Police chief Insp.-Gen. Yohanan Danino declared youth violence the country's "No. 1 threat" on Tuesday, saying it was "equal to external threats" such as terror on Israel's borders.

Speaking at a panel on Personal Security and Law Enforcement at the Herzliya Conference, Danino lamented the state of today's youth, noting that much of the spike in violence in Israeli society was coming from teenagers and young adults. Although he did not make any specific references to recent racism and violence by fans of the Beitar Jerusalem soccer team, many of those recently arrested for racism-related crimes and violence were teenagers or young adults.

"Anyone looking at the future must worry about our youth, the reduced motivation for being drafted into the army and the reduced level of youth volunteers," he said.

Danino said police frequently found 12- and 13-year-olds in questionable areas, committing crimes at 2 a.m. When officers ask how the teenagers plan to get home or whether their parents know where they are, he said, "there are no real answers."

He also addressed the public image of the police, saying that police precincts declare publicly that their goal is to "raise the faith of the public in the police."

The police chief discussed the importance of balancing law enforcement with honoring personal freedom, and expressed optimism that both could be accomplished. He added that the police were succeeding in reducing many forms of crime and responding faster to citizens' calls for help.

Danino also blasted the extent of public corruption and said that despite police success in fighting the phenomenon, it was still widespread.

In addition, he mentioned joint efforts with Palestinians and Jordanians regarding the "war on traffic accidents."

Finally, he said police were working hard to prepare for US President Barack Obama's visit and that it was a big responsibility to facilitate the visit going off without any problems.