NOT GRANT THE SERVICE AT ALL OR GRANT IT ON A PRIVATE BASIS ONLY.

Supervision of the Ministry of Education over the intake of pupils to high schools in the ultra-orthodox sector belonging to a recognized unofficial stream

IN 2019, THE OFFICE HANDLED 24 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE ULTRA-ORTHODOX DEPARTMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION. THE OFFICE POINTED OUT TO THE ULTRA-ORTHODOX DEPARTMENT DEFECTS IN ITS ACTIONS IN RELATION TO PLACEMENT PROCEDURES OF PUPILS IN RELIGIOUS HIGH SCHOOLS FOR GIRLS, INCLUDING ITS FAILURE TO SUPERVISE THE TRANSPARENCY AND EQUALITY OF THE PROCEDURES AND ITS DEFICIENT SUPERVISION OF THE MEETING OF DEADLINES THAT IT HAD LAID DOWN IN ITS DIRECTIVES.

SELECTED CASES



THE FOLLOWING IS A REVIEW OF SELECTED COMPLAINTS AND THE INVESTIGATION OF THEM. THE COMPLAINTS REVIEWED CONCERN THE CENTRAL ISSUES OCCUPYING THE OFFICE - PUBLIC SERVICE, THE ACTIONS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES, RIGHTS OF DISABLED PERSONS, ETC.

Public service

UPON HIS ENTRY INTO OFFICE, THE OMBUDSMAN EMPHASIZED THE GREAT IMPORTANCE THAT HE PLACES ON THE QUALITY OF SERVICE PROVIDED BY PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TO THE INDIVIDUAL. EVERY YEAR THE ISSUE OF PUBLIC SERVICE IS A CENTRAL THEME OF THE COMPLAINTS FILED WITH THE OFFICE. THE COMPLAINTS CONCERN DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S RELATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC AUTHORITY, AND MAINLY THE LACK OF RESPONSE TO INQUIRIES AND THE FAILURE TO HANDLE THEM, DELAYS IN THE PROVISION OF SERVICE, INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR OF PUBLIC SERVANTS TOWARDS PERSONS REQUIRING SERVICE, DEFECTIVE SERVICE IN THE SERVICE CENTRES AND FAULTY RECEPTION ARRANGEMENTS.

IN 2019, THE OFFICE RECEIVED 5,131 COMPLAINTS ABOUT PUBLIC SERVICE (35.7% OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY THE OFFICE). SOME 49% OF THE COMPLAINTS ON THIS SUBJECT IN WHICH THE INVESTIGATION WAS COMPLETED WERE FOUND JUSTIFIED. THIS PERCENTAGE IS HIGHER THAN THE OVERALL PERCENTAGE OF COMPLAINTS THAT WERE INVESTIGATED AND FOUND JUSTIFIED IN 2019 (35.2%).

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THE NEW SIGN FOR PACEMAKER WEARERS AT BEN GURION AIRPORT

PHOTOGRAPH: ISRAEL AIRPORTS AUTHORITY

- FOLLOWING THE INTERVENTION OF THE OFFICE**
- + THE DEPARTMENT FOR DAYCARE CENTRES AND NURSERIES IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR DETERMINED AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF ELIGIBILITY FOR APPLICANTS REQUESTING A SUBSIDY FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL IMPEDIMENTS RECEIVING AFTERSCHOOL CARE. THE DEPARTMENT REIMBURSED TUITION FEES ACCORDING TO ITS DECISION, HAVING FAILED TO DETERMINE THE ELIGIBILITY LEVEL FOR SOME EIGHT TO TEN MONTHS.
 - + NATIONAL SERVICE VOLUNTEERS LIVING IN TEL AVIV-JAFFA WERE GRANTED THE "DIGITAL SOLDIERS" BENEFIT CARD.
 - + THE POPULATION AND IMMIGRATION AUTHORITY APOLOGIZED TO A TOURIST FOR THE BEHAVIOUR OF AN EMPLOYEE OF THE AUTHORITY WHO HAD INSULTED HER.
 - + WEARERS OF PACEMAKERS WERE DESIGNATED A SPECIAL LINE FOR THE SECURITY CHECK AT BEN GURION AIRPORT. THE COMPLAINANTS THANKED THE OFFICE WARMLY FOR ITS HANDLING OF THEIR COMPLAINTS:



"We are happy to remark on your swift and excellent handling of the problem of pacemaker wearers using the security lane in Ben Gurion Airport. I wish to point out in particular the handling of [the lawyer] who dealt with the complaint.

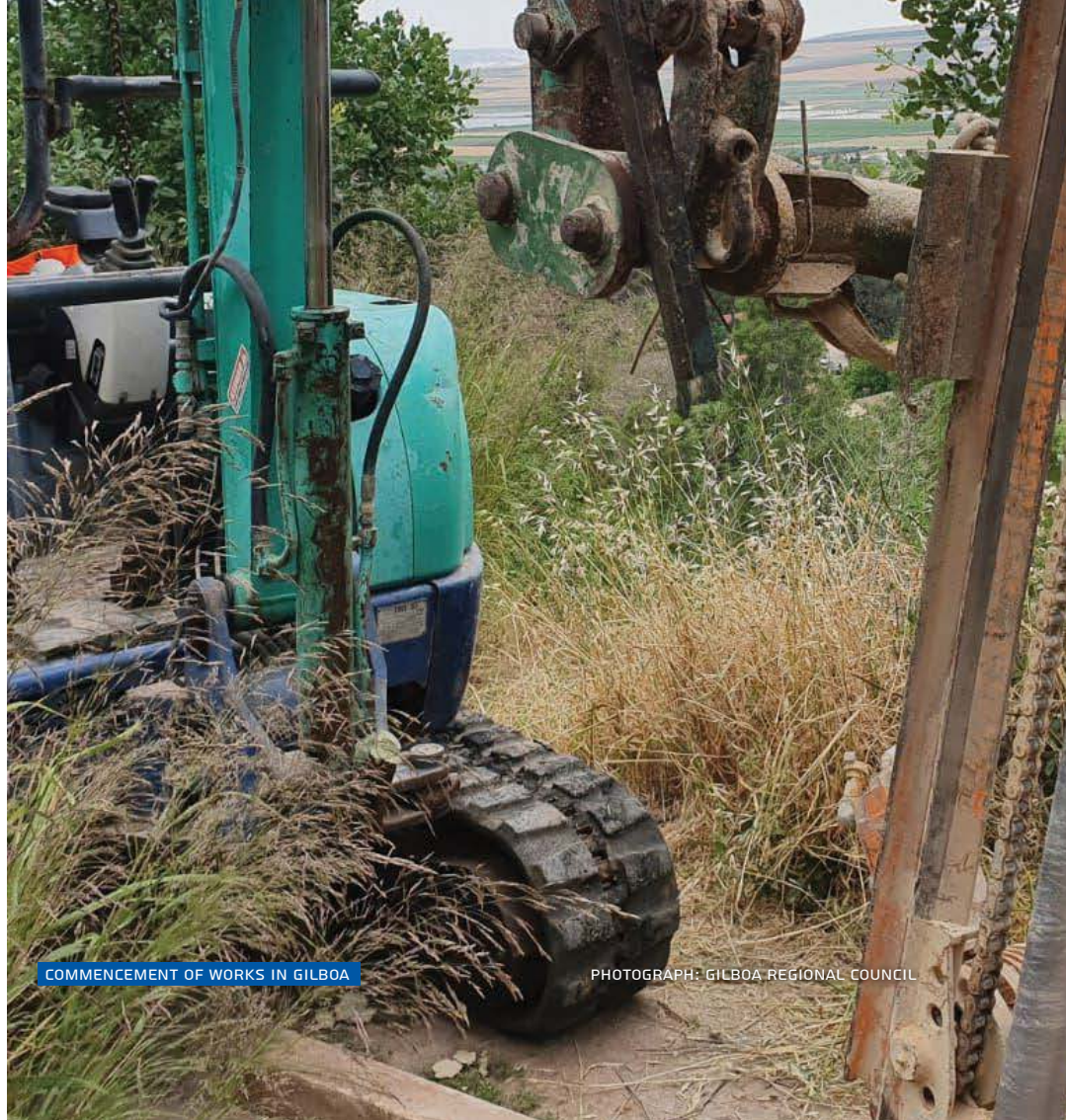
Strangely, until the matter was handled, the problem of pacemaker wearers was unknown to the Authority, and pacemaker wearers encountered many problems during the security check. Following her [the lawyer's] inquiry, the Airports Authority has erected a clear sign directing the pacemaker wearers to a security checkpoint that accommodates their health situation. Today there is appropriate signposting, the security staff have received instructions... and the security check experience has greatly improved... thank you and well done on your wonderful work".

