Review EL'BAHITH - ENS - Bouzareah - Algiers					
ISSN : 9577-1112	EISSN : 2602-5388	Volume: (18)	Number : (01)	year: 2026	Pages: 134-148

The Chaamba of Metlili and Their Resistance to French Expansion In Southern Algeria – Their Contribution to Supporting Popular Uprisings –

شعانبة متليلي ومقاومة التوسع الفرنسي في الجنوب الجزائري – إسهامهم في دعم الثورات الشعبية –

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Date Of Receipt: 24/04/2025 Date Of Acceptance: 25/03/2026 Date Of Publication: 31/03/2026

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ملخص:

تستعرض هذه الورقة البحثية مقاومة قبائل الشعانبة في منطقة متليلي للتوسع الاستعماري الفرنسي في الجنوب الجزائري، مبرزة دورهم المحوري في التصدي للاحتلال، حيث يتم التركيز على ثلاث محطات رئيسية في مسار المقاومة، تمثلت في: مساندة ثورة الشريف بوشوشة (1870–1881)، والمشاركة في ثورة أولاد سيدي الشيخ (1864–1881)، والانخراط في مقاومة الشيخ بوعمامة (1881–1908). وتهدف الدراسة إلى تحليل الأبعاد العسكرية والاجتماعية لهذه المقاومة، مع التركيز على الأساليب القتالية والاستراتيجيات التي استخدمها الشعانبة في مواجهة التفوق العسكري الفرنسي. وقد اعتمدنا على المنهج التاريخي التحليلي لإبراز أثر هذه المقاومة في إبطاء التوسع الاستعماري وترسيخ ثقافة الرفض الشعبي للاحتلال في الجنوب الجزائري.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

مقاومة الشعانبة؛ متليلي؛ التوسع الاستعماري الفرنسي؛ الثورات الشعبية؛ الجنوب الجزائري.

Abstract:

This research paper examines the resistance of the Chaamba tribes in the Metlili region to French colonial expansion in southern Algeria, highlighting their pivotal role in confronting the occupation. The analysis focuses on three key stages in the evolution of the resistance: their support for the uprising of Sharif Bou Choucha (1870–1881), their participation in the revolt of the Ouled Sidi Cheikh (1864–1881), and their involvement in the resistance led by Sheikh Bouamama (1881–1908). The study aims to analyze the military and social dimensions of this resistance, with particular emphasis on the asymmetric warfare tacticsemployed by the Chaamba in countering French military superiority. The analytical historical method was adopted to highlight the impact of this resistance in slowing colonial expansion and in fostering a spirit of anti-colonial resistance of colonial rule in southern Algeria.

Keywords:

Chaamba resistance; French colonial expansion; Metlili; popular uprisings; southern Algeria

1. ***INTRODUCTION:***

The Algerian People's Resistance Against French Occupation: A Manifestation of National Struggle in Contemporary History The resistance of the Algerian people against French occupation stands as one of the most prominent manifestations of modern historiography From the very onset of colonial penetration into Algerian territory, France sought to impose its dominance over all parts of the country, including the Algerian Sahara, which became the stage for a long and complex conflict. Among these regions, the resistance of the Chaamba in the city of Metlili emerges as a significant chapter in this struggle, where historical legacy, natural geography, and revolutionary spirit converged to produce a living model of steadfast popular resistance. Metlili, serving as a meeting point between Amazigh and Arab populations, imparted a distinctive character to its resistance, marked by resilience and sacrifice, making it one of the most prominent centers of defiance against French colonialism. The Chaamba's resistance was neither a spontaneous nor an isolated movement; rather, it was an extension of organized religious resistance movements in which religious, social, and economic dimensions intertwined, forming a solid foundation for national resistance. Within this context, three major resistance movements arose in the south, in which the Chaamba played a significant role : they contributed to the uprising of Sharif Bou Choucha (1870–1881), engaged in the revolt of the Ouled Sidi Cheikh (1864–1881), and actively participated in the resistance led by Sheikh Bouamama (1881–1908). These uprisings were characterized by strong alliances among the Saharan tribes and by the adoption of combat strategies adapted to the harsh desert environment, posing a continuous threat to French expansion in the south. This research seeks to answer the main question: **How did the Chaamba resistance in Metlili contribute to countering French colonial expansion and delaying its control over southern Algeria**?

