

## The Moroccan Resistance And The French Stance On It: The Rif War In Context

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### Abstract:

This study aims to examine a part of the Moroccan resistance in the north, especially in the Rif Mountains, against the dual protectorate system of "Spanish-French" colonial rule. It highlights the role of the leader Abd el-Krim in organizing and leading the resistance, his ability to confront the colonial system, and his skill in leading and managing the nascent Republic of the Rif. Additionally, it exposes the cunning of the colonial systems and their alliances in achieving their ambitions and eliminating any form of resistance that obstructs them, as well as the reactions opposing their policies towards the peoples and countries of the Maghreb.

Despite the resonance of this resistance throughout the Arab world, the colonial powers exerted every effort to undermine and devalue all liberation movements in the Maghreb, striving to eradicate their influence. This was done to achieve stability in these territories at the lowest possible cost.

**Keywords:** Moroccan resistance; Rif War; Abd el-Krim; Battle of Annual; Republic of the Rif.

### Introduction:

The colonial powers seeking to dominate the Maghreb countries encountered intense resistance from the local inhabitants, marking a historic example of human defiance against foreign occupation. The Rif region in Morocco, under the leadership of Mohammed ben Abd el-Krim al-Khattabi, exemplified this type of resistance against the occupiers, especially notable for its strength and ferocity, which was well demonstrated in the Battle of Annual. This battle inflicted heavy losses on the colonial forces in terms of both lives and equipment .

Abd el-Krim combined his political aspirations with a deep connection to his Amazigh identity, a defense of Islamic law, and a commitment to justice. Moreover, he fought for the freedom and independence of Morocco. What were the personal characteristics of Abd el-Krim that marked his resistance? What were the developments and challenges faced by this resistance, how were they overcome, and what was the French colonial position on this resistance and its outcome?

### **The Resistance of the Rif People Against the Spanish Occupation in Morocco:**

Spain had coveted the Rif region of Morocco since the 15th century, having seized Melilla at that time and later occupied Ceuta. In the late 19th century, conditions in Morocco deteriorated, with chaos, widespread corruption, famines, and revolts prevailing. These issues forced the Sultan to borrow from Spain, providing Spain with an opportunity to intervene in the country's affairs. Spain imposed the Treaty of 1897 on the Sultan, through which he recognized Spanish influence in both Ceuta and Melilla (Ouda & al-Khatib, 1989, p. 106).

In 1904, France and Spain agreed that Spain would have the right to control the Rif region of Morocco, while France would control the remaining parts of Morocco. In 1909, the Spanish occupied strategic areas in the Rif and forced the Sultan in 1910 to agree to this occupation (Ouda & al-Khatib, 1989, p. 107). On March 30, 1912, France imposed its protectorate over all of Morocco, separating its territories from those occupied by Spain (Sheikh, 1996, p. 151). Spain appointed a Spanish delegate to manage the affairs of the Rif and divided the Rif into five administrative regions, each supervised by an official responsible for security. Additionally, Spain encouraged Spanish migration to the Rif and did not attempt to grant Spanish citizenship to Moroccans, while openly practicing racial discrimination against them (Sheikh, 1996, p. 107).

Regarding the French side, the French forces focused all their efforts on asserting control over North Africa, under the pretext of the land of the Berbers and Amazigh (Rouard de Card, 1906, p. 5). Numerous articles were written against the French presence in the Moroccan Republic in this context (Rouard de Card, 1906, p. 310).

Indeed, the historical interactions and conflicts between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean are well-known, recorded throughout all

stages of history—from ancient to medieval, modern, and contemporary times. The geographical factors and the demands of competition and various differences have always renewed this relationship in the form of one side occupying the other, which in turn produces reactions and resistance. Thus, the people of the Maghreb, throughout their various regions, have preserved their collective memory with the experience of resistance. The modern European colonization necessitated the revival of this memory and the expertise of their ancestors, resulting in resistance and reactions.

