

# **The Israeli Border Police: Toward Fundamental Changes in its Mission and Responsibilities?**

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The violent clashes between Arabs and Jews in May 2021, as well as the increase in violence and crime in Israel, have put pressure on the political echelon to respond quickly and dramatically to the shortcomings in law enforcement and governance on the ground, particularly by strengthening the immediate response capabilities of the Israel Police, including the Israeli Border Police. As a result, a number of proposals were submitted to the government to ensure full, swift, and visible enforcement. The establishment of the new government has accelerated these processes and has raised additional ideas, some of them far reaching, on a variety of issues, including the role of the Israeli Border Police, and the establishment of an Israeli National Guard, which is designed to enhance enforcement capabilities in the fields of violence and large-scale disturbances, particularly in areas of friction between Jews and Arabs. The aim of this study is to systematically examine the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed changes to the Israeli Border Police and its links with the National Guard, in terms of their feasibility and applicability, and in relation to the current mission and duties of the Israeli Border Police. Our primary conclusion is that there is, indeed, a need to reform and strengthen the force to be qualified to fulfill its challenging missions. However, this should be done wisely, cautiously, and with careful planning. Furthermore, since the Border Police is part of the Israel Police, these changes must be considered within the broader framework of the necessary reforms of the Israel Police, in accordance with its overall capacity to adequately manage law and order in the country. Only in this context should any proposals be considered and implemented, including the one that calls for transforming the Border Police into an Israeli version of a National Guard.

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Since May 2021, in the wake of riots in some of Israel's mixed Jewish-Arab towns and in light of the Israeli public's weakened sense of personal security, a heated public discourse has emerged about the ways to address domestic security challenges and to strengthen the enforcement of the public order. One of the central notions being discussed to achieve these goals is the strengthening of the Israel Police (IP) and the Israel Border Police (IBP), as its operational combat arm. Also discussed is the option of establishing an Israeli National Guard (ING), as a supplementary force to augment domestic security. This issue was central in the last election campaign and was a key agenda for politicians in far-right wing parties that formed the new coalition.

This document focuses on the IBP, which is the central reserve of the IP for maintaining law and order and quick responding to mass disturbances, including riots within Israel that take on a nationalist character. The previous government decided in 2021 to establish the ING, based on the IBP, as a designated force for these missions within Israel. The IBP had already begun planning for this change. More recently, the government was called to address these issues on the basis of the coalition agreement between the Likud and the Jewish Power Parties. This agreement discussed two issues that could significantly affect the IP, the IBP, and their mutual relationship with the Israel Defense Forces (IDF): The first issue concerns the role of the IBP in Judea and Samaria and the possibility of transferring the responsibility for its operations from the IDF to the IP; the second issue relates to the possibility of separating the IBP and the future ING from the IP.

## **Part 1: The Israel Border Police From a Historic and Operational Perspective**

### **Background and Development of the Israel Border Police**

Shortly before the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, a committee of the Jewish Agency was convened to formulate the state institutions. The group responsible for the establishment of the national police proposed the creation of two parallel organs: a police force and a gendarmerie. While the IP was established immediately, the gendarmerie was not. After the war, the issue was discussed again considering the increasing number of infiltrators and fedayeen attacks. On September 21, 1949, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion decided that a gendarmerie would be established within the IDF, although the future IBP was soon transferred to the IP. It was then agreed that the IDF would control this corps only during wartime. To answer the ongoing issue of a continuous shortage of manpower to staff the new force, it was decided that serving in the emerging IBP would be part

of the compulsory military service. Only in 1963, the first 250 conscripts were recruited to the IBP.

The initial mission of the IBP was to guard the borders of the state against infiltrators and to protect the remote settlements adjacent to the borders. The military nature of the missions required the IBP to adopt the combat structure of the IDF. The commander of the IBP was subordinate to the chief of the Administrative Division of the Police, with a certain degree of independence in terms of the IBP's missions. The commander of the IBP also served as the advisor to the commissioner of the IP regarding the defense of settlements and as the representative of the Police to the IDF.

