

THEMATIC COMPILATION OF RELEVANT INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY ISRAEL

ARTICLE 8 UNCAC CODES OF CONDUCT FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

ISRAEL (EIGHTH MEETING)

The Judiciary

The judicial branch in Israel is independent from the legislative and executive branches. Personal independence is ensured by the appointment process and is reinforced by the fixed age of retirement, their salary and work conditions, as well as rules regarding the immunity of judges, as detailed below. Substantive independence is ensured by the fact that in discharging their duties, judges are not subject to any other authority or person. The disciplinary process, also described below, enables monitoring and implementation of the applicable rules including the independence requirements.

The Courts Law, 1984 establishes the Ethics Committee and the Disciplinary Tribunal of Judges. The disciplinary offences for which a complaint may be submitted against a Judge are specified in Article 18(a) of the Law: (1) the Judge acted improperly in the exercise of his/her position; (2) the Judge behaved in a manner inappropriate to his/her standing as a Judge; (3) the Judge was found guilty of an offence, which under the circumstances involves moral turpitude; (4) the Committee concluded that the Judge obtained his appointment unlawfully; (5) the Judge violated any of the Rules of Ethics, which were prescribed under section 16A of the Law. The complaint is submitted by the Minister of Justice, to the Disciplinary Tribunal.

Article 19 of the Courts Law lists the disciplinary measures which the Disciplinary Tribunal may impose: remark, warning, reprimand, transfer to a different position and dismissal from the position, either with payment of a pension or with its denial in whole or in part.

Article 77a of the Courts Law lists grounds for recusal, preventing a judge from hearing a case in circumstances that create a real suspicion of partiality in the conduct of the case.

The Ethics Regulations for Judges, 2007 define rules of conduct for judges. Similar regulations exist for judges in official religious courts (2008). The Ethics Regulations for Judges include the following key provisions to ensure prevention of corruption in the performance of judicial duties:

- Prohibition for judges to derive benefit from their positions, materially or otherwise, directly or indirectly and the prohibition to promote personal interests or using their title where it might be perceived that doing so will create a favorable position (Article 20 of the Regulations).

- Prohibition for judges to receive a discount when purchasing an item or upon receiving a service, unless the discount was given regardless of the judge's title or was approved by the Director of Courts (Article 21).1

- Prohibition on benefiting from free entrance to events or venues where admission is required, unless the invitation is from a family member or a close friend or where the judge accompanies someone else who was invited regardless of his or her position (Article 21).¹

- Refraining from financial or business management of a public institution in which a judge is active² and prohibition on receiving any benefits (Article 24).

- Prohibition on involvement in a public institution initiating legal proceedings and on approaching public authorities or private institutions on behalf of a public institution in which the judge is active (Article 24).

- Prohibition on actively managing a business, whether directly or indirectly, and on holding a position in a commercial corporation or any other business entity (Article 35).

Violations of the Ethics Regulations for Judges could result in a complaint with the Disciplinary Tribunal. The Regulations do not carry criminal sanctions, though some acts in violation of the Regulations may also be criminal offences, such as fraud and breach of trust, or abuse of office under the Penal Law, 1977.

In addition, the Ethics Regulations for Judges are upheld by the Office of the Ombudsman for the Judiciary, established in October 2003, pursuant to the Ombudsman for Complaints against Judges Law, 2002. Its purpose is to improve the unique functions performed by the judiciary while maintaining judicial independence. The law aims to combine the principles of judicial independence and accountability.

The Office of the Ombudsman for the Israeli Judiciary (hereinafter – the Judicial Ombudsman) provides an address to anyone who sees himself or herself injured by judicial misconduct. The Judicial Ombudsman investigates complaints regarding the conduct of judges, such as the use of offensive language in court decisions or during a hearing, misconduct outside the court and complaints regarding the manner in which the trials are conducted, such as unreasonable procedural delays. The judges that are subject to the review of the Judicial Ombudsman are judges and registrars from the general courts system, including judges from labor courts, judges in official religious courts (usually cases relating to marital status and divorce, governed in Israel by religious laws) and military judges.

Following a complaint, the Judicial Ombudsman is authorized to recommend to the Minister of Justice to file a complaint with the Judges Disciplinary Tribunal, to suggest how future conduct should be improved. In severe cases the Ombudsman can recommend to the Committee for the Nomination of Judges to dismiss the judge from office in accordance with its authority, or to recommend that the Minister or the Chief Judge or Chief Justice of the relevant court propose to the Committee to terminate the judge's term or remove a judge from his or her office.