The resistance movement in Morocco has left its mark, especially in the Rif region, which fell under Spanish domination. The Rif region, located in the northern part of the farthest reaches of Morocco, encompasses a beautiful area divided into two main blocks: the Jbala to the west and the Rif to the east. Its focal point consists of tribes of Berber origin (Jalal, 1986, p.7).

The resistance of the Rif people against Spanish occupation began before the signing of the protectorate treaty. In 1909, Mohammed Amzian, along with a group of rebels, resisted the Spanish attempt to expand into the Rif region from Melilla, located to the east of the Rif. The Rifians inflicted severe losses on the Spanish forces. Amzian then united tribes such as the Beni Warayagel, Beni Said, Beni Lhouzin, and others in 1910. They established their headquarters in Ajdir, in the Beni Said territory, and launched attacks on the centers of Izaffen and Amruf in 1911 (Ayyash, p. 144).

With the death of Mohammed Amzian, attention turned to Ahmed Raisouni, who was an influential figure in the region during the imposition of the protectorate (Harakat, 2000, p. 302). When the Spanish army invaded the Jbala region without negotiating with him, they occupied the port of Asilah, which serves as the natural gateway to the region, and then the city of Tetouan on February 19, 1913 (Dahesh, p. 71).

Therefore, Raisouni rallied the tribes and declared jihad against the Spanish occupation, obliging those capable of bearing arms to participate in the jihad against the Spaniards who seized the region. However, they faced a counterattack from the Rifians, resulting in casualties of 16 Spanish soldiers in the assault on General Silvestre's camp. This led the Spanish to enter negotiations to reach an agreement with Raisouni. The negotiations in 1915 resulted in his recognition as ruler of the mountainous region and granted him

the right to import weapons from abroad in exchange for recognizing the sovereignty of the Moroccan sultan's caliph in Tetouan, the Moroccan capital under Spanish control (Hakim, 1981, p.31)

During World War I, Raisouni formed an alliance with Germany, which provided him with weapons. Despite this, Spain maintained peace with him throughout this period, until France's victory over Germany led to Raisouni's removal from power in the Jbala region and the appointment of General Silvestre to occupy it. Battles ensued between the two sides, resulting in significant losses for Spain. However, Spain sought revenge by occupying the region of Chefchaouen in October 1920. Despite this, Raisouni continued to resist the Spanish and target supply convoys (Mahjoubi, 2009, p. 137). With the increasing influence of the Rif leader Abd el-Krim in the Jbala region, Raisouni chose to cooperate with Spain. However, he later clashed with Abd el-Krim, which led to the end of his revolutionary movement. Raisouni was arrested and imprisoned in the Rif, where he died on April 3, 1925. Since 1921, Abd el-Krim al-Khattabi had become the sole leader of the resistance in the Rif region (Hakim, p.32).

### **1- Resistance of Abd El-Krim al-Khattabi:**

Initially organized by the judge of the Beni Warayagel tribe, Abd El-Krim al-Khattabi, known for the loyalty of his family, the Khattabi, to the Sultan and their opposition to European intervention in Moroccan affairs. Members of this family gained renown for their resistance against the Spanish (Al-Massari, 2012, p.25).

Abd el-Krim al-Khattabi attempted to make the people of the Rif understand the true nature of Spanish ambitions and the exploitation of the natural resources of the Rif region. He faced the Spanish in several confrontations alongside a number of mujahideen, which unsettled the Spanish. Consequently, they devised a scheme to use Abd el-Salam Tafersiti to poison him. As his end neared, Abd el-Krim instructed his sons, Mohammed and Ahmed, to defend their country and fight against the Spanish (Al-Massari, 2012, p. 26).

