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Nazareth Mayor Ali Salem, 64, is a Muslim citizen of Israel. He began work as a welder and at the same time earned a degree in mechanical engineering at the Technion, then opened a business that today employs 300.

In 1993 he was recruited to the Nazareth City Council by its communist (Hadash) mayor Tawfiq Ziad to help curb the rising strength of the Islamist movement. After 15 years, Salem set up his own list, My Nazareth, ran against communist mayor Ramiz Jaraisy, and won.

In the city of 90,000, he says, "I just finished building 1,000 apartments and I'm building another 2,000. In one neighborhood we're now building 3 schools and in the adjacent neighborhood there will be a seniors center and a day care center for babies. I've paved all the roads in Nazareth with asphalt. And next week I'm starting to build a new city hall to replace the building we've been renting for the last forty years. I'm also building a \$20 million cultural center.

"All we want is to live together in peace. We want quiet that will enable us to work and develop our city....More and more local and city council heads are speaking about peace and coexistence."

"We live much better than the Palestinians [in the West Bank and Gaza]. We have horizons, possibilities, and almost full equality. Our youth have much more to lose, so except for a few extreme cases, we don't see Israeli Arabs participating in the wave of terror."

"Since 1948 we've paid a heavy price for this conflict and we need to bring an end to the bloodshed....The Palestinians who are now stabbing - what is this? It is forbidden to stab anyone. It doesn't matter if he's a Jew, Muslim, or Christian....This area can become the best and most peaceful one if we increase focus on our similarities and reduce the hatred."

"I think that in [Israeli] Arab society, whoever wants to can succeed. There are all the possibilities to learn, to work, and to develop in positive directions. Look how many doctors, technicians, and lawyers there are today in the Israeli Arab sector. You just need the will, and to respect the place where we live. I see myself as Palestinian, but I respect the state I live in."