

## = Bombardment of Salé =

The Bombardment of Salé was a naval attack against the Moroccan city of Salé that took place between 26 and 27 November 1851 , in response to the looting of a French cargo ship by residents of the city . After seven hours of fighting , the Moroccan artillery suffered severe damage , and the French bombarded the city through the night , damaging the city 's infrastructure and the Great Mosque of Salé .

French losses were minimal , with only four dead and 18 wounded . Between 18 and 22 Moroccans died , two @-@ thirds of whom were civilians . The French forces withdrew , and both sides claimed victory .

## = = Background = =

After the French conquest of Algeria , Abdelkader El Djezairi declared war against France , and requested assistance from Sultan Abd al @-@ Rahman of Morocco . When the Sultan responded favorably , it triggered the Franco @-@ Moroccan War . France sent warships to bombard Tangier on 6 August 1844 , destroying large parts of the city and its defenses . The French then bombarded Essaouira , and occupied the Iles Purpuraires . After the French army defeated the Moroccan cavalry at the Battle of Isly on 14 August 1844 , Sultan Abd al @-@ Rahman asked for peace with France , leading to the signing of the Treaty of Tangier on 10 September 1844 . Morocco 's defeat caused a revolt in Rabat ; in Salé , the city 's nobility , known as the Sharif , sent a letter to the Sultan complaining about the lack of weapons and ammunition in the city .

Meanwhile , the French government 's anger against Morocco was increasing . A series of incidents in October 1849 damaged relations between both countries ; a series of assassinations directed at the French frontier had occurred , and the French Consul had requested the dismissal of Pacha Ouchda , who was believed to have caused these issues . From 1845 to 1851 , Morocco had a serious agricultural crisis caused by a drought , resulting in crop failure . The people of Morocco were suffering as the price of wheat and barley reached unprecedented heights . In Salé , many people were starving , and the agricultural crisis and anger towards France ultimately led to the bombardment of Salé .

## = = Preliminaries = =

On 1 April 1851 , a French cargo ship carrying 98 tons of goods from Gibraltar to Rabat capsized near the coast of Salé . A few tons of goods were rescued , and were stored in the city for safekeeping . Salé turned out to be less than safe , however ; by the next day , hundreds of townspeople were scavenging and stealing the goods . The thieves were thwarted by Abdelhadi Zniber , but only temporarily . By the end of the raids , the French had lost 11 @,@ 391 franc germinals worth of goods .

French diplomat Nicolas Prosper Bourée reported the situation in Salé to the French , and accused the people in the city of piracy . Bourée recommended sending military forces to the city ; the French government obliged .

On 10 November 1851 , the French Secretary of the Navy tasked Louis Dubourdieu with the execution of the action against Salé , and five vessels were assigned to him in this regard : Henri IV ( armed with 100 cannons and captained by Louis Henri de Gueydon ) , the Sané ( 14 cannons ) , the Gomer ( 14 cannons ) , the Narval ( 4 cannons ) , and the Caton ( 6 cannons ) . The fleet gathered in Cádiz on 19 November , and after being supplied with food and coal , sailed for Salé on 21 November .

## = = Bombardment = =

On 24 November , some of the French ships traveled to Tangier , where they picked up Consul Julius Doazan and his secretary , Fleurat , on Narval . Later that evening , Caton reached Salé and

offered safe passage to Rabat for the British consul Elton and his family , in anticipation of the bombardment of the city . The following day , at 11 : 00 a.m. , Caton anchored between the cities of Rabat and Salé . Its commander demanded an apology over the thefts and raids and immediate repayment for the stolen goods , under threat of bombardment . The rais in the ports of both cities promised to answer to the French demands within three hours . Two hours later , all of the French ships had reached the mouth of the Bou Regreg , between Rabat and Salé .

The French crews of Henri IV received a telegraph from Admiral de Gueydon , suggesting that the bombardment of the city would begin soon , which the crews welcomed with enthusiasm . By then , a large crowd of people in Rabat and Salé had gathered to observe the French ships after they were spotted by Moroccan artillery operators . Admiral de Gueydon decided against starting the bombardment until consul Elton was aboard Caton ; the consul did not come aboard the ship until four hours later . At dawn on 26 November though , the British steamer Janus joined Caton , and took the consul as its passenger .

The Moroccan soldiers in both Rabat and Salé prepared to repel the French attack , and armed themselves with artillery . On the French side , Sané had moved to the fort at the entrance to the Bou Regreg river ; Henri IV was a short distance from the Moroccan batteries north of Salé . Gomer moved to a suitable position to attack , and both Narval and Caton would provide logistical support .

The French opened fire on the forts of Salé at 10 : 00 a.m. , and the Moroccans retaliated instantly with forty batteries of artillery weapons . An hour into the confrontation , the batteries in Salé were destroyed , and the artillery in Rabat were damaged to a level that they became almost useless . The French fire intensified , but at 3 : 30 p.m. , the damaged batteries were removed from the city by Moroccan forces ; however , resistance did not stop until 5 : 00 p.m. Sané and Gomer , lacking for ammunition , withdrew from the battle , while Henri IV continued its barrage on the city until 7 : 00 a.m. the next morning .

= = Aftermath = =

The following day , Dubourdieu sent a report to the Minister of War describing the French losses . Henri IV took several hits , with 1 dead and 9 wounded . The Sané suffered more damage than the Gomer , but neither was seriously damaged . Three men were killed on the Sané , and nine were wounded .

The damage to Salé was considerable ; a wall from the Almohad Caliphate was severely damaged , and the Great Mosque of Salé was struck by six cannonballs . Several homes were destroyed , and many were burnt down . Between 12 and 15 civilians were killed , along with six to seven soldiers . Tactically , the battle was a victory for France . In order to prevent Tangier from receiving a similar bombardment , Morocco agreed to pay 100 @, @ 000 francs to the French on 29 November 1851 .

Politically , however , the battle is considered a failure for France . Initially , France had desired a revolt against the governor of Salé to force repayment and avoid destruction of the city , but this did not occur . The French demanded that those who killed Christians in the city be sentenced to death , and that thieves have their hands cut off ; however , the governor of Salé simply banished these people from the city .

Following this confrontation , diplomatic relations between France and Morocco ended for several months , until a French diplomatic mission returned in 1852 . After the bombardment , Dubourdieu was promoted to Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor , and then to vice @-@ admiral in February 1852 .