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The Ottoman policy for maintaining stability in the Eyalet of Algiers according to the Mühimme Defteri documents of the 16th Century
La politique ottomane pour maintenir la stabilité dans l'Éyalet d'Alger comme il apparaît dans les documents Mühimme Defteri du 16^e siècle

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Abstract:

After Algeria was annexed to the Ottoman State in 1519, the latter sought to impose laws and regulatory measures to govern it, aiming to establish security and ensure internal stability. Given the Mediterranean circumstances at the time, which exposed the region to external threats, it became imperative for the Sublime Porte to pay close attention to Algeria, manage it with caution, and address the grievances of its inhabitants, which were frequently communicated to Istanbul. This study aims to critically examine and analyse the Mühimme Defteri Documents in order to highlight the efforts of Ottoman rulers in establishing security and maintaining internal stability within the Eyalet of Algeria. Additionally, the research seeks to refute the accusations made by detractors who alleged that the Ottoman presence in Algeria was marked by oppressive and brutal policies toward the local population. The study adopts a historical, inductive, and analytical approach, providing a rigorous examination of the insights derived from the Mühimme Defteri Documents. The findings of the study demonstrate the active role of the Sublime Porte in ensuring security and stability, suppressing Janissary mutinies, addressing the embezzlement of local funds, and enforcing accountability among officials who violated the established laws.

Keywords: Sublime Porte ; Algerian eyalet ; security ; internal stability.

Résumé:

À la suite de l'annexion de l'Algérie par L'État Ottoman en 1519, la Sublime Porte s'est efforcée d'organiser la nouvelle Éyalet en promulguant des lois et des règlements administratifs visant à instaurer la sécurité et à garantir la stabilité intérieure. En raison de sa position stratégique, avec une façade nord sur la Méditerranée, et du contexte géopolitique de l'époque, l'Algérie devint une cible pour ses ennemis. Cela a poussé la Sublime Porte à accorder une attention particulière à sa gestion, en veillant à ce qu'elle soit administrée avec précision, tout en répondant aux doléances des habitants adressées à Istanbul. Cette étude vise à examiner et analyser Des Documents Mühimme Defteri afin de mettre en lumière les efforts des gouverneurs ottomans pour établir la sécurité et assurer la stabilité intérieure au sein de l'Éyalet d'Alger. De plus, la recherche s'efforce de réfuter les accusations des détracteurs qui ont affirmé que la présence ottomane en Algérie était caractérisée par des politiques brutales et oppressives envers la population locale. L'étude adopte une approche historique, inductive et analytique, offrant une analyse rigoureuse des données extraites de Des Documents Mühimme Defteri Les conclusions de l'étude montrent le rôle actif de la Sublime Porte dans l'imposition de la sécurité et de la stabilité, la répression des mutineries des janissaires, la lutte contre le détournement des fonds locaux et la responsabilisation des fonctionnaires violant les lois en vigueur.

Mots-clés : le Sublime Porte ; l'Eyalet d'Alger ; sécurité ; stabilité intérieure.

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Introduction:

When Algeria became an Ottoman eyalet in 1519, its rulers faced several challenges. Externally, these included numerous attempts by the Spanish to occupy the cities of Algiers, Cherchell, and Mostaganem, as well as efforts to retain control of Oran and Mers El Kébir. Internally, the challenges arose from the difficulty of exerting control over the entire eyalet due to the occupation of Oran and Mers El Kébir, the establishment of the Zianid state, tribal movements, and resistance to the tax policy. This resulted in their initial influence being limited to the cities and some inland areas. To overcome these obstacles, the Ottoman state had to ensure internal stability by enacting laws, regulations, and addressing complaints received by Istanbul. Additionally, they focused on maintaining security and justice among the people, giving significant attention to renewing fortifications and restoring structures.

Thus, the issue of our research paper is as follows: How did the efforts of Ottoman rulers manifest in maintaining the security and stability of the Eyalet of Algeria as reflected in Ottoman documents during the second half of the 16th century?

This central issue is divided into the following sub-questions: How did the Ottoman rulers contribute to enforcing social security and internal stability in the Eyalet of Algeria? What role did the Sublime Porte play in deterring the rebels of Algeria, and how did its rulers deal with the oppressors? What methods were used to curb the excesses of the Janissaries? What were the major security measures taken against those who embezzled state treasury funds, as well as against the local population and their property?

The research aims to examine and analyze important Mühimme Defteri¹ documents to highlight the efforts of the Ottoman rulers in ensuring security and internal stability in the Eyalet of Algeria, as well as to respond to the criticisms made by those who accused the Ottoman state of occupying Algeria and treating its people with cruelty.

We adopted the inductive and analytical historical method, which aligns with the nature of the topic, through a historical and analytical reading of the data in Mühimme Defteri documents.

