



Appendix E – Statement of Reasons – Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ)

(Also known as; EI-Gihad; al-Jihad; Jihad Group; Islamic Jihad; AI-Jihad al-Islami; New Jihad Group; Qaeda al-Jihad; Talaa'al al-Fateh; Vanguard of Conquest; al-Takfir; World Justice Group; International Justice Group, Islamic Group).

The following information is based on publicly available details about Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ). These details have been corroborated by material from intelligence investigations into the activities of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and by official reporting. ASIO assesses that the details set out below are accurate and reliable.

The EIJ is listed in the United Nation's 1267 Committee's consolidated list and as a proscribed terrorist organisation by the governments of Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Current status of EIJ

The EIJ emerged as a coalition of Sunni Islamic radical groups that split from the Muslim Brotherhood, an Egyptian Islamic political movement, in the late 1970s. Following the EIJ's assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981, actions by the Egyptian authorities constrained its capability within Egypt

During the 1990s, the domestic EIJ faction continued to carry out attacks against targets in Egypt. Meanwhile, senior EIJ member (now al-Qa'ida deputy) Dr Ayman al-Zawahiri and the international faction of EIJ forged links with al-Qa'ida and affiliated groups. In February 1 998 the EIJ joined al-Qa'ida and other

extremist organisations in issuing a declaration under the banner of the 'World Islamic Front announcing a jihad against 'Jews' and 'Crusaders' and stating the US and its allies need to be expelled from the Middle East.

The EIJ exists as two factions - the international and the domestic. The international faction, led by al-Qa'ida deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, is largely subsumed within al-Qa'ida and has the same goals as that group. Terrorist activities by the EIJ international faction are likely credited to al-Qa'ida rather than the EIJ. The domestic faction is mostly inactive due to successful, sustained actions by Egyptian authorities. There is no evidence that this has led to the creation of two separate organisations.

The EIJ aims to overthrow of the Egyptian Government and the establishment of an Islamic state. More broadly, the international branch has adopted the global jihadist goals of al-Qa'ida.

Leadership and Membership

The leader of the domestic faction of EIJ is Abbud al-Zumar. Al-Zumar is currently in prison in Egypt. EIJ's spiritual leader is Omar Ahmed Abdul Rahman, an Egyptian cleric currently in prison in the US for his role in the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing.

Estimates of the size of the EIJ membership vary. It is estimated to have a core membership of several hundred, with several thousand supporters.

EIJ engagement in terrorist activities;

Consistent with its primary goals, the EIJ initially conducted armed attacks against high level Egyptian government personnel and Egyptian facilities. As the EIJ's goals became intertwined with those of al-Qa'ida and the EIJ became frustrated with its inability to overthrow the Egyptian Government, the EIJ concentrated on attacks against Egyptian targets outside Egypt and US interests.

The Egyptian security and police services have been effective in reducing the operational capability of the EU in Egypt and attacks that can be reliably attributed to the group have declined. However, despite the reported merger of EIJ with al-Qa'ida, there is no indication the EIJ has retreated from its objectives or has ceased terrorist activities. In October 2005 the US Government identified a several Egyptian nationals as EIJ members who had provided training and material support to al-Qa'ida. A statement in March 2006 attributed to the EIJ's spiritual leader, Omar Ahmed Abdul Rahman expressed the anti- Egypt sentiment of the EIJ and called for jihad in seeking his release from US custody. Ayman al-Zawahiri remains a significant symbol and leader of global jihad and is still considered the leader of the international EIJ faction. On 27 July 2006, al-Zawahiri

issued a video statement calling on Muslims to target the interests of "all the countries' who participated in the "assault against the Muslims" in countries including Afghanistan and Iraq, a reference taken to include Australia. In June 2006, EIJ member Abu Hamza al-Muhajir (also known as Abu Ayyub al-Masri), who had a senior position in al-Qa'ida, was appointed as leader of Tanzim Qa'idat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn (commonly known as al-Qa'ida in Iraq), following the death of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

Based on this information, it is reasonable to conclude that the EIJ, including EIJ members active in the al-Qa'ida network, continue to have the capability and intent to conduct further terrorist attacks. It is assessed the EIJ is active internationally and it is likely EIJ will undertake attacks if and when the opportunity arises. The group's close association with al-Qa'ida means it could draw on significant resources for future activities.

Terrorist attacks and activities which have been claimed by or reliably attributed to EIJ include:

- Oct 1981; assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat;
- Aug 1993: attempted assassination of the Egyptian Interior Minister Hassan al-Alfi using a VBIED;
- Nov 1993: attempted assassination of the Egyptian Prime Minister Atef Sikdi by vehicle borne improvised explosive device (VBIED);
- Nov 1995: assassination of an Egyptian diplomat in Geneva;
- Nov 1995: suicide truck-bomb attack against the Egyptian embassy in Pakistan, killing 17 people; and
- 1998; an attack against the US Embassy in Albania was disrupted.

Conclusion

The Criminal Code provides that for an organisation to be listed as a terrorist organisation, the Attorney-General must be satisfied that:

- (i) the organisation is directly or indirectly engaged in, preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of a terrorist act (whether or not a terrorist act has occurred or will occur); or
- (ii) the organisation advocates the doing of a terrorist act (whether or not a terrorist act has occurred or will occur).

On the basis of the above information, ASIO assesses that members of the EIJ remain active and are directly or indirectly engaged in preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of terrorist acts. It is considered that the acts attributable to EIJ are terrorist acts as they:

- (i) are done with the intention of advancing a political cause, namely, the establishment of a radical Sunni Islamic state in Egypt;
- (ii) are intended to coerce or influence by intimidation the governments of foreign countries, including Egypt, and/or intimidate sections of the public; and
- (iii) constitute acts which cause serious physical harm to persons, including death, as well as serious damage to property.

This assessment is corroborated by information provided by reliable and credible intelligence sources.