Local authorities

24.5% OF THE COMPLAINTS RECEIVED IN 2019 WERE ABOUT LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

SOME 28% OF THE COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES CONCERNED PUBLIC SERVICE. 48% OF THE COMPLAINTS WERE FOUND JUSTIFIED, OR THE MATTER OF THE COMPLAINT WAS RECTIFIED WITHOUT THE NEED FOR THE OFFICE TO REACH A DECISION. THIS PERCENTAGE IS HIGHER THAN THE OVERALL PERCENTAGE OF COMPLAINTS THAT WERE FOUND JUSTIFIED OR IN WHICH THE MATTER OF THE COMPLAINT WAS RECTIFIED WITHOUT THE NEED FOR THE OFFICE TO REACH A DECISION (41%). OTHER MATTERS COMPLAINED ABOUT WERE PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURES AND LAND, COMPULSORY PAYMENTS, ENVIRONMENT AND WELFARE.

THE FOLLOWING ARE SELECTED COMPLAINTS RECEIVED ABOUT LOCAL AUTHORITIES CONCERNING COLLECTION PROCEDURES, NUISANCES AND LAND:



COMMENCEMENT OF WORKS IN GILBOA

PHOTOGRAPH: GILBOA REGIONAL COUNCIL



COLLECTION PROCEDURES

A 100 NIS FINE HAD MULTIPLIED WITHIN TEN MONTHS TO 1,200 NIS

THE OFFICE DETERMINED THAT THE DEMAND TO PAY FOR COLLECTION EXPENSES THAT ARE CONSIDERABLY HIGHER THAN THE AMOUNT OF THE DEBT ITSELF IS UNREASONABLE AND DOES NOT CONFORM TO LEGAL PROVISIONS. THE MUNICIPALITY OF BE'ER SHEVA ACCORDINGLY REIMBURSED THE COMPLAINANT WITH THE SUM THAT SHE HAD BEEN CHARGED, AFTER DEDUCTING THE AMOUNT OF THE FINE AND THE EXPENSES THAT MAY BE COLLECTED BY LAW.

NUISANCES

THROUGH JOINT FORCES, BOULDERS WERE PREVENTED FROM FALLING ONTO KIBBUTZ HEFTZIBA

FOLLOWING A DISPUTE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES AND PUBLIC BODIES AS TO WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR HANDLING THE DANGER OF BOULDERS FALLING ONTO KIBBUTZ HEFTZIBA, THE OMBUDSMAN ASSEMBLED IN HIS BUREAU REPRESENTATIVES OF SEVERAL GOVERNMENT

