

## Palestinian Islamic Jihad

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Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) is a radical Islamic extremist organization inspired by the Iranian revolution of 1979. It was established by Palestinian students in Egypt who were admirers of the Iranian Revolution and the Muslim Brotherhood. Like  [Hamas](#), its expressed goal is the violent destruction of the State of Israel, which Islamic Jihad believes will then bring about the unification of the Arab and Islamic world, “purified of modern Western elements.”

The PIJ carried out its first terror attacks against Israeli civilians and soldiers in mid-1986, half a year prior to the outbreak of the first Intifada. It regards itself as part of the larger Islamic Jihad movement, which originated in Lebanon with the backing of Iran.

Unlike the larger and better-funded Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad does not manage social welfare programs; it concentrates instead on spectacular attacks against Israeli civilians and military forces, sometimes using women and children as suicide bombers. Its most deadly attacks include the October 2003 suicide bombing at the Maxim restaurant in Haifa, killing 22 and wounding 60; the June 2002 suicide bombing at Meggido junction, killing 17 and wounding 50; and the March 1996 suicide bombing of the Dizengoff shopping mall in Tel Aviv, killing 13 and injuring 75. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the July 12, 2005 suicide attack on a Netanya shopping mall, killing 5 and wounding 90 and at the Netanya mall on December 5, 2005, killing 5 and wounding 50. The group claimed responsibility (along with the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade) for the April 17, 2006 bombing of the old central bus station in Tel Aviv, killing 11 and wounding 70 and the January 29, 2007 attack on a bakery in Eilat, which killed three.

Since the Israeli [disengagement](#) from Gaza in 2005, PIJ has been one of the perpetrators of rocket attacks against civilian targets in southern Israel.