The decision of the Judicial Ombudsman is final (while the decision may be challenged in an appeal to the Supreme Court of Justice, thus far that has never been done). All investigations conducted by the Judicial Ombudsman Office are strictly confidential. However, the Judicial Ombudsman submits an annual report to the Minister of Justice and to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (omitting personal details). In addition, the Judicial Ombudsman publishes general

¹ The Public Service Law (Gifts), 1979 also regulates a judge's receipt of gifts.

² Article 24 (a) of the Ethics Regulations provides that a judge is allowed to be a member of the administrative body of an educational institution, such as a trustee of an educational institution, or of a body for public purposes as permitted under Article 11 of the Basic law: The Judiciary.

statements of opinion on different matters and makes presentations to judges in order to improve conduct and efficiency.

The Prosecution Service

The Public Prosecution represents the State before courts in all criminal and civil legal matters. The Public Prosecution is comprised of the State Attorney's Office (headed by the State Attorney), the Israel Police Prosecution and specialized prosecutors within ministries and local municipalities. The Public Prosecution is overseen by the Attorney General. In this capacity, he is in charge of enforcing rules of ethics and professional responsibility over public prosecutors.

The Attorney General and the staff of the State Attorney's Office all operate independently from any elected official. In prosecutorial matters, the Attorney General is not bound by the decisions or policies of either the government or the Minister of Justice. According to Israeli law, the Attorney General (and consequently, all prosecutors) must perform his/her functions and exercise his/her authority in legal matters independently, including in cases involving prominent public figures. The Attorney General's decision to file an indictment in any criminal proceeding cannot be directed or overruled by either the executive or the legislative branches of the government. The appointment procedure of the Attorney General by the government, on the basis of a public professional committee, composed of former government officials, academics and lawyers, and headed by a former Supreme Court judge, also guarantees the independence of the Attorney General.

The Civil Service Law (Discipline), 1963 and the Civil Service Regulations (hereinafter- "the Takshir") together comprise the disciplinary policy applicable to prosecutors and other government employees.

Article 17 of the Civil Service Law (Discipline) provides a list of disciplinary offences, such as conduct unbecoming a civil servant and dishonest conduct. In addition, article 42.7 of the Takshir (Chapter 11) provides that a State employee may only receive a salary and other payments from the State Treasury, and may not receive any other benefit from another person for or in connection with his/her public function. The Takshir also includes prohibitions on deriving a personal benefit from public positions and operating in conflicts of interest.

The Prosecution Service is regulated by the Civil Service Commission. Among its duties, the Civil Service Commission is responsible for supervising the implementation of the Civil Service Law (Discipline). Pursuant to Article 17, the Commission's Discipline Department tries public employees in disciplinary hearings for a wide variety of conduct that harms other persons, taints the work environment, disrupts labor relations, undermines public trust in the civil service, impairs or causes harm in another way to the proper functioning of the civil service.

The penalty for a disciplinary offence under the Civil Service Law (Discipline) is determined by the Commission's Disciplinary Tribunal for Government Employees. The Tribunal has the authority to impose various disciplinary penalties, including warning, reprimand, forfeiture of salary, demotion in rank, transfer of the civil servant to a different position, disqualification from fulfilling certain functions, dismissal with or without severance pay, dismissal together with disqualification from serving in the civil service.

Civil servants are also subject to specific norms of conduct under Israeli criminal law, aimed at preventing acts of corruption, embezzlement and other misdeeds. Such specific offences include bribe taking by a public servant, theft by a public servant, fraud and breach of trust, abuse of office, failure to perform official obligation, violation of statutory duty, etc.

Throughout the years, other norms of conduct have developed with regard to public servants by way of court rulings, State Comptroller's reports and guidelines of the Attorney General and the State Prosecutor.

It should be noted as well, that according to the State Comptroller Law, 1958, the State Comptroller functions also as the Ombudsman of Israel. As such, a person who is injured by an action or omission of the Prosecution service, for which he/she has no right of appeal to another body, may submit a complaint in the matter to the State Comptroller and Ombudsman (hereinafter - the National Ombudsman). The National Ombudsman is empowered to investigate and publish his findings and decisions.

