

French Detention and Torture Centers in the Touggourt Region During the Algerian War of Independence 1954-1962 AD "Dar Al-Doub Detention Center as a Model".

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Received: 10.02.2026

Accepted: 12.06.2026

Publishing: 05.08.2026

Abstract:

The torture and detention centers established by the French occupation in various parts of the homeland are generally considered dark points in France's black history in Algeria. France officially denied any connection to the torture operations and what was happening in Algeria. All killings, executions, burning of villages with internationally prohibited weapons, and nuclear tests in the Algerian desert were claimed by France to be pacification efforts. As for the operations carried out by the National Liberation Army, which destabilized its security, they were merely a group of outlaws who would soon be brought under control.

Upon the outbreak of the Liberation Revolution and the subsequent years until independence, France established many torture centers, prisons, detention camps, and internment camps. What happened inside them to Algerians defies all description. To this day, France has not acknowledged what it did in Algeria, despite all the evidence and clues, including torture centers, remaining to this day. However, they will remain a testament to the brutal methods used by the French occupier against the Algerian people to sever their connection with the revolution and eliminate them, claiming the lives of thousands of Algerians, and cannot be dismissed by statute of limitations.

In this research paper, we will attempt to address one of the French torture centers in the Touggourt region, and the most dangerous of all during the Liberation Revolution in the region, which is "Dar al-Doub Detention Camp." Inside it, the French occupation subjected the people of the greater Touggourt region in particular, and the Oued Righ region in general, to various brutal torture methods, such as torture using electric shocks, burning, severe beating, and other methods that will be mentioned in this research paper. Thus, the following problem arose: How did the French detention and torture centers in the Touggourt region, especially Dar al-Doub Detention Camp, contribute to the French repression strategy against the Liberation Revolution? To answer this problem, we developed a plan consisting of three main headings: the first is an introduction to torture centers, prisons, detention camps, and internment camps in general; the second is examples of French torture centers in the Touggourt region during the Liberation Revolution; and the third is dedicated to introducing Dar al-Doub Detention Camp in the Touggourt region.

Keywords: Touggourt, Prisons, Detention centers, Camps, Torture, Dar al-Doub.

Introduction:

Torture centers are considered hellish methods used by France against the Algerian people since the occupation in 1830. Prisons, detention centers, internment camps, and enemy French barracks remain witnesses to the extent of the crimes committed by the French against the Algerian people to this day. France left no area in Algeria without a torture center, especially during the Liberation Revolution, when the enemy intensified extermination operations to eliminate the Liberation Revolution with all the means it possessed. Touggourt region was one of the areas that did not escape this, as the enemy established many prisons, detention centers, and internment camps there, whether those in the city center or its outskirts in the villages located in the region.

One of the most prominent and dangerous French torture centers in the Touggourt region during the Liberation Revolution was "Dar al-Doub Detention Center," where the French occupation subjected the people of Greater Touggourt, in particular, and the Oued Righ region, in general, to various brutal torture methods, such as torture using electric shocks, burning, severe beating, and other methods that will be mentioned in this research paper.

Based on the foregoing, the problem of this study revolves around answering the following question: How did French detention and torture centers in the Touggourt region, especially Dar al-Doub Detention Center, contribute to the French repression strategy against the Liberation Revolution? To answer this problem, we relied on a set of sources and references, the most important of which are a collection of oral testimonies from mujahideen who suffered the horrors of these centers from torture and abuse, and some books such as the Martyr's Dictionary for Ouargla Province and doctoral theses by professors such as Ridouane Chafou and Mouadh Omrani, by extracting and identifying the most prominent torture and interrogation centers in the Touggourt region in general and inferring the most prominent brutal methods used by the French occupation soldiers to torture prisoners and detainees.

In this research paper, we will attempt to address torture centers in the Touggourt region in general, and Dar al-Doub Detention Center in particular. We have divided it into three main axes: the first axis is about defining the various detention and torture centers established by France in Algeria to identify the differences between them, the second axis was about mentioning examples of torture centers established by the French occupation in the Touggourt region during the Liberation Revolution, and the third was dedicated to introducing Dar al-Doub Detention Center and the most prominent brutal methods imposed by the French occupation against the people of the region.

First: Introduction to French detention and torture centers.

It is worth noting that the French occupation practiced torture and interrogation within all the centers it established, in prisons, detention centers, and even internment camps, barracks, and others. This became clearly and distinctly evident, especially with the beginning of the revolution and its spread throughout the national territory. These centers were equipped with special tools and equipment for torture, in addition to bringing in officers specialized in the arts of torture.