The role of the IBP changed significantly after the Six-Day War, when some of its units were transferred to the IDF's Central and Northern Commands and assumed responsibility for controlling the occupied territories, with the duty of imposing law and order and eradicating hotbeds of Palestinian terrorism. In 1971, IBP units also were deployed to Gaza, while maintaining their mission of securing the Green Line border.

Over the years, and with the increase in terrorist attacks inside Israel, the IP assumed responsibility for domestic security. To this end, several companies of the IBP were transferred from the West Bank to inside the Green Line, as a force multiplier for the blue-uniformed police. The operational responsibility for the war on terror led to a change in the character of the corps, which was manifested, among other things, by the establishment of the National Counter Terrorism Unit, the Negotiation Unit, the Bomb Disposal Unit, and the volunteer-based Civil Guard. During this period, the IBP underwent major organizational changes, including the establishment of three regional headquarters.

During the First Intifada, the size of the IBP increased significantly. In addition, three undercover special operations units were established in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and later in Jerusalem, and another one was set up during the Second Intifada. Following the violent clashes between Arab citizens and the police in October 2000, more changes were introduced, including the establishment of reserve units within the IBP in 2002.

Since then, further organizational changes have been made. In 2017, several special units were merged into the newly established Tactical Division, which specializes in rapid response in terrorist incidents, handling violent riots inside Israel, and participation in special operations against serious crime. During Operation Guardian of the Walls in 2021, IBP companies were transferred from the West Bank to the city of Lod, and additional IBP reserve units were called up

to assist the IP in maintaining law and order in areas where clashes between Jews and Arabs erupted.

### **The Mission and Duties of the Israel Border Police**

The Police Ordinance (updated in September 2001) defines the mission and duties of the IBP as a professional corps within the IP, which operates according to the principles of territorial responsibility and the unified chain of command. The Mission of the IBP is to serve as a multifunctional force of the IP to engage in security, policing, and counterterrorism.

**The Duties of the IBP** are defined as follows:

1. To serve as the operational arm of the IP, for counterterrorism, maintaining law and order, and for special security operations;
2. To serve as an early response force for acute disturbances requiring immediate intervention;
3. To assist police units in combating serious crime, in coordination with the respective district commanders;
4. To assist police units in combating agricultural crime in rural areas;
5. To serve as a multifunctional border security force in cooperation with the IDF;
6. To secure critical national facilities.

Currently, there are more than 7,000 police officers serving in the IBP, of which half are career soldiers and the other half are doing their compulsory service. The IBP constitutes a quarter of the total force of the IP. In addition, approximately 3,000 reservists serve in the IBP, including those serving in the West Bank. The IBP also has a relatively large volunteer force (ca. 7,000 strong). In practice, the authority of an officer in the IBP is similar to that of a regular police officer, but his/her training and professional skills in combat are more like those of an IDF combatant.

The IBP personnel serve as an important source of manpower for the IP. The commanding officers in the IBP often join the chain of command of the police.

## **From the Israel Border Police to a National Guard?**

On January 23, 2023, Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir declared the establishment of a National Guard as part of the IP, in order to strengthen the police force and double the strength of the IBP. The minister stated that the National Guard would be modeled after the IBP forces currently deployed in the West Bank, under the supervision of the IDF Command. In addition, this new force would be augmented by additional police, as well as by 10,000 combat veteran volunteers. In March 2023, Ben-Gvir proposed that the National Guard should be separated from the IBP and the IP and should be subordinated to the Ministry of National Security.

This was not the first time that the idea of establishing a National Guard had been discussed. A month after the May 2021 riots, the government, then under Benjamin Netanyahu, [adopted](#) an emergency plan (Decision 1701) for strengthening public peace, security, and order. The decision included a series of measures to reinforce the IP and the IBP. One year later, the government led by Naftali Bennett decided to establish an Israeli National Guard, based on IBP forces and thousands of volunteers. The government decided also that:

- The regular manpower of the existing tactical division of the IBP would be doubled, along with the reserve manpower of the force.
- The volunteer force of the IBP would be increased.
- The number of IP volunteers, who serve in the Civil Guard (a police volunteering arm) in existing police stations, would be increased.