MINISTRIES AND THE RELEVANT PUBLIC BODIES AND STRESSED TO THEM THE STATE'S DUTY TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF ITS RESIDENTS, AND THEIR OBLIGATION TO FIND AN IMMEDIATE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM. IN THE WAKE OF THIS MEETING, A PLAN OF ACTION WAS PRESENTED TO THE OMBUDSMAN, AND RECENTLY WORKS HAVE BEGUN TO ERECT FENCES TO PREVENT THE BOULDERS FROM FALLING. THE COMPLAINANT THANKED THE LAWYER WHO HAD INVESTIGATED THE COMPLAINT:



"Thank you for your handling of my complaint which has had a very successful outcome. Without you, this would not have happened. Many thanks for your support throughout the many years. I thank you and the Office of the State Comptroller (and Ombudsman) for its dedicated work. The project is taking off, and that is wonderful news".

LAND RIGHTS

THE LAND WAS APPROPRIATED IN 1972 AND IN 2019 THE MUNICIPALITY PAID THE COMPLAINANT’S FAMILY COMPENSATION TO THE SUM OF 94,500 NIS. THIS WAS PERFORMED AFTER THE MUNICIPALITY ADOPTED THE FINDINGS OF THE OFFICE’S INVESTIGATION, ACCORDING TO WHICH THE COMPLAINANT’S GRANDFATHER HAD NOT RECEIVED NOTICE OF THE APPROPRIATION AND THUS HIS CLAIM FOR COMPENSATION HAD NOT BECOME OBSOLETE.

Rights of persons with disabilities

THE OFFICE PLACES GREAT IMPORTANCE ON THE PROTECTION OF RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF THEIR RIGHTS, IN ORDER TO ENABLE THEIR INTEGRATION INTO SOCIETY IN ALL WALKS OF LIFE. THE REPORT CONTAINS DESCRIPTIONS OF COMPLAINTS THROUGH THE INVESTIGATION OF WHICH THE OFFICE HAS ASSISTED PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES; THESE INCLUDE COMPLAINTS FILED BY PEOPLE WHOSE FIRST-DEGREE RELATIVES ARE DISABLED, CONCERNING THE REJECTION

OF THEIR REQUEST FOR A TAX EXEMPTION ON MONIES DRAWN FROM A PROVIDENT FUND.

AS A RULE, THE TAX EXEMPTION IS GRANTED ONLY IF THE PERSON DRAWING THE MONEY WAS A BENEFICIARY OF THE PROVIDENT FUND PRIOR TO THE DETERMINATION OF HIS OR HIS RELATIVE’S DISABILITY. HOWEVER, AUTISM IS A DISABILITY THAT CANNOT USUALLY BE DISCERNED AT BIRTH. FOLLOWING THE INVESTIGATION OF SUCH A COMPLAINT, THE TAX AUTHORITY ACCEPTED THE STANDPOINT OF THE OFFICE THAT IN SUCH CASES THE BENEFICIARY MAY RECEIVE THE TAX EXEMPTION EVEN IF THE DEGREE OF DISABILITY IS DETERMINED RETROACTIVELY TO A TIME PRECEDING HIS BECOMING A BENEFICIARY OF THE PROVIDENT FUND.

FOLLOWING THE INVESTIGATION, THE TAX AUTHORITY EXEMPTED THE COMPLAINANT FROM THE TAX PAYMENT AND INSTRUCTED ALL ITS OFFICES TO GRANT TAX EXEMPTION IN SIMILAR CASES.

