What is Palestinian Islamic Jihad?

MAY 14, 2019

Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) is an Iranian-inspired terrorist group committed to the violent destruction of Israel and the creation of an Islamic Palestinian state in its place. On May 3, a PIJ sniper in Gaza shot and wounded two Israeli officers during a Hamas-organized border riot. The incident set off a round of violence that saw nearly 700 rockets fired at Israel, killing four Israelis. The United States must continue to stand by Israel and work to cut the flow of resources to PIJ.

PIJ is a terrorist group committed to the destruction of Israel.

- PIJ was founded in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution, with the goal of destroying Israel and replacing it with an Islamic State.
- PIJ refuses to negotiate with Israel and views violence as the only means to achieve its goal.
- PIJ has orchestrated rocket attacks, suicide bombings, car bombings and shootings that have killed and wounded hundreds of Israelis. PIJ was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the United States in 1997.
- PIJ is the second-largest terrorist group in Gaza (after Hamas). It controls networks of weapons-production facilities and terror tunnels reaching into Israel.

PIJ is funded by Iran with a rocket arsenal larger than Hamas.

- Iran is PIJ’s principal funder, providing the group with hundreds of millions of dollars over the last decade, as well as advanced rockets and military training. PIJ is the primary Iranian proxy in the Palestinian arena and regularly acts directly on Iran’s behalf.
- PIJ reportedly possesses around 8,000 rockets—an arsenal larger than that of Hamas—and commands around 6,000 fighters and 9,000 activists.
- Beyond military activities, Iran funds a PIJ network of charitable organizations—including the Al-Ansar Fund and the Gazan branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation—that support the families of terrorists killed fighting in Gaza and suicide bombers in the West Bank.
- Following the appointment of its current Secretary-General Ziad Nakhalah in 2018, PIJ deepened its ties with Iran. Nakhalah met with Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei as recently as December 2018. At that meeting, the supreme leader encouraged the group to continue fighting against Israel.