An [article](#) published by the INSS suggested that the implementation of this decision will have a significant impact, as it will provide an adequate professional and immediate response to disturbances of public order among the civilian population; it will strengthen governance and the public's sense of security; it will allow the police to concentrate on its traditional routine duties; and overall, it will utilize the National Guard to serve as the first response force to deal with mass disasters.

Since then, the Ministry of Public Security, the IP, and the IBP have been formulating an operational concept and an outline for the establishment of the National Guard. This planning has not yet been completed, and the process of recruiting new personnel for the IBP is still in its early stages. Since the establishment of the current government, there have been discussions about the

models for the National Guard, to whom it should report, and what its missions should be.

The establishment of the National Guard within the IBP, or transforming the entire IBP into a National Guard, within the IP, is a worthwhile plan. Its main missions must be in the civilian sphere, between the military missions of the IDF and the civilian law enforcement missions of the IP, with strict operational coordination between them. The National Guard will have to focus on missions of responding to widespread violent disturbances, serving as a reinforcement for the IP, while emphasizing a rapid and systematic response also to incidents characterized by nationalist tensions between Jews and Arabs. In any case, the link between the IP and the future National Guard should be maintained, according to the principles of territorial responsibility and the unity of the chain of command.

This essay will further discuss two issues that were part of the coalition agreement between the Jewish Power Party and the Likud Party, regarding the IBP and its relationship with the IDF and the IP.

## **Part 2: The Future of the Israel Border Police Units Deployed in the West Bank**

The IBP units deployed in the West Bank constitute a force on the scale of a military division. They operate in the occupied territories under the command of the IDF Central Command, implementing its missions and operational objectives as the sovereign in this region. This has been the case since the Six-Day War.

### **Definitions and Terms**

The implementation of the proposed changes requires an understanding of two basic police doctrinal terminologies. The first is **“territorial responsibility,”** which refers to the command-and-control basic structure of the IP, which is divided into seven territorial districts that are further divided by regions and stations. Within each territorial police command, the sub-units are subordinate to a single police commander who directs all the services provided by all the police units in its territory and who is responsible for achieving the goals of that geographic space. The only exception is the West Bank district, which provides police services only to the Jewish population and assists the military, as the sovereign in this territory. All police stations report to their regional headquarters, and two to three regions report to each district headquarters. From the perspective of the IP, “territorial responsibility” means that the commander in each geographic unit (station/region/district) has the sole and exclusive command responsibility for all the police activity carried out in the territory under his or her authority.

The second principle is the **“unified chain of command,”** which, according to the police doctrine, implies that all police units (stations/regions/districts) in a given territory and all units/departments/branches/divisions in the headquarters) are subordinate to a single commanding officer, in one direct hierarchy of the chain of command, headed by the police commissioner.

### **Transferring Israel Border Police in the West Bank to the Full Responsibility of the Israel Police**

The proposal to transfer the IBP units in the West Bank (consisting of some 1,700 police officers), from the jurisdiction of the IDF Central Command to the full responsibility of the IP has serious implications. These include:

#### **1. Disrupting the Principle of the “Unity of Command”**

- a. The presumed rationale behind this proposal is based on possible lessons learned from the civilian riots between Arabs and Jews in May 2021. During these events, the local police officers were not able to restore order, and reinforcement of the mixed towns was difficult. In the city of Lod, it was difficult to augment the regular police forces with IBP units whose deployment occurred late following their regular duties in the West Bank. The current proposal is apparently based on the assumption that if the IBP units in the West Bank were fully under the control of the IP, or were independent and available to be utilized in volatile arenas, it would have made a difference and they could have speedily been able to reinforce police stations when law and order was disrupted in Israeli localities. Presently, rapid deployment of high-quality police response units is only possible through the IBP forces operating in the West Bank, and this requires a change in the existing chain of command.
- b. The current situation is that the IBP contingency in the West Bank, which includes a (divisional) headquarters, 15 companies, and 5 special forces units, is subordinate to the IDF’s Central Command in all matters related to its operations in the territories.
- c. If the proposed amendment is carried out, the IBP, or perhaps the National Guard, as even an independent force, subordinated to the Ministry of National Security, would be responsible for both the force buildup and operations in the West Bank, a territory for which the overall responsibility lies with the IDF. This explicitly contradicts the IDF and Police’s core principle of a unified chain of command.



