



The First Massacre

“Al Saket” in Al Awali

In the first military confrontation between the commander of the Ottoman garrison, Fakhri Pasha and the Arabs around Al-Medina Al-Munawwarah in some valleys and nearby villages. Fakhri Pasha attacked until he reached Basateen Al-Awali, and the first real confrontation was when his garrison fired its artillery on Al Basateen and many were killed in this confrontation, even those who capitulated to Fakhri's forces, the artillery fired at them, and he started directing his artillery at the surrounding villages, where some Arabs have taken refuge in. He intentionally terrorized its people even the elderly, women and children, who were killed under Turkish artillery shelling after their homes were burned. The bodies of the dead, who were trying to flee from Fakhri's artillery barrage, were on fire.

Fakhri committed a human crime against the safe in Al-Awali, considering it as his first crime against the people of Al-Medina Al-Munawwarah, as he did not take into account the Islamic or humanitarian League against the elderly disabled women who could not move, nor the young and their grieving as a result of this terrorism, which was under the allegation of eliminating the Arab revolutionaries.

And this is a crime that history cannot forget, nor forgive, or find justification for it whatsoever. Fakhri Pasha, to confirm his crime, it is narrated by one of the Iraqi participants in this military confrontation with Al-Ashraf, that Fakhri deceived a large group of those who came to him as capitulates from the villagers of Al Awali, and as soon as they returned to their villages, he ordered his forces to storm and kill everybody they encounter, so the death toll reached hundreds, most of them were safe women and children rather than capitulated men who asked him for safety.



He wanted the Arabs to combat among themselves to cover his crimes.



One of the Arab officers involved in the Al-Awali confrontation describes the shock that struck the Arabs who fight the Turks, that it is not among the rules of the Arabs to violate the sanctity of women or kill them, kill children and destroy property.

Al-Awali coincided with another confrontation between Fakhri's forces and the Arab revolutionaries in the wells of Ali, in which they were repeatedly defeated, where many Arab attackers were killed, and the confrontations multiplied after that, until Fakhri thought of recruiting the youth of Al Medina Al-Munawwarah against their Arab brothers and exploited them for the benefit of his circumstances. Seeking to make the Arabs fight among themselves to cover his crimes in Al-Awali, however, something like this did not happen as he aspired to.

By the continuation of the war situation in the Hijaz, there was a group of inconclusive confrontations, but the most prominent of these confrontations was near Khaybar, in which the Turks were defeated and their leader was captured in January (1917 AD), and this incidence represented a shift in the confrontation between the Ottomans and Al Ashraf. As Fakhri Pasha became facing the Arab armies in every direction; this caused his anxiety and dissipated the first phase of control with a further siege on him in Al Medina Al-Munawwarah.

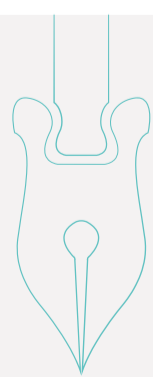
The circle began to narrow over the Ottoman garrison, and losses began to be incurred to it in several locations, until the garrison found itself surrounded in the borders near Al Medina Al-Munawwarah. This encouraged the Arabs to ask Fakhri Pasha to announce his capitulation, especially after cutting off all his communications with his headquarters in Syria, and his loss of control on the road from Medina to Syria. However, Fakhri did not respond and refused to capitulate despite his full knowledge that he would not succeed in resisting the Arab forces surrounding him from every direction, no matter how he tried to revive his strength and the strength of his garrison. The state of deterioration for him and his forces continued and retreated, until he learned of the Ottoman Empire contracting an armistice (Mudros) in October (1918 AD), according to which the Ottoman Empire pledged to withdraw from the areas agreed upon in the settlements of the war, including the Hijaz, as the Grand Vizier sent a letter to Fakhri Pasha in which he said: “After we made tremendous efforts and great sacrifices for more than four years for the sake of religion and honor, the countries in which we were fighting and on their side were defeated and severely weakened, which forced our Ottoman Empire to contract an armistice with the allied countries. And one of the articles of this armistice is provided that our forces in Hijaz, Asir and Yemen shall capitulate to the closest Allied commander. You are my friends, the soldiers who have fulfilled the duty of honor and dignity years ago, so your acceptance of this painful and cruel ruling will stem from a feeling of patriotism. As that will save the motherland from certain annihilation, and there is no doubt that your work is greatly appreciated.”



Has killed mothers before killing their children.



By this message, the Ottoman government announced its abandonment of Al-Medina Al-Munawwarah and its garrison there, holding a clear and explicit request from the Grand Vizier to Fakhri Pasha to capitulate. As Fakhri has not responded to the orders and insisted on resisting and not to capitulate. Even, he tried to conceal the capitulation order from his garrison, whose officers later knew the order, and Fakhri's situation became critical in front of the commanders accompanying him.



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