

Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ)



OVERVIEW

AS OF JULY 2026

The Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ) is a Sunni Islamist militant group that is committed to destroying Israel and establishing an Islamist Palestinian state. PIJ was founded in 1979 as an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and is the second-largest militant group in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank after HAMAS. PIJ has drawn inspiration from the Iranian Revolution and receives support from Iran and Lebanese Hizballah.

PIJ's military wing, al-Quds Brigades, has been responsible for many attacks on Israeli targets since the 1990s. PIJ sometimes operates in coordination with HAMAS, including in the HAMAS-led surprise attack against Israel that killed nearly 1,200 people on 7 October 2023. In the ensuing conflict between Israel and HAMAS, Israeli operations partially degraded PIJ. Historically, PIJ has occasionally disagreed with HAMAS's strategy for confronting Israel and tends to be more willing to act militarily, which has led to tensions.

Operating Area

Israel, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank; maintains a presence in Lebanon and Syria and offices in Iran

Members

Approximately 4,000 fighters

Tactics And Targets

PIJ primarily conducts small-arms, mortar, and rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip against Israeli targets in Israel and the West Bank. The group also has MANPADS, armed unmanned aircraft systems, antitank guided missiles, and IEDs. PIJ conducted suicide bombings from the late 1990s to the mid-2000s.

Terrorist Group Designation

The US State Department designated PIJ as a foreign terrorist organization in 1997 and designated PIJ Secretary General Ziyad al-Nakhalah as a specially designated global terrorist in 2014.

KEY LEADERS



Ziyad al-Nakhalah

Secretary General since 2018; leads leadership council



Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ) *(continued)*

KEY LEADERS *(continued)*



Muhammad al-Hindi

Deputy Secretary General of since 2018; member of the Political Bureau



Akram al-'Ajuri

Al-Quds Brigades commander

NOTABLE ATTACKS

7 October 2023

Israel

PIJ militants support hundreds of HAMAS fighters in launching an attack that kills nearly 1,200 people and in which at least 240 people are kidnapped. Along with Israelis, the victims include citizens of the United States and more than 30 other countries—almost all with dual Israeli citizenship.

5-7 August 2022

Israel

PIJ fires approximately 1,100 rockets at Israel in response to the death of one of the group's leaders, killing 15 Palestinians with errant rockets and causing a few injuries in Israel.

10-21 May 2021

Israel

Along with HAMAS, PIJ launches more than 4,000 rockets toward Israel, killing 11 civilians and one soldier.

23-24 February 2020

Israel

PIJ fires nearly 100 rockets toward Israel in response to the death of three PIJ fighters, causing at least a dozen injuries.

12-14 November 2018

Israel

Along with HAMAS, PIJ fires more than 400 rockets toward Israel, killing one person and wounding dozens more.