1 - Prisons:

Prisons are one of the penal institutions that France used to eliminate Algerians who rejected and resisted the French policy applied to Algerians during the French occupation. With the outbreak of the liberation revolution, the Governor-General in Algeria was given broad powers to confront and try to eliminate the revolution, through the issuance of the decree of March 17, 1956, by virtue of this

decree, special centers were established for imprisoning Algerians alongside the official prisons that existed before that, these prisons were characterized by a special architectural system, as they were surrounded by high walls¹, built of reinforced concrete, and had barbed wire at the top. As for the doors, they were made of thick iron plates that were difficult to penetrate or destroy.

Through this, the occupation forces sought to try to eliminate the revolution and cut off communication between the mujahideen and the general Algerian people, in order to prevent any aid or news from reaching them about the concentration and locations of the French occupation soldiers. Thus, most Algerian cities were not without a prison; rather, all of Algeria became a prison.

Most of these prisons were known for the ill-treatment of Algerians, where the accused would go through stages, starting with his arrest, then being taken to police stations for interrogation, during which he would be subjected to the most severe forms and types of torture, then he would be brought before the court to issue a prison sentence, after which he would be transferred to prison, where he would be subjected to procedures, and finally placed in a cell².

2 - Detention camps:

Detention camps are guarded places surrounded by barbed wire where tents are set up for detainees, at a distance from these, there is a guard tent topped with a set of searchlights, the guard tent often includes a military squad led by an officer³, a detention camp is a place where a group of people are gathered as a result of causing chaos, revolution, or disturbing order without trial⁴, citizens are gathered there with the aim of restricting their freedom because they pose a threat to the security and order of the French occupation forces⁵, the difference between a prison and a detention camp appears first in the time of their emergence, prisons have an ancient history, while detention camps only appear during wars and conflicts between nations. Secondly, it appears at their end; if wars end, detention camps disappear, and only prisons remain, as they continue as long as life continues⁶.

The French occupation authorities sought to establish these detention camps starting from mid-1955, especially after April 30, 1955, when the state of emergency law was issued, they imprisoned and detained anyone suspected of having a connection to the liberation revolution, whether as a supporter of the revolution or even a sympathizer⁷, detainees enjoyed some freedoms within the detention camp and were not subject to a specific dress code, they could read newspapers, listen to the

¹ - Abdelkader Fekair, Algerians in Prisons, Detention Centers, Camps, and Torture Centers During the Liberation Revolution, *Al-Nasiriya Journal for Social and Historical Studies*, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mustapha Stambouli University of Mascara, Vol. 09, No. 01, Algeria, June 2018, p.418.

² - Ibid, p. 419.

³ - Ibrahim Lounici, Detainees and Their Exploitation in Psychological Warfare Against Algerians During the Liberation Revolution, *Al-Nasiriya Journal for Social and Historical Studies*, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mustapha Stambouli University of Mascara, Special Issue, Algeria, December 2012 AD, p.16.

⁴ - Nour Eddine Mokaddar, French Detention Camps in Algeria During the Liberation Revolution, *Journal of Literature and Human Sciences*, Faculty of Literature and Islamic Civilization, Emir Abdelkader University of Islamic Sciences in Constantine, Vol. 15, No. 01, Algeria, July 2016 AD, p.240.

⁵ - Ibrahim Lounici, op. cit, p.15.

⁶ - Mohamed Tahar Azzoui, *Memories of Detainees*, National Communication Publishing and Advertising Foundation, Printing Unit (Publications of the National Museum of the Mujahid), Rouiba, Algeria, 1996 AD, p. 13.

⁷ - Nour Eddine Mokaddar, op. cit, p.241.

radio, exercise in the camp's special yard, and play sports..., because they were not criminals until their case was decided¹.

3 - Concentration camps:

Concentration camps are defined as settlements comprising a number of non-convicted or non-prosecuted nationals, established by the French occupation authorities in specific locations², they were gathered in fenced, guarded villages surrounded by barbed wire³, where Algerian citizens who were forcibly displaced from their lands resided, France imposed residence in these heavily guarded camps, which were also called "the wire" due to the barbed wire surrounding them from all sides. Various types of torture and interrogation were practiced in these camps, similar to other centers, where their inmates faced an unknown fate.