## **2- Mohammed ben Abd el-Krim al-Khattabi and the Rif Revolution:**

Mohammed ben Abd el-Krim al-Khattabi received a dual education that combined tradition and modernity. He studied at the University of al-Qarawiyyin in Fez, where education focuses on religious sciences and Arab-Islamic civilization. He then studied in Spain, where he was exposed to the foundations of Western civilization, enabling him to understand the nature of the Spanish and the intricacies of international affairs. Initially, he worked with the Spanish, assuming the position of chief judge in the Spanish-controlled region in 1913 (Ayyash, p. 190). Then, in 1914, he was appointed as a judge in the Melilla region by the Spanish administration, which also tasked him with translating one of the Spanish newspapers into Arabic. However, he quickly clashed with the Spanish authorities, who did not hesitate to imprison him in 1915. He was released in 1916. (Mahjoubi, 2009, p. 137)

Upon his father's death that year, Mohammed ben Abd el-Krim al-Khattabi was appointed as the leader of the Beni Warayagel tribe. From the outset, he worked on uniting and rallying the tribes to confront the enemy, starting from the fall of 1920 to 1921 (Skirj, 1926, p. 24). He called for reconciliation and unity for the homeland and to face the Spanish. Since assuming leadership, al-Khattabi embarked on an awareness campaign among the tribes and began uniting them, starting with his own tribe, the Beni Warayagel (Julien, et al. 1980, p.30).

## **3- The Battle of Annual:**

After the death of his father, al-Khattabi immediately worked on uniting the tribal ranks and called for reconciliation and unity for the homeland to confront the Spanish advance (Skirj, 1926, p. 24). This was achieved through a mobilization campaign that included delivering purposeful lectures supported by compelling arguments to harness popular efforts against the occupation. Thanks to his shrewdness and selfless personality, al-Khattabi won the hearts of the mujahideen with his ideology and by stirring up national fervor to achieve the country's freedom. He also worked towards social reconciliation, creating national awareness away from tribal conflicts, and stirred consciences to ignite enthusiasm, citing the revolutions in the Arab East in Egypt, Iraq, and Palestine. He possessed the ability to determine the value of collective power and direct it, thus laying the foundation for political and military organization to confront the

colonial adversary. He focused on reforming internal conditions, including clan and tribal relations, and organizing military leadership among the tribes (popular defense), emphasizing teaching the tactics of ambush warfare and guerrilla tactics (Al-Khattabi, p. 100-102).

Al-Khattabi did not content himself with securing popular support alone but also worked on gaining the support of tribal leaders and dignitaries to ensure unity of purpose. Therefore, he called for a general conference known as the "Imzouren Conference" on September 20, 1920, in the original tribe of al-Khattabi, where most tribal leaders attended (Idrisi, 2007, p.43). Al-Khattabi delivered a speech urging the attendees to adhere to the Quran and Sunnah in all their actions, to unite and forget grudges, and to organize themselves to fight the Spanish, emphasizing that success can only come through discipline. Al-Khattabi succeeded in this endeavor, as the attendees agreed, and the national fervor spread to the people of the region, to the extent that they sold their livestock to acquire weapons for defending the homeland. It was agreed that al-Khattabi would be the leader of the revolution. A location called "Al-Qama" was chosen as a permanent center for managing the affairs of the country and jihad. Here, al-Khattabi established four subsidiary centers to monitor Spanish movements in the areas of "Azru Jidar, Souk Al Athnin, Sidi Chayeb, and Akromous." Thus, the real Rif revolution began when a kind of unity was achieved (Al-Khattabi, pp. 102-103).