Public prosecutors are also bound by the professional ethical standards set forth in the Bar Association Law, 1961 and the Bar Association Rules (Professional Ethics), 1986 and enforced by the Israel Bar Association. The Israel Bar Association has its own disciplinary system and has broad authority in disciplinary matters. Complaints against lawyers are brought before one of the District Ethics Committees, which then decide whether to submit charges. The Bar's disciplinary system has an appeals system which may reach the Supreme Court of Israel.

In addition, an ethical code of conduct for public prosecutors was finalized and published in 2013. The code of conduct for public prosecutors includes the following key provisions to ensure prevention of corruption in the State Attorney's Office:

- Credibility and fairness: A public prosecutor shall carry out his duties and represent the State of Israel honestly, impartially, in good faith and in the framework of the rules of law; his professional conduct shall reflect honesty and respect for the truth; all of which shall be done in a manner that upholds the courts' trust and the public's trust in him/her and in the State Attorney's Office.

- Integrity: The public prosecutor shall carry out his duties honestly, on the basis of practical considerations, while ensuring that his decision and actions are impartial and not driven by conflict of interests and ulterior motives.

- Seeking to discover the truth: The public prosecutor shall strive without fear to expose the truth and bring it to court in accordance with the procedural law.

- Responsibility: The public prosecutor shall be an active partner in the establishment and maintenance of the rule of law and protection of civil rights and human dignity.

- Rational exercise of authority: The public prosecutor shall ensure the professional and appropriate use of the authority, tools and information available to him/her by virtue of his/her position or the environment of his work, solely for the purposes for which they were entrusted.

- Independence of discretion and professional subordination: The public prosecutor shall express his/her opinion in the framework of his position in a professional manner only, based on the facts, the law and the legal policy determined by those with the authority to do so; in fulfilling his/her duties, as representative of the State and appearing on behalf of the State in the courts, the public prosecutor shall respect the guidance and decisions of the relevant authorities.

Furthermore, an ethics committee was established under the ethical code of conduct for public prosecutors, headed by a deputy attorney general. The ethics committee discusses various questions regarding the ethical conduct of public prosecutors and provides recommendations.

**THEMATIC COMPILATION OF RELEVANT INFORMATION SUBMITTED
BY ISRAEL**

ARTICLE 8 UNCAC

CODES OF CONDUCT FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

ISRAEL (THIRD SESSION)

Article 8. Codes of conduct for public officials

1. In order to fight corruption, each State Party shall promote, inter alia, integrity, honesty and responsibility among its public officials, in accordance with the fundamental principles of its legal system.
2. In particular, each State Party shall endeavour to apply, within its own institutional and legal systems, codes or standards of conduct for the correct, honourable and proper performance of public functions.
3. For the purposes of implementing the provisions of this article, each State Party shall, where appropriate and in accordance with the fundamental principles of its legal system, take note of the relevant initiatives of regional, interregional and multilateral organizations, such as the International Code of Conduct for Public Officials contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 51/59 of 12 December 1996.
4. Each State Party shall also consider, in accordance with the fundamental principles of its domestic law, establishing measures and systems to facilitate the reporting by public officials of acts of corruption to appropriate authorities, when such acts come to their notice in the performance of their functions.
5. Each State Party shall endeavour, where appropriate and in accordance with the fundamental principles of its domestic law, to establish measures and systems requiring public officials to make declarations to appropriate authorities regarding, inter alia, their outside activities, employment, investments, assets and substantial gifts or benefits from which a conflict of interest may result with respect to their functions as public officials.
6. Each State Party shall consider taking, in accordance with the fundamental principles of its domestic law, disciplinary or other measures against public officials who violate the codes or standards established in accordance with this article.

1. Has your country adopted and implemented article 8 of the UN Convention against Corruption?

Yes.

2. Please cite, summarize and, if possible, provide copies of the applicable policy(ies) or measure(s):

As with Article 7, the measures in place in Israel in the context of Article 8 are diverse and comprehensive. The following are some representative examples, with particular emphasis on issues related to reporting on corruption by public officials and whistleblower protection.

Standards of Conduct for Performance of Public Functions (Article 8(1 + 2) –

Judges - The Ethics Regulations for Judges, 2007, which were enacted pursuant to article 16a of **the Courts Law, 1984**, set forth rules of ethics and integrity for the judicial authority. In addition, an Office of the Ombudsman for the Israeli Judiciary was established in 2003.

The **Ethics Regulations for Judges** include a few key provisions to ensure prevention of corruption in performance of judicial duties, as follows:

- Chapter Five determines that a judge is prevented from benefiting from his position as a judge, materially or otherwise, directly or indirectly. In addition Article 20 in the same chapter, forbids the use of the judge's position to promote personal interests or using the "title" of judge, where it might be perceived that doing so will create a favorable position.