Regarding prior studies on our research topic, they are rare, especially since our study focuses on Mühimme Defteri documents. However, we intersect with the article titled *"The System and Security in the City of Algiers during the Ottoman Era Through Foreign Sources"* by Mohamed Channafi, which addresses security and order. Nevertheless, we did not address it in the same way, as it discusses institutions responsible for security according to different data. Additionally, the article *"Eyalet of Algiers between Stability and Chaos, 1718-1671"* by Mustafa Ben Ammar, which discusses the political conditions of Algeria and its relationship with the Ottoman state, intersects with our study in terms of the conflict between the Riyas and the Janissaries, a topic we covered under the issues related to the Janissary corps.

¹ -The Ottoman documents relied upon in this article are from the important ledger archives found in the Ottoman archive, and the documents pertaining to the 16th century are taken from the important ledgers and the appendices of the important ledgers, which exceed 75 ledgers. It is noted that among the documents concerning the Islamic West, Algeria received the lion's share due to its centrality among these provinces. As for the content of the documents, according to our knowledge, the military aspect predominated over most topics, and the reason for this is the geopolitical position occupied by the Eyalet of Algeria in the West, as it was referred to as the House of Jihad, because it was in a state of constant war with the Spanish Empire. Its relation to our research topic is that it was the only one that addressed the conditions in Algeria during that period and its foreign relations.

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1. Emphasizing social security and internal stability by appointing competent governors:

After Algeria became an Ottoman Eyalet, the Sublime Porte made every effort to achieve and establish security within it, considering this as one of the primary goals of Ottoman administration. Among the methods employed were efforts to appoint competent and politically astute governors to contribute to ensuring the safety and security of the inhabitants of the eyalet at all levels. This can be illustrated through several incidents observed in the Algerian eyalet that reflect the Sublime Porte's efforts in stabilizing it. The inhabitants of the Algerian eyalet, including tribes and clans, suffered from the injustices of various rebels. Due to the commendation of the Beylerbey Kılıç Ali of the Algerian eyalet for his justice and his actual contributions to securing the country and fortifying the citadels, the Ottoman Sultan Selim II issued a correspondence requesting the intervention of the eyalet's forces to suppress them and protect the people from their harm. Following the praise from the Sultan's Divan-i Humayun², for his efforts in organizing the affairs of the people and protecting them from rebellious nomads and other injustices., the Ottoman Sultan rewarded him with an official appointment. He was presented with the Sultan's robe and was instructed to maintain and protect the inhabitants, especially the weak and poor among them, while continuing to ensure justice among them³.

When the Ottoman Sultan called upon Kılıç Ali to appoint him as Admiral of the Ottoman Fleet, Beylerbey Hasan Pasha son of Khair al-Din⁴, was selected for the fourth time to assume leadership of the Algerian eyalet, due to his proven competence in maintaining the security and stability of the eyalet, and in preserving it. However, he did not assume the position due to compelling circumstances⁵.

The choice fell on Pasha Ahmed Arab due to his distinguished qualities of nobility, resilience, determination, courage, and good management⁶. He established good relationships with the notables and sheikhs of the Eyalet of Algiers, and the Sublime Porte praised him for subduing and winning over the rebels among them. He contributed to achieving internal security by completing the restoration of fortresses and castles, developing areas, and strengthening defenses. To facilitate this, he received support from the Sublime Porte in a decree issued to the Agha of the Janissaries, instructing him to agree and cooperate with Pasha Ahmed Arab in maintaining the security of the Eyalet, obey his commands, honor his position, protect the religion and state, and provide all services deemed necessary and appropriate by the new governor. Additionally, he was tasked with safeguarding and protecting the subjects and ensuring security within the Eyalet⁷.

² - **Divan-i Humayun** : was the council of ministers of the Ottoman State. It was established during the reign of Ghazi Orhan and saw significant development during the era of Mehmed the Conqueror. The council convened four days a week and included the Kubbe Viziers (Ministers of the Dome), along with the Rumeli Kazasker and Anatolia Kazasker (Chief Military Judges), the Defterdar (Minister of Finance), and the Nişancı (Minister responsible for seals and imperial decrees) (DARĀĞ, 2018, p. 20)

³ - B.O.A, **A.DVNS.MHM.d**,... (Mühimme Defteri), Kutu No.7, Gömlek No.2456; 23 Cemaziyelevvel 976, s 897.

⁴ - B.O.A, **A.DVNS.MHM.d**,..., Kutu No.16 , Gömlek No.637; 11 Cemaziyelahir 979, s 313./Kutu No.16 , Gömlek No.347; 17 Cemaziyelahir 979, s 368./Kutu No.10 , Gömlek No.164; 03 Ramazan 979, s s 102- 103./Kutu No.10 , Gömlek No.157; 04 Ramazan 979, s 99.

⁵ - Hassan bin Khair al-Din was appointed for the fourth time as Beylerbey of Algeria, which is not mentioned in the sources and references that discuss this period. For further details on the subject, refer to the Ottoman Archives:

– B.O.A, **A.DVNS.MHM.d**, ..., Kutu No.16, Gömlek No.563; 08 Cemaziyül-Ahir 979, ss 319-320.