These camps were officially implemented starting in 1956, following the issuance of the state of emergency law in April 1955, the number of Algerians forced to reside in these camps reached approximately 1 million and 157 thousand Algerians, which was nearly a quarter of the Algerian population at that time, this was acknowledged by the Plenipotentiary Minister **"Paul Delouvrier"** who, as the official spokesperson for the French government in Algeria, stated: **"The specialized administrative services (SAS offices) have gathered a number of Algerians reaching 1 million and 250 thousand people."**

These camps were considered a form of pressure on the revolutionaries, aimed at tightening the noose on the revolution, as it drew its strength from the people, who were an important source of its continuity. Concentration camps were also a type of collective prison where inmates suffered various forms of misery and deprivation. Bishop "Jacques Beaumont," describing the miserable conditions suffered by those inside the camps, especially children, in October 1959, said: **"I saw children whose bones were clearly visible under their skin. They were children exhausted by fever and cold, whose growth was stunted, accompanied by pallor and emaciation, and consumed by various diseases... lying on the ground without cover. I visited many centers where there was not a single cover, and if there was one sometimes, it was a single cover for thirteen people, all covering themselves with it in one tent."**

The objectives behind establishing these camps can be summarized in the following points:

- _ Isolating the National Liberation Army from the people.
- _ Preventing the Algerian people from being influenced by the propaganda and national and political awareness efforts carried out by individuals and agencies of the National Liberation Army and Front.
- _ Preventing Algerians from joining and adhering to the revolution.
- _ France's attempt to mislead international public opinion by establishing these camps near French military centers, suggesting that the people were tired of the revolution and the revolutionaries and had

¹ - Ibrahim Lounici, op. cit, p.15.

² - Nadia Naaman, Detainees and Camps During the Liberation Revolution (Medea Wilaya as a Model), Journal of History of Sciences, Ziane Achour University of Djelfa, Vol. 04, No. 07, Algeria, March 2017, p.55.

³ - Masoud Othmani, The Liberation Revolution Facing a Difficult Challenge, Dar Al-Huda for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, Ain M'lila, Algeria, 2012 AD, p. 317.

fled from the mountains and rural areas to these regions, so that French military centers could provide them with protection and security¹.

Second: Examples of French torture tenters in the Touggourt region during the Algerian war of independence

The French occupation authorities established a number of torture and interrogation centers and sites in the Oued Righ region, similar to other cities and rural areas of the country, the aim behind this was to try to suppress and eliminate the revolution in the Oued Righ region in general, especially after its intensity increased in 1957 in the region, Therefore, France established specialized schools in Algeria for teaching torture techniques, such as the "Jeanne d'Arc" school in Skikda, which it established on May 11, 1958, this center specialized in training many groups of torturers who were distributed to various centers after a period of training, having proven their competence in using various methods and techniques of torture², such as electric torture in sensitive areas, forced ingestion of large quantities of water, severe flogging, stabbing between the shoulder blades, and other brutal torture methods³.

Among these centers are the El M'Ghair detention center, Dar Zrig, Dar Diab, the military barracks in El M'Ghair⁴, the Oum Touyour town detention center, the Nesigha center, and the El Baaj town tower for interrogation, in Djamaa and its surroundings, we find the El Aghfian detention center, Borj Corneau, and the Djamaa detention center, as for the Touggourt region⁵ and its surroundings, which is the subject of our study, we also find many torture and interrogation centers there, similar to the Touggourt region and its surroundings, El Hadjira, El Tayebat, and others, such as the Dar Al-Doup (DOP) detention center, Barracks 401⁶, the civil prison or what is known as the Great Prison in Touggourt, the French military internment camp in El Tayebat, Borj El Assali in El M'Ngar, the military center (El Koudia) in El Hadjira, the Dar Touijine torture center, Dar El Hadj El Alami in El Alia city in El Hadjira, and others that will be mentioned later.

1 - Touggourt administrative district - headquarters of the French administration for the greater Touggourt region (Bureau Arabe):

This headquarters was established in 1910, and it also served as a special center for the command of the military region of Touggourt, located in the city center, it is a massive building with

¹ - Nadia Naaman, op. cit., pp. 55-56.

² - Othman Taher Aliya, *The Algerian Revolution: Glories and Heroism*, National Communication, Publishing and Advertising Institution, Printing Unit, Rouiba, Algeria, 1996 AD, p. 138.

³ - Abdelmadjid Omrani, *The French Intellectual Elite and the Algerian Revolution 1954-1962 AD*, Dar Al-Shihab Press, Batna, Algeria, 1995 AD, p. 130.

⁴ - Mouadh Omrani, *The Oued Righ Region under French Occupation (1854-1962 AD) A Political Study*, (Thesis submitted for a PhD in Modern and Contemporary History), Faculty of Humanities, Department of History, University of Algiers - 2 - Bouzareah, Algeria, 2015/2016 AD, p. 245.

⁵ - The city of Touggourt is geographically located in the southeast of Algiers, at a distance of approximately 650 km. In the new administrative division, it has become a full-fledged wilaya (province) with the number 55. It is bordered to the north by El M'Ghair Province, to the east by El Oued Province, to the west by Djelfa and Ghardaia Provinces, and to the south by Ouargla Province. Touggourt is considered the capital of the Oued Righ region. For more, see: Mohamed Said Boubaker, *The Present of Touggourt and Ouargla during the Ottoman Era*, Sami for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, El Oued, Algeria, 2024 AD, pp. 33-34.

