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East J'lem Palestinian to become deputy chief scientist at ministry

Nir Hasson

Dr. Tareq Abu Hamed, a Palestinian chemical engineer from the village of Sur Bahir in East Jerusalem, has just won a tender for the position of deputy chief scientist at the Ministry of Science, Technology and Space.

Like most East Jerusalem residents he does not enjoy full Israeli citizenship but has the status of a temporary resident. Upon his appointment he will become the East Jerusalem Palestinian with the most senior position in any government ministry.

Abu Hamed is 42 and studied chemical engineering in Ankara, Turkey. His doctoral thesis involved the biological breakdown of petroleum effluents. He was accepted as a post-doctoral fellow at the Weizmann Institute and at the University of Minnesota, studying renewable energy with a focus on petroleum substitutes for transportation.

Subsequently, he man-



Tareq Abu Hamed *Eliezer Yaari*

aged the Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies and was the head of the department for renewable energy at the Dead Sea and Arava Science Center. Two years ago he started working at the Ministry of Science as a scientific manager in engineering. He won the prestigious Dan David Prize for fostering social responsibility with an emphasis on the environment.

“Dr. Abu Hamed brings with him a record of proven scientific achievements, tying in practical work in the field with writing research articles. His familiarity with the ministry as well as current scientific trends will enable him to do an outstanding job,” said Prof. Nurit Yirmiya, the ministry’s chief scientist.

Recently, Abu Hamed was interviewed by journalist Eliezer Ya’ari for his soon-to-be-released book “Beyond the Dark Mountains,” which is about Sur Bahir.

“I’d like to say a few words about my schizophrenia,” Abu Hamed tells Yaari in the book. “The Arabs of East Jerusalem have several advantages. You can travel across the world with a Jordanian passport, with which you can enter Arab countries. You leave here with an Israeli travel document. These passports reflect the schizophrenic situation – we want and don’t want Israel at the same time.”