After the "Imzouren Conference," the Spaniards attempted to fragment the unity of the national front and weaken its cohesion by recruiting allied groups and involving Riffians in internal conflict to dismantle their unity, thus thwarting the conference resolutions. The Rif leadership condemned all those who participated in the conference and warned against complying with Spanish calls for peace. They imposed a financial penalty on them to maintain the unity of the national front. This indicates the strength of the Rif leadership's control over the internal situation and its clear authority in the region. Consequently, al-Khattabi continued to work more extensively to thwart Spanish efforts and invalidate their claims, on one hand, and to build military forces, on the other hand. Therefore, a conference was held in "Ajdir" in May, and the attack on the resistance center in "Al-Qama" occurred the following day to decisively tip the balance in favor of national unity, implementing the previous conference resolutions. Spanish forces were deployed across the entire Rif region from "Al-

Qama," "Abran Mountain," "Annual," to "Ajdir." This marked the declaration of war between the two sides, and thus, since mid-1921, the Rif revolution began defending freedom, independence, and Moroccan unity against Spanish occupation, initiating a chapter of armed military conflict that affected both eastern and western Rif (Al-Khattabi, pp. 105-107). General Silvestre seized control of the port of Sidi Idris west of the city of Melilla and established Annual (It is a strategic location connected to the port of Sidi Idris by the sea to the north, the road of Tafersit in the south, Melilla to the east, and Al-Qama to the west) in 1921 (Amzian, 1971, p. 136), where the number of soldiers reached 18,000 equipped with all kinds of weapons, awaiting an opportunity to eliminate Abdelkrim al-Khattabi. He gathered some volunteers from the Riffians and the Ouriaghel tribes, among others, numbering no more than 300, whom he trained in the hall west of Annual. The first operations began with Silvestre sending written orders to seize what remained of the Rif mountains of Abran. However, Abd el-krim and his group defeated them, killing them all and seizing their ammunition (Al-Fasi, 1999, p. 126).

And so, Abd el-krim advanced to besiege the Igriiben military base north of Annual, following the trench warfare strategy. On July 15, 1921, al-Khattabi attacked a Spanish supply convoy heading to reinforce the Igriiben garrison and annihilated it (Al-Khattabi, p. 102). This prompted "Silvestre" to send a force to shell the Riffians, but when they approached, the Riffians ambushed them, causing the Spaniards to flee and become surrounded (Skirj, pp. 24-25). The siege lasted for four full days, during which Silvestre attempted to seek assistance from the Resident General, but his efforts were futile. They decided to engage in battle without support, hoping for victory (Amzian, pp. 148-149).

On July 20, 1921, the Spanish army left Annual with a strong force, engaging in a major battle. A battalion of the Spanish army, led by Silvestre, joined the battle to break the siege, but most of them were annihilated. The commander and those who refused to surrender were captured, resulting in the fortress falling into the hands of the Riffian mujahideen, especially after Riffian soldiers rebelled against Silvestre and joined their fellow mujahideen (Skirj, p. 25). That night, the Spanish commander, Silvestre, prepared what remained of his army to confront Abd el-krim's forces in Annual. A fierce clash ensued, in which the Spanish army was decimated. The Riffians seized control of Annual

and the Sidi Driss camp, wreaking havoc, and killed General Silvestre near Annual (Ghallab, p. 257).

Abd el-krim El Khattabi inflicted significant losses on the Spanish army in terms of equipment and personnel. He seized vast quantities of various modern weapons. The remnants of the Spanish army had no choice but to retreat and seek refuge in Melilla. Abd el-krim could have pursued them, but he refrained, believing that after the defeat at Annual, the Spanish government would lean towards peace and negotiate with him based on recognizing the Rif's independence in exchange for economic privileges in the region. However, despite ceasing hostilities, the Spanish refused to submit to Abd el-krim's conditions. He capitalized on the Battle of Annual and the subsequent cessation of fighting to solidify his reputation and build the Rif Republic, ensuring its independence (Mahjoubi, p. 138).

#### **4- Establishment of the Rif Republic:**

Following his victory in Annual and the liberation of the Rif region, Abd el-Krim worked on establishing state institutions and laws according to the Western model (Skirj, p. 53). For this reason, he called on the tribes to appoint representatives to facilitate communication with them and regulate the system among them. This included the process of collecting weapons and putting them in service of the mujahideen. To achieve this goal, he gathered representatives from the Rif tribes in the capital city of Agadir in September 1921 (Al-Fasi, p. 119).

