

Palestinian Islamic Jihad

(Also known as: PIJ; al-Quds Brigades; Harakat al-Jihad al-Islami fi Filistin; Islamic Jihad; Islamic Jihad Palestine; Islamic Jihad – Palestine Faction and Islamic Holy War)

The following information is based on publicly available details about Palestinian Islamic Jihad. To the Australian Government's knowledge, these details are accurate and reliable and have been corroborated by classified information.

Basis for listing a terrorist organisation

Division 102 of the *Criminal Code* provides that for an organisation to be listed as a terrorist organisation, the Attorney-General must be satisfied on reasonable grounds that the organisation:

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

Details of the organisation

PIJ is a Sunni Islamist Palestinian militant organisation committed to the destruction of the state of Israel. The group was founded in 1981 in Gaza by Dr Fathi abd al-Aziz Shaqaqi and Shayk Abd al-Aziz Awda, both of whom were originally members of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Believing the Muslim Brotherhood to be too moderate, the two created PIJ as a radical militant alternative focused on the liberation of Palestine.

PIJ consists of a leadership council and a military wing, called the al-Quds Brigades. Responsibility for PIJ attacks is claimed by the al-Quds Brigades. Unlike groups such as Hamas and Hizballah, which maintain extensive political and social apparatuses alongside their terrorist wings, PIJ focuses exclusively on militant activity. It is therefore unnecessary to distinguish the al-Quds Brigades from the PIJ as a whole.

Despite being a Sunni group, PIJ was inspired by and remains ideologically supportive of Iran's Islamic Revolution and maintains close ties with the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps and Hizballah.

PIJ's main source of funding is Iran. PIJ also receives donations from Syria and the Palestinian community.

Objectives

PIJ's goal is the establishment of a sovereign Islamic state within the geographic borders of the pre-1948 British mandated Palestine. It promotes the military destruction of Israel as the only viable means to attain this goal. Accordingly, PIJ refuses to participate in the political process and rejects the possibility of a negotiated settlement to the Israel/Palestine problem.

Leadership and Membership

The current leader of PIJ is Dr Ramadan Abdullah Shallah, who took over from Fathi abd al-Aziz Shaqaqi in 1995 after Shaqaqi's death. Shallah is based in Damascus, from where he

and his leadership council coordinate fundraising and procurement for the al-Quds Brigades in Gaza, Lebanon and the West Bank.

PIJ recruits the majority of its militants from Palestinian refugee communities in Gaza and the West Bank. It is a secretive organisation and the exact size of its membership is not known, although the total size of PIJ, including its political leadership in Damascus and militant activists in the Palestinian Territories, is likely to be less than 1000 members.

Terrorist activity of the organisation

Directly or indirectly engaged in the doing of terrorist acts / Directly or indirectly preparing and/or planning terrorist acts

PIJ claimed responsibility for more than 30 suicide bombings between 1987 and 2006. Since that time, the majority of its attacks have consisted of indiscriminate rocket and mortar fire into southern Israel from Gaza. Its attacks are generally indiscriminate in nature, seeking to maximize casualties.

Some recent examples include:

- 29 October 2011: PIJ launched a number of rockets into several areas of Israel's Southern District, killing one Israeli civilian and wounding two.
- 20 August 2011: PIJ militants launched a series of rockets into Israel's southern district, killing one Israeli civilian and injuring seven.
- 8 January 2011: suspected PIJ militants fired two mortar rounds into an area of Israel's Southern District, wounding two Thai nationals.

PIJ has confined its attacks to the Levant and has not deliberately targeted Western interests.

Conclusion

On the basis of the above information, ASIO assesses PIJ continues to directly and/or indirectly engage in, preparing, planning, assisting, advocating or fostering the doing of terrorist acts, involving threats to life and serious property damage. This assessment is corroborated by information provided by reliable and credible intelligence sources.

In the course of pursuing its objectives PIJ is known to have committed or threatened action:

- that causes, or could cause, serious damage to property, the death of persons or endanger a person's life; and
- with the intention of advancing PIJ's political, religious or ideological causes; and
- with the intention of intimidating the public and sections of the public.

Other Relevant Information

Links to Australia

There are no known links to Australia.

Other designations

PIJ is proscribed as a terrorist organisation by the governments of Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. PIJ is also listed by the European Union for the purposes of its anti-terrorism financing measures.

PIJ is also included in the DFAT Consolidated List that refers to United Nations Council Resolution 1373 in relation to countering financing of terrorism.