Health

FOLLOWING THE INTERVENTION OF THE OFFICE

- + THE HEALTH PLAN EXCEPTIONS COMMITTEE OF THE CLALIT HEALTH SERVICES APPROVED THE REQUEST OF A LUNG-DISEASE PATIENT TO RECEIVE A REFUND FOR THE INHALATOR THAT HE HAD PURCHASED.
- + A PATIENT REQUIRING MEDICATION IMPORTED FROM ABROAD WILL NO LONGER HAVE TO FILE AN APPLICATION FORM FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE MEDICATION. PRIOR TO THE INTERVENTION OF THE OFFICE, IT HAD BEEN NECESSARY FOR THE COMPLAINANT TO FILE THE FORM AFTER SEVERAL DOCTORS HAD SIGNED IT, A PROCEDURE THAT HAD REQUIRED HIM TO TURN TO THE DOCTORS TIME AFTER TIME WITH THE DOCUMENTS SUPPORTING HIS REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF THE MEDICATION. IN ADDITION, THE PATIENT WILL NO LONGER ENCOUNTER DIFFICULTIES WHEN COLLECTING THE MEDICATION FROM THE CHEMIST AFTER ITS APPROVAL.




PHOTOGRAPH: SHUTTERSTOCK

Right to information and freedom of expression

+ FOLLOWING THE EXTENDED INVESTIGATION OF THE OFFICE, THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE NOTIFIED IT THAT FROM NOW ON, IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO PHOTOGRAPH INDEPENDENTLY, WITH EITHER CAMERAS OR MOBILE PHONES, MATERIAL KEPT IN THE PERUSAL ROOM OF THE IDF ARCHIVES. FURTHERMORE, THE OBLIGATION TO USE THE SERVICES OF THE ARCHIVES AND PAY FOR A COPY OF THE MATERIAL WOULD BE REVOKED. IN ADDITION, ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS WOULD BE EXEMPT FROM PAYING A FEE FOR THE PHOTOCOPYING SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE ARCHIVES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ARCHIVES REGULATIONS (FEES), 5742-1982.

ON BEHALF OF HIMSELF AND THE COMMUNITY OF RESEARCHERS, THE COMPLAINANT THANKED THE LAWYERS WHO HAD INVESTIGATED HIS COMPLAINT:



"I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your taking up this issue and for your determination... by doing so you have provided an immense service to the community of researchers, as well as to the research on the IDF and the defence system. I do not exaggerate if I claim that this is no less than a revolution for researchers. After tens of barren years, and despite the efforts of the most senior historians and researchers, how ironic it is that it is we who have succeeded. May you all be blessed".

+ IN 2019, AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS, GOVERNMENT MINISTERS, MAYORS AND PUBLIC BODIES REMOVED THE BLOCKING OF ACCESS OF COMPLAINANTS TO THEIR ACCOUNTS ON SOCIAL NETWORKS, SUCH AS FACEBOOK AND TWITTER. THIS WAS CARRIED OUT AFTER THE OFFICE BROUGHT TO THEIR ATTENTION THE OMBUDSMAN'S STANDPOINT THAT THE

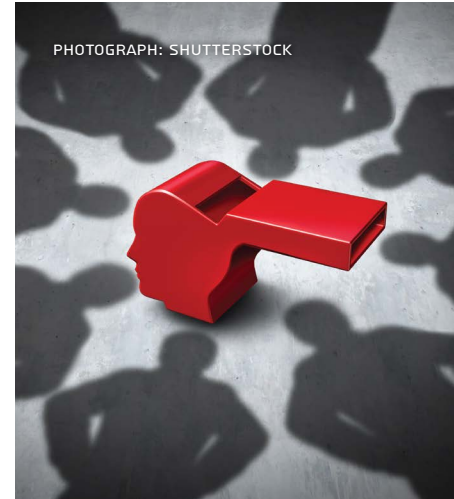
ACCOUNT OF A PUBLIC OFFICIAL, WHICH IS USED BY HIM OR HER TO MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH THE PUBLIC FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF HIS FUNCTION, IS BOUND BY THE RULES OF PUBLIC LAW. THE OFFICE LAID DOWN THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO DELETE A COMMENT OR BLOCK ACCESS TO AN ACCOUNT ONLY IF THIS IS DONE FOR AN APPROPRIATE PURPOSE AND TO A PROPORTIONAL EXTENT.

