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Country Reports on Terrorism 2016 - Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)

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aka PFLP; Halhul Gang; Halhul Squad; Palestinian Popular Resistance Forces; PPRF; Red Eagle Gang; Red Eagle Group; Red Eagles; Martyr Abu-Ali Mustafa Battalion

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) is a Marxist-Leninist group that was formed in 1967 by George Habash after splitting from the Arab Nationalist Movement. The group earned a reputation for large-scale international attacks in the 1960s and 1970s, including airline hijackings that killed at least 20 U.S. citizens.

Activities: The PFLP increased its operational activity during the Second Intifada. During that time, the group assassinated Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze'evi in 2001, carried out at least two suicide operations, and launched multiple joint operations with other Palestinian terrorist groups. In 2008 and 2009, the PFLP claimed responsibility for numerous attacks on Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in Gaza.

Between 2008 and 2011, the PLFP claimed responsibility for multiple mortar and rocket attacks fired from Gaza into Israel. In 2011, the group carried out an attack on a group of Israeli citizens. In 2012, the Israeli Security Agency arrested several members of the PFLP for plotting to carry out attacks on IDF checkpoints and planning to conduct kidnappings.

On November 18, 2014, two Palestinians reportedly affiliated with the PFLP entered a Jerusalem synagogue and attacked Israelis with guns, knives, and axes, killing five people – including three U.S. citizens – and injuring 12. In May 2014, Jerusalem police arrested three suspects, one of whom was affiliated with the PFLP, on suspicion of plotting an attack in East Jerusalem; and in December 2014, the PFLP claimed responsibility for several rocket attacks along the Lebanese-Israeli border.

In August 2016, the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades – the military wing of PFLP – fired a rocket at the Israeli town of Sderot. No casualties or damages were reported.

Strength: Unknown

Location/Area of Operation: Gaza, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, and the West Bank.

Funding and External Aid: Unknown

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