

What is Palestinian Islamic Jihad?

The militant group that is an ally of Hamas and took part in the Oct 7 cross-border attack, denies Israel's accusations that it is behind a strike on a hospital in Gaza that killed hundreds of people



Ziyad al-Nakhalah
Leader of
**Palestinian
Islamic Jihad
(PIJ)**

ORIGINS

PIJ founded by Palestinian students **Fathi Shaqaqi** and **Abd al-Aziz Awda** in Egypt in late 1970s, as offshoot of **Muslim Brotherhood**

IDEOLOGY

PIJ and Hamas share goal of creation of Palestinian state, but PIJ disagrees with statements by Hamas leaders softening commitment to destruction of Israel

Unlike Hamas, PIJ refuses to contest Palestinian elections and appears to have no ambition to form government in Gaza or West Bank

OPERATING BASE

PIJ has significant presence in West Bank town of Jenin, as well as leadership in Lebanon and Syria, where it maintains close ties with Iranian officials.

Both Hamas and PIJ get funds and weapons from Tehran

TACTICS AND TARGETS

PIJ's military wing, **al-Quds Brigades**, has attacked many Israeli targets since 1990s

PIJ does not have as many long-range rockets as Hamas, but has significant arsenal of small arms, mortars, rockets and anti tank missiles

Strength is difficult to assess, with estimates ranging from 1,000 to several thousand