



Population and Immigration Authority

• Statistics of Foreigners in Israel – 2017 summary

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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 in the website of the Population and Immigration Authority (www.piba.gov.il) and is available to the general public.

The current edition of the "Statistics of Foreigners in Israel" is a summary of 2017. This expanded edition includes more detailed breakdowns than those appearing in editions published during the year, in order to enable the public to understand the issues and the phenomena that are covered in the previous editions of "Statistics of Foreigners in Israel".

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.

The following is a summary of developments in 2017, in regards to foreigners in Israel: In 2017 additional steps were taken by the government to regulate the employment of foreign workers by bilateral agreements and other arrangements. This year, the main achievements in this field include: an increase in the number of agricultural workers employed under bilateral agreements to 96% of the total number of foreign workers in this sector, signing a new bilateral agreement with China in the building industry and the beginning of its implementation, to employ additional workers from six companies selected in the tender, while overseeing the fair transaction. In the nursing sector, a pilot program was conducted to bring workers into bilateral agreements with Nepal and Sri Lanka. These pilot programs are expected to expand in 2018.

In terms of dealing with the infiltration phenomenon, 2017 was marked by a complete halt to the influx of infiltrators with zero infiltrators entering the territory this year. At the same time, a number of measures were taken to ensure that the infiltrators who are currently staying in Israel (approximately 37,000) will leave for different destinations. It was decided to close the Holot detention facility in the first quarter of 2018. Moreover, an outline was put in place pursuant to Government Decision No. 3326, from 3.1.18, that aims at reducing the exit grant attributed to infiltrators who would choose not to leave Israel in the coming months.

Between 2015 and 2017, there was a sharp increase in the number of asylum seekers from Ukraine and Georgia. Following a publication of an opinion stating that the countries of origin of these asylum seekers are safe, a procedure was introduced that states that these requests will be rejected out of hand. The procedure was approved for citizens of Georgia in February 2017, and for citizens of Ukraine in October 2017. In 2017 there was a significantly reduced the number of asylum applications submitted by citizens of these countries.

Table 1. Data of foreigners in Israel – a concentrated table

Subject	Date of Update	Total	Comments
Infiltrators who entered Israel since beginning of 2017	31.12.17	0	Further details in table 2
Infiltrators who are staying in Israel	31.12.17	37,288	Further details in table 2
Infiltrators who left voluntarily since beginning 2017	31.12.17	3,375	Further details in table 4
Asylum Applications submitted since beginning 2017	31.12.17	14,778	Further details in table 5
Legal foreign workers	31.12.17	88,171	Further details in table 6
Illegal foreign workers	31.12.17	18,059	Further details in table 6
Tourists with no valid visa	31.12.2016	*74,000	Further details in table 12
Deportations of illegals since beginning 2017	31.12.17	5,841	Further details in table 13
Enforcement of employers since beginning 2017:			
Number of cases opened	31.12.17	811	Further details in table 14
Number of indictments	31.12.17	143	Further details in table 15

*Source: Central Statistics Bureau – Press Release from 26.7.17.

A. Infiltrators¹

Table 2. Infiltrators, according to date and location of trace

Until 2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		Total Infiltrators Entered Israel	Total Infiltrators now* in Israel
2,766	5,179	8,844	5,197	14,630	17,281	10,445	Location of Trace		Location of Trace		Location of Trace		Location of Trace		Located at the Border (Saharonim)	Located in Israel	64,850	37,288
							Border	In Israel	Border	In Israel	Border	In Israel	Border	In Israel				
							43	80	21	22	220	12	18	30				

*As of 31.12.17

One of the phenomena that the Immigration and Population Authority has focused on in recent years is infiltration into Israel. At the peak of the phenomenon between 2010 and 2012, the number of infiltrators reached more than thousands per year. In total, 64,850 infiltrators entered Israel over these years. Since the mid-2012, there has been considerable progress in building the land barrier on the southern border and concerning the amendment of the legislation extending detention period. Moreover, there has been a sharp drop in the number of infiltrators entering Israel each year since that date.

