



**Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center
at the Israel Intelligence Heritage
& Commemoration Center (IICC)**

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The Israeli security forces have recently exposed a Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) squad in the Ramallah region which included two Israeli Arabs. The squad was well prepared for an attack on an IDF roadblock north of Ramallah; it also drew up initial plans for assassinations of senior Israeli officials.¹

Overview

1. In August 2008, working with the IDF and the Israeli police, the Israel Security Agency (ISA) exposed a PIJ squad in the Ramallah region. Two of its operatives were young Israeli Arabs from Shfaram, a city in northern Israel. They raised funds to purchase explosives and attempted to contact the PIJ headquarters in Syria.
2. The operatives' interrogation by the ISA showed that the Ramallah squad was planning military operations, including attacking an IDF roadblock in Atara (north of Ramallah) and assassinating key Israeli figures (pilots, scientists, lecturers, etc.). The squad held in its possession weapons and ammunition and was well into preparations for the attack on the IDF roadblock, while the assassination plans were still in their initial stages.

¹ Source: Israel Security Agency.

The Israeli Arabs' position in the terrorist squad

3. Five squad members were detained in August 2008, two of them Israeli Arabs and three of them Palestinians from the Ramallah region:
 - a. **Anis Safouri**, 20, Israeli Arab from Shfaram, media student at Birzeit University near Ramallah.
 - b. **Hussam Khalil**, 19, Israeli Arab from Shfaram, electrical engineering student at a university in Jordan.
 - c. **Muhammad Badr**, 19, from Beit Laqiya (near Ramallah), PIJ operative at Birzeit University.
 - d. **Ibrahim Tamaliya**, 25, from Ramallah, prominent PIJ operative.
 - e. **Ibrahim Hamad**, 26, from the Qalandiya refugee camp, PIJ operative.

4. Investigation of the two Israeli Arab operatives showed that Anis Safouri, a member of the People of the Homeland (Abnaa al-Balad) movement,² moved to Ramallah in 2006 during his studies at Birzeit University. There he formed relationships with PFLP operatives and became professionally and socially associated with reporters working for Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV channel. Later, Anis Safouri became involved with **Al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyya**, the PIJ student wing, and was recruited to military activity in the organization. During his activity in the squad, Anis Safouri showed strong leadership skills and initiated its military activities.



Birzeit University

(<http://www.arabicdream.com/forums/index.php?act=Print&client=printer&f=185&t=40897>)

5. Anis Safouri established a military squad with PIJ operatives in the Ramallah region, attempting to recruit more Israeli Arabs to the squad. He sought the assistance of

² According to an article by Jacky Houry and Yuval Azulai, Haaretz, August 29, 2008. The article also says that Jamil Safouri, Anis's father, was one of the suspects in lynching Eden Natan-Zada, an Israeli Jew who perpetrated a terrorist attack in Shfaram three years ago.

Israeli Arab Balad party activist Hussam Khalil in **transferring funds from Jordan** to sponsor the squad's activity. In his interrogation, Hussam admitted that he was aware of Safouri's activities and realized that the money was meant for military purposes.

6. Attorney Salim Waqim, who represents Anis Safouri, claimed that his client was innocent. Attorney Riyadh Anis, who represents Hussam Khalil, told a Haaretz reporter that his client had, indeed, been asked to help with money transfers but that he turned down the request as soon as he found out what the money was for and with whom he was supposed to collaborate. However, their detention was extended by five days and soon charges will be filed against them at the Haifa District Court for serious offenses against state security (Haaretz daily, August 29, 31, 2008).

Al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyya at Birzeit University as a breeding ground for terrorist recruits

7. The student movements of Hamas, the PIJ, and other terrorist organizations serve as breeding grounds for new terrorist operatives, recruited during their studies in universities in the Palestinian Authority-administered territories. Many terrorist operatives who planned or perpetrated terrorist attacks in Israel, including suicide bombing attacks, were recruited to their terrorist organizations during their studies.
8. **Birzeit University**, where Anis Safouri studied, is a well-known human resource pool for the PIJ as well as for other terrorist organizations. Documents seized by the IDF indicate that the Palestinian preventive security, aware of the fact that the terrorist organizations operated also against the Palestinian Authority, closely followed the activity of Al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyya at Birzeit University even before the outbreak of the Palestinian terrorist campaign (the intifada).



Title of a report by the preventive security on PIJ activity at Birzeit University, written on the eve of the outbreak of the intifada (September 18, 2000)