- Receiving gifts by a judge is governed by the 1979 public service law (gifts). Furthermore according to Article 21 to the **Ethics Regulations** a judge is prevented from receiving a discount when purchasing an item or upon receiving a service, unless the discount was given regardless of the judge's title or approved under the Courts administration general regulations.

- A judge cannot benefit from free entrance to events or venues where admission is required unless the invitation is from a family member or a close friend or where the judge acts as an escort to someone else invited and regardless of his position.

- Article 24 (a) to the **Ethics Regulations** determines that a judge is allowed to be a member of the administrative body of an educational institution such as a trustee of an educational institution or in a body for public purposes as permitted under Article 11 of the **Basic law: The Judiciary**. According to Article 24 (a) a judge must refrain from financial or business management of the public institution in which he is active, and shall not receive any benefits.

- A judge cannot be active in a public institution initiating legal procedures and shall not approach public authorities or private instruments on behalf of a public institution in which he is active.

- According to Article 35 to the **Ethics Regulations** a judge shall not conduct a business in an active manner, whether directly or indirectly, and shall not act as a functionary in a commercial corporation or any other business entity.

Public Officials - As noted, there are many provisions in Israeli law regulating the conduct of public officials in Israel, with aim to prevent corruption by public officials. The main ones are as follows: **The Civil Service Regulations** (hereinafter: "Takshir", the collection of the regulations and orders of the Civil Service) includes, *inter alia*, prohibitions on gaining personal benefit from public positions and operating in conflict of interest; The **Civil Service Law (Discipline), 1963** provides the Civil Service Commissioner with jurisdiction to penalize public officials for any violation of the "Takshir", and The **Encouragement of Public Morality in Public Service Law, 1992**, provide the framework for encouraging public officials to report acts of corruption in public administration; The **Civil Service Law (Gifts), 1979**, regulates acceptance of gifts by public officials, mandating the reporting of gifts with over nominal value.

Reporting Acts of Corruption (General) – Civil Service (*Article 8(4)*) - The duty of civil servants to report information regarding suspicions of corruption forms an integral part of a civil servant's duty of loyalty. This notion is further expressed in **Article 4.02 of the Code of Ethics (part of the Takshir) and Article 17 of the Civil Service Law (Discipline), 1963**, which also grants the Civil Service Commissioner the authority to penalize public officials for any violation of the Takshir (the Civil Service Regulations, as stated previously).

The **Encouragement of Public Morality in Public Service Law, 1992**, provides the framework for encouraging public officials to report acts of corruption within the public administration, by creating a process which allows the public servant who made a complaint to receive a report of the results of the investigation and a confirmation of the validity of his/her complaint, as well as a possibility of receiving a commendation from the President of the State of Israel.

According to this framework, the Director of Discipline of the Civil Service Commission issued a Circular in 2009, entitled "**OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials**" setting out the requirements for the reporting of corruption offences by public officials (the Circular relates to both domestic and foreign bribery). The Circular focuses on the provision of the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, but also refers to UNCAC and the information provided by the website of the Ministry of Justice in that regard (para. 25 to the Circular, see translation of the text below).

The binding Circular provides instructions to employees of the civil service who, in the course of carrying out their functions, have either been personally offered a bribe or have obtained information of a bribe offered or accepted by a peer employee which has not been reported. Additionally, the Circular includes instructions for civil servants who have obtained information of a bribe offered by a peer civil servant to foreign public officials. Under the Circular, civil servants are obligated to promptly report any such information to their supervisors or to law enforcement authorities.

The Circular points out that a civil servant is a public trustee and as such has special responsibility to carry out his or her duties with fairness, honesty, and integrity. The Discipline Department of the Civil Service Commission will consider taking disciplinary measures, including disciplinary hearings, against a civil servant failing to report as required any such substantial information concerning the payment of a bribe to either the relevant superior within the civil service or the law enforcement authorities. Civil servants in such actions could be charged of engaging in conduct unbecoming a civil servant or dishonest conduct (see the translation of the text of the circular in the examples portion of the answer).