Consequently, the IDF has already expressed its strong opposition to such an arrangement, which would significantly disrupt its ability to carry out its responsibility for the force operations in Judea and Samaria, thus reducing the efficacy of its activities in this sensitive region.

- d. Separating the IBP from the IP (see below) would create an impossible situation by which three security organizations would be involved in the operational deployment of these IBP units: the IDF, when these units are deployed in the West Bank; the National Police's territorial commands, when the IBP units are deployed in Israeli localities; and the IBP headquarters, which would be responsible for their training and administrative control. This separation would break the organizational and operational chain of command.

## **2. Diminishing the Connection Between the Forces and Their Area of Operation**

- a. The situation today: The IBP units in the West Bank are deployed on a long-term basis in specific locations of friction and are well familiar with the issues and needs of these areas. This familiarity, which is transmitted from one cohort to the next, is essential to the units' ability to accomplish their missions.
- b. Implications of the proposed change: Should the proposed change increase the frequency in which the IBP units will be moved from their routine deployments in the West Bank to various areas throughout the country, to ensure public order and address serious crime for undefined and varying periods of time, it is likely that the operational effectiveness of these IBP units will be jeopardized. A significant operational disparity is likely to emerge between the different arenas in which they operate. IBP units that regularly operate in the West Bank are unfamiliar with the operational arenas within Israel. Furthermore, whenever they are redeployed to other missions in Israel, the IDF Central Command will have to fill the gaps created by the unplanned redeployment of the IBP units. All this could disrupt the force's effectiveness both in the West Bank and inside Israel.

## **3. Impairing the Israel Border Police's Operational and Response Capacity**

- a. The situation today: IBP units deployed in the West Bank operate according to a work plan formulated by the IDF's Central Command,



which plans their deployment for both routine operations and challenges, including last-minute calls to respond to the frequently changing situation in the field.

- b. Implications of the proposed change: In the new situation, should the IP have the authority and responsibility to directly control the operations of the force, it will be consequential to the operational planning, routine, readiness, and immediate response of these IBP units.

In theory, it is possible to resolve these issues in advance and through dialogue between the authorities. However, in most cases, the proposed formula will, in practice, lead to frequent and significant obstacles to processes within both the IDF's Central Command and the IP.

#### **4. Diminishing Motivation**

- a. The situation today: The IBP units serve as a special force for specific missions in the West Bank, characterized by their complexity and sensitivity. As these units perform in accordance with the IDF's missions and needs, the operational motivation of these units is very high, and they attract highly motivated new recruits.
- b. Implications of the change: Frequent separation of these units from their operations in the West Bank as their primary mission is likely to harm the motivation of new recruits to enlist in these IBP units. Experience has already shown that the frequent transfer of forces between different areas of operation, in order to enhance policing in Israel itself has already reduced the motivation to serve in these IBP units.

#### **5. Obstructing the Execution of Police Duties in the West Bank**

- a. The situation today: IBP units have been deployed in the West Bank for a good reason. As mentioned above, this arrangement began after the conquest of the territories during the Six-Day War. The military has required an experienced police force to cope with disturbances of public order, demonstrations, and terrorism. The IDF's policy over the years has been to reduce deploying young military recruits with combat experience to operate among a hostile Palestinian civilian population. Circumstances such as these are sensitive and volatile and require experience, maturity, good

judgement, and substantial professional police experience. In places where soldiers operate, clashes with the local civilian population often result in injuries and sometimes unnecessary deaths. The use of the IBP units—equipped also with nonlethal means of crowd dispersal by experienced, mature officers—is generally perceived as more effective. This is also true when the IBP is used to enforce the law against Jewish settlers, such as in evacuating illegal outposts and demolishing houses.

- b. Implications of the change: The proposed change will require the use of IDF soldiers in the scenarios described above. This will increase friction and the risk of injury and death, in addition to reducing the effectiveness of the required actions. The army may be forced to train and deploy a less experienced military force for these policing missions. This would also require additional IDF soldiers or reservists to be deployed in the West Bank, and the use of more army units to perform policing tasks, which would interfere with its primary combat mission.