To achieve this objective, we adopted the analytical historical method, analyzing historical events within their various contexts while focusing on the military and social roles played by the Chaamba in resisting colonialism. Additionally, this study aims to shed light on the factors that sustained the continuity of this resistance and to analyze its impact in obstructing French plans in the region, making Metlili one of the main strongholds of Saharan resistance against occupation.

To provide a clear understanding of the significance of the Chaamba's popular resistance, the article is divided into three main sections:

- ✔ Geography and Topography: to understand the natural context of Metlili;
- ✔ The Origins and Settlement of the Chaamba: to link tribal identity to resistance;
- ✔ French Expansion and Resistance: with a detailed analysis of the Chaamba's role in the major uprisings.

2. Geography of the Metlili Region :

The city of Metlili enjoys a strategic geographical location at the heart of Algeria, serving as a link between plains and deserts. This positioning has made it a meeting point between diverse geographies and varied climates (Passager, p. 513), a factor that has had a significant impact on the activities of the city's inhabitants.

2.1. The Geographical Location of Metlili :

Metlili is one of the cities of Ghardaïa Province, located in the northern part of the Algerian Sahara. Geographically, the region is situated **at** 16° and 32° north and longitudes 9° east and 2° west (Passager, p. 513; Al-Arabi, 1883, p. 163). Geographically, it is bordered to the north by the city of Ghardaïa, approximately 45 kilometers away; to the west by the city of El Guerrara, about 60 kilometers away; and to the east by the city of Zelfana, around 70 kilometers away. To the south, it is adjacent to the city of Dhayet Bendhahoua, located roughly 35 kilometers away (Suwaylim, 2019, p. 27; Rahima, 2014, pp. 27-28; Bouglebiba, 2007, p. 15; Al-Asakir, 2018, p. 32). This location makes Metlili an important center connecting these surrounding cities and facilitating communication among them.

The city is also situated on a small plateau overlooking the Metlili Valley and is surrounded by a well-constructed wall featuring battlements and three gates: Bab Al-Zahrawi, Bab Al-Baghara, and Bab Al-Gharbi. The city is enclosed by this wall, except on the side where orchards stretch for more than a kilometer and a half. The surrounding wall reaches a height of eight meters to the north and tapers to four meters along the remaining perimeters. (Dumas, 2013, p. 41).

2.2. Climatic and Topographical Characteristics

The summer in Metlili is hot and dry, while the winter is mild, profoundly influencing both the lifestyle and agricultural patterns in the region. The city is surrounded by a network of seasonal valleys that provide a vital water source and enhance agricultural activity. Additionally, the vegetation in Metlili varies to suit the harsh desert environment (Passager, p. 513).

2.2.1. Topography

The Metlili oasis forms part of one of the folds of the regional geological network. It is a compact limestone plateau with a gray hue and crystalline veins, containing fossils embedded in alabaster deposits. Crystalline formations can occasionally be found in some areas. The valleys and ravines of this network have existed since the fourth Tarbian age. The plateau's elevation reaches approximately 800 meters in the north and gradually decreases to about 400 meters in the south (Passager, p. 513; Mas'ud bin Walahah, 2014, p. 20). It slopes from the northwest to the southeast, with an average width of about 110 kilometers, covering an area of approximately 17,000 square kilometers. Sand dunes are relatively scarce and are primarily found in the western part near the town of Sebseb (Mas'ud bin Walahah, 2014, p. 21).

The region contains a type of rock known as "lithographic stone," typically found in layers discovered during well digging (Mas'ud bin Walahah, 2014, p. 21). This rocky plateau, largely unsuitable for agriculture, is interspersed and crossed by a network of valleys, ravines, and medium-height elevations known locally as *"Al-Qur,"* formations the inhabitants refer to as *"the network"* due to the interwoven and similar appearance of the valleys and ravines (Passager, p. 515).