Reporting Acts of Corruption (Protection of Whistleblowers) – Civil Service (*Article 8(4)*) - The **Protection of Employees Law - Exposure of Offences of Unethical Conduct and Improper Administration) Law, 1997** prohibits an employer from adversely modifying a person's conditions of employment for reasons that the person "complained" about their employer or a fellow employee. The law is applicable to both public and private sector employees. The Law provides the courts with authority to order compensation for unlawful termination due to whistleblowing and, in public bodies or employers with more than 25 employees, to order reinstatement of the employee under certain circumstances.

Public sector employees are additionally protected by **Regulation 43.523(a) of the Takshir**, providing that a public official may not be dismissed and his working conditions may not be prejudiced as a result of his complaint or assistance to another official to file a complaint, provided that the complaint concerns violations of integrity and proper administration, that it was filed in good faith, and that certain other conditions are met. An additional condition to this protection is that the harm he suffered from his superior is in reaction to the complaint. As noted, a public official who reports a bribery offer made either to him or to another official, will likewise be entitled to the protection set forth in the Civil Service Regulations, as long as the conditions for that protection are fulfilled.

The 2009 Circular of the Director of Discipline of the Civil Service Commission, mentioned above also addresses the issue of protecting persons who expose acts of corruption. Under the Circular, any civil servant reporting suspicions of bribery is afforded protection as set forth in the **Civil Service Regulations**, in addition to the protections granted under the **Protection of Employees Law**. The text of the Circular is provided in the implementation section of this question (part 3).

The State Comptroller's Office includes the State Comptroller and the Ombudsman and plays a significant role in the protection of whistleblowers. The Office is empowered to protect public officials (and employees of state-owned companies) who report suspicions of corruption in the workplace by public officials working in the same office as the reporting person. The State Comptroller has wide powers of investigation and is authorized to issue protective orders where there is a connection between the reporting of the act of corruption and the action taken against the complainant.

It should be noted that, pursuant to the **State Comptroller Law, 1958**, the Ombudsman cannot investigate any matter which is pending in court or in which a court has rendered a decision. This means that, if an employee who had exposed suspected acts of corruption in the workplace submits a claim to a court under the **Protection of Employees Law**, or makes a complaint to law enforcement authorities which results in a prosecution, the Ombudsman's protection will no longer be available. The rationale for this approach is that, in such circumstances, the courts are in a position to provide protection. In addition, this avoids potential of conflicting rulings, one by the court and one by the ombudsman. The State Comptroller's Office has become a very significant authority in Israel, while remaining independent of the government. The State Comptroller is elected by the Knesset and not by the government.

Gifts and Asset Declarations: As detailed in the answer in relation to Article 7, the Public Service Law (Gifts) and chapter 42.7 of the Takshir govern the subject of gifts given to civil servants.

Asset and Gifts Declarations by Public Officials (Article 8(5))

As noted previously, Article 42.7 of the Takshir (Chapter 11 of the rules of ethics) provides that a state employee may only receive a salary and other payments from the State Treasury, and may not receive any other benefit from another person for his public work or in connection with his work. The Takshir also includes, *inter alia*, prohibitions on deriving a personal benefit from public positions and operating in conflicts of interest.

Declarations of private interests: The **Public Service Law (Appointments), 1959**, requires certain public officials to declare assets, debts and past sources of income (if these might apply in the future), for themselves and their families. Ministers and Deputy Ministers are required to make such declarations to the State Comptroller with respect to themselves and their families, pursuant to the **Rules for the Prevention of Conflicts of Interests by Ministers and Deputy Ministers, 2003**. Similarly, heads of municipal authorities and their deputies are also required to submit such declarations, pursuant to the **Heads of Municipal Authorities and their Deputies Law (Financial Statement), 1993**.

The **Public Service Law (Gifts) 1979**, provides that a gift (beyond a minimal economic value) given to a public servant in his capacity as such is considered state property, and hence the public service employee must transfer any gift received to the State Treasury. As an exception to this rule, a public servant may request permission to keep a gift he or she received, but this permission will not be given if the gift has value to the State, besides its economic value, or if allowing the employee to keep the gift could harm public morals. A public employee must give notice of a gift received, and handle it as determined by the law and regulations. Any violation of this Law constitutes a criminal offence.