With the exception of 2015, when the number of infiltrators on the border reached 220, in recent years only a few dozen individuals infiltrated into Israel, and in 2017 no new infiltrators entered Israel. In addition, in 2017 there was a decrease of 7% in the number of infiltrators staying in Israel, from 40,274 to 37,288² at the end of 2017.

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

² Not including births.

Graph 1 – Arrivals of infiltrators to Israel, by Year of Entry

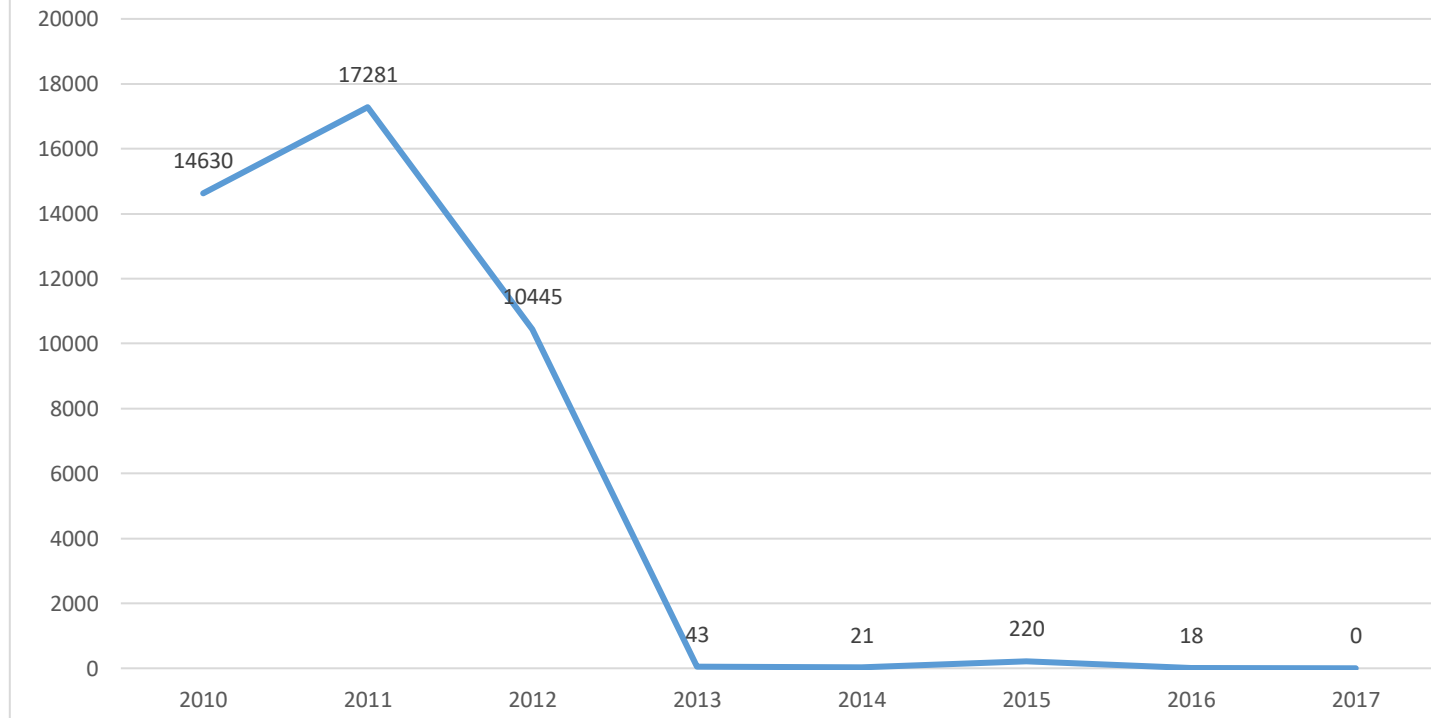


Table 3. Infiltrators who live now in Israel, by specific countries

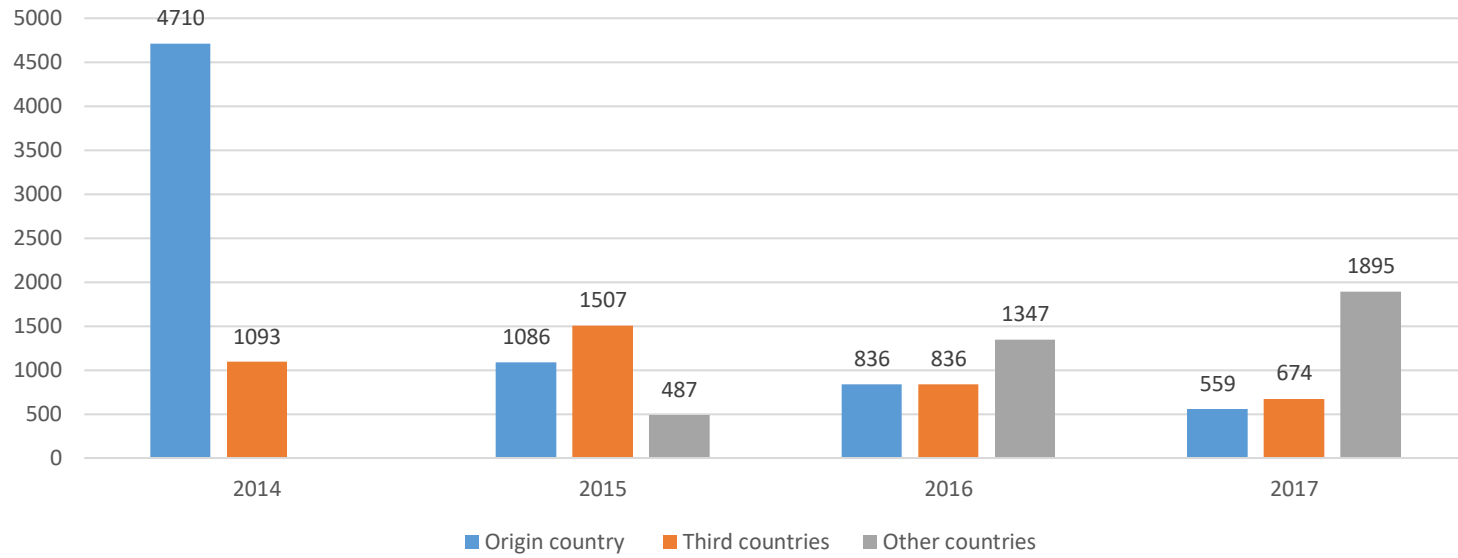
Type of data	Country				Total 2017
	Sudan	Eritrea	Other Africa	Other	
Numbers	7,624	26,563	2,628	473	37,288
Percentage	21	71	7	1	100

92% of all the infiltrators who are currently living in Israel originated from Eritrea or Sudan. These infiltrators are staying under a temporary restraining policy of their country.

Table 4. Voluntary Departures of African Infiltrators, 2017

Country	2014	2015	2016	2017												