Among the notable valleys in the region is the Metlili Valley, primary water source thanks to its watercourse that stretches across the plateaus and plains. Other significant valleys include the Adira Valley, the White Valley (*Oued El Abiod*), and the Sebseb Valley, each serving as a principal water and irrigation source for nearby lands.

The Amlelouil Valley ("Mansoura") is also of particular importance, known for its green, cultivated areas nourished year-round by abundant water. Other environmentally significant valleys include the Adghir Valley ("Hassi Fahl"), Bouali Valley, Zirara Valley, and the Nessa Valley, all of which play crucial roles in supporting the local ecosystem and agricultural activities (Mas'ud bin Walahah, 2013, p. 15; Suwaylim, 2019, pp. 36-41; Amiraoui, 2009, pp. 14-15; Talai, 1970, p. 62).

2.2.2. Climate

Metlili, like many desert regions, experiences a dry continental climate characterized by wide thermal fluctuations both seasonally and daily. During winter, temperatures are relatively cold, averaging around 15°C and sometimes dropping below 0°C. In summer, temperatures rise dramatically, often exceeding 35°C, and at times surpassing 45°C, particularly during intense nighttime heat waves (Rahima, 2014, p. 14; Passager, p. 521). Rainfall is extremely rare during the summer, and while somewhat more frequent in winter, precipitation remains generally low. Most rains are accompanied by storms, especially during spring and autumn (Bichi, 2001, p. 11).

Rainfall patterns are highly irregular across seasons, with an annual average of about 70 millimeters. The combination of high temperatures and the permeability of the surface leads to significant water seepage through the sands, greatly reducing surface water retention compared to deep artesian reservoirs (Bichi, 2001, p. 12). The region occasionally witnesses snowfall, as recorded in certain years, such as 1253 AH / 1837 CE and 1275 AH / 1858 CE (Duveyrier, 1859, p. 03; Passager, p. 521; Rahima, 2014, p. 15); however, snow typically melts quickly upon contact with the ground. Wind patterns vary greatly in both intensity and direction. Strong winds, known as *"Chili"* winds, along with southwestern sandstorms, occur in spring and summer. In winter, cold winds often blow from the north or northwest (Mas'ud bin Walahah, 2013, p. 19; Passager, p. 521).

2.3. Vegetation Cover

The region is characterized by sparse vegetation, uniquely adapted to endure the intense heat and harsh climate. The principal plants include *rqiq* (Euphorbia), *shiḥ* (Artemisia), *butm* (Pistacia), *ramth* (Haloxylon), *ajram* (wild caper), *ʿ iqqa* (local grass), *ʿ arfağ* (Rhanterium), and *drīn* (Calligonum), an essential fodder source for camels. Clay and sand depressions support seasonal herbaceous growth, especially in spring. The vast palm groves represent the cornerstone of the region's agro-economy, agriculture, and settlement, accompanied by orchards established by local inhabitants.

Primary cultivated crops include pomegranate trees, apples, figs, and grapes. According to Coyne's research, approximately 24 varieties of dates have been identified in the area, including *Deglet Nour*, *Timjouhart*, *Dala*, *Bent Khabala*, and *Ghers*, among many others (Al-Madani, 1963, p. 21).