After Abd el-Krim was appointed as the leader of the Rif tribes, the meeting of tribal representatives resulted in the establishment of a Rif government and a national assembly comprising tribal leaders to legislate and oversee the budget, as well as to monitor the work of ministers who were accountable to them (Al-Khattabi, p. 145). This parliament endorsed the program in the form of a national charter, affirming its rejection of any agreement or treaty that contradicted the sovereignty of Greater Morocco, especially the 1912 Treaty of Protection. It demanded the expulsion of the Spanish from the Rif regions still under their control and emphasized Spain's recognition of the full independence of the Rif Republic. The assembly also announced the readiness of the Rif government to establish friendly relations with all countries on an equal footing and to conclude trade treaties with them.

This system, resulting from the national charter and based on the principle of consultation with the elders of the United Rif Republic, saw Abd el-Krim, who rejected the title of Sultan and settled for the title of Amir of the Rif (Al-Fasi, p. 119), at the head of the central government and as president of the republic. This government included essential departments to establish a modern state. Abd el-Krim efficiently organized the affairs of his young republic, curbing outdated tribal practices such as blood feuds. Thus, the state acquired modern institutions and resources derived from taxes on individuals and incomes. The financial payments made by Spain as ransom for its captured soldiers, detained by Abd el-Krim's forces, also contributed to the state's finances (Al-Fasi, p. 119).

Abd el-Krim al-Khattabi, the Amir of the Rif, worked on establishing a modern state with its internal and external ministries, in addition to focusing on ensuring security and promoting justice (Al-Khattabi, p. 145). He enacted new laws to regulate social and economic life, organizing tax collection, land ownership, trade sectors, and even water distribution. He also prioritized education, sending scientific missions to Europe, and emphasized healthcare by establishing hospitals and clinics. Abd el-Krim reformed the judiciary, constructed roads, and benefited from the administrative division of Rif territories into tribes, each led by a chief with administrative, judicial, and military powers, all under the supervision of the central government. The aim of these reforms was to protect the Rif people and ensure their rights and interests (Al-Fasi, p. 121).

However, the Rif region remained threatened by Spanish and French forces, which feared the repercussions of his victories. Especially with Abd el-Krim's efforts to expand into the western region (Skirj, p. 30) and unify the Rif tribes, which became a concern for them. Therefore, it was necessary for the United Rif Republic to prepare for war and organize the army meticulously to face the Spanish and French challenges. This led Abd el-Krim to pay special attention to establishing an army that combined the traditional Moroccan military style with modern European techniques.

In addition to the weapons seized after the Battle of Annual, military service became mandatory for all able-bodied men aged between 16 and 50. They were trained in modern military tactics in the capital of the republic,

Agadir. The army consisted of infantry battalions and artillery units tasked with guarding the coast and monitoring the enemy to repel their warships from landing on the Rif shores.

The military organization was subject to the requirements of the ongoing war that the Rif Republic endured (Al-Zaidi, pp. 109). His battles and victories continued in 1922 against General Branger, forcing the Spanish government to halt all military operations and attempts to expand into the Rif region. They resorted to peaceful methods with the Riffians (Al-Khattabi, pp. 109). However, the new general, who succeeded Branger, named Berenguer, rejected this decision and resumed besieging and fighting the Riffians on March 10, 1922. They inflicted heavy losses on him in Al-Hoceima and captured him along with his army, gaining significant spoils. This forced Spain to negotiate with the prince, who demanded full independence for the Rif. However, Spain refused to agree, insisting on internal autonomy (Al-Fasi, pp. 128).

