

The Foreign Workers' Call Center within the framework of Bilateral Agreements:

Data for 2024

**A Review of Activities,
Insights, and Trends**



Introductory Statement by the Director of the Bilateral Agreements Division

The people of Israel are measured not only in their treatment of their own, but also in their care for and sensitivity to the stranger, the foreigner, and the resident alien.

The Foreign Workers' Call Center continues to demonstrate its importance in protecting the rights of foreign workers, whether in routine times or under emergency conditions.

In 2024, at the height of the Iron Swords War and at a time of increased recruitment of foreign workers, the Center's contribution was particularly significant in providing information to workers, responding to inquiries, and enhancing workers' sense of security. While continuing to handle routine calls, the Center expanded its activities to provide information on protection from rocket fire, in unique collaboration with the IDF's Home Front Command. This collaborative effort placed the Call Center at the head of efforts to provide guidance and instruction to foreign workers in Israel. A sense of security is important not only to protect workers' welfare, but also to maintain economic stability and prevent the return of workers from vital sectors to their countries of origin. These sectors were already suffering from a severe lack of working hands due to the cessation of work permits for Palestinian workers.

2024 saw the widespread recruitment of thousands of foreign workers for vital sectors, introduction of quotas for foreign workers in new sectors, the signing of new bilateral agreements, and increased possibilities for the private recruitment of workers, in addition to the bilateral agreement track.

The Call Center invested great efforts to develop and distribute customized explanatory materials and provide information and answers to workers recruited both through bilateral agreements and via the private recruitment track. The arrival of thousands of workers from India to work in the construction sector obliged the Center to organize an immediate response to the needs of these new workers.

Looking forward, the Center is focused on the continued development of advanced digital tools to improve access to information, reduce the burden of calls requesting information, and broaden the Center's exposure among workers recruited outside of the bilateral agreements.

As before, we bow our heads and pray for the safe return of all the hostages – Israeli citizens and foreigners – and hope for the restoration of peace and security to our country.

Shirly Raisin Sasson

Director of the Bilateral Agreements Division
Foreign Workers Administration

Statement by CIMI's Director

Each year, thousands of people decide to pack their belongings and try their luck in Israel in order to improve their family's financial fortunes. On this complex journey they must face numerous challenges: leave their family for a long period of time, adapt to a country with unfamiliar social norms, and perform difficult daily work.

We're proud of CIMI's Foreign Workers' Call Center, which, over the past 13 years, has been the most significant center of support and assistance for workers during their period of employment in Israel. The Call Center was established by PIBA, the Population and Immigration Authority, in collaboration with CIMI – the Center for International Migration and Integration. From year to year, the Call Center has expanded the supportive services it provides to workers arriving from a variety of countries to work in the vital sectors of the Israeli economy.

2024 was perhaps the Call Center's most challenging year. The severe shortage of working hands led to the expansion of Israel's bilateral agreements and the entry of 20,000 workers in one year, in addition to other workers recruited privately. These high figures, alongside new countries of worker recruitment and the ongoing wartime situation, required adjustments and professional flexibility on our part in order to continue providing workers with the best assistance possible. This was achieved first of all through expanding and training the team of translators constituting the basis for the Center's operations. Secondly, it required improving the technological infrastructure of the telephone, online, and digital system while focusing on the ability to reach every worker through digital communities. In addition, we were required to expand collaboration and our daily interactions with relevant Israeli bodies such as the Home Front Command. We also expanded our information collection operations and focused surveys aiming to better understand the workers' needs and challenges. Finally, all these activities necessitated cultural comprehension of the migrant population, particularly from India and Sri Lanka, thousands of whom arrived over the year.

In the near future, the recruitment of foreign workers will continue to play a crucial role in Israel. We at the Call Center hope to continue improving the service provided to foreign workers, caring for their welfare, and protecting their rights.

I would like to thank the Call Center's staff and our partners at PIBA who lead the way, as well as all our other partners advancing the welfare of Israel's foreign workers.

Alon Akerman
CEO, CIMI

Background

The Foreign Workers' Call Center is operated by CIMI for the Population and Immigration Authority, enabling workers to receive assistance in their native language and providing reliable information regarding their rights and obligations.

The annual data booklet provides a comprehensive survey of the operations of the Call Center. The booklet also presents historical data collected since 2014, when the computerized system was launched that enables routing calls to different units and analyzing information. The aim of the booklet is to reflect the Center's activities, identify current trends, and improve our handling of workers' needs.*

The Center was founded in July 2012 as part of Israel's first bilateral agreements, fulfilling a crucial role in protecting the rights and welfare of foreign workers in Israel.

Core Operations of the Call Center

- 1. Handling inquiries:** workers contact the Center to address issues related to wages, working or living conditions, and safety concerns. Inquiries are handled by multilingual representatives. Unsolved cases are transferred to other agencies for further action.
- 2. Disseminating information** on topics related to workers' employment, stay in Israel, and rights and obligations. The information is provided through text messages via the CIMI website, customized apps, and social media. Emergency information, such as instructions during the Iron Swords War, is immediately disseminated through all channels.
- 3. Support for new workers:** meeting new arrivals at Ben Gurion Airport and providing comprehensive guidance through customized apps on a variety of topics.
- 4. Mapping and monitoring:** performing surveys to identify new needs, uncover trends, and improve service accordingly.

* The Call Center also provides services to foreign workers in the construction sector who arrived through contractors. As of late 2023, some 6,200 foreign workers from China and Turkey were residing in Israel, subject to the regulations that apply to foreign contractors. Since October 2023, services have also been provided to workers arriving through private agencies.

2024 in Numbers

This booklet presents the Center's activities, achievements, and data insights for 2024, while offering suggestions for further improvements in the coming years.

Our main achievements for 2024 include:



19,563 foreign workers arrived in Israel under the bilateral agreements



79,782 incoming calls were received by the Call Center



7,438 inquiries were made to the Call Center



6,413 inquiries were handled by the Call Center



4,726 workers contacted the Call Center



Workers arriving under new agreements: The Center developed culturally appropriate responses for 6,664 Indian workers and 5,042 Sri Lankan workers arriving under new bilateral agreements in the construction sector.



