



10 years to the Orr Commission Recommendations

Orr Commission: The Orr Commission (formally the “*National Commission of Inquiry into the Clashes Between the Security Forces and Israeli Citizens on October 2000*”) was a three-person panel of inquiry appointed by the Israeli government to investigate the Events of October 2000¹ in which 12 Arab citizens of Israel and one Palestinian were killed by Israeli police and one Jewish citizen was killed amidst violent demonstrations. The panel was headed by Justice Theodore Orr, a Supreme Court Judge, and included District Court Judge Hashim Khatib and Former Ambassador Professor Shimon Shamir. The Commission was appointed on November 15, 2000 and held an extensive hearing process,² releasing its findings on September 2, 2003.

Main recommendations:³ The Orr Commission investigated both the progression and root causes of the October 2000 Events, notably stating that the issue of the Arab sector “is the most sensitive and important domestic issue facing Israel today” and as such, “requires the personal involvement and leadership of the Prime Minister.” The report made recommendations in four major areas:

- i. *Police:* The Commission determined Israeli police were unprepared and used excessive force to disperse the protesting and rioting citizens. A number of policemen were reprimanded and two were released from duty.
- ii. *Arab leadership:* The Commission determined Arab leadership must show greater responsibility in its messaging and actions in that praising violence as a means of attaining goals, even legitimate ones, is contrary to the obligation of leadership to act with primary concern for public safety and social well-being.
- iii. *Personnel:* The Commission made specific recommendations regarding a number of individual security personnel, politicians, and leaders – both Jewish and Arab.
- iv. *Systemic:* The Commission found that Arab citizens suffer discrimination in Israel and criticized the government for failing to give fair and equal attention to their needs. The Commission determined the issue had been neglected for many years, and that resulting frustrations led to the outpourings of the October 2000 Events. It demanded that the government take immediate, medium, and long-term actions to close gaps in education, housing, industrial development, employment, and services.

¹ The October 2000 Events were a series of protests in Arab villages in northern Israel in October 2000 at the beginning of the Second Intifada that turned violent and escalated into rioting by Arab citizens. This led to counter-rioting by Israeli Jews and clashes with the Israel Police, ending in the deaths of 13 Arab demonstrators.

² <http://www.haaretz.com/news/in-depth-the-or-commission-of-inquiry-1.98769>

³ This version was translated and published in Haaretz newspaper, September 2, 2003

and posted online at: [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society & Culture/OrCommissionReport.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society%20&%20Culture/OrCommissionReport.html)

Public Reception: The Commission's report was highly publicized and controversial. The findings and recommendations deeply disappointed victims' families and Arab leadership on the one hand and angered those who blamed Arab citizens for the unrest of October 2000 on the other.

Government adoption: On September 14th, 2003 the government formally adopted the report's personnel recommendations and established a Ministerial Committee headed by then-Minister of Justice, Yosef (Tommy) Lapid, to address the systematic recommendations. The Ministerial Committee's recommendations became a Government Resolution in May 2004 formalizing commitments to establish an authority for the development of the Arab sector, enhance the integration of Arab youngsters into civil service, promote master plans for all Arab localities, establish a national week dedicated to 'knowing the other,' and create a public consultancy forum for the police force, among others.

Implementation: In recent years there has been partial implementation of most commitments, including:

- i. *Police:* The Police adopted new regulations regarding the use of rubber bullets and established a new methodology for civil demonstrations conforming to most Orr recommendations. In addition, the Police Internal Investigations Unit initiated investigations in all areas recommended by the Commission. However, this effort came under heavy criticism from Arab leadership when all cases were ultimately closed due to lack of sufficient evidence in September 2005.
- ii. *Economic Development Authority:* In 2007, the Authority for the Economic Development of the Arab, Druze and Circassian Sector in the Prime Minister's Office was established with a mandate to "maximize the economic potential of the minorities population...so as to gradually improve its economic wellbeing and enhance equality... and to act as a coordinating, integrative and monitoring body to governmental activities for the enhancement of economic development of the minorities sector."
- iii. *National/Civil Service:* In 2005, the government established a special committee under the title "The Institutionalization of Civil-National Service" headed by former Director of the National Security Council, General (ret.) David Ivri (known as the Ivri Committee). Its recommendations, adopted in August 2007, led to the establishment of the Civil Service Administration (Minhelet) under the Prime Minister's Office which opened national civil service to Arab youngsters (and other populations that do not serve in the IDF).