

**BANK OF ISRAEL**

Office of the Spokesperson and Economic Information

October 24, 2023

Press Release:

**Remarks by the Supervisor of Banks at the Knesset’s Finance Committee meeting on steps taken by the banking system during the “Swords of Iron” War**

Supervisor of Banks Daniel Hahiashvili participated today in a meeting of the Knesset’s Finance Committee dealing with the banking system’s steps in the “Swords of Iron” War.

Following are the main points of the Supervisor’s remarks:

* Since the beginning of the war, we at the Bank of Israel have held ongoing situation assessments and are following the effects of the security situation on various economic and financial aspects, and are taking policy steps accordingly.
* The Banking Supervision Department reacted rapidly to events, and worked immediately from the start of the war to ensure the banking system’s operational continuity so that there would be continuity of the service to customers, with an emphasis on conduct that is responsible and sensitive to customers’ needs.
* The Banking Supervision Department worked to identify banking-system customers’ needs and difficulties and to strengthen the connection with the public in various ways, among others by setting up an emergency call center for handling customer enquiries, and visits to the field.
* Many steps were taken with the goal of providing relief to customers and preventing economic deterioration.
* A broad assistance framework was implemented for banking system customers. It includes providing broad easings to people adversely impacted directly by damages of the war and to people called to serve in the reserves. These include the option of deferring mortgage and loan payments without any interest or fees charged, along with exemptions from current account management fees and from interest on a negative balance (overdraft). The framework also provides a response and the option of assistance to the general population as well, beyond the first circle. The framework was expanded yesterday to credit card companies as well, and as needed we will consider expanding it and taking other steps.
* In addition to the framework formulated by the Bank of Israel , which was adopted by the banks and credit card companies, those entities also worked for additional easings and additional steps of assistance at their own initiative. We encourage the banks and credit card companies to continue to broaden the assistance steps for customers as much as possible.
* Alongside the assistance plans, we have seen an increase in the risk environment—financial risks as well as other risks such as cyber risk, which also have to be dealt with and monitored.
* The banking system in Israel is strong and stable. In parallel with steps taken for the benefit of customers, we will continue to confirm that the banking system maintains its stability, among other things so that it can continue supporting the economy and banking system customers, including through recovery activities as needed.

Following are steps for reaching the public enquiries call center:

* The Consumer Enquiries and Inspections Unit at the Banking Supervision Department: 02-655-2680 or \*9086
* The call center for the Supervisor of Credit Data at the Bank of Israel: \*6194
* For the emergency page on the [Bank of Israel website](https://www.boi.org.il/en/bank-of-israel/iron-swords/).