	Total	Total	Total	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Eritrea	1,691	2,480	2,629	362	436	355	172	265	242	213	168	187	123	153	219	2,895
Sudan	4,112	600	390	17	25	22	31	18	19	23	13	25	7	13	20	233
Other Africa	611	301	337	16	15	25	21	23	17	15	22	23	13	33	24	247
Total	6,414	3,381	3,246	395	476	402	224	306	278	251	203	235	143	199	263	3,375

Graph 2 - Voluntary Departures of Eritreans and Sudanese, by year and destination.



B. Asylum Seekers

Table 5. Asylum application by country of origin and by year of submission

Country of origin	2014	2015	2016	2017
Ukraine	51	703	6,880	7,711
Eritrea	1,203	3,586	1,992	1,748
Ethiopia	115	280	121	191
Ghana	72	108	83	99
Georgia	27	736	3,668	1,351
Moldova	0	22	302	332
Nigeria	133	146	109	274
Sudan	903	1,162	636	906
Russia	0	14	395	635
Other countries	172	514	651	1,531
Total	2,676	7,271	14,837	14,778

During 2017 14,778 asylum application were filed, a similar number of application filed in 2016 (14,837). The rate of asylum application in 2017 was higher 103% compared to 2015 and 452% compared to 2014. The most notable increases were among Ukrainian and Georgian nationals.

