

Office of the Director-General

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The impact of the current war on the Israel Nature and Parks Authority (INPA)

While our hearts are with our country, which has been attacked so brutally by Hamas, the mandate of our agency, the Israel Nature and Parks Authority (INPA) is to protect nature and heritage. Many colleagues around the world have written to me and to many of my employees with letters of support, and I want to thank you for all these warm words.

I want to fill you in a bit on what is happening in the INPA now.

- Many INPA employees live near the Gaza Strip. Over 70 families of our employees have had to be evacuated, and 13 of their homes were totally destroyed by Hamas.
- One of our rangers is missing, and his son (12) has been kidnapped to Gaza. Four rangers have had a close relative killed. Many other families of employees have relatives injured or missing.
- Over 200 INPA employees have been called up for reserve army duty, so we are dealing with manpower challenges in many sites.
- With the cost of the war to the country, and the loss of incoming foreign tourism to our sites, we are expecting a large budget cut for the last quarter of 2023 and for 2024. From the experience we gained during the COVID-19 crisis in 2020-2021, we are preparing alternative scenarios for dealing with this situation.
- Many of our National Parks and Nature Reserves are closed to visitors. The sites that are open are giving free admission to families that have been relocated from the war zone.



Some activities of note:

- Last week INPA rangers went into Kibbutz Be'eri and Kibbutz Nir Yitzhak in the war zone near the Gaza Strip, to rescue wild animals from the min-zoos in these kibbutzim.
- We relocated dozens of raptors (birds-of-prey) from an INPA breeding center to other breeding centers and to the Jerusalem Zoo, in order to move them far away from an area that could be impacted from missile attacks.
- Our rangers are continuing with patrols and enforcement for wildlife conservation in all areas, but have doubled-up (2 rangers per vehicle), and are at an increased level of security.
- Since all the schools in Israel are closed now, the INPA is offering free on-line lessons and activities in environmental education for school-children at home.

With warm wishes for better days.

Ms. Raya Shurki,
Director-General of the INPA