ISRAEL (SECOND SESSION)

Codes of Conduct – Civil Service

Reporting by public officials of acts of corruption to appropriate authorities

In October 2009, the Director of Discipline of the Civil Service Commission issued a Circular setting out the requirements for the reporting of corruption offences by public officials. The Circular provides instructions to employees of the civil service who, in the course of carrying out their functions, have either been personally offered a bribe or have obtained information of a bribe offered or accepted by a peer employee which has not been reported. Additionally, the Circular includes instructions for civil servants who have obtained information of a bribe offered by a peer civil servant to foreign public officials. Under the Circular, civil servants are obligated to promptly report any such information to their supervisors or to law enforcement authorities. According to the circular, a civil servant is a public trustee and as such has special responsibility to carry out his or her duties with fairness, honesty, and integrity. The duty of civil servants to report information regarding suspicions of corruption is an integral part of a civil servant's duty of loyalty. This notion is further expressed in **Article 4.02 of the Code of Ethics** and **Article 17 of the Civil Service Law (Discipline), 1963**. Accordingly, the Discipline Department of the Civil Service Commission will consider taking disciplinary measures, including disciplinary hearings, against a civil servant failing to report as required any such substantial information concerning the payment of a bribe to either the relevant superior within the civil service or the law enforcement authorities. Civil servants in such actions would be charged of engaging in conduct unbecoming a civil servant or dishonest conduct.

The Circular also addresses the issue of protecting persons who expose acts of corruption. Under the Circular, any civil servant reporting suspicions of bribery is afforded protection as set forth in the **Civil Service Regulations**, in addition to the protections granted under the **Protection of Employees (Exposure of Offences of Unethical Conduct and Improper Administration) Law, 1997**. Finally, the circular refers to the Ministry of Justice's anti-corruption website.

Codes of Conduct – Municipal Authorities

The Union of Municipal Authorities published in 2002 a Code of Ethics for elected officials in local government. The code establishes the guiding principles pertaining to this sector, including the duties to act in the public interest, to avoid conflicts of interest and refrain from bias, to honor and respect the employees and the public, to refrain from accepting gifts or gratuities that are not offered to the public at large, and to respect the rule of law.

A new and detailed **Code of Ethics for Mayors and Heads of Other Local Authorities** was approved last year by the Union of Municipal Authorities and by the Union of Municipal Regional Authorities. This detailed Code, consisting of more than one hundred sections, deals with many subjects relevant to UNCAC, among them honorable conduct,

prevention of conflicts of interest and many more. In the future, this Code is intended to be implemented as a part of a general scheme to facilitate the work of an Independent Committee on Ethics that will be established by law and that will be authorized to impose civil sanctions (in addition to the preexisting penal sanctions). It should be noted that this project is still in its planning stages and currently being examined by a working group composed of representatives from the Union of Municipal Authorities, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior.

Advisory Committee - The Advisory Committee for the Prevention of Conflicts of Interest of Elected Officials in Local Government was set up jointly by the Union of Municipal Authorities, the Attorney General and the Ministry of Interior in 1984. The committee was established as a means of assisting these officials, many of whom are not acquainted with the particulars of the law concerning conflicts of interest, with questions regarding conflicts of interest.

Any member of a municipal council may ask the committee for advice concerning his or her rights and duties as member of a local council, in regards to personal interests (or other duties that could raise a conflict of interest). The Committee expanded its role to include taking questions from the public at large regarding municipal council members, and responding to those questions, after asking for the council member's response.

The chairman of this committee is a Deputy of the Attorney General. The other members are a mayor, a legal advisor of a municipal authority, a comptroller of a local authority, and a legal counsel from the Ministry of Interior. The committee convenes several times a year, discusses questions and issues published legal opinions. The opinions of this committee are not legally binding, but are sent to the relevant officers in municipal and central government, including officers with relevant powers so that they may decide if they wish to exercise their powers, after reading the Committee's opinion.

The rules according to which the Committee was established are available to the public on the website of the Ministry of Justice. These rules include a summarized codification of the principles of conflicts of interest, as applicable to elected officials in local government. The site also includes many of the Committee's general opinions, together with provisions of relevant laws, regulations, orders and case law. To date, the Committee has rendered approximately one thousand opinions.

Declarations of private interests

Several senior public officers are required to submit declarations concerning their private interests, including properties, financial income, debts and other interests. Ministers and Deputy Ministers are required to make such declarations to the State Comptroller with respect to themselves and their family, pursuant to **The Rules for the Prevention of Conflicts of Interests by Ministers and Deputy Ministers, 2003**. Heads of municipal authorities and their deputies are also required to submit such declarations, pursuant to the **Heads of Municipal Authorities and their Deputies Law (Financial Statement), 1993**. Similarly, certain senior public officers are required to do so pursuant to the **Civil Service Regulations (Appointments) (Declaration of Property), 1959**.