However, he did not assume his position due to an illness he suffered from, which led to his death See: [https://cdn2.islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/dosya/16/C16005622\(htt1\).pdf](https://cdn2.islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/dosya/16/C16005622(htt1).pdf) ss 334-335.

⁶ - For an in-depth exploration of the subject, refer to: B.O.A, **A.DVNS.MHM.d**,..., Kutu No.10 , Gömlek No.266; 19 Şevval 979, s 179./ Kutu No.10 , Gömlek No.269; 19 Şevval 979, s 183.

⁷ -B.O.A, **A.DVNS.MHM.d**,..., Kutu No.12 , Gömlek No.1088; 08 Zilkade 979, s 571.

In matters concerning the preservation and security of the Algerian eyalet, Amir Koko was instructed to exert his efforts in safeguarding and maintaining the Dar al-Jihad (House of Jihad), and to collaborate with Beylerbey Ahmed Arab in repelling enemies from the country and its fortresses⁸.

To establish social security and internal stability, the Sublime Porte issued a firman (decree) instructing the Beylerbey of Algeria Hassan Finiziano⁹, that it was not feasible to change the Agha's¹⁰ (MARWĀN, 2017: 32), position every 3 or 4 months, as this would lead to instability, Unless the agha was proven guilty of a crime, he should remain in his position for a period ranging from five to ten years, Those who violated the law or were deemed unworthy of the position were to be removed¹¹.

The Ottoman state efforts to enact laws for maintaining security and stability within the province through the acumen of its governors enabled it to achieve its desired objectives in the Province of Algeria, This is reflected in the reports of the Beylerbey of Algeria to the Sublime Porte, which indicated that the situation in the province was stable, and that the inhabitants were enjoying security and safety, The Imperial Council also requested enhanced efforts to ensure the restoration of peace, secure the stability of the province, and achieve full coordination with the provincial governors (Sanjaks) and other notable figures, Additionally, monitoring enemy movements and safeguarding the province to prevent any harm from them was a priority.

From all of this, we can infer the Sublime Porte's keen interest in the security and safety of the Islamic Maghreb provinces in general, and Algeria in particular, as it represented the protective shield for the Ottoman state against European and Christian assaults, The selection of competent individuals with expertise in managing its affairs was crucial, given its strategic importance.

2. The Sublime Porte monitors and holds oppressive governors accountable:

Despite the Ottoman state efforts to establish the principles of justice among the 121 people of Ottoman Algeria by implementing rulings and penalizing offenders, there were instances where certain governors exploited their positions, resulting in injustice and mistreatment of the local populace, This led the Sublime Porte to institute measures aimed at ensuring security, peace, and the well-being of the inhabitants, and to underscore the importance of punishing lawbreakers, documenting their names, and reporting them to the Sublime Porte¹².

It has been reported that Hussein Agha, appointed as the head of the Janissaries, committed acts of violence and oppression in Algeria, including theft from and fraud against the local population, He engaged in bribery, embezzled treasury funds, distributed them to his followers, and locked the gates of the citadel (the city of Algiers), leading to a siege and severe hardship for the

⁸ -B.O.A, **A.DVNS.MHM.d**,..., Kutu No.23 , Gömlek No.633; 23 Zilkade 981, s 294.

⁹ - **Hassan Finiziano** (1577–1591): Of Italian origin, his real name was Andrietta. He ruled as the Emir of Algiers twice: the first time in 1577, but was deposed due to the heavy taxes he imposed on the people of Algiers, and his second term was in 1583. He also served as the Qubudan Pasha after the death of Kılıç Ali in 1587 (DE HAEDO, 1881, pp. 190-196). / B.O.A, **A.DVNS.MHM.d**,..., Kutu No.30, Gömlek No.427; 02 Rejeb 985, s 182./Kutu No.35, Gömlek No.314; 03 Cemaziyelahir 986 , s 122./Kutu No.44, Gömlek No.136; 990, s 136./Kutu No.44, Gömlek No.183; 991, s 183.

¹⁰ - **Ağa of the Janissaries**: was one of the most prominent figures in the Ottoman State, serving as the commander of the state's most powerful infantry unit. Due to his position, he also held the office of Chief of Police in Istanbul, overseeing the maintenance of security. Additionally, he was a member of the Council of State, selected by the Sultan from among the senior officers (MARWĀN, 2017, p. 323) .

¹¹ -B.O.A, **A.DVNS.MHM.d**,..., Kutu No.30 , Gömlek No.430; 5 Rebiyülevvel 985, s 183./ Kutu No.30 , Gömlek No.471; 5 Rebiyülevvel 985, s 199.

¹² - B.O.A, **A.DVNS.MHM.d**,..., Kutu No.22 , Gömlek No.252; 05 Rebiyülahir 981 , s 124.