The Center launched new digital tools, such as communication apps, an online information center, and automated SMS texts, providing workers with orientation programs, vital information, and updates about callers' inquiries.

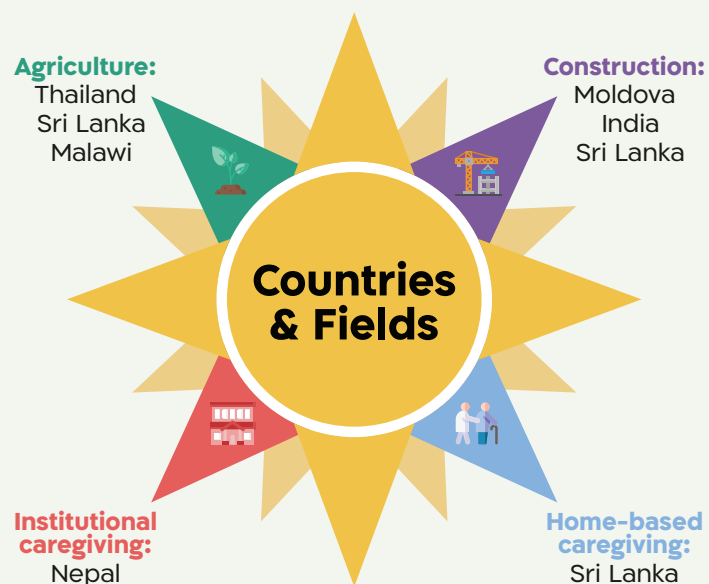


The Center improved its operational capabilities despite an increased volume of calls and a changing security situation, reducing response times and expanding its array of services.

Bilateral Agreements for the Recruitment of Foreign Workers²

The bilateral agreements signed by Israel for the recruitment of foreign workers are intended to promote the recruitment of skilled and professional workers while putting an end to the phenomenon of illegal recruitment fees, protecting workers' rights, and preventing modern-day slavery and human trafficking. Since signing the first bilateral agreement in 2012, Israel has expanded its partnerships both to new countries and to new employment sectors. In 2024, it had agreements with 12 countries regulating 5 employment sectors, with additional agreements in different stages of negotiations.

Countries from which workers arrived in 2024 under bilateral agreements:*



* There are additional agreements and arrangements Israel has signed but are no longer implemented. These include agreements with Sri Lanka in the seasonal agriculture sector (2010), Bulgaria in the construction sector (2012), and Romania in the construction sector (2015), as well as two trial agreements in the caregiving sector, with Nepal (2016) and Sri Lanka (2017). The latter two were pilot agreements that are not in effect at this time.

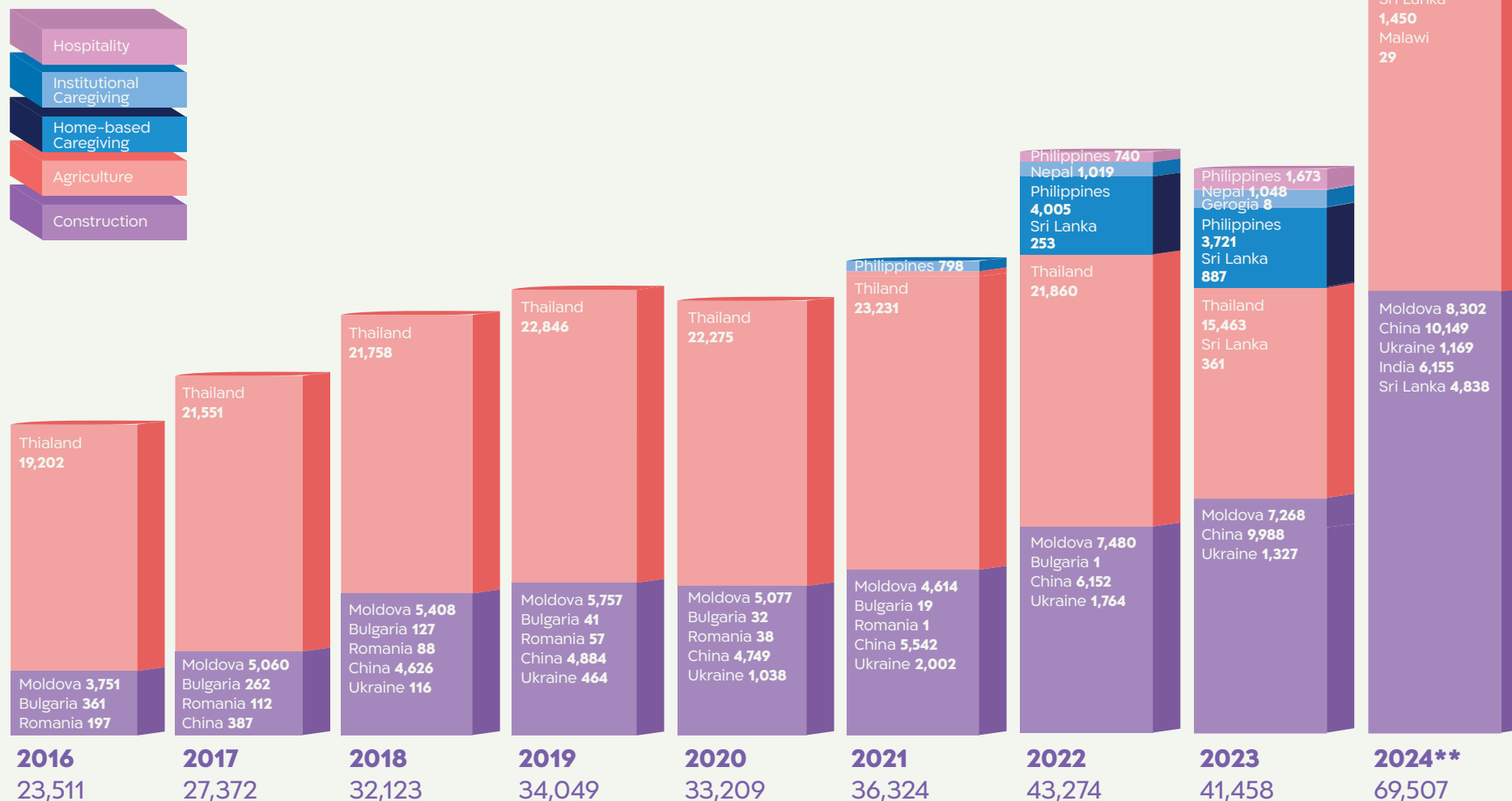
Dates of Implementation of Bilateral Agreements between Israel and other Countries



The bilateral agreements changed Israel's approach to work migration, bringing significant advantages to workers, employers, the countries of origin, and the State of Israel.

