



# The Holy Grave bombing disaster

Fakhri Pasha lost control of his soldiers as a result of the worsening impact of the siege, famine and the spread of diseases, as well as the soldiers' conviction that their leader was leading them to death, after the communication with the command center was interrupted; especially since the losses incurred by the Ottoman army in the Levant strongly sent out the spirit of defeat among them. Therefore, some Arab officers in his garrison had to surrender themselves with their units to the Arab forces, accordingly, the army retreated and confined to the Medina borders. Then, the soldiers began fleeing as described by one of the Turks accompanying the campaign, Kashif Kilman; the Arab soldiers fleeing had begun and then the Turks did, considering their flight as shameful.

Turkish Gandemir mentioned that within only three months; about 164 soldiers fled from Fakhri Pasha's garrison in Medina. Hence, it weakened the spirits of the members of the Ottoman garrison, especially those who believed that Fakhri's policy was wrong, and he disobeyed the orders of his government to surrender Medina; accordingly, it increased the incidences of intermittent fleeing.

During April (1918 AD), Fakhri Pasha held a court-martial to a group of soldiers and officers of his garrison, drove them to the execution square, and they were shot dead on charge of provoking and inciting his garrison to surrender and flee.

Months after the execution and the increase of tension, the Ottoman government ordered Fakhri to surrender as a result of the truce that had been signed with the Allies forces in October (1918 AD). However, Fakhri's character did not accept the surrender and began to stall his leadership in Istanbul, despite his hopeless situation, including threatening the forces of his garrison with an imminent massacre if he did not surrender, so fleeing was growing among the officers and their recruits.

Moreover, releasing leaflets onto the garrison aggravated their psychological defeat that was caused by the besieged Arab forces. They also threatened them that their insistence on staying in Medina would bring them calamities and misfortunes; in addition, the news about the victories of the Allies contributed in worsening the psychological state.

Then, it was straitened to Fakhri, as he became struggling with the Arab forces besieging him, the psychological defeat among the members of his garrison, and the pressures of his government to surrender, especially after sending an officer of the Ottoman diplomatic corps to convince him of the government orders. Due to this situation, the garrison was divided into those who supported the government's orders, and a few who stood with Fakhri out of their fear from him, until the rebellion started in the garrison and the division became crystal clear, at that time, Fakhri had to fortify himself in the Prophet's Mosque while he was in a state of severe stress. To prove this point, Gandemir mentioned that Fakhri sat on cannons of ammunition and explosives in the courtyard of the Mosque and threatened to ignite them if he had been attacked by members of his garrison. Thus, he moved his headquarter to the Prophet's Mosque with some of the general staff officers who supported him, and deliberately loaded it with shipments of weapons, grenades and explosive dynamite with large quantities of ammunition. In addition, he packed the stores in the Haram with canned food and dried bread because he resolved to resist, and gave orders to his officers who supported him to be armed, then closed the doors of the Haram after concealing explosive mines on the roads. He also threatened that he surrounded the Prophet's chamber with explosives and would not hesitate to detonate it if had been attacked.



## The Turks accompanying Fakhri confessed the details of the bombing plan.



Indeed, Fakhri daring threat of bombing the Prophet's Chamber was proven in what Gandemir, who is affiliated with the Ottoman garrison and sympathetic to Fakhri Pasha, said, in addition, the Turkish confirmations that bear witness to the situations, and contemporary historians: Hasan Al-Serafi described in his manuscript notes that he reached out for a hand grenade and threatened the officers surrounding him if they approached him, he would burn the whole city.

Fakhri committed the most shameless crimes just by threatening blowing up the Prophet's Mosque because he did not care for the sanctity of the place, nor in the vicinity of the Messenger ﷺ, and if he executed his threat, the entire Islamic world would be quaked. Nevertheless, it is not surprising that he dared to do that as he was the one who used to insult the Arabs in front of the Grave of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; it refers to the fact that he was a criminal anyway due to every action he had taken in Medina.

Next, Fakhri resisted sleep for 24 consecutive hours so that he would not be arrested, but after he fell asleep, his officers entered and brought him out of the Prophet's Mosque before he carried out his major crime. Then, he was handed over to the Arab forces after they promised him not to be touched and he was deported from the peninsula, although he was supposed to be tried in public for his crimes committed against the people of Medina; the families displaced and dispersed, the souls murdered as a result of executions in Medina Square, and his outrageous crime in violating the sanctity of the Prophet's Mosque and making it his military barracks, cruelty threatening to blow it up, without thinking of the consequences.



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