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residents, In response, the Sublime Porte ordered the appointment of a deputy Agha (Kethuda Agha) to oversee affairs and restore order, with directives to arrest Hussein Agha and his followers, detain and prosecute them, or, should he refuse to comply, to send him to the Sublime Porte for trial and appropriate punishment¹³.

Furthermore, the Sublime Porte exhibited its resolve in dealing with Beylerbey Hasan Finiziano by ordering his imprisonment and forbidding his release without explicit permission from the Sublime Porte, due to the abuses he inflicted upon the people of Algeria¹⁴.

Not only this, but there were also other governors who engaged in the misappropriation of the state treasury under the pretext of dealing with soldier rebellions and civil disobedience. This pretext necessitated the expenditure from the treasury to address the rebellion and unrest, with the expenditure by the Beylerbey being justified as covering these costs, although these claims were fundamentally unfounded. The Dafterdar¹⁵ Mustafa (Dafterdar of the Islamic Maghreb Eyalets) proposed that expenditures be drawn from the eyalet's treasury to cover the costs of the soldiers., with any remaining funds reserved for future needs related to the soldiers as well. This indicates that none of the resources from the three provinces were sent to the central government; instead, they were entirely allocated to the needs of the province, particularly for the¹⁶.

Greed blinded some political figures in the Province of Algeria, leading them to circumvent laws and regulations and to misuse the treasury's resources for their personal gain. In towns such as Annaba, Constantine, Biskra, Ténès, Tlemcen, and other regions within the Province of Algeria, resources were collected by the miri (a local administrator) and used to pay the soldiers' salaries. However, these resources fell into the hands of individuals who managed to obtain orders from the central government allowing them to manage these funds. This mismanagement resulted in the loss of crucial budgetary resources for the province and led to a failure to pay the soldiers' salaries for two consecutive periods. Consequently, The Sultan's Divan intervened to annul the orders granting control of these funds to certain individuals. A Sultan's decree was issued, directing the Beylerbey of Algeria, Khedir Pasha, to manage the resources of the aforementioned areas in the name of the miri (i.e., the province's treasury), particularly if these resources had originally been managed by the miri but had subsequently been appropriated by others. The Divan also prohibited any individual from intervening in the management of these resources¹⁷.

The Council of Governance in Algeria was among those contributing to cooperation with the Sublime Porte in order to eliminate injustice and abuses against the inhabitants of the eyalet. It repeatedly informed the Sublime Porte about the acts of injustice and abuse committed by some leaders in the Eyalet of Algeria. Consequently, a decree was issued to the Beylerbey of Algeria Ahmed Arab to remind him of the duties and responsibilities he was expected to fulfill, The purpose of his appointment was to ensure the security, safety, and well-being of the inhabitants. Therefore, he was instructed to adhere to this mandate, prevent anyone from committing acts of injustice and abuse contrary to the law, and report the names of those involved to the Council, The same directive led the Sublime Porte to report the actions of the Sanjak-Bey of Ténès in Algeria,

¹³ - B.O.A, **A.DVNS.MHM.d**,..., Kutu No.42 , Gömlek No.266; 19 Cemaziyelahir 989 ,s 55.

¹⁴ -B.O.A, **A.DVNS.MHM.d**,..., Kutu No.44 , Gömlek No.240; 25 Zilhicce 990 , s 130.

¹⁵ - **The Defterdar** is the Sultan's representative in managing the financial affairs of the province. His primary responsibility is to oversee the province's financial accounts. To this end, he maintains the books and records detailing the province's financial resources, whether liquid or in-kind, the funds collected, the anticipated expenditures, any surplus or reserves, and strategies for securing additional financial resources in the event of a budget deficit (AQṬĀŞ Nağātī, 1986, p. 04)

¹⁶ - B.O.A, **A.DVNS.MHM.d**, Kutu No.39 , Gömlek No.439; 13 Muharrem 988 , s 217.

¹⁷ - B.O.A, **A.DVNS.MHM.d**, Kutu No.73 , Gömlek No.1253; 11 Şevval 1003, s 574.

who was accused of perpetrating injustice and abuse against the local population, The Sultan then ordered the Beylerbey of Algeria and the Judge of Ténès to investigate the claims of the inhabitants by confronting them with the Sanjak¹⁸, Bey of Ténès and examining the case thoroughly. The goal was to rectify the situation and restore the rights of the people¹⁹.

The issue did not stop there; abuses extended to the Andalusians who sought refuge in Algeria fleeing from Spain, leaving behind their wealth and livelihoods. They were subjected to taxation and their belongings were confiscated. Consequently, a firman was issued by the Sublime Porte to the Beylerbey of Algeria Ahmed Arab, instructing him to protect their belongings and wealth and to ensure that no one obstructed their way. Additionally, the impoverished among them were to be exempted from costs until their situation improved, allowing them to contribute financially like other subjects²⁰. They had already endured enough suffering from the Spanish while in Andalusia and had faced the hardship of migration from their homeland, the loss or plunder of their possessions, and the need to restart their lives from scratch, but for the endowments that were granted to them.