Number of Workers Residing in Israel under Bilateral Agreements*

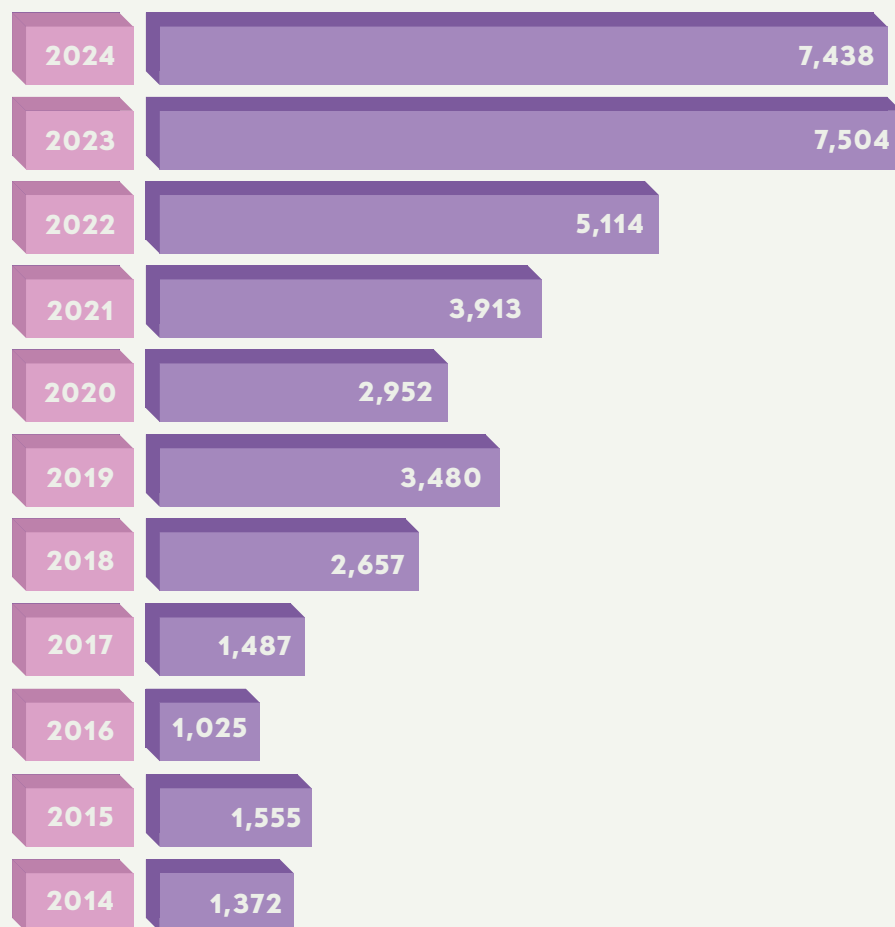
By Sectors and Countries of Origin



* The data refers to workers with a valid work visa. The PIBA worker quota also includes workers lacking a valid visa. Data does not include additional groups served by the Call Center: construction workers arriving via foreign contractors (8,120) and workers in the caregiving sector arriving from Sri Lanka and Nepal via trial agreements (49). Also excluded are veteran workers in the relevant fields and workers who arrived in Israel from these countries prior to the implementation of the bilateral agreements.

** Total workers who stayed and arrived under bilateral agreements in 2024 – 78.3 thousand (workers who stayed legally – 69.5 thousand, illegally – 8.8 thousand).

Number of Inquiries⁴ Received at the Call Center, by Year

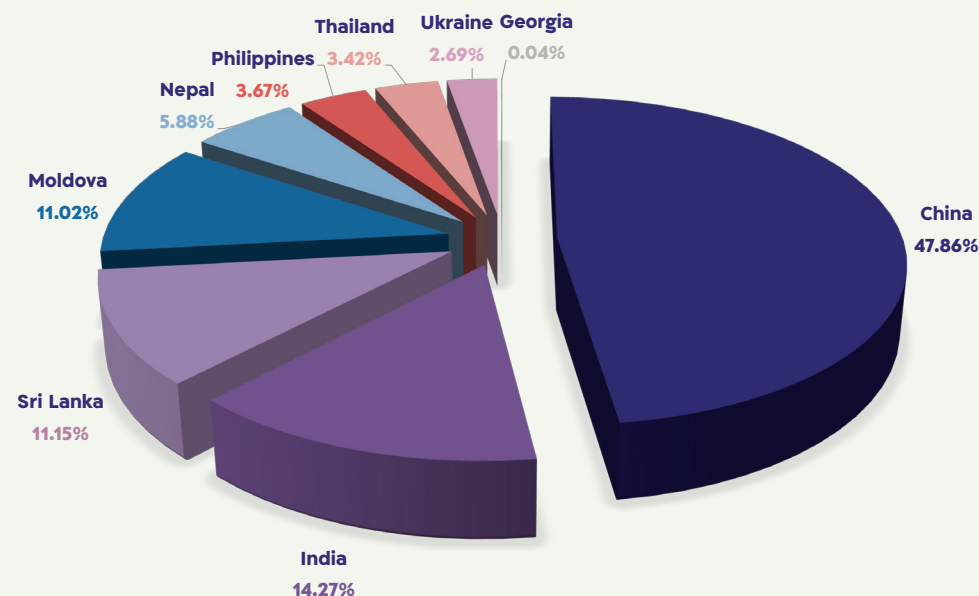


The next tables will present numerical data reflecting the activity of the Call Center for 2024.

Workers who contacted the Call Center in 2024*

By Workers' Country of Origin (%)**

As the table below demonstrates, most of the inquiries to the Call Center in 2024 were made by Chinese workers. Further down in the report, we will discuss the upward trend in the number of inquiries made by Indian workers.*



* In 2024, 7 inquiries were received from workers employed by Chinese contractors, and another 8 from Chinese workers who arrived as employees of Israeli companies through private recruitment agencies.