3. Introduction to the Origin of the Chaamba and Their Settlement Stages in Metlili

3.1. Origin of the Name

The term *Chaamba* is believed to be a compound word derived from two parts: *"shuaʿ"* meaning "ray" and *"nabaʾ"* meaning "news" or "announcement." It suggests that the Chaamba used to keep fires burning in elevated locations to signal their presence to lost travelers in the desert or to wayfarers seeking their path, enabling them to find the camp and receive hospitality and generosity (Masʿud bin Walahah, 2014, p. 15; Lakhal, 2014, p. 35). Some sources, however, claim that the name *Chaamba* originates from the place where they first settled in Africa, a location referred to as *Shaʿ nibariya*. Others believe that the name is linked to their ancestral mother called *Shanʿ aba* (with an emphatic *sh* and ʿ sounds), and that they trace their lineage back to the *Hassoun Arabs of Yemen*, with some branches settled among the Hammama tribes, others among the Marazig, and still others in the Ouargla region (Bouglaba, 2015, p. 14). Another hypothesis proposes that the name relates to their ownership of many livestock, particularly rams known as *mashaʿ niba* (Masʿud bin Walahah, 2014, p. 18), characterized by their distinctive horns curling around their heads before reaching the ears. Some narratives claim that the name results from a fusion of the words *"ash-ʿ anba"* ("go, ʿ Anba!"), in reference to a female dog named ʿ Anba that accompanied a girl and her two brothers who were lost in the desert. Their survival depended on the prey captured by the dog, and the girl would often run after it, calling "ash ʿ Anba," meaning "go, ʿ Anba." European writings offer different explanations for the origin of the term *Chaamba*.According to *Gauvee* (Gauvé), the etymology appears inconsistent. At times, he states that the name derives from their sacred book, the Bible, linking it to *Cham* (Shem), one of the sons of Noah (peace be upon him). He also suggests that they were a Berber tribe that settled in Metlili around the 14th century CE. Moreover, Gauvee mentions that the Chaamba belong to the tribe of *Ouled Mahdi*, one of the Hilalian Arab tribes that reached Metlili. According to *Veyroux*, citing Gauvee in his book *"The Desert of Constantine"*, the name *Chaamba* was originally associated with a hunting greyhound owned by the Arab tribe *Ouled Mahdi*. The dog's name was *Amba*, and because it was known for its swiftness in hunting gazelles, the owners would often encourage it during hunts by calling *bash ʿ Amba* ("go, Amba!"), which eventually led to the name *Chaamba* becoming associated with the tribe (Caunelle, 1968, p. 20).

3.2. Stages of Their Settlement in Metlili

The Chaamba are a large confederation of Arab tribes whose origins trace back to the tribe of *Sulaym ibn Mansur al-Qaysi*, descending from the Adnanite lineage, specifically from the branches of *ʿ Alaq ibn ʿ Awf ibn ʿ Abd ibn ʿ Ikrima ibn Khuṣ afa ibn Qays ibn ʿ Ilan ibn Muḍ ar ibn Nizar ibn Maʿ d ibn Adnan*. They are distinguished by their participation in the famous *Hilalian migration* alongside the Banu Hilal tribes.

These movements aimed to advance westward to retaliate against the Zirid dynasty, which had rebelled against the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt, after the Fatimids allowed them to cross the Nile and move toward the Maghreb (Al-Arabi, 1883, p. 163; Bichi, 2001, pp. 13-15).

The main branches of the Sulaym tribes settled in Libya, while the Hilalian tribes continued expanding their influence across other parts of the Maghreb during the mid-fifth century AH (11th century CE). As for the Chaamba delegations coming from the Fezzan Desert, their migration occurred approximately a century later than the Hilalian arrival, and their initial settlement in the Metlili region dates back to around 1150 CE (Talai, 1970, p. 107).

According to *Boville*, the Chaamba tribe is considered the only Arab tribe of Eastern origin to have settled permanently in the northern Algerian Sahara following the Islamic conquest. Moreover, *Regnier* states that the Chaamba established themselves in the principal oases of southern Algeria and maintained their presence there for five centuries, from approximately 1350 CE to 1850 CE (Bofill, 1988, p. 99; Régnier, 1933, p. 28).

4. French Colonial Presence in the Region

After France succeeded in occupying the northern cities and their ports, and after suppressing the various resistances that stood in its way—such as that of Ahmed Bey of Constantine, who resisted from 1830 until his defeat following the weakening of his army and his surrender on June 5, 1838, and Emir Abdelkader, who led resistance from 1832 until his surrender after a fierce battle against colonial forces in 1847—along with other local leaders and tribes, it then moved to implement its broader project aimed at controlling the entire Saharan region. To achieve this, France relied on carefully crafted plans executed in phases, starting with the dispatch of exploratory missions composed of clergymen, geographers, and expert spies tasked with preparing the ground for penetration into these areas (Roudi, 2014/2015, p. 09).