⁶ - Mouadh Omrani, op. cit, p. 246.

an area of approximately 2500m², featuring numerous wings and an upper floor. It has a main entrance on the western side and a secondary special entrance on the northern side of the building. This building housed many offices, a residence for the administrative governor, other facilities, and a courtyard. Behind it was a garden and a building dedicated to interrogation and torture, which was used before the outbreak of the Liberation Revolution as a temporary detention center for civilians who committed offenses, after the start of the Liberation Revolution, it was used as a center for the arrest and interrogation of members of the Liberation Revolution and for subjecting them to torture, after the French occupation authorities abolished the law of military regions in the south of Algeria, it was converted into the headquarters of the Touggourt Governorate's deputy office in 1959.

After independence, it was used as the headquarters for the Touggourt district until 1975, after the district headquarters was relocated, it was evacuated and permanently removed, and the site was later used for the construction of buildings where the Touggourt arcades and the Agricultural Bank for Rural Development are now located.

2 - City Center (Military Barracks) in Touggourt:

This barracks was built in 1905 by the French occupation authorities, it covers a vast area estimated at about 8000 m² in the center of Touggourt city, with a high wall and four watchtowers at its corners. It has a main entrance facing the building of the military governor's administration for the Touggourt region, and also a secondary entrance on the southern side, it includes administration buildings, soldiers' dormitories, and many cells and rooms for torturing detainees from the liberation revolution.

It was used as a military barracks and prison for members of the liberation revolution and a center for their interrogation and torture starting from 1957, it is considered the largest barracks in the Touggourt region, where the French occupation forces practiced various forms of torture, including electricity, water, burning, and even executions, which France carried out from time to time, when interrogating detainees, detainees were brought to the barracks from all municipalities of the military region of Greater Touggourt, they were initially imprisoned in cells built of stone and iron, and then subjected to the most horrific types of torture, France did this to many of the region's people, some of whom were even executed or transferred to larger prisons such as Lambèse Prison in Batna or El Koudia Prison in Constantine, today, no trace of this barracks remains, as it was completely removed in 1974, and its land was used for building various projects¹.

3 - Center or Barracks 401 in Touggourt:

It is a military barracks that was established in 1957 by the French occupation administration, it covers a vast area, extending over several hectares, surrounded by an iron fence, in the middle of its courtyard, iron houses were placed and used for managing the center and housing French soldiers, additionally, numerous underground tunnels were built and used by the French occupation forces to torture and interrogate arrested locals.

In it, the French occupation forces practiced the most horrific types of torture and abuse during the interrogation of detainees, torture involved the use of electricity, water, chaining, inciting dogs, and burning the body with a special device, after all this suffering, interrogation, and torture, the detainees

¹ - Jamal al-Din Miadi and others., Dictionary of the Martyr for the Wilaya of Ouargla, Al-Amal Publishing, 1st ed., El Oued, Algeria, 2006 AD, pp. 562-565.

were transferred to a barracks in the center of Touggourt city to serve their designated prison term, after independence, these barracks became a military barracks, rebuilt and with many new facilities added, while maintaining its location and removing all old fences and structures¹.

4 - The police station, or what is known as the Public Security in Touggourt:

The location of this building is almost in the center of the city of Touggourt, slightly confined to the northeast side, it was established by the French colonial authorities in 1940 and was designated for the Public Security Police, it covers an area estimated at about 600 m². To the south, it is bordered by the courthouse building, this center consists of two floors: the ground floor contains administrative offices and an interrogation room, while the upper floor was allocated by the occupying forces as a residence for the head of the center, the center also includes a garden on its northern side, a main entrance on the western side, a private entrance on the same side, and another rear entrance, this building is almost independent within its boundaries on all sides, with only the courthouse building attached to its southern side².

After the outbreak of the liberation revolution, which was a violent shock and a resounding call for freedom and independence³, many of those proven to have joined the revolution were arrested and thrown into this center, whether they were civilians or fedayeen, for interrogation as a first stage, then, the police practiced various methods of torture and abuse on the detainees, many of them were transferred either to the military barracks located in the city center or to the DOP (Dar Al-Doup) center as a temporary prison, and later, a large group of them was transferred to one of the major prisons, whether Lambèse Prison⁴ in Batna or the Koudia Prison in the city of Constantine.

This building still exists today in its old state and has not undergone any changes. It has preserved its architectural character, as it was used after independence as the headquarters of the police (National Security), and later became a facility affiliated with its services.