Protection of whistleblowers

THE LEGISLATOR HAS GRANTED THE OMBUDSMAN AUTHORITY TO PROTECT EMPLOYEES WHO IN GOOD FAITH AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROPER PROCEDURES, HAVE EXPOSED AN ACT OF CORRUPTION, A SERIOUS BREACH OF LAW OR A SERIOUS VIOLATION OF THE RULES OF PROPER ADMINISTRATION IN HIS WORKPLACE, AS A RESULT OF WHICH HIS SUPERIORS HAVE VICTIMIZED HIM OR REQUESTED HIS DISMISSAL. FURTHERMORE, THE LEGISLATOR HAS AUTHORIZED THE OMBUDSMAN TO ISSUE A PROTECTION ORDER TO INTERNAL AUDITORS WHO HAVE BEEN VICTIMIZED IN RESPONSE TO THEIR ACTIONS AS INTERNAL AUDITORS. THE WEBSITE

OF THE OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER AND OMBUDSMAN CONTAINS DETAILS RELATING TO THE INVESTIGATION PROCESS OF SUCH COMPLAINTS OF VICTIMIZATION, THE CONDITIONS FOR RECEIVING A PROTECTION ORDER, THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RECEIVING THE ORDER AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF BREACHING IT.

IN 2019, 57 COMPLAINTS WERE FILED BY EMPLOYEES WHO CLAIMED THAT THEIR SUPERIORS HAD INFRINGED THEIR RIGHTS AS A RESULT OF THEIR EXPOSING ACTS OF CORRUPTION. THIS CONSTITUTES A 30% INCREASE IN COMPARISON WITH THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS FILED IN 2018. IN 2019, THE HANDLING OF 64 COMPLAINTS (INCLUDING COMPLAINTS FILED IN PREVIOUS YEARS) WAS COMPLETED. 20 COMPLAINANTS (31%), THE INVESTIGATION OF WHOSE COMPLAINTS WAS COMPLETED, RECEIVED DIFFERENT REMEDIES: THREE COMPLAINANTS RECEIVED PERMANENT PROTECTION ORDERS FROM THE OMBUDSMAN; IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE INVESTIGATION OF TEN COMPLAINTS, THE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE PARTIES WAS RESOLVED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE OMBUDSMAN, OR THE PARTIES AUTHORIZED THE OMBUDSMAN TO REACH A DECISION IN THEIR MATTER; THE ISSUES RAISED IN SEVEN COMPLAINTS WERE RECTIFIED,



SINCE THE VICTIMIZATION OF THE COMPLAINANTS CEASED FOLLOWING THE INTERVENTION OF THE OFFICE.

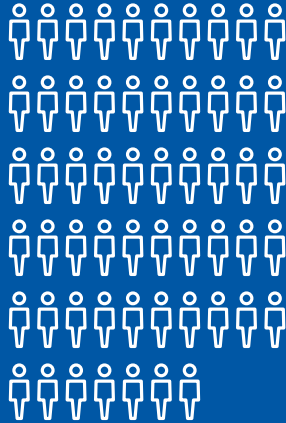
IN 2019, THE OMBUDSMAN ISSUED **SIX** PROVISIONAL PROTECTION ORDERS TO EMPLOYEES WHO HAD COMPLAINED ABOUT VICTIMIZATION FOLLOWING THEIR EXPOSING ACTS OF CORRUPTION. THE ORDERS WERE DESIGNED TO PREVENT HARM TO THE COMPLAINANTS UNTIL THE COMPLETION OF THE INVESTIGATION.