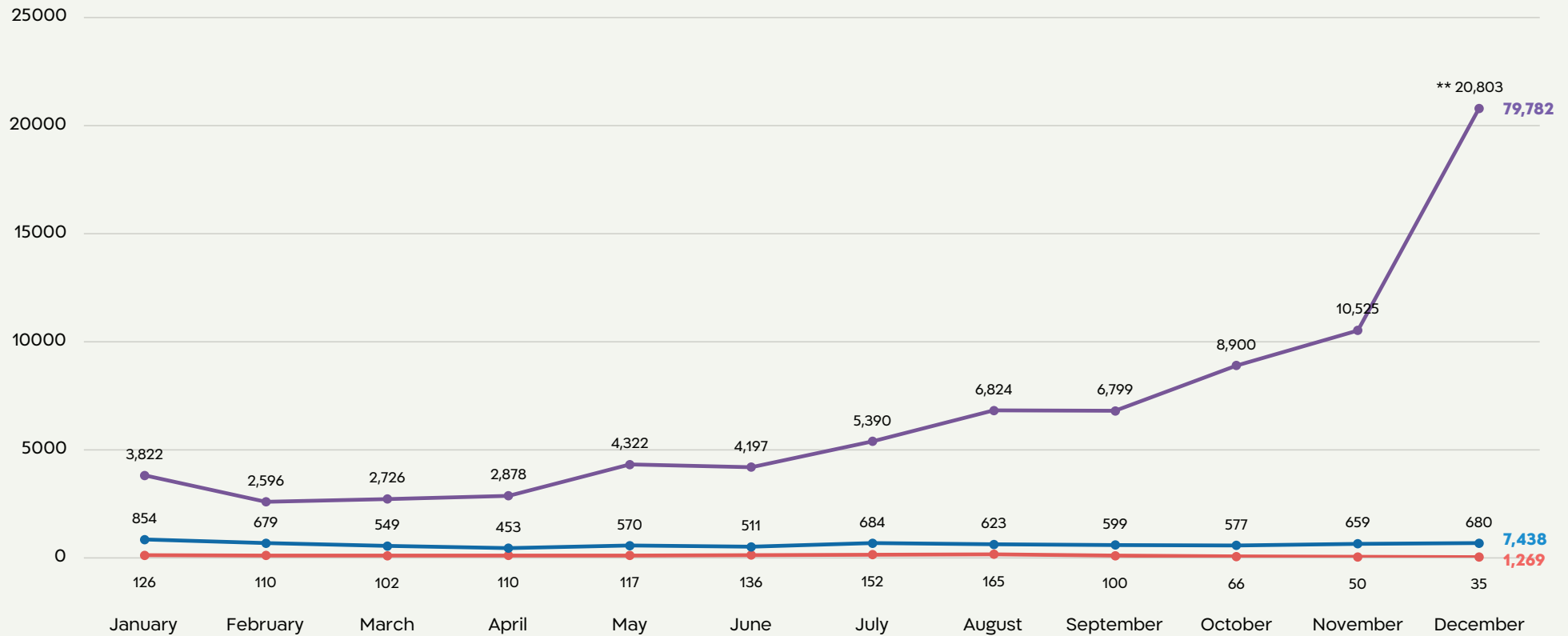
** In addition, the Call Center received inquiries from workers in different sectors such as homebased caregiving, construction, agriculture, etc., who arrived in Israel via private recruitment agencies, most of them from Uzbekistan, India, and Malawi.

2024: Data on Call Center Activity*

The following table presents data on the Call Center's activity, categorized into three types: calls made to the Call Center, new inquiries opened in the Center's system, and inquiries submitted through an online form.

Key:

- 79,782 Incoming calls
- 7,438 New inquiries
- 1,269 Online inquiries



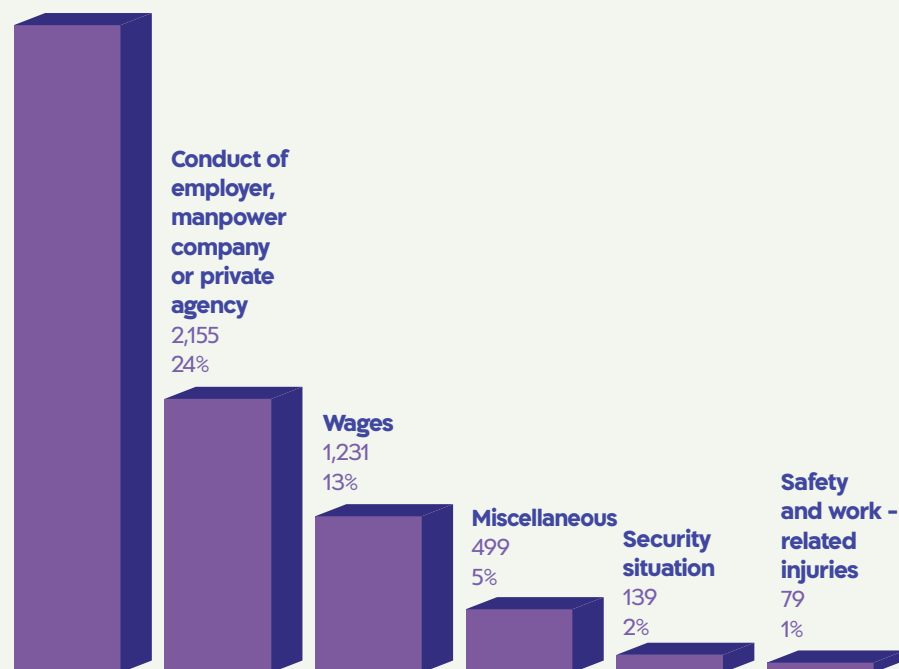
* An incoming call differs from an inquiry that is opened in the system for further investigation. Thus, there may be several incoming calls from the same worker regarding one inquiry, complaints that have already been addressed, and more. The Call Center's activity also includes outgoing calls to the worker as part of the handling of his or her inquiry, for example, to receive additional information, to follow up, and in response to an inquiry. In 2024, the Center made 24,085 outgoing calls.

