



## Incitement to Terrorism:

Newly-elected PIJ head Ziyad al-Nakhalah gave a speech broadcast at a rally in al-Bireh, calling on the residents of the West Bank to lead the armed resistance against Israel.

November 18, 2018

## Overview

On November 10, 2018, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) held a rally to mark the anniversary of the founding of the organization and the death of its founder, Fathi Shqaqi. The rally was held in a large hall in al-Bireh **where a recorded speech by Ziyad al-Nakhalah,<sup>1</sup> the newly elected PIJ leader, was played.** Al-Nakhalah stressed the importance of the armed struggle against Israel and called on the residents of the West Bank "to lead the armed resistance against Israel as they did in the [second] intifada in 2000" [during which the PIJ was one of the most prominent organizations in carrying out suicide bombing attacks].<sup>2</sup>

► Al-Bireh is next to Ramallah (and about 15 kilometers, or about nine miles, from Jerusalem). **It is an important administrative center for the Palestinian Authority (PA) in Judea and Samaria,** and some of the PA's offices are located there. **It can be assumed that al-Nakhalah's speech could not have been given in al-Bireh without the authorization, or at least the prior knowledge, of the PA's security services.** However, the PIJ claims that both the PA and Israel exerted pressure on the PIJ's Paltoday TV station not to broadcast the rally live. The end result was that Paltoday uploaded a short video of the rally to its Facebook page after it had ended. According to al-Nakhalah's speech, **"the Palestinian Islamic Jihad renews its commitment to its leaders and shaheeds from the heart of the West Bank"** (Paltoday TV Facebook page and Twitter account, November 10, 2018).

► Ziyad al-Nakhalah has been PIJ secretary general since September 28, 2018. Al-Nakhalah, who was one of the founders of the Jerusalem Brigades, the organization's military wing, replaced Ramadan Abdallah Shalah, who has been in a coma since April 2018. **The PIJ is**

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<sup>1</sup> Ziyad al-Nakhalah, who lives in Lebanon, was recently elected to lead the organization. For further information, see the October 28, 2018 bulletin, "Profile of Ziyad al-Nakhalah, the New Palestinian Islamic Jihad Leader."

<sup>2</sup> Some of the suicide bombing attacks carried out by the PIJ were exploding a car bomb in the central bus station in the central Israeli city of Hadera on May 25, 2001 (two Israelis killed and 45 wounded); blowing up a bus on the Wadi Ara road in central Israel near Hadera on March 20, 2002 (five Israelis killed and 28 wounded); blowing up a bus at the Yagur Junction in northern Israel on May 20, 2002 (eight Israelis killed and 15 wounded).

**Iran's preferred proxy in the internal Palestinian arena.** Al-Nakhalah, who has **close relations with Qassem Soleimani, commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps' Qods Force**, plays a central role in fostering PIJ-Iran collaboration. **It is likely that after having been elected to head the organization, he will try to increase the PIJ's activities in Judea and Samaria, which so far have been suppressed by the Israeli security forces and the PA's security apparatuses.** In all probability he will try to motivate the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria to renew PIJ terrorist attacks in order create escalation with Israel, to parallel the escalation in the Gaza Strip.



**PIJ flags are hung on the stage in al-Bireh. On the back wall are pictures of PIJ founder Fathi Shqaqi, former secretary general Ramadan Abdallah Shalah, and current secretary general Ziyad al-Nakhalah. Next to them are pictures of shaheeds, two of whom have been identified by the ITIC: Muhannad al-Halabi (who carried out a stabbing attack killing two Israelis in the Old City of Jerusalem on October 3, 2015, one of the attacks triggering a wave of popular terrorism); and Muhammad 'Asi, who planned an attack on a bus in Tel Aviv during Operation Pillar of Defense in 2012 (wounding 26 Israelis, one of them critically).<sup>3</sup>**

## The al-Bireh Rally and al-Nakhalah's speech

► On November 10, 2018, the PIJ held a rally in the Salim Effendi Hall in al-Bireh to mark the anniversary of the organization's founding and the death of its founder, Fathi Shqaqi. The hall was decorated with pictures of the past and present leaders. Dozens of people were in attendance, among them representatives of the terrorist organizations operating in Judea and Samaria. They included Ahmed al-'Awri, senior **PIJ** figure; Sheikh Hassan Yusuf, the senior **Hamas** figure in Judea and Samaria; Wasel Abu Yusuf from the (**Palestinian**

<sup>3</sup> On November 21, 2012, the eighth day of Operation Pillar of Defense in the Gaza Strip, an IED blew up in a bus in Tel Aviv, wounding 26 Israelis, one of them critically. Muhammad Mufarjah, who carried out the attack, was sentenced to 25 years in prison. Muhammad 'Asi, who planned the attack, was killed in an exchange of fire with Israeli security forces during an attempt to detain him.