In July 1923, the war reignited in the western region, with intense battles resulting in the loss of a thousand Spanish soldiers. The Riffians advanced towards the borders of Chefchaouen and Tetouan, forcing the Spanish to negotiate a new peace agreement with the prince. However, the negotiations failed for the same reasons as before. Moreover, with the joining of the Jbala tribes to the mujahideen after breaking away from the Riffians who had aligned themselves with the Spanish, the war continued against the Spanish.

The conflict escalated, reaching Tetouan, where the Riffians made significant advances, inflicting heavy losses on the Spanish in major battles (Skirj, pp. 115). However, the Spanish managed to impede the progress of the mujahideen towards the city of Tetouan. This compelled the new Spanish government to withdraw from the interior regions and focus on maintaining control over Tetouan, Tangier, and Larache in 1924. Additionally, the Spanish government agreed to a ceasefire with the prince to facilitate their withdrawal without further losses. However, the conditions proposed by the Spanish were rejected, and they withdrew with difficulty, facing casualties as many of them were killed or captured, despite the support of the loyalist, the Ahmas tribe.

## 5- The French Stance on the Rif Revolution:

The French were surprised by Abd el-krim's victory over the Spanish, just as they were taken aback by the withdrawal of Spanish forces from the entire Jbala region. While Spain failed to defeat Abd el-krim and his state, France would not allow the establishment of an independent Moroccan state on the borders of its spheres of influence. Such a state could serve as a model and support for its opponents in the farthest reaches of Morocco, encouraging and assisting them in their resistance. This prompted France to closely monitor the situation in the Rif Republic and to track the movements of Prince Abd el-krim's forces with the aim of eliminating them, alongside its European ally, Spain.

These covert intentions were articulated in the speech delivered by the French Resident-General in Greater Morocco to his government on December 11, 1919 (Al-Aqqad, 1969, p. 287). In it, he emphasized the threat posed by Abd el-krim to French influence in the region and thus the necessity of sending reinforcements to the northern front. Prince Abd el-krim was aware of France's hidden intentions and the difficulty of confronting them, especially given its alliance with Spain. Therefore, he took necessary precautions to avoid providing any pretext for France to declare war on him. However, prevailing tribal values in the Rif, based on loyalty to commitments and not betraying allied tribes, hindered his efforts to appease France. When the Beni Zerwal tribe, which had allied with him and previously helped him against the French who had encroached on their territory, sought his assistance, his sense of honor compelled him to respond to their call and repay their kindness, regardless of the consequences for his relationship with the French government (Al-Aqqad, pp. 287-288).

France decided to intervene in the fighting against Abd el-krim in favor of Spain. The French authorities in Greater Morocco exploited the disagreements between the religious leaders loyal to them and Prince Abd el-krim by providing them with arms and money to resist the Rif state. France also worked to weaken Abd el-krim by spreading rumors that he coveted the throne of Marrakech, coordinating its propaganda with the Spanish government. Italy ensured its assistance, while Britain remained silent. This division among the mujahideen caused some followers of Sufi orders to dissent. France made the decision to launch a military campaign and occupied the Wadi al-Khasib River (Zouzou, p.

65), cutting off food supplies of grains to the Rif population. In April 1925, the Riffians responded with a counterattack, breaching French fortifications and approaching the strategic city of Taza. This prompted the French government to dismiss General Lyautey and replace him with Petain (Zouzou, p. 65), a clear warning of the impending conflict.

Abd el-krim initially achieved some victories against French forces and seized several of their positions, demonstrating his men's adeptness in modern military tactics. However, he refrained from advancing towards Fez to avoid provoking France. In June 1925, France agreed to a ceasefire with him, recognizing the danger of Abd el-krim's state to its influence and interests in North Africa. Determined to eliminate him, France called on the Sultan to declare Abd el-krim an outlaw (Al-Aqqad, p. 288). Furthermore, in September 1925, France intensified its forces and bolstered its military position (Zouzou, p. 65).

