

Israel Inquiry Says Security Agents Lied at Trials of Terrorist Suspects

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JERUSALEM, Oct. 30 — An official inquiry into Shin Beth, Israel's internal security service, has concluded that security agents systematically lied in court over 16 years to assure the conviction of terrorist suspects.

The report condemned what it said was an unwritten but consistent policy of committing perjury to cover up the use of physical force and other pressures to extract confessions. But it said limited use of force during interrogation was unavoidable and justified.

Placing a premium on national security considerations — particularly

the need to continue combating terrorism aimed at civilian targets — the report recommended that no charges be filed or other steps taken against security agents who committed perjury in the past.

Shin Beth is the primary arm used to combat guerrilla activity inside Israel and the occupied territories, and many Israelis feared that an investigation into its methods might irreparably harm the agency, resulting in a rise in Palestinian terror attacks.

Many Retrials Possible

The inquiry's conclusions open the possibility that hundreds or even thousands of Palestinians convicted of security offenses will request retrials. The report recommends that such requests be granted.

The precise number of people convicted with the aid of perjured testimony by Shin Beth agents could not be ascertained by the committee. "According to an estimate, their number could be significant," the report said.

The army does not make public the number of so-called security prisoners held in Israeli jails, but it is estimated to be in the thousands.

"If the conviction is canceled as the result of a retrial, a person convicted without any basis for the charge will be

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