

## **Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)**

1. 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. PIJ is also known as Islamic Jihad Palestine (IJP), Islamic Jihad - Palestine Faction and Islamic Holy War. ASIO assesses that the details set out below are accurate and reliable.

### ***Background***

2. PIJ was founded in 1979-80 in Egypt by Palestinian students Fathi Shaqaqi, Abd al-Aziz Odah and Bashir Musa. It emerged from the Muslim Brotherhood Movement and was inspired by the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Rejecting the non-violent stance of the Muslim Brotherhood, and disillusioned with the Palestinian national movement as represented in the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), PIJ grew to be one of the main Palestinian Islamic rejectionist movements.

3. In August 1988, the two primary leaders of PIJ, Fathi Shaqaqi, and Abd al-Aziz Odah, were expelled by Israel to Lebanon, where Shaqaqi reorganised the group, developing closer ties with Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps elements and with Lebanese Hizballah. From this time, PIJ increasingly adopted the use of terrorist actions to promote its cause, including the use of suicide bombings. PIJ rejected the Middle East Peace process and the Oslo Accords, and joined the Palestinian Rejectionist Front, opposed to compromise with Israel.

4. 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. PIJ has since been responsible for attacks inside Israel, and continues to oppose a negotiated peace settlement, rejecting the Middle East 'road map for peace' launched in Aqaba, Jordan on 5 June 2003 which envisages the establishment of a secular Palestinian state by the end of 2005.

### ***Objectives***

5. The objective of PIJ is the establishment of an Islamist Palestinian state and the destruction of the state of Israel. PIJ believes Palestinian liberation and the seizure of Jerusalem for the Islamic world would serve as a catalyst for a wider Islamic revolution across the Arab and Muslim world. PIJ sees its role as a revolutionary vanguard, carrying out terrorist attacks to weaken Israel, prior to its destruction by an Islamic army.

### *Leadership and membership*

6. PIJ has at times consisted of seven or eight factions, however, following the expulsion of Shaqaqi and Odah to Lebanon in 1988, Shaqaqi 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 Shaqaqi in Malta.

7. 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, Gaza and South Lebanon. Its main strongholds in the West Bank are the cities of Hebron and Jenin. PIJ also has members and supporters throughout the Middle East, US and Europe, and maintains offices in Beirut, Damascus (where a number of its leadership are located), Tehran and possibly Khartoum. Funding for the group is believed to be primarily from Iran and Syria, but also from sympathisers in the Gulf, Europe and the United States.

8. PIJ is assessed as too small to run large guerrilla training camps, relying instead on training in safe-houses in Gaza and Southern Lebanon, or facilities run by other groups including Lebanese Hizballah.

9. Up until the formation of the PA in 1994, PIJ maintained only limited links with other terrorist organisations besides Egyptian Islamic Jihad. Since the establishment of the Rejectionist front to the peace process, HAMAS' acceptance of the concept of martyrdom operations, and the 1995 death of Shaqaqi, PIJ and HAMAS have developed significantly closer ties, coordinating attacks and joint operations, including the 1995 Beit Lid bombing in Israel. The PIJ is also allied to Lebanese Hizballah, which provides through its External Security Organisation (ESO) training and material support, for PIJ to conduct terrorist attacks.

### *Terrorist activities*

10. PIJ has been involved in terrorist attacks including bombings, suicide bombings (referred to as martyrdom operations), shooting attacks, kidnappings and stabbings. The favoured method of attack by the group is suicide bombings, through either 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 from the first attack.

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

12. Terrorist attacks for which responsibility has been claimed by PIJ have included:

- the 22 January 1995 double suicide bombing of a military bus stop at Beit Lid near Netanya which killed 19 and injured 69. PIJ claimed responsibility for the attack. The mission was a joint PIJ/HAMAS operation;

- the 9 April 1995 suicide bombings in Netzarim and Kfar-Darom. In the first attack a bombing of an Israeli bus killed eight people, and injured over 30. In the second attack, a car bombing of a convoy of cars injured 12 people;
- the 4 March 1996 suicide bombing of a Tel Aviv shopping mall which killed 20 persons and injured 75 others;
- the 2 November 2000 car bombing of a Jerusalem outdoor market which killed two people and injured 10;
- the 20 March 2002 suicide bombing of a bus travelling from Tel Aviv to Nazareth which killed seven persons and injured about 30;
- the 5 June 2002 car bombing of a bus near Afula which killed 17 persons and injured 38;
- the 17 July 2002 double suicide bombing in Tel Aviv which killed five persons and injured about 40;
- the 19 May 2003 suicide bombing at a shopping mall in Afula which killed three persons and injured 83;
- the 19 August 2003 suicide bombing of a bus in Jerusalem which killed 21 persons and injured over 100. HAMAS and PIJ claimed responsibility for this attack, although a senior HAMAS official later stated HAMAS was not involved;
- the 4 October 2003 suicide bombing of the Maxim restaurant in Haifa which killed 21 persons;
- the 11 January 2004 suicide bombing at an Israeli checkpoint near Janput. Aside from the suicide bomber, there were no other casualties; and
- the 27 February 2004 suicide bombing at Kfar Darom. Aside from the suicide bomber, there were no other casualties.

## **Conclusion**

13. 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 strongly corroborated by information provided by reliable and credible intelligence sources.

14. 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, since the early 1980's and as recently as February 2004, in actions that:

- are aimed at advancing PIJ's political and religious causes;
- are intended to, or do, cause 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.

15. 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.