When the term of office for the beys in Algeria was reduced to three years with the possibility of renewal, some beys exploited the short term to extract as much money as possible by imposing taxes (AL-MAQALLĀTĪ, 2013:27). This was done to ensure a steady income. Additionally, the governors in the eyalet of Algeria resorted to a system of monopolies by assigning positions in exchange for a monthly or annual fee, such as the position of Khoja al-Jild in Algeria, which required an annual commitment of 400 riyals to retain the position (S'YDŪNĪ, 2010: 23).

3. The Sublime Porte restrains the janissaries and limits their abuses:

The defining characteristic of the Ottoman presence in Algeria was the dominance of the Janissaries in managing military, political, and economic affairs (KUNTŪR, 2021: 96). The factionalism among the Janissaries in the eyalet arose due to competition with the riyas and karağul and their desire to control the reins of power, as well as their protests when their salaries were delayed (Dāwud, 2015: 98-99). However, the Sublime Porte did not allow this and sought to suppress these rebellions while simultaneously addressing their issues through correspondence directed to the eyalet of Algeria.

It happened that the Janissary faction in Algeria raised a concern with the Sublime Porte regarding the competition with the local people for the position of supervisor of state buildings, churches, and embassies (Yasakçilik)²¹, This position had historically been exclusively held by the Janissaries. However, the local people expressed their desire to take over this role and began to intervene in the matter. Consequently, the imperial decree mandated that the practice from the past be maintained and that this position (Yasakçilik) be restricted solely to the Janissary²².

The conflict between the Janissaries and the A'zim and the Divan in the eyalet of Algeria was intense. The A'zim contested the Janissaries' right to stand on the right side during military

¹⁸ - **Sanjak** : The term "Sanjak" linguistically means "flag" and originally referred to the banner granted by the Sultan to a governor or prince as a symbol of trust. Over time, its meaning evolved to signify an administrative division of the state (ŞĀBĀN, 2000, p. 136).

¹⁹ - B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d, Kutu No.22 , Gömlek No.252; 04 Rebiyülevvel 981, s 124.

²⁰ - B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d, Kutu No.22 , Gömlek No.671; 15 Rebiyülevvel 981 , s 339.

²¹- **Yasakçilik**: During the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, the primary responsibility of the Yasakçi was to maintain security and order. They were led by a chief known as Yasakçi Pasha, who was selected from among the infantry commanders of the Janissaries. The salaries of the Yasakçis were funded by fees levied on sheep in the region, with one akçe collected for every four sheep (BAYĀT, 2019, p. 161).

²² - B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d,..., Kutu No.07 , Gömlek No.67; 08 Safer 975 , s 20.

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parades, as it was customary for the A'zim to stand on the left. However, they sought to alter this tradition by standing on the right, which was reserved for the Janissaries. When the Pasha of Algeria was unable to resolve the issue and persuade the A'zim not to challenge the Janissaries in this matter, a complaint was submitted to the Porte. As a result, a ferman was issued specifying that the Janissaries should remain on the right side of the Divan and the A'zim on the left. Furthermore, the role of Yasakci was to be exclusively held by the Janissaries, and each party was required to perform its assigned duties. The ferman also addressed the issue of the Janissaries' mistreatment of the local population and the imposition of excessive fees beyond what was officially set, mandating the punishment of any violators of the existing orders and laws²³.

According to Ramadan Pasha's²⁴, statements regarding the rebellions carried out by the Janissaries and their pursuit of personal gain, their high-ranking position led them to seek wealth and spoils under the pretext of their right to jihad, causing disorder and rebellion against the Divan. Consequently, the Ottoman Sultan issued a communication to the Pasha of the Eyalet of Algeria, Hasan Pasha Finiziano, who succeeded Ramadan Pasha, to regulate the conduct of the Janissaries and to punish any who failed to comply with the regulations²⁵.

The Sublime Porte also insisted on the necessity of investigating them if they continued their actions, particularly when they created disorder and rebellion against the authority of the Divan with the aim of obtaining money and spoils under the guise of jihad²⁶.

Because the rebellion of the Janissaries and volunteers reached the level of disobeying the orders of their leaders and Aghas, including using offensive language and insults, a letter was sent to discipline those responsible for the chaos and to compel the rebels to submit and obey the orders²⁷.

The Janissary corps entered into numerous conflicts due to the inclusion of the agent of the Karaklıs into their ranks. Previously, this agent was aligned with the heads of ports and sailors. This integration transformed them into military units and incorporated them all into the Janissary corps and their agents, which led to constant disputes and ongoing conflicts. Since the inclusion of the Karaklıs and port heads into the Janissaries, there has been continuous discord and division among them. Consequently, imperial orders were issued to cease this disorder and restore the previous state, with a requirement to separate and maintain the independence of each faction, and to appoint a specific agent for each group²⁸.