**Liberation Front**) and Qais Abu Laila, (**Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine**), both members of the **PLO's Executive Committee**; and Omar Shahadeh, senior figure from **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine** (Paltoday, November 10, 2018).

► A recorded speech given by Ziyad al-Nakhalah was played. Some of the topics he related to were the following (Paltoday, November 10, 2018):

► **The "return marches" in the Gaza Strip:** al-Nakhalah stressed the importance of **continuing the "return marches" until they had achieved their objectives**. He said the "return march" was one of the means used by the "resistance" [i.e., the terrorist organizations].

► **"Armed resistance" [i.e., terrorist attacks]:** al-Nakhalah stressed that the **"return marches" were not a replacement for "armed resistance."** He said the "resistance" in the Gaza Strip was escalating and enforcing "new equations" [on Israel], despite regional and international efforts to contain it, domesticate it and empty it of its objectives.

► **Call for an armed confrontation with Israel:** according to al-Nakhalah, the settlements, which are spreading like cancer in the West Bank, will only be stopped by "resistance." **Al-Nakhalah called on the residents of the West Bank to "lead the confrontation with Israel, as they had in the [second] intifada in 2000."**

► **Another speaker at the rally was Hassan Yusuf**, the senior Hamas figure in Judea and Samaria, who spoke as representing Hamas. He said Hamas had no intention of negotiating for any of the rights of the Palestinians "in return for a few coins." He added that the Palestinians would not waive the "right of return" and would fight until their last bullet to realize it (Paltoday, November 10, 2018).



**Right: Hassan Yusuf, senior Hamas figure in Judea and Samaria, gives a speech at the PIJ rally in al-Bireh. Left: The rally participants (Facebook page of the Muhjat al-Quds Association in Gaza Strip, November 10, 2018).**

## Glorifying shaheeds, and the participation of the family of the Palestinian terrorist who carried out a fatal stabbing attack in Jerusalem

► On the rear wall behind the podium was a large banner with pictures of shaheeds. Among those identified were **Muhammad 'Asi, a PIJ operative who was one of the planners of an attack on a bus in Tel Aviv during Operation Pillar of Defense**, in which 26 Israelis were wounded (November 21, 2012); and **Muhannad at-Halabi, who carried out a stabbing attack in the Old City of East Jerusalem**, killing two Israelis and wounding two others (October 3, 2015). **The parents of Muhannad al-Halabi** attended the rally and **received a plaque from Ihsan Salem, the Palestinian factions' coordinator in Judea and Samaria** (Paltoday, November 10, 2018).



**Right: The father and mother (center) of Muhannad al-Halabi, who carried out a stabbing attack in the Old City, killing two Israelis (Paltoday, November 10, 2018). Left: The father of Muhannad al-Halabi (fourth from left) receives a plaque. With him on stage are senior figures from the Palestinian terrorist organizations (Facebook page of the PIJ-affiliated Muhjat al-Quds Association in the Gaza Strip, November 10, 2018).**



**PIJ banner hung over the mourning tent erected for terrorist Muhannad al-Halabi (aljazeera.net, October 5, 2015).**

## The PIJ's Paltoday TV covers the rally

► The Twitter account of the Paltoday channel posted that **because of pressure allegedly exerted by the PA and Israel not to cover the rally live, they were using their Facebook page instead.** After the rally, at 22:09 at night, **a short video was uploaded to Paltoday's Facebook page, documenting the event.** According to the notice accompanying the video, the PIJ was proud of having held the event from the West Bank. The Arabic reads, "**The rally of the [PIJ's] founding and the shaheeds...the Palestinian Islamic Jihad renews its commitment to its leaders and shaheeds from the heart of the West Bank**" (Facebook page and Twitter account of Paltoday TV, November 10, 2018).



The notice posted to the Paltoday TV Facebook page, with a short video of the rally (November 10, 2018).