## **6. Reducing the Quality of the Manpower**

- a. The situation today: The IBP units that operate in the West Bank are composed of career soldiers and regular soldiers who do their compulsory service under a special arrangement with the IDF and the Ministry of Defense. As a first-class force, they are an inseparable part of the IDF's mission in this crucial and sensitive arena.
- b. Implication of the change: If the IDF does not accept the proposed arrangement, as suggested by its senior commanders, it will be obligated to find replacements for these units—either through regular or reserve units. This situation will impede the IDF's force buildup and its professional engagement capabilities in the territories.
- c. The implementation of the proposal will also harm the quality of both the soldiers and the IBP, as well as the IP, since a significant number of soldiers later join the two organizations as career officers.

## **Interim Conclusion**

Based on the above analysis, we conclude that the proposal to change the subordination of the IBP units in the West Bank and transfer the full responsibility

for them from the IDF's Central Command to the National Police is wrong and should not be adopted. Our conclusion is that it will be too costly from the operational and organizational aspects for all concerned. We concur that there is a need to augment the IP, either by strengthening the Police and/or the IBP, or perhaps by building the ING, in order to build the enforcement capacity to adequately deal with relevant domestic disruptions. This issue has to be resolved by examining the national needs and priorities versus the resources that should be invested. Given the profound implications of the problem, the weakness of the IP and the needs of the military—the whole spectrum—should be considered systematically, in relation to all the organizations involved. If it is decided to subordinate the IBP units operating in the West Bank to the IP, then the mission of the corps, including the capacity of the IBP headquarters to manage and operate it, will need to be redefined and hence restructured.

In order to make the final decision about the IP's level of readiness to deal with extreme and diverse events, including the eruption of nationalist-oriented violence, the IP must be thoroughly and professionally examined.

### **Part 3: Separating the Israel Border Police From the Israel Police and Establishing an Independent Operational Force?**

In clause 90 of the coalition agreement between the Jewish Power Party and the Likud Party, it is stated, inter alia, that "It will be decided to separate the IBP from the IP, and to transform it into an independent service with a status similar to the Israel Prison Service, to place it under the authority of the minister of national security and to carry out legislative changes accordingly." This plan represents a significant change from the existing relationship between the IP and the IBP, and it requires full consideration, including an examination of the advantages and disadvantages, the implications for the IP, the IBP, the IDF, and additional security bodies, as well as meticulous planning of the changes that will be determined at the policy level.

- a. The situation today: The commander of the IBP is a major-general, who reports to the Police commissioner. The headquarters of the IBP is composed of professional departments, which correspond to the professional divisions in the IP National Headquarters.
- b. The IBP operates in six regions, corresponding to the districts of the IP (except for the Tel Aviv and Center districts, which constitute one region for the IBP). The regions are subordinate to the commander of the force and report to the commanders of the respective districts where they operate according to the principles of unity of the chain of command

and territorial responsibility. The IBP units operate in the field according to the instructions of the District Command in the fields of serious crime and the enforcement of public order. The Operations Division of the Police Headquarters is the body that deploys forces according to defined missions in the various districts, based on situational assessments.

- c. The Tactical Brigade and the Domestic Security Unit constitute the special forces of the IBP. Another special unit, the Centralized Special Unit (YAMAM), which serves as a national counterterrorism unit, reports to the commander of the IBP and operates in coordination with the Operations Division of the IP, the Israel Security Agency (Shabak), and the IDF.
- d. The IBP has the unique capability within the IP to operate reserve units. Over the years, it has established reserve units and trained them for their missions. In addition, the IBP includes some 7,000 volunteers, mainly in its regional brigades. In general, the IBP units are distinguished from the regular IP force by their unique missions, training, and deployment in combat missions.
- e. The IBP has recently added an investigative capacity to its roster and has established new central units with investigative and intelligence capabilities, to focus on agricultural crime and illegal residency. The IBP's intelligence program is directed by the IP and operates in conjunction with the "Intelligence Center," which oversees the overall intelligence picture based on all the information sources of the IP. The police prosecutor also provides services to the IBP, as well as to all other police units.

