

Statistics of Foreigners in Israel

The document “Statistics of Foreigners in Israel” presents statistical data that refers to the main issues of the subject of foreigners in Israel. The document is publicized on the website of the Population and Immigration Authority (www.piba.gov.il) and is available to the general public.

It is recommended to read the definitions of the variables, which appear at the end of the booklet. Those definitions are important in order to understand the presented data. From time to time we clarify the definitions and so it is recommended to read them again each time before reading the document.

The current document also serves as a summary for the year 2015 as well as a description of the trends throughout the years. We therefore deal with the following two issues:

Phenomenon of infiltration to Israel – The trend that continued over the years 2012 to 2014, characterized by a marked decline in the number of infiltrators entering Israel, was reversed in 2015. While in 2014 the phenomenon of infiltration to Israel stopped almost completely, with only 21 infiltrators entered during the whole year, in 2015 there was an increase of more than 10 times the number of infiltrators who entered compared to the previous year, with a total number of 220 (see Table A.1).

92% of the infiltrators who resided in Israel at the end of 2015 originated from Sudan or Eritrea (see Table A2). The total of all infiltrators residing in Israel dropped from about 46,440 at the end of 2014 to approximately 43,200 at the end of 2015. This decrease is explained mainly by the number of infiltrators who departed voluntarily in 2015 (3,381). This year the number of infiltrators who voluntarily departed decreased by nearly 2 times (3,381 compared to 6,414 in 2014), yet in the last quarter of 2015 the voluntary departure rate increased significantly, with 40% of all departing in 2015 departing during this quarter (see Table A.3).

Employment of Foreign Workers – In accordance with the government policy, in 2015 efforts continued to expand the recruitment and employment of foreign workers in the various sectors within the framework of bilateral agreements.

Out of 6,855 legal foreign workers in the construction industry, who were in Israel at the end of 2014 (see Table B.1) approx. 35% arrived through bilateral agreements with the Bulgarian, Moldovan and Romanian governments. For the sake of comparison, this figure stood at 25% at the end of 2014. Of the 21,268 legal foreign workers who were in Israel at the end of 2015 (see there), about 71% came through bilateral agreements with Thailand, while this figure stood at 55% at the end of 2014. Thus there is a steady increase in the number of foreign workers who arrived in Israel within the framework of bilateral agreements.

Data of foreigners in Israel – a concentrated table

Subject	Date of Update	Total	Comments
Infiltrators who are staying in Israel	31.12.15	43,186	Further details in tables table A.1; A.2
Infiltrators who entered Israel since beginning of 2015	31.12.15	220	Further details in table A.1
Infiltrators who left voluntarily since beginning 2015	31.12.15	3,381	Further details in table A.3
Legal foreign workers	31.12.15	77,192	Further details in table B.1
Illegal foreign workers	31.12.15	15,915	Further details in table B.1
Tourists with no valid visa	31.12.14	91,000*	Further details in table C.1
Deportations of illegals since beginning 2015	31.12.15	3,116	Further details in table D.1
Enforcement of employers since beginning 2015:			
Number of cases opened	31.12.15	936	Further details in table E.1
Number of indictments	31.12.15	147	Further details in table E.2

*Source: Central Statistics Bureau – Press Release from 28.07.15, notice of revision from 22.10.15.

A. Infiltrators¹

Table A.1 Infiltrators, according to date and location of trace

Until 2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015										Located in Israel	Total # of infiltrators who entered Israel	Infiltrators currently* residing in Israel			
2,717	5,015	8,740	5,208	14,666	17,301	10,440	Location of Trace		Located at the Border (Saharonim)										7	64,389	43,186			
							Border	In Israel	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10				11	12	Total at border
							43	77	21	21	0	4	0	15	26	0	0	44				57	35	39

*As of 31.12.15

The trend that continued over the years 2012 to 2014, characterized by a marked decline in the number of infiltrators entering Israel, was reversed in 2015. While in 2014 the phenomenon of infiltration to Israel stopped almost completely, with only 21 infiltrators entered during the whole year, in 2015 there was an increase of more than 10 times the number of infiltrators who entered compared to the previous year, with a total number of 220 (see Table A.1).

