

BANK OF ISRAEL

Office of the Spokesperson and Economic Information

October 12, 2023

Press release:

**Measures taken so far by the Banking Supervision Department to assist customers of the banking system due to the “Swords of Iron” war**

Since the outbreak of the “Swords of Iron” war, the Banking Supervision Department has been active on a number of fronts with the aim of ensuring the continued provision of services by the banking system, in accordance with the restrictions due to the security situation, the provision of necessary assistance to banking system customers, and the mapping of all financial aspects affecting customers due to the war. Since the beginning of the situation, the Banking Supervision Department has held meetings with the CEOs of all of the banks, and holds frequent situation assessments. These include the participation of the Supervisor of Banks and of Banking Supervision Department teams in situation assessment meetings of national institutions and the establishment of designated for a with senior banking system officials to map, monitor, and formulate solutions for immediate assistance.

Supervisor of Banks Daniel Hahiashvili said: “The emergency situation in the State of Israel is affecting most of the country’s citizens, including customers’ interactions with the banks and credit card companies. We have been working intensively since the start of the hostilities in order to make sure that the banking system continues to provide essential banking services with sensitivity toward customers who have been harmed, and we are continuing to work hard to find additional solutions. The Banking Supervision Department will do all that it can in order to formulate a variety of creative solutions, and will utilize the tools available to it to make it easier for the banking system’s customers and their families during this complex and painful period.”

The following is a list of the measures that the Banking Supervision Department has taken thus far:

* **Supervisor of Banks letter to the heads of the banks, containing the Banking Supervision Department’s points of emphasis to the banking system due to the “Swords of Iron” war, detailing the measures that the banks are to take at this time.** As part of this, the Banking Supervision Department has emphasized the need to show greater sensitivity in their interface with customers due to the complex security situation, make it as easy as possible for customers in distress, maintain continuity in the proper and professional provision of services, and manage all financial risks that are unique to this period. All of the measures are detailed in the letter attached to this notice.
* **Dedicated and sensitive handling of the issue of the misuse of credit cards and bank account details of victims of the security situation.** This incident has been handled since it started by Bank of Israel professionals, including a special Banking Supervision Department team, in conjunction with relevant government and security officials. Details appear [at the following link](https://www.boi.org.il/en/communication-and-publications/press-releases/misuse-of-credit-cards-and-bank-account-information-of-victims-of-the-security-situation/).

The Banking Supervision Department, the commercial banks, and the credit card companies are constantly monitoring the situation, and call on the public to contact them to receive assistance on these matters as necessary, whether through the financial institution where they manage their account, or through the special Banking Supervision Department call center at 02-655-2680 or \*9086.

* **Restrictions on checking accounts** – We are working to help with regard to restrictions on the use of checks for high-risk populations, both in the north and in the south, as well as for those called up for reserve duty. The timing and nature of leniencies will be published soon.
* **Adapting banking system branch activities to the Homefront Command’s protection measures**, with the aim of maintaining the safety of employees and customers. The press release is available [here.](https://www.boi.org.il/en/communication-and-publications/press-releases/a08-10-23/)
* [**Permitting**](https://www.boi.org.il/roles/supervisionregulation/letters/lett202331/) **the banking system to operate emergency banking services,** including the use of mobile branches and the possibility of providing basic banking services to customers through permanent or mobile branches of another bank.
* [**Publication of a main FAQ file for the public**](https://www.boi.org.il/bank-of-israel/iron-swords/), including responses to the broad public on issues arising from the field. This file is regularly updated as additional clarifications become necessary.
* **Making information accessible to the general public on the** [**Bank of Israel’s website**](https://www.boi.org.il/bank-of-israel/iron-swords/)**,** regarding the activities of the Banking Supervision Department and the banking system.

It should be noted that the Banking Supervision Department is continuing to monitor the banking system’s activity, map the needs of the system’s customers and of the families that have lost loved ones, and examine other measures that may help deal with the difficulties of the current situation. In the coming days, the Department will distribute temporary orders that include necessary adaptations to the emergency situation.

At the same time, the Banking Supervision Department calls on the banks and the credit card companies to continue initiating additional measures to help their customers deal with the financial ramifications of the war, alongside benefits and leniencies that some of them have already adopted, some of which include leniencies in delaying loan and mortgage repayments, establishing funds to provide interest-free bridge loans, exemptions from current account fees, increasing credit facilities, and so forth.[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. Detailed information on assistance measures can be found on the banks’ websites. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)