The situation worsened due to the poor treatment the Janissaries received from the administration, which included the failure to pay their salaries and the lack of appointments to provincial positions. This led to numerous complaints being submitted to the Sublime Porte. In response, the Sublime Porte issued correspondence to the Pasha of the Algerian Eyalet, instructing him to ensure the payment of salaries to the Janissary troops stationed in the Eyalet as well as to those serving in land allocations. Additionally, it was mandated that no one should obstruct individuals claiming their rights, and in the event of the dismissal of a regional governor

²³ - B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d,..., Kutu No.07 , Gömlek No.2399; 10 Cemaziyelevvel 976, s 874.

²⁴ - **Ramadan Pasha:** He was captured as a young man in Sardinia. ruled Tunisia for a year, and after seizing it from Juan of Austria in 1573, he was forced to retreat to Kairouan with the Ottoman garrison. In 1574, he assumed the governorship of Algeria (DE HAEDO, 1881, pp. 158-167)

²⁵ - B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d,..., Kutu No.30 , Gömlek No.432; 05 Rebiyülevvel 985, s 185.

²⁶ - B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d,..., KŞutu No.30 , Gömlek No.469; 05 Rebiyülevvel 985, s 198.

²⁷ - B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d,..., Kutu No.30 , Gömlek No.517; 13 Rebiyülevvel 985, s 223.

²⁸ - B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d,..., Kutu No.43 , Gömlek No.226; 27 Rebiyülevvel 988, s 125.

(Sanjakkbey), they should be immediately replaced by a qualified individual, adhering to previous practices²⁹.

Certain inappropriate actions were carried out by some members of the Janissary corps, which were unbecoming of a military or governmental official in the Algerian Eyalet. For example, the Agha (commander) of the Janissaries engaged in misconduct, such as practicing cruelty, oppressing Muslims, accepting bribes, and inciting conflict among regional governors to extort them. He also blocked the wells of the citadel without consideration for others. Numerous complaints were made against him, leading to his dismissal by the Pasha, who appointed a new Janissary commander at the order of the Sublime Porte. The Divan requested that the dismissed commander be sent to the central government for punishment, unless a decision was made to execute³⁰.

To restrain the Janissaries and stop them from exploiting the locals, spreading injustice, and causing disorder, a communication was sent to the Pasha of Algeria. This was after addressing some of their demands—such as not promoting anyone directly and responding to requests for salary increases by stating that the country's revenue was insufficient and that the treasury's needs took precedence to ensure the country's stability. The emphasis was placed on caring for the subjects and implementing the specific regulations concerning the Janissary troops³¹.

Fearing that these strict penalties against the Janissary corps might lead to dissatisfaction with the Sublime State, the latter took special care in handling the issue, particularly regarding the promotion of Janissary units within the military hierarchy. The Ottoman state was keen to ensure the promotion of Janissary soldiers based on their valuable services and merits, as well as their contributions to the Sublime State. This imperial decree was communicated to all Janissary units³².

The Ottoman state was accustomed to honoring its military personnel, especially the Janissaries, whenever they achieved victories in battles or made significant efforts in state-related services. This honor typically involved promotions or increases in their salaries. Governors would present the achievements of their troops to the Sublime Porte for recognition. However, it seems that the state did not open the door wide to receiving requests from Janissaries for promotions or financial rewards beyond their regular salaries. Consequently, the Sublime Porte instructed the Beylerbey of Algeria to persuade them that they would receive honors if they contributed to the conquest of new territories and based on their merit, supported by their Aghas. Despite this, the Janissaries persisted in their demands for salary increases in Algeria without having achieved any military accomplishments, which led to the insufficiency of the province's resources in the treasury of the eyalet³³.

4. The Sublime Porte restrains the janissaries and limits their abuses:

The Ottoman state was keenly focused on safeguarding and protecting its subjects, avoiding interference in their affairs, and supporting those who faced injustice and oppression. In this context, measures were taken to address instances of embezzlement that harmed the local population, particularly when such misconduct involved the treasury's funds and the revenues of the eyalet, which were often misappropriated by prominent figures within the eyalet. This can be illustrated by several correspondences that reflect this issue.

²⁹ - B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d,..., Kutu No.47 , Gömlek No.436; 05 Cemaziyelahir 990, s 188.

³⁰ - B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d,..., Kutu No.42 , Gömlek No.266; 19 Cemaziyelahir 989 , s 55.

³¹ - B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d,..., Kutu No.48 , Gömlek No.136; 01 Şaban 990 , s 47.

³² - B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d,..., Kutu No.30 , Gömlek No.517; 13 Rebiyülevvel 985 , s 223.

³³ - B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d,..., Kutu No.24 , Gömlek No.413; Rebiyülevvel 985 , s 82.

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Among them is the correspondence directed to the financial and treasury representatives of the eyalet of Algeria, Tunisia, and Tripoli, which mandated an investigation into the disputes between the divan and the locals regarding certain state properties and lands³⁴.