** This year saw an increase in the number of incoming calls, due to numerous calls by Indian workers to the Call Center – repeat calls made by the same workers. The increase in the number of inquiries is already apparent, beginning in August, as new workers continued to arrive in Israel. The number of inquiries increase significantly, even more than the unusually high number from October 2023 when the war started.

Topics of inquiries, 2024*

The following table presents the number of inquiries to the Call Center in 2024, arranged by topic. As the table shows, many inquiries were requests for information. In order to better handle such inquiries, a number of tools and channels were developed to improve workers' access to information: a digital platform for foreign workers developed by the Population and Immigration Authority; an information center for agriculture workers on the CIMI website; info pages and recorded explanations on a variety of topics, which are disseminated to workers through various apps.

Request for Information
5,098
55%



* A single inquiry can relate to more than one topic, so the categorization by topic is not exclusive. Therefore, while the percentage reflects how many times a topic appeared out of all inquiries, the sum of the percentages does not add up to 100%.

Breakdown of inquiries by topic

Inquiries requesting information:

74%	Locating the manpower company
13%	Information on transfer to a different employer
6%	Information regarding visa

Inquiries on conduct of employer, manpower company, or private recruitment agency:

64%	Lack of assistance/availability from the agency/corporation
23%	Working without/before completion of registration
11%	Living conditions

Inquiries on wages:

57%	Unpaid wages
49%	Wages paid without a pay slip
19%	Wages do not comply with legal requirements

Miscellaneous inquiries:

68%	Deposit was not withdrawn
20%	Medical condition
3%	Violence between co-workers

Brokerage fees for employment charged in Israel and abroad

This year has seen a significant increase in the number of inquiries by foreign workers regarding brokerage fees they were required to pay in their country of origin or in Israel in order to receive employment or arrange registration. In 2023, the Call Center received only one complaint on this topic. In 2024, the number increased to 30 complaints in one year, particularly from Chinese workers (77% of all the complaints on this topic).

The following tables present a breakdown of inquiries by workers from the various employment sectors: construction, agriculture, home-based caregiving, institutional caregiving, and hospitality.

Inquiries by Sector Construction

In 2024, 5,769 new inquiries were opened for workers in the construction sector. Most of the inquiries were requests for information.

	2022	2023	2024
Number of inquiries	3,956	5,438	5,769
Number of workers residing in Israel who arrived through bilateral agreements	21,345	18,583	30,591
Number of workers who made inquiries	2,067	2,958	3,517
Percentage of callers out of total resident workers	10%	16%	12%

Main Topics of Inquiry 2024 (%)*



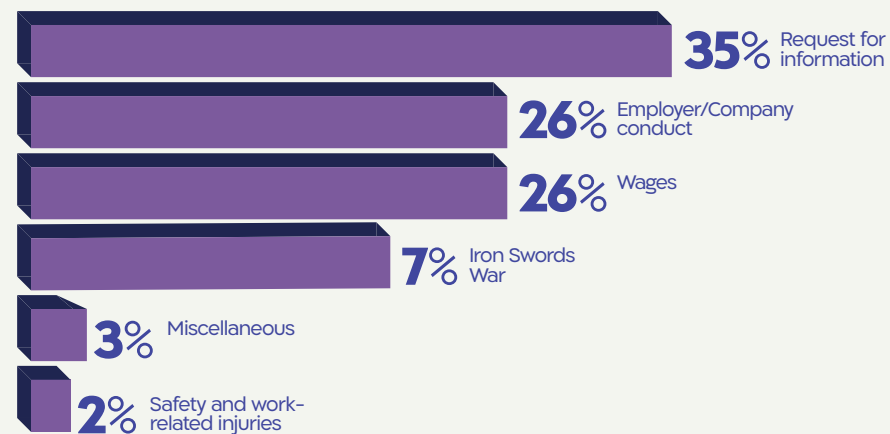
* An inquiry can include more than one topic, therefore the categories above are not mutually exclusive. Accordingly, while the percentage refers to the number of times a topic was raised out of the total number of inquiries, the percentages do not add up to 100%.

Inquiries by Sector Agriculture

In 2024, 790 new inquiries were opened for workers in the agriculture sector. Most of these inquiries concerned employer conduct.

	2022	2023	2024
Number of inquiries	291	523	790
Number of workers residing in Israel who arrived through bilateral agreements	21,860	15,824	30,596
Number of workers who made inquiries	250	423	607
Percentage of callers out of total resident workers	1%	3%	2%

Main Topics of Inquiry 2024 (%)



Inquiries by Sector

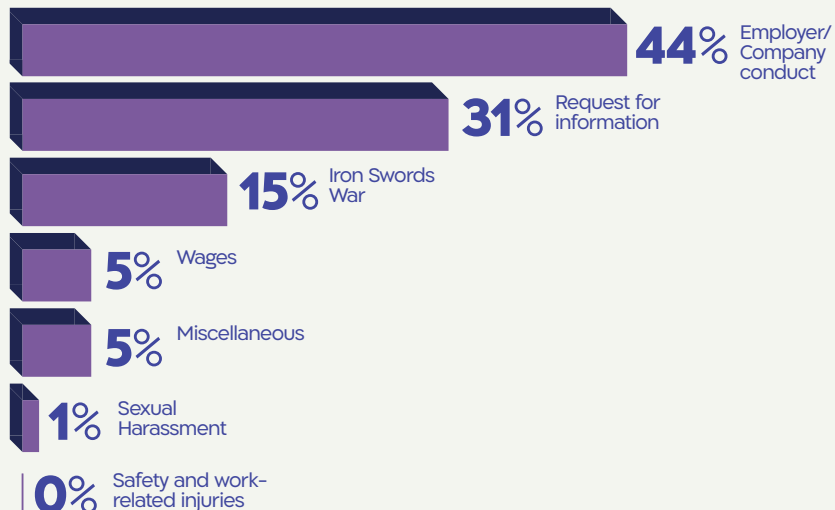
Home-based Caregiving

In 2024, 294 new inquiries were opened for workers in the home-based caregiving sector. Most of these inquiries concerned employer conduct.

