



The top posts in Israel's national police force are now in the hands of hardline religious settlers who are seeking to make "alarming" changes to policing in both Israel and the occupied territories, critics have warned.

The growing influence of the settler movement was highlighted this month with the appointment of Rahamim Brachyahu as the force's chief rabbi. He lives in Talmon, a settlement close to the Palestinian city of Ramallah in the West Bank.

Roni Alsheikh, who was made police chief late last year, lived for many years in one of the most violent settlements, Kiryat Arba, next to Hebron. According to Israel's Haaretz daily, Alsheikh lobbied hard on behalf of Brachyahu for the chief rabbi position.

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