5 - The civil prison, also known as the large prison in Touggourt:

It is located in the center of the city of Touggourt, we did not find a specific year for its establishment, but it certainly existed before the outbreak of the Liberation Revolution in 1954, this prison was built with special and precise planning⁵, occupying a vast total area of more than approximately 1000 m², it contains several facilities, such as watchtowers located at its four corners, as well as halls for prisoners, whether those proven to have joined the Liberation Revolution, civilians,

¹ - Ibid, p. 567.

² - Ibid, pp. 570-571.

³ - Jamal Qanane, Issues and Studies in the Modern and Contemporary History of Algeria, National Institution for Communication, Publishing, and Advertising, Printing Unit in Rouiba (Publications of the National Museum of the Mujahid), Algeria, 1994, p. 243.

⁴ - Lambèse Prison was established in January 1850 and is located about 12 km from the city of Batna, covering an area of approximately 10 hectares. It was built in the shape of a cross and is considered one of the prisons that bear witness to the brutality of the French occupation. It contains a chamber called the "madmen's chamber," which housed those who were subjected to such brutal torture that they lost their sanity and became insane. Most of the prisoners of Lambèse were those sentenced to hard labor and life imprisonment. For more information, see: Yasmina Karimi, Detainees and Prisoners during the Algerian Revolution 1954–1962, (Master's thesis in Contemporary History), Faculty of Humanities, Department of History, University of Algiers 2 – Bouzareah, Algeria, 2016/2017, p. 26.

⁵ - Jamal al-Din Miadi and others, op. cit, pp. 571 to 573.

or those awaiting trial, there are also cells in the prison yard designated for temporary detention, and offices for the administration, it is surrounded by a high wall and has a single main entrance¹.

This prison was designated for those sentenced under common law, but after the outbreak of the Liberation Revolution, it mainly housed detainees from the revolutionaries, they were subjected to interrogation under torture and abuse, and were later transferred to one of the military detention centers, whether to the military barracks in the city center, the Dar al-Doub detention center, the Lambèse prison in Batna, or even the Koudia prison in Constantine.

After independence, this prison continued to be used as a civil prison, but was later evacuated and remained empty, retaining its facilities and structure until 1990, when it was subsequently converted into housing.

6 - The French military camp in Tayebat:

This camp is located in the center of the city of Tayebat², it was built in 1959 by French army forces, the camp consists of a vast area surrounded by a wall with a single main entrance and exit, three watchtowers were installed for internal and external surveillance, France placed this camp under the command of Officer Gaulois, who in turn assigned about 80 soldiers to manage and guard the camp, the purpose of its establishment was to separate the people from the liberation revolution by imprisoning many families of fleeing mujahideen and even those sentenced by the French occupation authorities, in order to prevent the families of these mujahideen from carrying out any revolutionary act that might threaten the security of the French occupation soldiers on one hand, and on the other hand, to prevent any assistance being provided to the mujahideen.

The French practiced various types of torture in this camp against the families of the mujahideen, and even the women were not spared from torture, the occupation forces subjected them to many different methods of torture, despite all this, some young people from the region managed to establish a secret revolutionary organization to transmit news and monitor enemy movements³, in addition to carrying out many protest movements from time to time.

Despite everything the French did, they did not succeed in winning over the youth of the region from the families of the mujahideen, whether to obtain information related to the mujahideen or to try to integrate and recruit them into the ranks of the French army, despite all the temptations that were offered to them⁴.

7 - Al-Assali Tower in the Municipality of Al-Mingar:

This tower is located in the vicinity of the Boutara area, which is in the municipality of Al-Mingar, Tayebat district, it is about 38 km from the municipal headquarters, to the northwest, this tower is situated in a flat area to facilitate the French occupation forces' monitoring of any movement by the

¹ - Ruffaïda Jarid and others, the French detainees in the Wadi Righ region during the Liberation Revolution, Dar Al-Doub in the city of Touggourt as a model (1957–1962), (A memorandum submitted to fulfill the requirements for the Academic Master's degree in General History, specialization: Modern and Contemporary History), Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, Department of History, Hamma Lakhdar University in El Oued, Algeria, 2024/2025, p. 13.

² - Jamal al-Din Miadi and others, op. cit., pp. 573-574.

³ - Saoud Dahdi and others, Tribal Tayebat: History and Glories, Mazwar Press, 1st Edition, El Oued, Algeria, 2019, p. 43.

⁴ - Jamal al-Din Miadi and others, op. cit., p. 575.

mujahideen of the region, especially since its location was on the caravan route that traveled between Wadi Righ¹ and Wadi Souf.

Al-Assali Tower is considered one of the most important historical landmarks still standing today. It is part of a group of towers, similar to Al-Tarfaia Tower and Boumzoud Tower... the occupation established it in 1914 with the beginning of World War I, for the purpose of tightening and intensifying surveillance, especially on the southeastern borders, when the French occupation learned of the German forces landing in Tunisia, which led to French fears and consequently intensified surveillance on the southeastern side.