IN 2019

57

complaints were filed
by employees

WHO CLAIMED THAT THEIR
SUPERIORS HAD INFRINGED
THEIR RIGHTS AS A RESULT
OF THEIR EXPOSING ACTS OF
CORRUPTION



30% ↑



This constitutes a 30%
increase in comparison with
the number of complaints
filed in 2018

Protection of whistleblowers

31%

20 COMPLAINANTS, THE INVESTIGATION OF WHOSE COMPLAINTS WAS COMPLETED, RECEIVED DIFFERENT REMEDIES:

3



COMPLAINANTS RECEIVED
PERMANENT PROTECTION ORDERS
FROM THE OMBUDSMAN

10



IN TEN COMPLAINTS
THE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE
PARTIES WAS RESOLVED

7



THE ISSUES RAISED IN
SEVEN COMPLAINTS
WERE RECTIFIED

SUMMARY

THE YEAR 2019 WAS FOR THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN A YEAR FOR RAISING AWARENESS OF THE NEED TO TAKE ACTION FOR POPULATIONS IN ISRAEL WHO DESERVE SPECIAL ATTENTION, WHO HAVE DIFFICULTY IN EXERCISING THEIR RIGHTS AND ARE IN NEED OF AN INSTITUTION TO ACT AS A MOUTHPIECE FOR THEM IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES AND PUBLIC BODIES.

IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ACTIONS TAKEN TO RAISE THIS AWARENESS, THE OFFICE ISSUED TWO NEW INFORMATION PAMPHLETS; IT LAUNCHED A PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN FOR THE ARAB COMMUNITY ON SOCIAL NETWORKS AND ON A LEADING ARAB-SPEAKING NEWS WEBSITE; AND IN THE FRAMEWORK OF A PROJECT TITLED "KNOW THE STATE COMPTROLLER AND OMBUDSMAN", IT PARTICIPATED IN

ACTIVITIES, CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS ORGANIZED FOR DIFFERENT SECTORS OF SOCIETY, INCLUDING THE ULTRA-ORTHODOX COMMUNITY, THE COMMUNITY OF JEWS OF ETHIOPIAN ORIGIN, INTERNAL AUDITORS IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND SCHOOLTEACHERS OF SOCIAL STUDIES. THE OFFICE EVEN HOSTED A SEMINAR FOR VOLUNTEERS AND WORKERS DEALING WITH THE EXHAUSTION OF RIGHTS.

The main activity of the Office for raising awareness in 2019 was the hosting of a pioneering conference on the theme "Multi-Dimensional Protection of Human Rights". The conference was attended by people working in the important field of public complaints investigation in the public sector of Israel and by representatives of social organizations. The conference gave expression to the central role of the Office in the field of complaint investigation.

IN 2019, THE OFFICE INVESTIGATED SOME 14,000 COMPLAINTS. 41% OF THE COMPLAINTS, WERE FOUND JUSTIFIED, OR THE MATTER OF THE COMPLAINT WAS RECTIFIED WITHOUT THE NEED FOR THE OFFICE TO REACH A DECISION. THIS DATUM ILLUSTRATES THE HIGH SUCCESS RATE OF THE OFFICE IN ASSISTING THOSE WHO TURN TO IT AND IN IMPROVING THE SERVICE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN

ISRAEL. ONE MUST REMEMBER THAT THE FINDINGS OF THE OMBUDSMAN CONCERNING A DEFECT IN THE ACTION OF A PUBLIC AUTHORITY, DISCLOSED FOLLOWING THE FILING OF A COMPLAINT, CAN LEAD TO A WIDESPREAD IMPROVEMENT IN SIMILAR ACTIONS OF OTHER AUTHORITIES.

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We invite you to continue filing complaints with the Office in the various ways available to you, and promise that the dedicated staff of the Office will continue to investigate the complaints impartially, professionally and with sensitivity.