	2022	2023	2024
Number of inquiries	664	694	294
Number of workers residing in Israel who arrived through bilateral agreements	4,116	4,608	5,433
Number of workers who made inquiries	516	539	248
Percentage of callers out of total resident workers	13%	12%	5%

Main Topics of Inquiry

2024 (%)*



* An inquiry can include more than one topic, therefore the categories above are not mutually exclusive. Accordingly, while the percentage refers to the number of times a topic was raised out of the total number of inquiries, the percentages do not add up to 100%.

Inquiries by Sector

Institutional Caregiving

In 2024, 443 new inquiries were opened for workers in the institutional caregiving sector. Most of these inquiries were requests for information.

	2022	2023	2024
Number of inquiries	184	619	433
Number of workers residing in Israel who arrived through bilateral agreements	1,020	1,056	1,271
Number of workers who made inquiries	131	259	243
Percentage of callers out of total resident workers	13%	25%	19%

Main Topics of Inquiry

2024 (%)

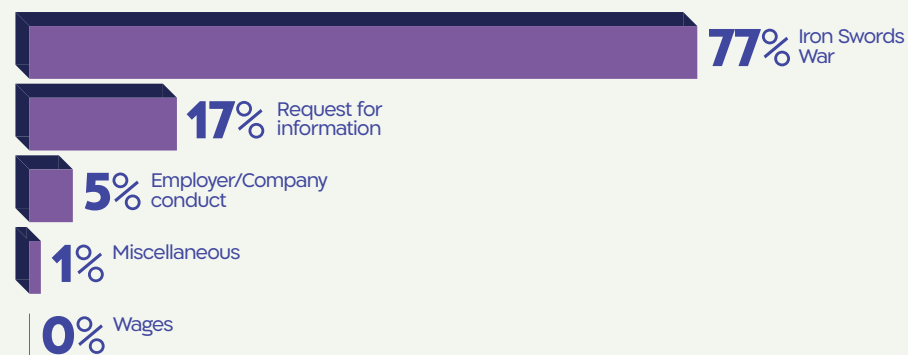


Inquiries by Sector Hospitality

In 2024, 141 new inquiries were opened for workers in the hospitality sector. Most of the inquiries concerned the Iron Swords War.

	2022	2023	2024
Number of inquiries	19	290	141
Number of workers residing in Israel who arrived through bilateral agreements	740	1,673	1,591
Number of workers who made inquiries	17	211	65
Percentage of callers out of total resident workers	2%	13%	4%

Main Topics of Inquiry for 2024*



* An inquiry can include more than one topic, therefore the categories above are not mutually exclusive. Accordingly, while the percentage refers to the number of times a topic was raised out of the total number of inquiries, the percentages do not add up to 100%.

In the Spotlight: Construction Workers from India

The most prominent agreement to strengthen the construction sector, which suffered setbacks as a result of the war, is the agreement with India. Since their first arrival in Israel in April 2024 and until the end of 2024, the Call Center identified a significant increase in the number of inquiries made by Indian workers. Most of the inquiries concerned employer conduct or requests for information.



6,664 Indian workers entered Israel beginning in April 2024



967 complaints were filed



871 complaints were closed



833 Indian workers contacted the Call Center

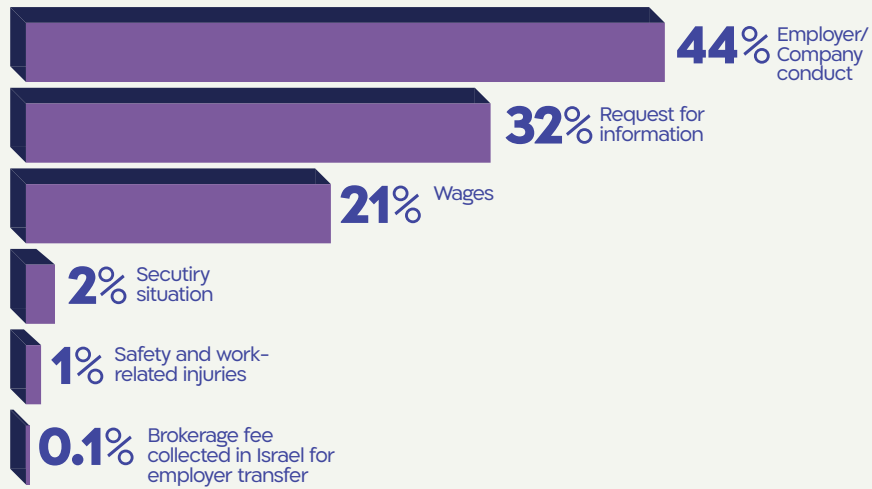
The Call Center's Response to the Increase in Inquiries by Indian Workers

In order to handle the significant increase in the number of inquiries made by Indian construction workers and to enhance the efficiency of the assistance provided to them, a number of steps were taken:

- Expanding the Call Center hours providing a response in the Hindi language.
- Dividing the shifts into specialized response types: incoming calls and outgoing calls only.
- Operating a pilot program sending SMS messages to Indian workers to update them about inquiries regarding registration.
- Developing an online information center in Hindi, modeled on existing information centers for agricultural workers in English and Thai (to access the website, [click here](#)).
- Operating a pilot program that provides pre-recorded answers to calls to the Call Center on topics that do not require a human response, such as employer transfer, registration check, and prolonging work permits.

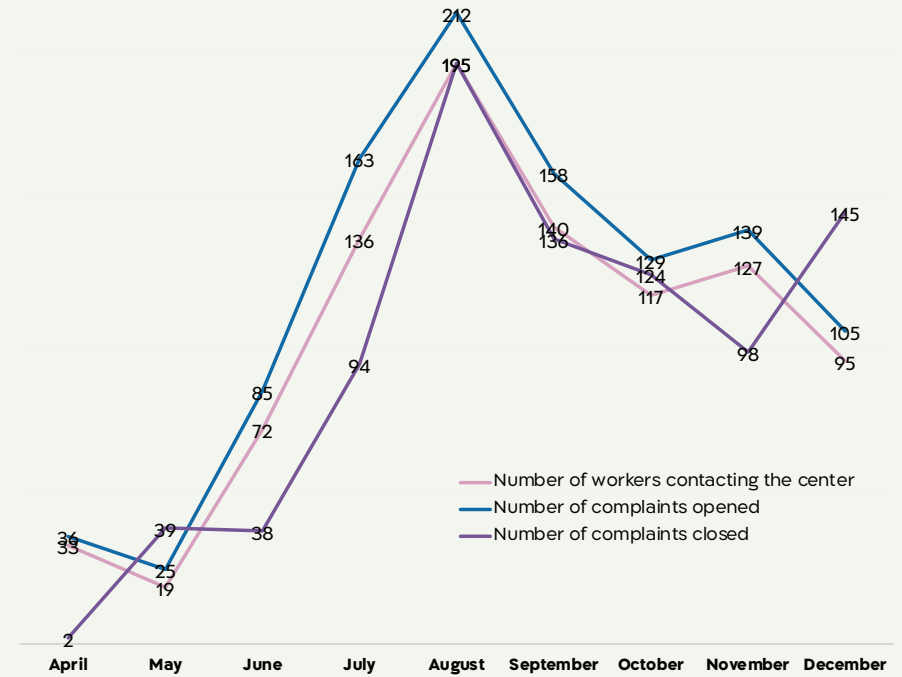
Main topics of inquiry for 2024 (%)