In addition, the occupation forces used this tower as a training center for cavalry and mehara (camel-riding) teams, which played a prominent role in the region, detecting the movements of revolutionaries and mujahideen on the eastern border. During the outbreak of the Liberation Revolution on November 1, 1954, it became a center for monitoring and tracking the activities of the National Liberation Army soldiers to restrict and try to stifle the revolution, thus, it became a center for torture and interrogation operations, where many mujahideen were transferred to the tower for torture, such as Mujahid Rahmani Muhammad and other mujahideen of the region, where the occupation subjected them to severe torture before they were transferred to prisons and detention centers in Touggourt and other areas².

8 - The Military Center (Al-Koudia) in El Hadjira:

It is a military barracks located in the center of El Hadjira city on a high plateau, which gives the center strategic importance due to its central location within the city on one hand, and the elevation it was built upon on the other, this allowed French occupation soldiers to monitor all movements of individuals and mujahideen of the Liberation Revolution inside and outside the city³.

This center was built in 1956 by the French occupation administration, it was originally a large house owned by Qaed Hamma Al-Saghir, which the French occupation authorities seized from him and converted into a torture center⁴, it covers an area of approximately 600 m², with offices and rooms built inside, surrounded by a high wall with watchtowers at its corners, it enjoys a strategic location and a solidly constructed building that was difficult for the region's mujahideen to penetrate, as any movement around it was exposed, as mentioned, due to its construction on a high plateau.

France used this center specifically to gather occupation soldiers who carried out sweeping and surveillance operations and guarded the area to prevent any movement by the mujahideen of the Liberation Revolution in the region, in addition, the center was also used as a place to interrogate mujahideen and subject them to various types of torture, as well as any civilian who might be suspected

¹ - The Oued Righ region is located in the northeastern part of the Algerian Sahara, approximately 600 km southeast of the capital Algiers. The region is a depression that starts from the slope of Oum El Tiour, 80 km from Biskra, and extends to the town of El Goug, located 30 km south of Touggourt. Thus, the Oued Righ region stretches about 160 km from north to south, while its horizontal or transverse extension is between 30 and 40 km. For more information, see: Yamina Ben Saghir Hadri, The Oued Righ Region Through Western Sources (Colonial Era), Al-Wahat Journal for Research and Studies, Ghardaia University, Vol. 10, No. 02, Algeria, December 2017, p. 1015.

² - Saoud Dahdi and others, op. cit, pp. 46-47.

³ - Jamal al-Din Miadi and others, op. cit, p. 576.

⁴ - Interview with Mujahid Mohamed Sheikh Obeidli at his home in the city of El Alia -El Hajar- on February 25, 2025, at 11:30 AM, by student Jarid Rufaida and her colleagues, who are preparing for their Master's thesis.

of collaborating with the mujahideen, This center still stands today and is currently utilized by some local authorities.

9 - Dar Touijine Torture Center, and Dar El Hadj El Alami in El Alia city in El Hadjira:

As for the Dar Touijine torture center, it is located in the neighborhood called Touijine in the eastern part of El Alia city, an agricultural area containing some scattered popular dwellings built before the outbreak of the liberation revolution, the mujahideen had designated one of these houses in this location to hold their meetings, which was the house of one of the mujahideen of the area named Mashri Ghazal. However, France monitored some movements of the mujahideen, who were originally residents of this area, and raided the place, arresting many residents of the area, they subjected them to the most extreme and heinous types of torture, in addition to destroying and demolishing most of the dwellings in the area once in 1957, and again in December 1961, when the Battle of El Alia occurred, which ended with the martyrdom of Ahmed Jawahi.

The house that was designated for holding many meetings of the area's mujahideen is still standing after being renovated, and it is surrounded by palm trees, as for the rest of the dwellings, they were destroyed due to the sabotage carried out by the French occupation at that time.

As for the Dar El Hadj El Alami torture center in El Alia, it is the house of El Hadj El Alami bin Saghir, a citizen of El Alia city, it was built before the outbreak of the liberation revolution, this house is located in the western part of El Alia city, and is close to the headquarters of Sheikh Ben El Alami's zawiya, the mujahideen used it as a place to retreat to after carrying out operations against the French occupation forces to rest, spend the night, and plan anew, however, after the occupation forces discovered the place, they seized it and converted it in 1957 into a watchtower to monitor the movements of those coming to the zawiya, and to prevent the infiltration of mujahideen with them, the place (the house) was also used to interrogate many civilians and mujahideen using different types of torture, and then transfer them to Dar El-Doub detention center or the prison in Touggourt area¹.