Following the French Parliament's issuance of a decree in 1844 mandating the expansion and occupation of the southern Algerian regions, France adopted a strategy focused on establishing military posts and garrisons to monitor the situation and control the movement of commercial caravans between the north and the south. This strategy was implemented through two main policies:

- Securing control over key southern cities with influence in the Sahara, beginning with Laghouat, which served as an initial administrative base for further expansion and was occupied in 1852 by General Pélissier.
- Expanding into the south through political efforts, notably through the signing of treaties (Bouaziz, 1996, p. 154).

Since the Chaamba tribe dominated trade across most southern Algerian regions, owing to their direct connections with Sudan and Niger, their members directly confronted this French expansion. Rather than signing treaties with the French, they chose to declare resistance against them (Roudi, 2014/2015, pp. 10-11).

Most of the military forces stationed in Metlili, El Meniaa, and their surrounding valleys were aligned with the forces of Sharif Ben Abdallah. These forces often subjected the local population to systemic repression over the local population, especially considering that the southern Chaamba had previously contributed to Emir Abdelkader's uprising, which ended in 1848. In response, France quickly dispatched two military detachments toward Metlili: one from Laghouat led by *De Pareille*, and the other from El Bayadh led by Major *Niquaux*. The battle fought by the Chaamba ended with the defeat of both French detachments in 1853 (Bichi, 2001, p. 22).

5. The Role of the Chaamba in Supporting Popular Uprisings

The Chaamba tribes played a significant role in the history of resistance in southern Algeria, particularly during the nineteenth century. Known for their mobility, deep knowledge of the Saharan environment, and strong social cohesion, they actively contributed to various popular uprisings against colonial expansion. Their support was not only military but also logistical, as they facilitated communication, movement, and supply across vast desert territories. In this context, their involvement alongside figures such as Emir Abdelkader highlights their strategic importance in sustaining resistance efforts. This section examines the nature, forms, and impact of the Chaamba's participation in these uprisings, with particular attention to their role in shaping local dynamics of opposition and resilience.

5.1. Supporting the Uprising of Mohamed El-Toumi Bou Choucha (1870–1881)

With the growing French influence in Algeria during the second half of the nineteenth century, the colonial administration sought to extend its control over the Saharan regions, leading to a surge in resistance movements among local tribes (Passager, p. 528). The region of Metlili held significant strategic importance, serving as a barrier to French expansion. This prompted Sharif Mohamed El-Toumi Bou Choucha to adopt it as a base for his resistance activities (Miyachi, 1996, p. 68).

Bou Choucha began his military movements in 1869 and found strong support among the Chaamba tribes, who were suffering from oppressive French policies, including excessive taxation and restrictions on commercial activities. This hardship naturally inclined them to ally with him, and their alliance marked the beginning of an organized resistance against the French presence (Bichi, 2001, p. 23).

Between 1869 and 1870, Bou Choucha succeeded in gaining the allegiance of several Saharan tribes. The *Chaamba Al-Mowadhi* tribe in Ain Salah were among the first to pledge allegiance, followed by the Chaamba tribes of Ouargla in 1870. This widespread support strengthened the political and military foundation of the resistance, enabling Bou Choucha to expand his influence towards the southern oases. He dispatched envoys to invite other tribes to join the resistance (Bouaziz, 1996, p. 220). After securing broad support, he decided to establish Metlili as his military headquarters, setting up a camp there on May 5, 1870. From this base, he launched attacks against tribes allied with France, such as the *Arbaa* tribe, aiming to weaken their influence and expand his military reach. He also attempted to incorporate the M'zab oases into his project; however, the M'zabite community refused his allegiance out of fear of direct French intervention, prompting him to attack Ouargla on May 5, 1871, where he looted and confiscated the goods of M'zabite merchants (D'Armagnac, 1885, p. 178).