In light of this situation, an imperial decree was issued with the purpose of investigating each person who claimed legitimacy of ownership documents (temlik). Moreover, it was required that taxes (vergiler) and tithes (öşür) be paid, following what had previously been implemented, and no one was to be granted an exemption³⁵.

The Sublime Porte was highly adamant about addressing the embezzlement of the eyalet's treasury and the public's wealth, which, as previously mentioned, was not solely attributed to commanders or governors. Other influential figures, including some with respected professions in the region, also exerted authority over these funds. These individuals exploited their positions and standing among the populace to deceive and defraud them, taking their money unlawfully. One such person was named Isa, who had previously held the position of governor in one of the sanjaks of the eyalet. He stole state funds from the treasury and kept three sacks of money. When this news reached the Sublime Porte, an imperial order was issued to arrest him, confiscate all his wealth and assets, and send them to the Sublime Porte, recorded in a special ledger³⁶.

Even the stipends (alufeh) of some captives and holders of sacred petitions were infringed upon after these payments were made to them as salaries. This prompted the Sublime Porte to intervene and address the issue, ensuring that these groups received their rightful stipends³⁷.

Even the governors themselves had a hand in seizing state properties, as mentioned by Governor Ahmed Pasha to the Ottoman Sultan regarding Ramadan Pasha, who had appropriated state funds and properties, including 1,200 horses, each valued at 22 florin, 200 mules, each valued at 15 florin, and 500 camels, each valued at 25 florin. Additionally, he seized all the amhal (land revenue), one of which was valued at 15,000 gold riyals and another at 30,000 gold pieces. Ramadan Pasha sent 15,000 gold riyals to his agents in Istanbul and kept 15,000 for himself. By imperial decree, these funds, belonging to the state, were to be reclaimed, avoiding any conflict, and the Sublime Porte was to be informed if the recovery was not successful³⁸.

Another communication was sent regarding the investigation into the ransom funds for the prisoners who had been redeemed by their state, Venice, after being captured by Raïs Murad during one of the campaigns in collaboration with the Ottoman State. The number of prisoners was estimated to be 80. Murad, despite knowing that the funds were meant for the state treasury, diverted the money for his personal use. Consequently, a Sultan's decree was issued to the Beylerbey of Algiers, ordering the recovery of these funds without any deduction or negligence and ensuring their transfer to the Ottoman state treasury via one of the ships heading to the Sublime Porte, with a stern warning against neglecting the enforcement of this decree.³⁹

³⁴ - where the Ottoman Turks and Arabs purchased these properties and lands from the Treasury and refused to pay the tithes and taxes on them, claiming ownership based on documents that proved their private ownership (ownership documents).

³⁵ - B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d,..., Kutu No.36 , Gömlek No.313; 08 Muharrem 987 , s 108.

³⁶ - B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d,..., Kutu No.07 , Gömlek No.2403; 03 Cemaziyelevvel 976 , s 875.

³⁷ - B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d,..., Kutu No.22 , Gömlek No.251; 05 Rebiyülahir 981 , s 124.

³⁸ - B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d,..., Kutu No.28 , Gömlek No.625; 25 Recep 984 .

³⁹ - B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d,..., Kutu No.34 , Gömlek No.246; 11 Safer 986, s 112.

Conclusion:

Based on the analysis presented in the research paper "An Approach through Ottoman Documents," the following conclusions were drawn:

After the Ottoman State successfully annexed several regions and established them as Eyalets under its control, it remained diligent in ensuring their proper administration, particularly through the formulation of laws and regulations, with a special focus on security. Ensuring stability and providing comfort to the inhabitants of the Eyalet of Algeria was the primary goal of the Ottoman state. To this end, numerous regulations and firman were issued to clarify the administration and management of the Eyalet, with the aim of enhancing social security and ensuring internal stability. As Malik Bin Nabi famously stated in his concept of "The Colonial Potential," internal weakness inevitably leads to external ambitions. Therefore, the Ottoman rulers endeavored to implement the orders of the Sublime Porte by protecting the populace, ensuring their safety, and achieving justice and order, with a particular focus on enforcing justice within the community. Despite facing obstacles, such as the presence of oppressive governors who were supposed to support the state, the Ottoman State sought to contain the Eyalet of Algeria and stabilize its situation. The involvement of influential figures like Hasan bin Khair al-Din, Kılıç Ali, and Ahmed Arab compelled the Sublime Porte to exert considerable effort in organizing the Eyalet effectively.

The Janissary corps was the backbone of each eyalet, tasked with maintaining security in the region, which reassured the Sublime Porte. However, the greed exhibited by some Janissaries led to contrary conditions within the Eyalet, prompting the Sublime Porte to take precautionary measures and enforce several laws to regulate the Janissaries. The abuses originating from entities expected to provide security to the populace became a source of concern for the Ottoman State, as complaints from the inhabitants against oppressive governors and Janissaries persisted over time. The injustices, assaults, and chaos caused by the Janissary soldiers were a result of their failure to integrate into society and establish social relationships with the local populace.