92% of the infiltrators who resided in Israel at the end of 2015 originated from Sudan or Eritrea (see Table A2). The total of all infiltrators residing in Israel dropped from about 46,440 at the end of 2014 to approximately 43,200 at the end of 2015. This decrease is explained mainly by the number of infiltrators who departed voluntarily in 2015 (3,381) (see Table A.3).

The data indicates that 67% of the infiltrators who entered Israel throughout the years continue to reside here. For comparison it should be noted that in 2010 this figure stood at 89%. i.e., during the last six years there has been a significant decline in the ratio of the number of infiltrators who entered Israel and the number of those who continue to reside in the country now. This decline can be attributed primarily to the voluntary departure of infiltrators assisted by the Voluntary Departure Unit of PIBA as well as the enforcement activities on infiltrators and their employers.

¹ File is dynamic and may update retroactively with respect to previous months and years.

Table A.2. Infiltrators who live now* in Israel, by specific countries

Type of data	Country				Total
	Sudan	Eritrea	Other Africa	Other	
Numbers	8,353	31,414	2,865	554	43,186
Percentage	19	73	7	1	100

*As of 31.12.15

Infiltrators from Eritrea and Sudan constitute 92% of the total number of infiltrators currently residing in Israel. Infiltrators belonging to this group as not subject to removal at this time.

Table A.3. Voluntary Return of African Infiltrators, 2015

22	2015												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Ma y	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Sudan	55	45	46	41	52	54	29	29	21	67	86	75	600
Eritrea	178	178	183	62	167	182	168	200	133	296	395	338	2,480
Other Africa	29	19	16	28	24	23	22	23	23	22	28	44	301
Total	262	242	245	131	243	259	219	252	177	385	509	457	3,381

This year the number of infiltrators who voluntarily departed decreased by nearly 2 times (3,381 compared to 6,414 in 2014), yet in the last quarter of 2015 the voluntary departure rate increased significantly, with 40% of all departing in 2015 departing during the last quarter of the year (see Table A.3).

B. Foreign workers

Table B.1. Foreign workers currently in Israel, by field

Date of update	Legal								
	Nursing	Building	Agriculture	Seasonal agriculture	Restaurants	Industry and services	Experts	Total	
31.12.2015	45,632	6,855	21,268	79	0	0	3,358	77,192	
	Illegal								
	Nursing	Building	Agriculture	Seasonal agriculture	Restaurants	Industry and services	Experts	Other ²	Total
	11,800	999	705	11	26	126	401	1,464	15,915

The total number of legal foreign workers at the end of 2015 (77,192) is higher by about 3.5% relative to the total number at the end of 2014 (74,567). The increase occurred mainly in the following industries: nursing, building and experts, while in the agricultural sector the number of foreign workers decreased.

The increase in the number of legal foreign workers in the construction sector can be explained by the fact that in 2015 the implementation of bilateral agreements was expanded to recruit and employ foreign workers in the construction industry, in which some 1,270 new foreign workers entered Israel.

The total number of illegal foreign workers at the end of 2015 increased by 4% in relation to the number at the end of 2014 (15,915 versus 15,315). This is mainly due to the increase of some 500 illegal workers in the nursing industry. It should be noted that at the end of 2015 the Minister of Interior approved the continued employment of foreign workers living in Israel over 63 months as recommended by the Advisory Committee to the Minister to extend the B/1 permits in the nursing industry for special humanitarian reasons” according to defined criteria. Implementation of the recommendations at the beginning of 2016 is expected to further increase the number of legal foreign workers in the nursing industry and to a decrease in the number of illegal foreign workers.

² Illegal foreigner workers with no connection to a certain field

C. Tourists

Table C.1. Foreigners who entered Israel as tourists and are still in Israel by the end of 2013 with no valid visa³

Country	Thousands	Percentage
The former Soviet Union*	54.4	59.8
Romania	4.6	5.1
Mexico	3.3	3.6
Egypt	1.7	1.9
Czechoslovakia**	1.5	1.6
Venezuela	1.4	1.5
Peru	1.3	1.4
Colombia	0.8	0.9
Nepal	0.7	0.8
Turkey	0.4	0.4
Other countries	20.9	23.0
Total	91	100

* Including republics of the (former) Soviet Union

** In the border prior to the dissolution

³ Source: Central Statistic Bureau Press Release of 30 July 2014, update notice of 22.10.15.