As Bou Choucha's influence grew, the French became increasingly determined to eliminate his resistance. This led to the *Battle of Sebseb* in 1880, one of the most significant confrontations between the Saharan resistance and the French army. The French forces, equipped with advanced weaponry, aimed to cut off the supply lines of the fighters. Nevertheless, the Chaamba leveraged their intimate knowledge of the desert terrain to set ambushes in narrow passageways. Despite the superior French firepower, the occupying forces suffered considerable losses due to the guerrilla tactics employed by the Saharan fighters, forcing the French military command to reconsider its southern strategies (Ben Khalifa, 2009, p. 89).

Ultimately, as the resistance persisted, France decided to launch a large-scale crackdown on Metlili in 1881, led by General *Dulisse*. Heavy taxes were imposed on tribes supporting the resistance, villages suspected of sheltering Chaamba fighters were bombarded, and mass arrests were carried out. Faced with this harsh military and economic siege, the resistance began to lose momentum. Supplies became scarce, and some tribes started withdrawing from the confrontation out of fear of French reprisals. By late 1881, Bou Choucha was forced to retreat towards the border regions of the desert, leading to the collapse of his organized military resistance, although sporadic skirmishes by Chaamba fighters continued thereafter (Decraene P. &., 1982, p. 266).

5.2. The Revolt of the Ouled Sidi Cheikh (1864–1881)

Relations between the Ouled Sidi Cheikh and the French colonial administration were tense from the outset, as France sought to diminish the influence of the *Sheikhiyya* order, which held significant religious and social status among the Saharan tribes (Histoire de l'insurrection des Oulad-Sidi-Ech-Chikh (sud-algérien) de 1864 à 1880, 1879, p. 39). Despite French attempts to co-opt some tribal leaders by offering them official positions, these efforts failed to quell the popular rejection of colonial rule. In 1864, the first confrontations erupted in the regions of El Bayadh and Metlili when France began direct interference in the tribe's internal affairs. This provoked the organization of resistance forces and marked the beginning of a new escalation against colonialism. In an attempt to contain the situation, France appointed *Hamza bin Abu Bakr* as Khalifa (deputy governor) over the Sahara in 1870. However, his tribe soon faced harsh punitive measures for its support of Sharif Bou Choucha's uprising. French forces launched military campaigns against Metlili and El Meniaa, resulting in severe repression and collective punishment of the local population. Although Hamza bin Abu Bakr was viewed as a relatively stabilizing figure between France and the Ouled Sidi Cheikh, his sudden death on August 5, 1871, complicated matters and increased pressure on the tribe (Laour, p. 33).

Following his death, his son *Abu Bakr Agha* was appointed as the new Khalifa, but he too died in the same year after continuing the fight against Sharif Ben Abdallah.

This sequence of events led many members of the tribe to perceive any alliance with the colonial authorities as a betrayal of their own interests (Bichi, 2001, p. 24).

In 1871, the revolt underwent a major transformation under the leadership of *Si Suleiman bin Hamza*, who was influenced by his uncle *Si Al-Ala bin Abu Bakr*, a staunch opponent of any reconciliation with France. Si Al-Ala organized the resistance, choosing Metlili as his base of operations, and enlisted the cavalry forces of the Chaamba, who formed the core military strength in battles against the French. These actions prompted the French forces to launch extensive repressive campaigns against Metlili, further isolating it under colonial siege. At the same time, however, the repression intensified the resistance movement, making it fiercer and more determined (Passager, p. 512).

Between 1875 and 1881, France intensified its military crackdown on Metlili, destroying parts of the city, forcibly displacing its inhabitants, and targeting resistance leaders. Despite these pressures, *Si Al-Ala* and *Si Qaddour bin Hamza* categorically rejected all reconciliation offers made by the French, viewing them as mere ploys to end the resistance without achieving any real political gains. As French military superiority continued to grow and the colonial pressure intensified, the revolution gradually began to lose momentum. Eventually, the *Treaty of Brézina* was signed on May 20, 1883, with *Si El-Din bin Hamza* formally acknowledging the end of the uprising. However, this did not mark the end of popular resistance, as the Ouled Sidi Cheikh continued to oppose colonialism, igniting subsequent revolts in the Algerian south (Bouaziz, 1996, p. 171).