Construction workers from India



Complaints Handled by the Call Center, by Month

Construction workers from India



■ Collaboration with the Home Front Command

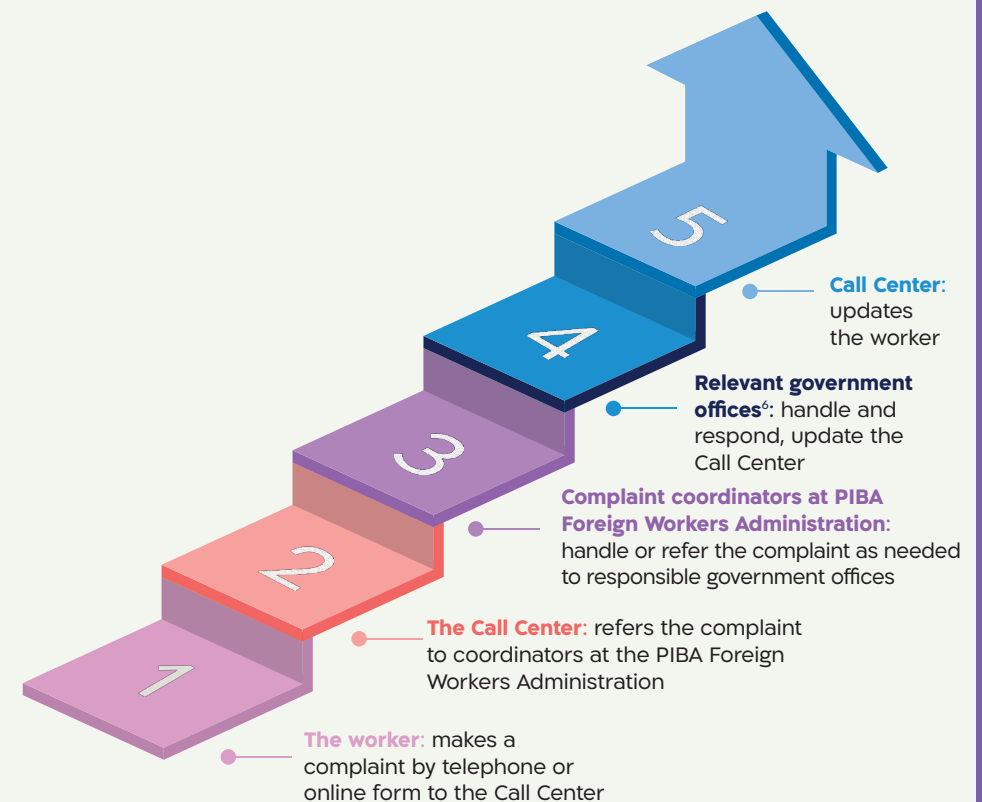
In light of the ongoing Iron Swords War, we found it necessary to improve workers' access to information on topics related to emergency situations. To address this need, the Call Center partnered with the IDF's Home Front Command, taking the following steps:

- **Translating explanatory material:** informational and explanatory materials received from the Home Front Command were translated by the Call Center staff into the native languages of foreign workers, so as to ensure clear comprehension of the instructions meant to protect their safety.
- **Focused distribution:** the translated materials were disseminated to worker groups through apps and uploaded to the online information center for agricultural workers, for maximum accessibility.
- **Customized webinars:** two webinars (online meetings) were held, one for Indian workers and the other for Thai workers, addressing the topic of Home Front Command guidelines. The webinars were conducted by a representative of the Home Front Command and translated in real time to the workers' language by translators from the Call Center staff. As part of the webinars, the workers heard a detailed explanation of Home Front Command guidelines, received tools for conduct in emergencies, and received answers to their questions on the subject.

These steps ensure the transmission of critical information to all foreign workers in Israel, adjusted to the unique needs of their communities.

