The Battle of Bani Na’im in 1938: The Siege of Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni and Reinforcements from Abd al-Halim al-Jawlani

In 1938, Bani Na’im, east of Hebron, witnessed a battle during the Great Palestinian Revolt against British Mandate rule. British forces surrounded a group of rebels led by Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni before reinforcements arrived under Abd al-Halim al-Jawlani.

A Reconciliation Meeting Turns into a

Confrontation

According to Palestinian accounts, Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni traveled to Bani Na’im to attend a meeting intended to resolve local disputes and unite ranks. Some accounts date the battle to October 4, 1938, while other sources give a different date.

After receiving information about the presence of al-Husayni and his men in the town, British forces assembled a large military force and surrounded the area, supported by aircraft and heavy weapons. The rebels found themselves facing an opponent with superior numbers and firepower.

The Fighting and the Arrival of Reinforcements

Fierce clashes broke out as British aircraft bombed rebel positions while ground forces advanced. Under mounting pressure, the fighters used the surrounding hills, valleys, and caves for cover and continued fighting.

Accounts differ on how long the battle lasted. Some describe approximately forty hours of fighting, while the Palestinian Encyclopedia records around ten hours. Estimates of troop numbers also vary, making it difficult to establish a definitive figure.

During the confrontation, Abd al-Halim al-Jawlani arrived with a group of fighters to reinforce the besieged rebels. According to Palestinian accounts, his intervention helped relieve the pressure on al-Husayni’s forces and opened a route for the survivors to withdraw.

Al-Husayni’s Injury and Evacuation

Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni was wounded during the battle. An article published by Babelwad recounts that al-Jawlani evacuated him on a camel to Hebron, where he received initial treatment. He then helped him travel to Jordan and subsequently to Beirut.

Casualties

The rebels suffered heavy casualties. Some accounts name Ibrahim Khleif, commander of the Bethlehem unit; Issa Abu Qaddum, commander of the Arab al-Ta’amira unit; and Abdallah Mishal among those killed. However, casualty lists and details differ between sources and require further comparison and verification.

The sources used for this account do not establish a consistent figure for British casualties.

The Battle of Bani Na’im illustrates the intensity of the fighting in the Hebron region during the Great Palestinian Revolt. It also highlights the importance of cooperation between rebel units in confronting encirclement and British military superiority.