C. Foreign workers

Table 6. Foreign workers currently in Israel, by field and by year, 2010-2016

Date of update	Legal								
	Nursing	Building	Agriculture	Seasonal agriculture	Restaurants ³	Industry and services ⁴	Experts	Total	
31.12.10	43,499	6,901	22,887	296	193	360	1,682	75,818	
31.12.11	42,349	5,201	24,612	84	62	176	22,294	74,778	
31.12.12	41,260	5,900	21,133	0	9	112	2,867	71,281	
31.12.13	40,484	5,732	22,179	79	0	42	2,836	71,352	
31.12.14	43,468	6,106	22,087	64	0	0	2,842	74,567	
31.12.15	*45,632	6,855	21,268	79	0	0	3,358	77,192	
31.12.16	49,156	8,557	21,786	359	0	0	4,627	84,458	
31.12.17	50,162	10,120	22,430	261	0	0	5,405	88,378	
	Illegal								
	Nursing	Building	Agriculture	Seasonal agriculture	Restaurants	Industry and services	Experts	Other ⁵	Total
31.12.10	10,209	2,409	369	180	490	46	1,092	-	14,795
31.12.11	10,123	2,148	154	10	60	194	487	942	14,118
31.12.12	10,069	1,899	359	25	68	168	555	966	14,109
31.12.13	11,993	1,010	167	22	46	161	624	1,343	15,366
31.12.14	11,324	1,006	531	15	28	143	757	1,511	15,315
31.12.15	*11,800	999	705	11	26	126	784	1,464	15,915
31.12.16	11,317	787	919	10	23	121	851	1,632	15,660
31.12.17	13,231	751	1,263	16	22	112	684	1,773	17,852

³ From 2013 the restaurants industry was not included among the industries within which the government allows employment of foreign workers.

⁴ Since 2014 the manufacturing and services industry is not included among the industries within which the government allows employment of foreign workers.

⁵ Other - illegal foreigner workers with no connection to a certain field. The lack of connection is due to technical reasons, as a result of the severing of the relationship between the employee record and the record of employment permit, by virtue of which he was employed in the past.

* The comparison made between the figure relating to the nursing industry in 2015-2016 with this figure in other years isn't accurate due to a change in definition applied in 2015.

The rate of legal foreign workers employed in Israel within the framework of bilateral agreements out of a total of legal foreign workers is increasing over the years.

Thus, in 2014 the percentage was 18%, 2015 - 22% and in 2016-28%.

In 2010-2014, the number of legal foreign workers staying in Israel was quite stable and ranged between 71,000-74,500. Changing the trend started in 2015 when

The number increased by 3.5% compared to the number in 2014. In 2016 growth in the number of employees escalated when it reached 9.4% in relation to

2015 (84,485 versus 77,192, respectively). The increase in legal foreign workers in 2016 applies to all industries (in Nursing - 7.7%, construction - 24.8%, agriculture - 2.4%, for experts - 37.8%).

Increase in the number of legal foreign workers in the construction sector can be explained by the extension of implementation of bilateral agreements for recruitment and employment

Of foreign workers in the construction industry, conducted in 2016, in which some 2,500 new foreign workers entered Israel. Also, this year left the country less foreign workers than in 2015.

The number of illegal foreign workers, who stayed in Israel in the years 2010 to 2016, did not change significantly and range from 14,000 to 16,000 over the Years. However, in 2016 the percentage of illegal foreign workers in relation to all foreign workers in 2015 decreased from 17.1% to 15.6%. This rate is the lowest since 2010.

It should be noted that at the end of 2015 the Minister of Interior approved preparation to continue employment of foreign workers in the nursing industry, who had living in Israel over 63 months as recommended by the "advisory committee to the Minister to extend the licenses in / 1 nursing in special humanitarian reasons" and according to defined criteria.

Implementation of the recommendations, which began in early 2016, caused a decline in the number of illegal foreign workers.