France has always harbored and continues to harbor all manifestations of hatred and contempt for Algerians, no matter how long it takes², despite all the suffering endured by the youth of the region inside the torture centers, including torture and interrogation, they were able to stand up to the French occupation and not surrender, they managed to carry out many movements that greatly disturbed the enemy, and even inflicted significant losses on them in various battles and clashes, in addition to carrying out many protest movements and demonstrations from time to time in the Touggourt region in general, the French occupation authorities did not succeed, despite all they did, in winning over the brave youth of the region, whether to obtain some information about the mujahideen from them, or to try to integrate and recruit them into the ranks of the French army, despite all the temptations offered to them.

¹ - Jamal al-Din Miadi and others, op. cit, pp. 577 - 578.

² - Mohamed Mania, Stories of Colonial Scandals in Algeria, A. Badran & Co. Presses in Beirut (Publications of Dar Al-Kitab Library in Blida), Lebanon, 1963 AD, p. 58.

Third: Dar Al-Doub (DOP) Detention Center in Touggourt:

The Dar Al-Doub D.O.P detention center, also known as Dar Al-Sheikh, is an acronym for French words meaning Operational Detachment for Prevention¹, in early 1957, this service became operational in the field, tasked with dismantling National Liberation Front cells by all means, including torture, abuse, and interrogation², this detention center is located in the Sidi Abdel Salam neighborhood in the western part of Touggourt city, this building has a single main entrance from the east, and it also contains two watchtowers installed at two corners of the center, it has 09 offices for administration, a weapons storage room, and two large torture and interrogation chambers, there are 07 individual cells in the courtyard of this detention center, as well as a club for soldiers and private accommodation for soldiers on duty in the back courtyard of the detention center.

France used this center as a special facility for detainees from the Liberation Revolution, where French occupation forces (paratroopers) practiced the most heinous forms of torture, the first martyr due to various torture operations was Martyr Ahmed Tanamri Bouleifa in 1957, many people from Touggourt were also tortured there, such as those detained during the March 13, 1962 demonstrations in El Mangar - El Tayebat.

The French commander "**Critès**" is considered one of the most infamous leaders of the French occupation who practiced the most brutal and varied forms of torture on detainees in this center, he would strip off his clothes during the torture of detainees from the region, remaining only in his underwear, then drink alcohol and begin the interrogation and torture of detainees at night, among the torture methods practiced by French occupation soldiers on prisoners in this detention center, we mention:

_ Torture using high-voltage electric shocks, where the prisoner is seated on an iron chair, then 06 wires connected to electricity are attached to their hands, feet, and ears, in addition to pouring water on their head until the prisoner often loses consciousness due to the torture, the occupation soldiers would repeat this process on prisoners daily.

_ Torture by prolonged standing under the scorching sun, often lasting a full day, with hands and feet tied and bound, and the prisoner deprived of food and drink, when they collapsed, they would be beaten by a group of soldiers until they lost consciousness.

_ Performing strenuous labor under the scorching sun, which was imposed on detainees, especially in construction and excavation work such as building barracks and other structures, in addition to torture by deprivation of food for a long period, which could reach three full days, one of the detainees, Saud Saud, recalls that often he would see flies moving at the door of the torture room, and he and his comrades would imagine it was food that would be served to them due to extreme hunger, also, Ammari El Sayeh, another prisoner, recalls seeing a dog urinating on a piece of bread, which he took and hid,

¹ - Radouane Chaafou, Live Testimonies of Torture Manifestations and Methods in the Ouargla Region During the Algerian War of Independence, Al-Maaref Journal for Historical Research and Studies, University of Echahid Hamma Lakhdar El-Oued, Vol. 01, No. 03, Algeria, November 2015, p.12.

² - Radouane Chaafou, The Algerian Southeast During the Colonial Era, Ouargla as a Model 1844 - 1962, (Thesis submitted for a PhD in Modern and Contemporary History), Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of History, University of Algiers - 2 - Bouzareah, Algeria, 2011/2012, p.309.

when he had not eaten for a long time, he resorted to eating it, and when one of his comrades saw him, he rushed to him and begged him to give him a part of it to satisfy his hunger.

_ Among the torture methods also were severe beatings with whips or even an iron hammer, causing detainees to suffer serious injuries, as well as tooth extraction, and tearing flesh from the detainee's body with dogs and placing it in their mouth, for the purpose of interrogation to make them tell the truth, as happened to the prisoner Dababi Hammadi, in addition to torture by burning sensitive areas of the prisoner's body by pouring alcohol on them and then setting these areas on fire, which continues until the prisoner suffers severe burns.