### **Analysis of the New Proposal**

The proposal to separate the IBP from the regular IP was introduced under particularly severe circumstances and in the context of the political need to respond to the widespread public perception that governance has weakened, crime is widespread, and law enforcement is lacking. This has led to a negative public attitude—justified or not—that the citizens' sense of personal security has diminished. This is a challenging problem for the government and one that requires practical solutions that affect the IP in general and the IBP specifically. However, focusing primarily on the IBP will not solve the problem. The challenging situation of law enforcement in Israel requires a profound change within the entire

law enforcement system, including the IP and all its components, of which the IBP is only one.

The IBP has undergone many changes over the years, and most addressed particular problems at a certain time and under specific circumstances. Each change provided some immediate relief but did not create a fundamental transformation. This has led to ongoing frustration in both the IP and the IBP. Within the IBP, the frustration stems from the commanders' desire for more independence and freedom of action, due to the barriers imposed by the doctrinal principles of territorial command and the unified chain of command. These principles unequivocally state that the authority over a given territory rests exclusively with the district commander of the IP. Hence, the IBP field commanders are only responsible for carrying out their tactical missions. Also, IBP commanders claimed that the force has fully exhausted its capabilities in terms of its operative missions and had met its accomplishments in the civilian sphere. This is also true regarding the IP, which is limited in its capacity to respond to even ordinary needs.

Given the above, the option of completely separating—both organizationally and operationally—the IBP from the IP could have the following far-reaching consequences:

- a. The principle of territorial responsibility and unified chain of command will require a new and different territorial division of the IP. This process is unnecessary and will not solve the problems currently facing the IP. On the contrary, the separation of the two entities would weaken their functional capabilities to carry out their complex missions.
- b. In the case of separation, areas of responsibility could be divided between the two organizations, territorially or functionally. This is unreasonable, due to the deep connection between typical crimes and law-breaking with nationalist violence and riots. Who will be responsible for the different issues and the overlap between them?
- c. The character of the IP is shaped by its missions. It must respond 24/7 to crimes, accidents, disturbances, and events. Consequently, it must constantly deploy its forces and can devote only a small portion of its time resources to building up its forces. In contrast, the IBP, like a military force, spends a relatively long time building up its forces. This reduces the availability of the IBP forces to assist the IP, whose units have buckled under the burden of their routine operations.

These lead to the following main conclusions:

- a. The discussion and decision on the future organization of the IBP should be postponed until the completion of strategic planning to examine the status of the IP and the IBP as part of it.
- b. As part of this systemic approach, one of the following two main courses of action should be chosen: The first is to create a new territorial division of the entire state between the IBP and the IP. **This option is neither desirable nor feasible.** The second option is to create an effective operational coordination mechanism between the two organizations in each territorial area, a process that would render the proposed separation irrelevant in practice. This would be a lengthy, complicated, and expensive process that could further exacerbate the fundamental problems of the IP.
- c. The same applies to the option of establishing an expanded separate headquarters for the IBP, to facilitate its proposed separate roles and operations. This would require the addition of hundreds of new positions, offices, infrastructure, and more, at the expense of adding new operational manpower to the force.
- d. Overall, the separation of the two entities will significantly and adversely affect their overall ability to perform their missions in accordance with the law and existing needs.
- e. The separation between the two entities will require reestablishing the mode of operation for response to future civilian emergencies. This vital sphere requires detailed and complex planning and preparation, while separation is likely to exacerbate the existing problem.
- f. If the separation does take place, with the division of territorial responsibilities, as in the case of the French Gendarmerie or the Italian Carabinieri, the two systems will both need strengthening in order to act independently in all areas. Currently, they complement each other and cannot operate independently. The IBP lacks sufficient resources, especially in intelligence, investigation, and prosecution, while the IP lacks sufficient operational capacity and resources for restoring law and order. Their mutual need for reciprocity is evident on a daily basis.

