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Police commissioner to establish youth movement on 11-year-old's recommendation

• By ELIYAHU KAMISHER

The Israel Police will establish a youth movement to educate youngsters on law enforcement and police values, Police Commissioner Insp.-Gen. Roni Alsheich said on Wednesday.

Speaking at the annual Herzliya Conference, Alsheich said he received a letter from an 11-year-old proposing a “children’s police” because “kids are breaking the law” and “parents are a negative example.”

Alsheich said he met with the child and after making some revisions to the proposal, they decided to start a youth movement, with pilot programs starting in September. The commissioner did not specify in which neighborhoods the pilots would take place.

He said the plan was not meant to increase police enforcement, but to instruct youth in proper behavior



POLICE COMMISSIONER Roni Alsheich speaks at the Herzliya Conference yesterday. (IDC)

and values.

The commissioner also briefly touched on the situation of Arab Israelis and the police. “Residents of Umm el-Fahm are dealing with shootings and residents of Tel Aviv are dealing with karaoke. The challenge is to match the police service,” he said.

Alsheich added that the police

must create goals that take into account the different needs of communities in Israel.

Police are facing increased criticism for a perceived lack of policing and strained relations with Arab-Israeli communities. In June a civilian security guard manning a community policing station in Kafr Kassem opened fire on a group of rioters, killing 20-year-old Muhammad Taha. The incident sparked a security crackdown in the town of more than 21,000 and brought widespread condemnation of police actions from Arab-Israeli leaders.

Police and other officials readily admit that there is a shortage of forces in Arab-Israeli communities. There are only seven stations for those communities. Yet they say a five-year, NIS 2 billion plan to increase law enforcement in Arab localities that began last year is under way. In addition, police were able to double the number of Muslim officers last year to 4% from 2% of the force. Muslims make up 17% of the population.