#### **6- The French-Spanish Alliance:**

After France and Spain reached an agreement during a special conference held in Madrid in June 1925 to tighten the joint blockade on Abd el-Krim's revolution (Zouzou, p. 65), preventing him from acquiring weapons from Europe, and with both parties refraining from signing a separate peace with the enemy without the consent of the other party, following this agreement to coordinate military operations in the Rif, the French-Spanish alliance prepared a formidable force supported by naval and aerial power at the beginning of the winter of 1925/1926. The coalition forces managed to monitor the mountains overlooking Agadir, the capital of Abd el-Krim. The bilateral communications culminated in an official visit by "Petain" to Madrid on February 4, 1926 (Al-Khattabi, p. 213), in response to an invitation from the Spanish Prime Minister. The two parties also agreed to hold additional consultations between military leaders before the start of operations. In this regard, a meeting was held on March 27, 1926, where the date for the commencement of operations was set for the second week of April 1926.

The agreement reached on June 24 stipulated the establishment of joint naval control over most of the Moroccan coasts, which included a significant portion of the coasts under French influence. This agreement allowed Spanish warships to approach some Algerian ports, and Spanish ships were permitted to

seek refuge in certain ports under Spanish influence for provisioning. The agreement was communicated to European countries two days after its signing. On September 7, the two parties launched an attack with an army comprising 288,000 soldiers. On September 13, alongside the French forces, 12 American pilots, mercenaries led by Colonel Swinney, participated. The Rif army did not exceed 60,000 fighters. The colonizers used airplanes, naval vessels, and heavy equipment supported by British naval artillery. However, the Rif Revolution suffered from shortages in supplies and equipment due to a lack of external assistance. By the beginning of 1926, the Riffians, from their new headquarters in "Bani Zerwal," mobilized an army of twenty thousand to attack the Spanish army. The Riffian forces also launched attacks on French positions.

In 1926, Abd el-Krim declared general neutrality and sent messengers throughout Morocco to incite them to fight. His efforts resulted in support from urban populations and the formation of secret organizations to arrest French officials. This forced the French Resident-General to respond to the government's need to open negotiations with Abd el-Krim. Both the French and the Spanish agreed to hold peace negotiations in the city of Oujda on April 15, 1926 (Al-Khattabi, pp. 213-216). While the French-Spanish alliance agreed to a ceasefire with the Rif forces and entered into the negotiations in Oujda in April 1926, Abd el-Krim soon realized the enemy's bad intentions and decided to resume fighting. However, the balance of power was not in his favor, making it difficult for him to withstand the French-Spanish armies, which, with their formidable capabilities, managed to seize the fortress of "Targist" where Abd el-Krim sought refuge after the fall of his capital Ajdir (Martin, 1988, p.120).

#### **7- The Retreat of the Resistance and the Surrender of the Prince (Emir Abd el-Krim):**

After the French-Spanish alliance, the Rif forces had no choice but to withdraw to the south to continue fighting, refusing to surrender. Despite the promises of amnesty from the coalition forces for those who surrendered, and despite Emir Abd el-Krim agreeing to withdraw from the battle and offering to surrender unconditionally, the French required him to release the prisoners he held before surrendering. He complied with this condition, and thus the surrender took place. Abd el-Krim had no choice but to surrender on May 24, 1926 (Al-Khattabi, pp. 225-226), not to the Spaniards who considered him a

rebel to be executed, but to the French forces who treated him as a prisoner of war and exiled him to the island of Réunion in the Indian Ocean. He remained in this colony until he was allowed to move to France (Gabriel, 1953, p.135). He seized the opportunity when the ship transporting him docked at Port Said to seek political asylum in Egypt. He lived in Cairo from then on, where he resumed his political activities within the framework of the Maghreb Liberation Committee, which he founded and chaired until his death at the age of 81.

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port of Sidi Idris by the sea to the north, the road of Tafersit in the south, Melilla to the east, and Al-Qama to the west.)

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