#### **Part 4: Conclusions and Systematic Recommendations**

The main conclusion of this paper is that **the existing police force in Israel is inadequate to perform all the complex and essential tasks with which it is charged today**. This is true regarding both routine and emergency missions. Given that the current police manpower in Israel is insufficient—an issue that must be addressed systematically—any deviation from the daily routine, especially in the case of disturbances to the public order or mass disasters, requires immediate redeployment of forces from various police units to these urgent missions. This is in addition to the 1,200 officers of the Special Patrol Unit who are responsible for public order missions and respond to serious crimes. Frequent redeployments of police officers from their routine missions to emergency missions come at the expense of both their essential routine work and service to the public and their operational response effectiveness.

One of the solutions for this systemic gap in policing has been for the IBP and its reserve units to serve as a backup in times of need. However, this current model is not sufficient, and therefore, a new model of functioning is required, which would give the IP and its branches the ability to carry out both routine and emergency tasks in a reasonable manner. Although this document focuses on the IBP, the real solution lies in **the expansion and multidimensional transformation of the entire IP, which would allow for specific changes to take place in the IBP**.

The proposal to separate the IBP from the IP must be examined in this broader context, primarily in relation to the resources of the IP—manpower, equipment, budgets, and public status. The IP in its current model and scale is not built for and cannot handle all its missions, which has increased with the growth in population, the rise in crime and law-breaking, the escalating inter-ethnic tensions and clashes, the entry of crime into cyberspace, and more. At the same time, the status and capabilities of the IP have been declining for years. The IP has needed to make changes and improvise responses at the local level, usually with a limited budget, which has never allowed it to build itself in an orderly, planned, and effective manner, according to its real needs.

Following the internal domestic crisis in May 2021, which took place at a time of rising crime and violence in both the Jewish and Arab communities, the commissioner of the IP submitted the strategic Plan 555, which suggested to add some 5,000 new positions to the police force, requiring an additional budget of NIS 5 billion over five years. This plan was not implemented, and the disparities between the needs and the resources remained unchanged.



In this context, it is recommended to consider the overall problem in a strategic holistic manner, based on the following main guidelines:

- The practice of improvised fixes that provide short-term local responses to specific problems, must come to an end. Experience shows that this approach may give an image of improvement but usually creates new and more serious challenges in the long term.
- Despite the importance of providing an appropriate response to violent disturbances in the Jewish–Arab context, which undoubtedly requires a law enforcement solution, evaluating response capacity of the IP and the IBP solely through this lens will not lead to the necessary systemic solution.
- The fundamental problem that needs to be addressed is the inability of the IP, both qualitatively and quantitatively, to fulfill its complex and diverse missions. A structural response to this problem—even if it takes time to formulate and implement at the strategic level—is the direction to be taken, even under political pressure and a challenging reality.
- Therefore, it is recommended to conduct an in-depth strategic assessment of the IP preparedness and suitability for the next five years in terms of the forecast for future domestic security threats versus the needed capacities of the IP services and the other law-enforcement agencies, all this with reference to the required financial and organizational resources.
- It is further recommended to conduct a strategic planning process regarding the structure of the IP force over the next fifteen years, in accordance with the expected population growth, demographic changes, the transformative impact of climate change, technological developments, international crime, and changing work patterns.
- Strategic planning for the IBP should be based on the general strategic plan for the IP, including its mission, duties, structure, manpower, and its relations with the IP and the IDF.
- The far-reaching changes discussed in this essay regarding the IBP in the West Bank and the separation of the IBP from the IP should be postponed until the completion of a necessary examination of the entire police and law enforcement systems. As part of this process, it is necessary to propose different alternatives, including those raised recently, while examining their advantages, disadvantages, costs, and benefits.

- A renewed systematic examination of the national responsibility for handling mass disasters, both natural and man-made, should include an assessment of the duties and status of the IDF's Home Front Command, its subordination, and its association with the IP. This subject is not less important than the one under discussion here.
- It is recommended that the strategic planning process be divided between the issues that require short-term solutions and the fundamental problems related to the weakness of the IP in providing a quality response to extreme events. The question of whether the IBP/National Guard should be an independent entity certainly belongs to the latter category.