D. Enforcement of illegal residents⁴

Table D.1. Deportations of illegal foreigners*, 2015

Type of foreigners	2015												
	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Tourists	177	222	204	143	183	218	165	104	33	31	61	127	1,668
Foreign workers	75	80	61	37	54	73	80	49	9	13	18	31	580
Other foreigners	84	92	86	63	66	99	102	99	38	38	40	61	868
Total	336	394	351	243	303	390	347	252	80	82	119	219	3,116

* Excluding Palestinians

In 2015 there was a marked increase (about 24%) in the number of illegal foreigners who were deported from Israel compared to 2014 (2,507 versus 3,116).

⁴ File is dynamic and may update retroactively with respect to previous months

E. Enforcement re Employers of Foreigners⁵

Table E.1. Administrative Fines, 2015

Month	Cases opened during the month	Fines imposed as a result of illegal employment		Fines imposed as a result of other violations		Total of fines	
		Number	Amount (NIS)	Number	Amount (NIS)	Number	Amount (NIS)
January	93	42	388,250	24	290,000	66	678,250
February	78	94	995,250	75	867,250	169	1,862,500
March	111	81	918,500	58	760,000	139	1,678,500
April	72	72	650,000	51	485,000	123	1,135,000
May	100	79	752,500	53	535,000	132	1,287,500
June	130	71	747,500	58	583,000	129	1,331,500
July	117	38	412,500	30	247,500	68	660,000
August	43	53	467,500	39	317,500	92	785,000
September	17	30	215,000	28	217,500	58	432,500
October	22	97	935,000	71	625,000	168	1,560,000
November	63	46	415,000	38	315,000	84	730,000
December	90	57	580,000	45	445,000	102	1,025,000
Total	530	439	3,908,000	319	2,967,250	758	13,165,500

⁵ File is dynamic and may update retroactively with respect to previous months

Table E.2. Criminal Indictments, 2015

	2014												
	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Indictments⁶	6	28	14	11	6	8	7	16	1	13	14	23	147
Verdicts	16	26	12	16	9	13	14	2	5	11	20	7	151
Sum of Verdicts	703,500	1,351,294	388,000	822,000	406,080	400,800	676,000	30,750	113,000	1,122,000	818,500	247,612	7,079,536

⁶ Indictments submitted in a particular month for cases opened that month and previous dates

Definitions

1. Infiltrators

Foreigners who entered Israel through the border with Egypt, illegally, and were arrested in the border (when they entered) or inside the Israeli territory (after a while).

2. Voluntary return of infiltrators

Foreigners who left Israel after entering it illegally, and whose departure from Israel was not done under a deportation order.

3. Legal foreign workers

According to the law of foreign workers, the employment of a foreign worker has two conditions:

A. The employer holds a valid employment permit, in one of the sectors in which the government permits to employ foreign workers.

B. The foreigner has a valid work permit in that department, and will be registered to the employer who received the permit.

Breakdown of the permits for each department:

Nursing - Valid B/1 or B/2 visa + is under a valid permit + an active employer or the employer died less than 30 days ago.

Building – a valid B/1 visa and is under a valid permit.

Agriculture - a valid B/1 or B/2 visa and is under a valid permit.

Industry and Services - a valid B/1 or B/2 visa and is under a valid permit.

4. Illegal foreign workers

Foreigners who in the past were legal foreign workers, according to the definition of legal foreign workers (see above) but right now do not meet at least one criteria of this definition. The breakdown by industry is done according to the work permit the foreign worker had when he was still a legal worker.

5. Tourists with no valid visa

The estimation of foreigners from undeveloped country who entered Israel as tourists between the years 1995 and 2013 and are still in Israel by the end of 2013 with no valid visa. According to the estimation, most of them work illegally.

6. Deportations

Foreigners who left Israel as a result of a deportation order.

7. Enforcement on employers

Fines imposed because of illegal employment – fines imposed because of violations of articles of the foreigner workers law, which refer to the employment of a foreign worker without a permit/visa or opposed to the permit's conditions.

Fines imposed because of all other violations - fines imposed because of violations of the foreigner workers law, in reference to the following articles: lack of suitable living space for the foreign worker, lack of medical insurance for the foreign workers and lack of employment documentation of the foreign worker.

Criminal Indictments – Criminal indictments submitted for violations of the Foreign Workers Law, in the labor tribunals

Verdicts - Penalty imposed for a conviction in a criminal procedure