Table 7. Foreign workers in the Nursing field currently in Israel, by selected countries, 31.12.2017

Country of origin	Legal	Illegal	Total
Philippines	18,111	6,452	24,563
India	10,462	1,773	12,235
Moldova	8,867	1,350	10,217
Sri Lanka	4,402	980	5,382
Uzbekistan	3,115	162	3,277
Nepal	1,951	1,280	3,231
Ukraine	1,930	338	2,268
Rumania	349	439	788
Other countries	975	457	1,432
Total	50,162	13,231	63,393

In the nursing industry there is a wide geographical dispersion in composition of countries of origin. Most of these foreign workers arrived from three countries only: the Philippines (36%), India (21%) and Moldova (18%). The data shows that amongst foreign workers in the nursing industry, who are nationals of the aforementioned countries there is a much higher proportion of illegal workers compared Migrant workers from the other countries (49%, 13% and 10% respectively). The rate of non-migrant workers of the total of workers in the industry is 21% as of the end of 2017.

Table 8. Foreign workers in the Building field currently in Israel, by selected countries, 31.12.2017

Country of origin	Legal			Illegal		Total
	Total	Of which with Bilateral agreement	Of which with a construction company	Total	Of which with Bilateral agreement	
Moldova	5,156	5,060	-	67	6	5,223
China	3,405	387	105*	219	0	3,624
Turke	1,131	0	1,097**	87	0	1,218
Romania	142	112	-	276	0	418
Bulgaria	273	262	-	51	0	324
Other countries	13	0	-	51	0	64
Total	10,120	5,821	1,202	751	6	10,871

* Legal workers employed through "construction companies", in accordance with a government decision number 597 dated 10.25.2015.

** It should be noted, that the government decision (# 1321 DR) / 60 (dated 24/03/2016 regarding bringing foreign construction companies applied the rules applicable to these companies also Yilmazlar company.

Foreign construction workers employed in the framework of a bilateral agreement are at the end of 2017 almost 70% of all workers in the industry. This rate is expected to increase over the years, as the employment of new workers in the construction industry will be within the framework of the bilateral agreement or by one of the construction companies, according to Government decision No. (1321 DR) / 60

In the construction industry there is a unique composition of countries of origin: foreign workers from three countries: Moldova – 51%, China – 34% and Turkey – 11%. Represent 96% of all workers in the industry. One of the reasons for the small dispersal of the countries from which came the foreign workers is the implementation of bilateral agreements allowing entry of new foreign workers only from countries with which Israel has an agreement or as stated in the said agreement, as part of one of the construction companies.

The rate of illegal foreign workers in the construction industry of all employees is 7%.

Table 9. Foreign workers in the Agriculture field currently in Israel, by selected countries, 31.12.2017

Country of origin	Legal		Illegal		Total
	Total	Of which with Agreement	Total	Of which with Agreement	
Thailand	22,361	21,551	1,213	411	23,574
Vietnam	41	0	27	0	68
Nepal	27	0	20	0	47
Other countries	1	0	3	0	4
Total	22,430	21,551	1,263	411	23,693

Agriculture is the most homogeneous sector in terms of composition of country of origin. 99.6% of foreign workers come from Thailand. This is because there is a bilateral agreement between the Israeli government and one country only (Thailand). Therefore there are no arrivals of foreign workers from other countries. It also indicates that within the framework of the bilateral agreement to bring seasonal workers in the agricultural sector at the end of 2017, 261 workers from Sri Lanka are employed in the State of Israel.

The industry is characterized by the lowest rate of illegal foreign workers. Only 5% of all workers are staying in the country illegally.

Table 10. Foreign workers in the Experts field currently in Israel, by selected countries, 31.12.2017

Country of origin	Legal	Illegal	Total
China	1,170	402	1,572
USA	427	34	461
Romania	395	25	420
Thailand	290	79	369
Spain	269	8	277
India	182	44	226
Germany	147	39	186
Italy	170	10	180
Turkey	123	23	146
Other countries	1,454	187	1,641
Total	4,627	851	5,478

There are foreign workers staying in Israel in the experts industry from 97 countries. Most of the workers come from China and they represent 25% of all workers in the sector. Out of all the Chinese in the experts industry 26% are illegal.