■ Inquiry Handling Procedure

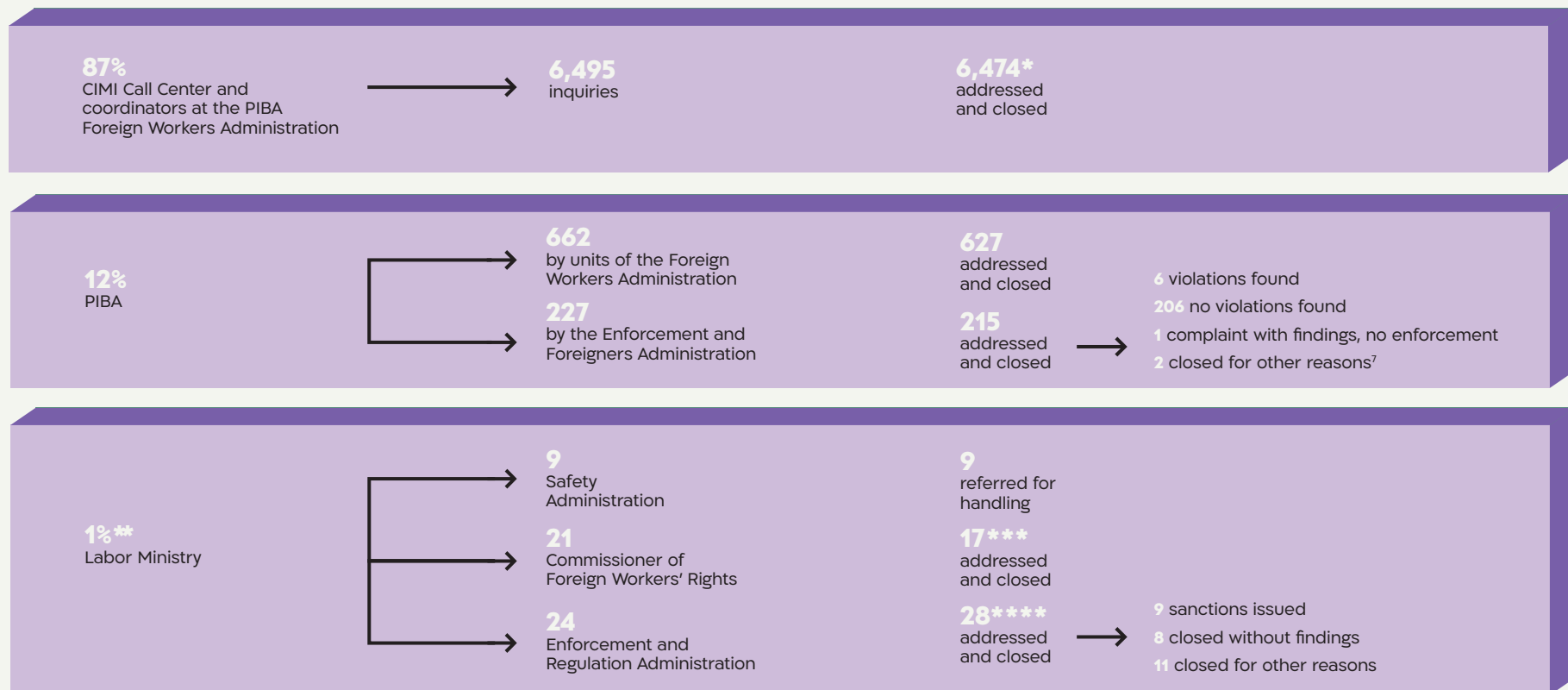
Inquiries and complaints are referred to relevant bodies according to topic. The length of time needed to address the complaint varies in accordance with its content and circumstances. For the most part, the Call Center and Foreign Worker Administration coordinators assist in providing information, PIBA handles employer/manpower agency conduct and change of employers, and the Labor Division at the Ministry of Economy and Industry handles complaints regarding wages,⁵ additional employment terms, and work safety.



Handling of Inquiries in 2024

The following graphs present numerical data on the handling of inquiries by various bodies in 2024.

7,438 inquiries were received over the past year. Out of these, 7,265 complaints were addressed and closed.



* Includes inquiries that were opened as early as 2023 but were closed during 2024.

** The data is accurate as of 04/05/2025.

*** Some of the complaints were opened in 2022/2023 but were closed in 2024.

**** Some of the complaints were opened in 2023 but were closed in 2024."

Success Stories

Outstanding Examples of Complaints Handled by the Foreign Workers Call Center in 2024

1. A worker from Sri Lanka, employed in the agriculture sector, contacted the Call Center to complain about severely inadequate living conditions. The complaint was handled urgently and transferred to the Agriculture Division of the Immigration Authority for administrative enforcement. Following intervention by the division and a call to the employer, **the worker was transferred to a new workplace where he was provided with adequate and improved living conditions.**
2. An inquiry was received from the Moldovan Employment Bureau on behalf of a group of Moldovan workers employed in the construction sector. When they arrived in Israel, a representative of the manpower company took their passports, and the workers were unable to get them back, despite repeated calls to the company. The complaint was transferred for urgent handling by the Immigration Authority, which contacted the manpower company to receive clarifications. **Following the intervention, the passports were immediately returned to the workers.**
3. An Indian worker employed in the construction sector contacted the Call Center after allegedly receiving partial wages for the month of July. The worker reported that he did not receive payment for overtime and contacted the manpower company, but was unable to understand their answer since he does not speak Hebrew, and a translator was not made available to him.
The complaint was transferred for investigation by the Immigration Authority, which found that the worker had received proper payment. In another conversation with the worker, it transpired that he had thought he was supposed to be paid NIS 42 per regular work hour, whereas this was in fact the rate for overtime hours. **After the worker received a detailed explanation regarding how his wages were calculated, he understood and agreed that he had received his entire wages.**
In addition, the worker received in-depth information on his rights and obligations in the workplace. **During the conversation he relayed to the Call Center representative that he is satisfied with his job, feels he has a good connection with his boss, and continues to work in the same workplace without apprehension or confusion.**

Notes

1. The information presented in the different parts of this booklet is accurate as of its date of publication.
2. The terms in this booklet refer to the different worker groups as formulated in Israeli law. They do not necessarily reflect the terms used by CIMI and the way in which the organization views the use of these terms.
3. See government resolution no. 4024, July 31, 2015: https://www.gov.il/he/departments/policies/2005_des4024
4. The Call Center receives inquiries on various topics. Some of the inquiries are complaints that are forwarded for handling. See pages 26–27.
5. In the case of complaints regarding wages, the Regulation and Enforcement Administration at the Labor Division of the Ministry of Economy and Industry cannot give legal aid and compensation, but can only issue an administrative or criminal sanction to the employer after completing an investigation into the case. Therefore, regardless of whether the handling of the case vis-à-vis the employer has ended or is ongoing, in order to receive legal aid and compensation, the worker must, in parallel, submit a lawsuit through a civil court.
6. The relevant units include: the PIBA Foreign Workers Administration, the Regulation and Enforcement Administration, the Safety Administration, the Commissioner of Foreign Workers' Rights at the Labor Division of the Ministry of Economy and Industry, and the Israel Police.
7. Other reasons include: the worker rescinded their complaint; the complaint lacked details; the worker failed to cooperate with the investigation; a police investigation is ongoing; the complaint was addressed without opening an investigation; the worker left the country, and consequently, the investigation could not be continued.

General information:

Population and Immigration Authority website:

piba.gov.il

The Center for International Migration and Integration website:

cimi.org.il

Contact details for workers:

Phone number of the Foreign Workers Call Center:

1-700-707-889 / 077-999-85-67

Online: cimihotline.formtitan.com/homepage