

Attachment C**Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)**

(Also known as: Islamic Jihad Palestine (IJP), Islamic Jihad - Palestine Faction, Islamic Holy War)

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

PIJ has been listed as a terrorist organisation by the UN, UK, US, Canada and the EU.

Background

PIJ was founded in 1979-80 in Egypt by Palestinian members of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement. However, inspired by the Iranian revolution and disillusioned with the actions of existing Palestinian nationalist movements, the group rejected the Muslim Brotherhood's non-violent position and grew to be one of the main Palestinian Islamic extremist movements.

In August 1988 Israel expelled two primary leaders of PIJ, Fathi Shaqaqi and Abd al-Aziz Odah, to Lebanon where Shaqaqi reorganised the group, developing closer ties with Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps elements and Lebanese Hizballah. From this time, PIJ increasingly used terrorist actions, including suicide bombings, to promote its cause. Co-ordinating with the HAMAS military wing (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades), PIJ conducted a number of suicide bombings in the mid 1990's in an attempt to derail the peace process. Although the Palestinian Authority (PA) pressured the PIJ to refrain from terrorist activities during the peace process in the lead up to Camp David in 2000, the PIJ continued its involvement in terrorism, and supported the outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada in September 2000.

Funding for the group comes primarily from Iran and Syria, but also from sympathisers in the Gulf, Europe and the United States. PIJ relies on training in safe-houses in Gaza and Southern Lebanon, or facilities run by other groups including Lebanese Hizballah.

Objectives

PIJ aims to establish an Islamic Palestinian state which would include the territory of the current state of Israel. It also believes that Palestinian liberation would inspire a wider Islamic revolution across the Arab and Muslim world.

PIJ has opposed all previous peace negotiations with Israel and refused to give a formal commitment to a Palestinian unilateral ceasefire in 2005. While it signed the Palestinian Authority brokered Cairo Declaration committing militant groups to a 'period of calm', PIJ has declared its continuing right to undertake acts of violence and PIJ members conducted a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv on 25 February 2005.

Attachment C***Leadership and membership***

PIJ has at times consisted of seven or eight factions; however, following his expulsion to Lebanon in 1988, Shafaqi took a dominant role in reorganising the group, expanding its political connections with Iran, Syria and Lebanese Hizballah. PIJ is now led by Damascus-based Dr Ramadan Muhammad Abdullah Shalah, who became leader after the October 1995 assassination of Shafaqi in Malta.

PIJ draws support from a small membership base of approximately 50-200 as well as recruiting suicide bombers from mosques, or heavily screened volunteers. PIJ's main membership base is in the West Bank (particularly Hebron and Jenin), Gaza and South Lebanon. PIJ also has members and supporters throughout the Middle East, US and Europe, and maintains offices in Beirut, Damascus and Tehran.

Terrorist activities

PIJ has been responsible for a series of bombings, including suicide bombings, shootings, kidnappings and stabbings of Israeli/Jewish soldiers and civilians in Israel and the Occupied Territories. The group's favoured tactic is suicide bombings using explosive belts or car bombs. PIJ have at times carried out double suicide bombing attacks at the same location within a short space of time to target bystanders and emergency workers responding to the first attack.

PIJ has coordinated attacks and joint operations with a number of other Palestinian extremist groups, including HAMAS Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, which has been listed as a terrorist organisation by the Australian Government. PIJ also has ties to Lebanese Hizballah, which through its External Security Organisation (which also has been listed as a terrorist organisation by the Australian Government) provides material support for terrorist operations by PIJ.

PIJ has not acted outside the Middle East or deliberately targeted Western interests; however, it has threatened to target the US embassy and its personnel if it moves from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Recent terrorist attacks for which PIJ has claimed responsibility, or for which responsibility has been reliably attributed to PIJ, have included:

- 25 February 2005: a suicide bombing at a nightclub in Tel Aviv which killed five people and injured 50.
- 10 January 2005: PIJ gunmen ambushed an Israeli military vehicle in the Gaza Strip, killing three people.
- 21 November 2004: Gunmen from PIJ and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFPL) ambushed a convoy of Israeli settlers in the Gaza Strip, injuring nine people.
- 8 July 2004: PIJ detonated an explosive device next to an Israeli military jeep in the Gaza Strip, injuring two people.

Attachment C***Conclusion***

ASIO assesses the PIJ is continuing to prepare, plan and foster the commission of acts involving threats to human life and serious damage to property. This assessment is corroborated by information provided by reliable and credible intelligence sources.

In the course of pursuing its objective of creating an Islamist Palestinian state and the destruction of the state of Israel, PIJ is known to have engaged in actions that:

- are aimed at advancing PIJ's political and religious causes;
- are intended cause, or have caused, serious damage to property, the death of persons or endangerment of life; and
- are intended to cause, or have caused, serious risk to the safety of the public in Israel and other persons visiting areas in which it operates.

In view of the above information, PIJ is assessed to be preparing, planning, and fostering the conduct of terrorist acts. Such acts include actions which are to be done and threats of actions which are to be made with the intention of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause and with the intention of coercing, or influencing by intimidation the Government and people of Israel. The actions or threatened actions which the PIJ are assessed to be involved in would, if successfully completed, cause serious physical harm and death to persons and serious damage to property.