Table 11. Legal foreign workers currently in Israel, by field, age and sex, 31.12.2017

Age	Nursing				Buildi ng	Agriculture				Seasonal agricultu re	Experts				Total
	Men	Wome n	Unknow n	Total	Total (only men)	Men	Wome n	Unkno wn	Total	Total (only men)	Men	Women	Unknown	Total	
Up to 20	4	17	0	21	31	4	-	1	5	-	31	6	-	37	94
21-30	1,439	4,840	107	6,386	1,835	6,900	119	80	7,099	96	1,326	159	7	1,492	16,908
31-40	3,660	14,757	804	19,221	3,647	12,291	455	196	12,942	163	1,709	109	10	1,828	37,801
41-50	2,020	14,337	847	17,204	3,615	2,206	96	62	2,364	2	1,158	45	3	1,206	24,391
51-60	410	6,066	422	6,898	980	10	1	0	11	-	659	27	2	688	8,577
61+	23	374	35	432	12	6	1	2	9	-	153	1	-	154	607
Total	7,556	40,391	2,215	50,162	10,120	21,417	672	341	22,430	261	5,036	347	22	5,405	88,378

At the end of 2017 stayed in the State of Israel 88,378 legal foreign workers. Of which - 44,390 men, 41,410 women and 2,578 are not known. In the nursing industry the majority of workers is women, while in other industries most workers are men.

D. Tourists

Table 12. Foreigners who entered Israel as tourists and are still in Israel by the end of 2016 with no valid visa⁶

Country	Thousands	Percentage
The former Soviet Union*	51.3	69.3
Romania	4.7	6.4
Mexico	2.7	3.6
Egypt	1.6	2.2
Venezuela	1.3	1.8
Colombia	1.2	1.6
Peru	1.2	1.6
Hungary	1	1.4
Czechoslovakia**	1	1.4
Nepal	1	1.3
Other countries	7	9.4
Total	74	100

* Including republics of the (former) Soviet Union

** In the border prior to the dissolution

⁶ Source: Central Statistic Bureau Press Release of 26.7.17.

E. Enforcement of illegal residents⁷

Table E.1. Deportations of illegal foreign workers, by visa and year

Type of foreigners	2015	2016	2017												
	Total	Total	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Tourists	1,668	1,836	141	170	214	176	156	159	180	188	198	157	176	134	2,049
Foreign workers	580	505	39	34	46	36	18	34	41	34	30	26	25	31	394
Other foreigners	868	880	142	141	189	276	232	308	316	279	334	273	359	549	3,398
Total	3,116	3,221	322	345	449	488	406	501	537	501	562	456	560	714	5,841

* Excluding Palestinians

⁷ File is dynamic and may update retroactively with respect to previous months

E. Enforcement re Employers of Foreigners⁸

Table E.1. Administrative Fines, 2017

Month	Cases opened	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	70	75	1,131,750	71	1,007,500	146	2,139,250
February	58	32	354,000	35	256,750	67	610,750
March	71	59	815,000	44	390,000	103	1,205,000
April	50	11	132,500	10	85,000	21	217,500
May	70	27	290,000	25	185,000	52	475,000
June	90	20	237,500	22	150,000	42	387,500
July	65	38	457,500	34	385,000	72	842,500
August	98	45	392,500	57	442,500	102	835,000
September	78	25	230,000	16	110,000	41	340,000
October	39	91	1,135,000	89	955,000	180	2,090,000
November	67	55	520,000	69	460,000	124	980,000
December	55	54	570,000	45	500,000	99	1,070,000
Total	811	532	6,265,750	517	4,926,750	1,049	11,192,500

⁸ File is dynamic and may update retroactively with respect to previous months

Table 15. Criminal Indictments, 2017

	2016												
	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Indictments ⁹	16	13	14	10	6	10	4	8	31	9	16	6	143
Verdicts	11	10	6	3	20	11	16	3	8	8	9	6	114
Sum of Verdicts	226,000	157,949	312,000	104,000	521,000	673,120	551,000	46,000	357,800	45,000	107,500	25,000	3,747,249

⁹ 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 departments 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