The Sublime Porte, through its firman issued to the Eyalet of Algeria, took several decisive actions to reinforce justice and social peace. It aimed to combat any beylerbey or Ottoman official who committed crimes or injustices against the populace, ordering their trial, imprisonment, and transfer to Istanbul. The correspondence covered various directives addressed to the Sublime Porte, accusing several officials, such as Isa the Sanjak Governor, Beylerbey Ramadan Pasha, and Rais Murad, of unlawfully seizing the assets and properties of the populace, as well as funds from the Algerian treasury and ransom money, which posed a significant challenge for the Sublime Porte in terms of investigations and financial management. Nevertheless, the Sublime Porte's response was decisive, ordering the confiscation of the assets of these officials to compensate the rightful owners and deposit the remaining funds into the eyalet's treasury.

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VII. Appendices:

Appendix 1: B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d,..., Kutu No.12 ,Gömlek No.1088; 08 Zilkade 979 /23 Mart 1572, s 571.



A. (DVNSMHM 00012)

Decree to the Agha of the Janissaries, the Kethuda of the Janissaries, the Block Leaders, and the Leaders of the Odas, and the Janissaries in the Western Algiers, In recognition of the companionship and bravery demonstrated by the former Beylerbey of Western Algiers, Kılıç Ali, may his fortune endure, during expeditions and jihad for the sake of God and in my noble service, he has been included in the sphere of my supreme sultanic care. He has been appointed to the post of Kapudan Pasha and the governorship of Algiers in my exalted presence, as well as the governorship of Tunis. Upon the arrival of the aforementioned to my exalted presence, he reported your commendable unity in exerting all your efforts for the sake of the true religion and that you have become wholeheartedly aligned with your commanders, demonstrating your usefulness in religious matters and in affairs related to my eternal dominion connected to my Sultanate. Those who accompanied the aforementioned from the soldiers of Algiers were honored according to their ranks, with some assigned to the Right and Left Blocks, others to the corps of Jeberds and artillery in my exalted presence, in accordance with their regulations and Ojaks. The aforementioned reported your honorable services and valor, which brighten [your reputation] and earn you

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blessings. This was the expected behavior from you, as he attested. The governorship of Western Algiers has been entrusted to Ahmed Pasha, may his fortune endure, who has been dispatched there.

Upon the arrival of the aforementioned, you are to act as you have always done, with proper conduct and coordination, in accordance with his directives. You must adhere to his words without delay in showing him the utmost respect and honor. Be diligent and strive to preserve the governorship and defend the frontiers of the Muhammadan religion, exerting your commendable efforts in my noble service in the manner he deems appropriate. Should your governor present to my exalted station reports of beneficial services or valor from any among you, such will be granted acceptance from us, God willing, and you will be honored according to your ranks. Therefore, it is incumbent upon each of you to safeguard and protect this esteemed territory, ensuring security and safety for its people and inhabitants, and to exert all possible efforts in this regard.

Appendix 2: B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d,..., Kutu No.39 , Gömlek No.439; 13 Muharrem 988 /28 Şubat 1580 , s 217.



A copy to: Mustafa Dafterdar of the Western Eyālah, sent a memorandum of the cases, in which he reported that the governors who had taken over the provinces of Tunisia, Western Algeria, and Tripoli, due to their greed for the Bayt al-Mal, had embezzled the miri funds, sometimes claiming that the military class had rebelled, and at other times that the people of the province had raised the banner of rebellion. It was stipulated that all funds collected in the mentioned provinces, whether in full or in part, should be spent on the military class to the extent necessary, and any remaining funds should not be wasted, but stored to be used for their needs when required. Based on this report, a decree was sent to the aforementioned, instructing that the funds collected in the mentioned Eyālah, whether fully or partially, should be allocated to meet the needs of the military class, and any surplus should be stored in a separate place for future use.

Upon arrival, you are also required to comply with this instruction and ensure that sufficient funds from crops and other miri funds in the Eyālah, whether in full or in part, are spent accordingly, while the remaining funds should be stored in another treasury under the supervision of the relevant authorities. This is so they can be used when necessary to cover military expenses

and other essential costs. Furthermore, you should prepare a sufficient number of soldiers to assist in the collection of the miri funds.

Appendix 3: B.O.A, A.DVNS.MHM.d,..., Kutu No.07,Gömlek No.2403; 03 Cemaziyelevvel 976 / 24 Ekim 1568, s 875.



A (DVNSMIM.4.0007)

This decree is addressed to the Beylerbey of the Eyâlet of Algiers:It has been reported that the individual named Isa was previously appointed as Ameer of one of the sanjaks of the Eyâlet of Algiers. He has outstanding debts to the state, which he embezzled, and he still possesses three bags of money. Therefore, it is necessary to arrest him, confiscate all the provisions and funds in his possession, and send them to the Sublime Porte. You must ensure that these funds are sent in the best possible manner, recording all the money found in his possession in a Defter and sending it to the Sublime Porte.