_ In addition to psychological torture by completely stripping the prisoner of their clothes and leaving them naked, or urinating on them, or killing a family member¹, or using and inciting dogs, where trained dogs that eat and tear human flesh are unleashed on prisoners by bringing the dogs close to the prisoners after stripping them of their clothes, then the dog climbs onto the prisoner's body and places its front paws on the prisoner's shoulders, and the dog opens its mouth to touch the prisoner's face under the threat of interrogation².

These brutal methods used by French occupation soldiers on prisoners in the Dar Al-Doub detention center, especially the psychological ones, left deep wounds on them, as they felt humiliation and degradation, these memories remained etched in their minds, which was clear and evident from the tone of their voices, mixed with sadness and sorrow, during the interviews conducted with them as they recounted their ordeal during torture³.

Only a small part of this detention center remains, specifically the two torture chambers, the rehabilitation of this detention center was completed in June 2024, under the supervision of the Algerian Association for the Preservation of Historical Heritage and National Memory in Touggourt, with the support of the Ministry of Mujahideen and Rights Holders, and in cooperation with the wilaya and municipal authorities, this is to ensure it remains a landmark testifying to the brutality of the French occupation and its savage practices against the people of the greater Touggourt region⁴.

Conclusion:

Through our discussion of this topic in this research paper, titled **French Detention and Torture Centers in the Touggourt Region During the Algerian War of Independence 1954-1962 AD "Dar Al-Doub Detention Center as a Model"**, we have reached a set of conclusions that can be summarized as follows:

_ Before the outbreak of the Algerian War of Independence in 1954, the prisons and military barracks of the French occupation authorities were considered torture centers, however, with the outbreak and intensification of the revolution and the people's rallying around it, France established many detention camps and internment camps in addition to prisons and military barracks to inflict the most horrific

¹ - Mouadh Omrani, op. cit, pp. 250 to 254.

² - Testimony of Rabeih Sayeh (may God have mercy on him -1936/2021), one of the detainees imprisoned in the Dar Al-Doub (DOP) detention center following the events and massacres of March 13, 1962, in the city of El-Moungar, Touggourt. The interview was conducted with him on Friday, March 13, 2020, at his residence in the western El-Moungar neighborhood, El-Moungar municipality, Touggourt district, at 9:00 AM.

³ - Mouadh Omrani, op. cit, p.255.

⁴ - Jamal al-Din Miadi and others, op. cit, p. 569.

forms of torture and interrogation on anyone suspected of involvement or having a connection with the revolutionaries, not only that, but even their families were not spared from being thrown into internment camps and subjected to torture and interrogation.

_ Through the definitions and concepts of prisons, detention centers, and internment camps, we find that prisons are the oldest, having been established since the French occupation entered Algerian territory, and cannot disappear, however, internment camps and detention centers were established after the outbreak of the Algerian War of Independence and the great popular support for the revolution, and they end with the cessation of wars and revolutions. As for the difference between a detention center and an internment camp, detainees were brought in as a result of causing chaos, a revolution, or disturbing order, but internment camps were for unconvicted nationalists to isolate and separate the people from rallying around their revolution.

_ The French occupation forces worked hard to suppress and eliminate the revolution in the Touggourt region in general, by establishing a group of torture and interrogation centers in the center of the region and its various towns such as El-Hadjira, Tayebat, Megarine, and others, this indicates that the occupation forces suffered greatly from the movements of the National Liberation Army and Front in the region.

_ Dar Al-Doub detention center is considered one of the most prominent torture centers where the French occupation authorities used the most horrific and dangerous types of torture on detainees and prisoners, whether physical, such as high-voltage electric shocks, forced labor under the scorching sun, prolonged deprivation of food, and severe beatings with whips and iron hammers, or psychological torture, which is the most dangerous, such as stripping them of their clothes and leaving them naked, urinating on them, killing a family member, or inciting dogs against them.

Appendices





_ Image 02: This photo of Dar Al-Doub detention center was taken after its preparation in June 2024.



_ Image 03: This photo of Dar al-Doub detention center was taken after its preparation on April 25, 2026.



_ Image 04: Touggourt Administrative Quarter (Peru Arab), see: Jamal al-Din Miadi and others, op. cit, p.562.



_ **Image 05:** Touggourt city center (military barracks), see: Jamal al-Din Miadi and others, op. cit, p.564.



_ **Image 06:** Al-Asali Tower in Al-Manqar -Al-Taybat-, see: Saoud Dahdi and others, op. cit., p. 47.



_ **Image 07:** Dar Toujjine Torture Center in El Alia -El Hujaira-, see: Jamal al-Din Miadi and others, op. cit, p.578.



_ **Image 08:** Dar El Hadj El Alami torture center in El Alia -El Hujaira-, see: Jamal al-Din Miadi and others, op. cit, p.580.

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