5.3. The Uprising of Sheikh Bouamama (1881–1908)

With the outbreak of Sheikh Bouamama's uprising in 1881, Metlili and its inhabitants played a crucial role in supporting the resistance against French occupation. The region sacrificed more than 300 martyrs in the battles that took place across various parts of southern Algeria. The Chaamba made a significant military contribution by forming a special unit within Bouamama's army, tasked with executing ambushes and surprise attacks, exploiting their intimate knowledge of the desert terrain. This tactic contributed to disorienting French forces and slowing their advances in many areas. Metlili's support extended beyond the military dimension to include substantial economic contributions to the revolution. Taxes were levied on palm groves and sheep herds, and the revenue was used to purchase weapons and provide supplies for the fighters, thereby strengthening the endurance and resilience of the resistance movement (Zuzu, 1983, p. 136).

Sheikh Bouamama sought to consolidate his relations with the people of Metlili by forging alliances through intermarriage with prominent local families. This rapprochement bolstered the *Bouamama order*, an extension of the *Sheikhiyya order*, but with a more militant orientation. As military operations against the French intensified, the colonial administration launched a punitive campaign against Metlili in 1883, known as the "Second Crisis." The French authorities cut down palm trees in an effort to economically cripple the population and force them to cease their support for the resistance. This action had disastrous consequences, depriving the local population of a vital source of food and trade, leading to widespread famine and increasing the hardships faced by the resistance (Miyachi, 1996, p. 93).

France continued its strategy of containment by establishing a military center in El Meniaa in 1891, aimed at restricting the movements of the fighters and cutting supply lines between resistance strongholds. Despite these measures, the fighters carried out intermittent military operations against the French, prompting Bouamama to initiate negotiations with Morocco in search of protection for his followers, especially as colonial pressure and repression intensified. Over time, some Chaamba fighters rejected the idea of negotiating with France and chose to continue fighting, refusing to cease military operations. This divergence led to internal divisions within the resistance. Some leaders opted to seek refuge in Morocco and the greater Erg Occidental after the French occupied Metlili for the second time, while small groups continued to conduct limited attacks until the outbreak of the Algerian War of Independence in 1954 (Mas'ud bin Walahah, 2014, p. 49).

6. ***Conclusion***

In conclusion, the key outcomes of the Chaamba's resistance to French colonial expansion in southern Algeria can be summarized as follows:

- The popular resistance led by the Chaamba in Metlili demonstrated sustained resilience in the face of French colonialism. They consistently refused to submit to colonial authorities and continued their struggle by all available means, constituting a major obstacle to the implementation of French plans in the region.

  This resistance helped slow the colonial expansion process and proved that occupation could not be imposed without facing determined opposition.
- The uprisings of Sharif Bou Choucha, the Ouled Sidi Cheikh, and Sheikh Bouamama represented pivotal milestones in the Saharan struggle against French colonialism.

- The Chaamba played a fundamental role in supporting these revolts by providing supplies, engaging in direct combat, and executing surprise attacks that disrupted French forces and forced them to reconsider their military strategies.
- The resistance relied on combat tactics well-adapted to the desert environment, including guerrilla warfare, ambushes, and the exploitation of rugged terrain, giving local fighters an advantage against the heavily armed French army. The Battle of Sebseb in 1880 clearly exemplified this approach, where French forces suffered heavy losses and were compelled to retreat and reassess their military campaigns in the south.
- Military resistance was not the sole factor sustaining the struggle; the local community played a vital role in supporting the fighters, whether through the provision of supplies and resources or through tribal communication networks that facilitated coordinated attacks against colonial forces. Additionally, the Chaamba's alliances with other Saharan tribes strengthened the resistance, particularly during periods of siege and intensified French pressure.
- The Chaamba resistance helped inspire future revolutionary movements, demonstrating that French colonialism was not invincible and that armed struggle could undermine the colonial project even in remote desert regions that France believed would be easily subdued.

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