Ways of filing a complaint



BY ONLINE
FORM



BY
EMAIL



BY REGULAR
MAIL



BY
FAX



BY
FACEBOOK

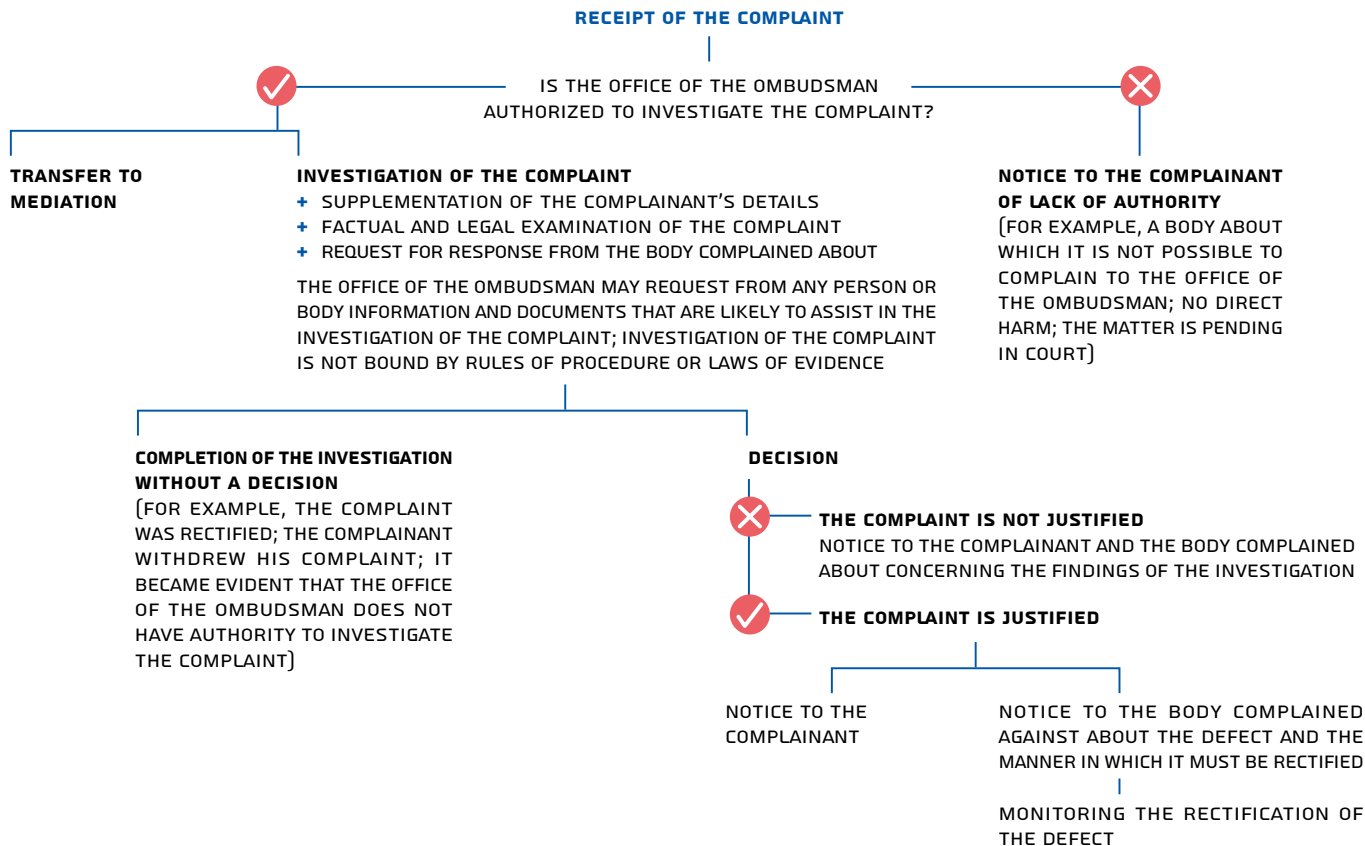


AT THE RECEPTION
BUREAUS OF THE
OMBUDSMAN



PHOTOGRAPH: SHUTTERSTOCK

Complaint Investigation Procedure



Addresses of the offices of the Ombudsman

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TEL. 04-8649748
FAX 04-8649744

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TEL AVIV-JAFFA 6107001
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