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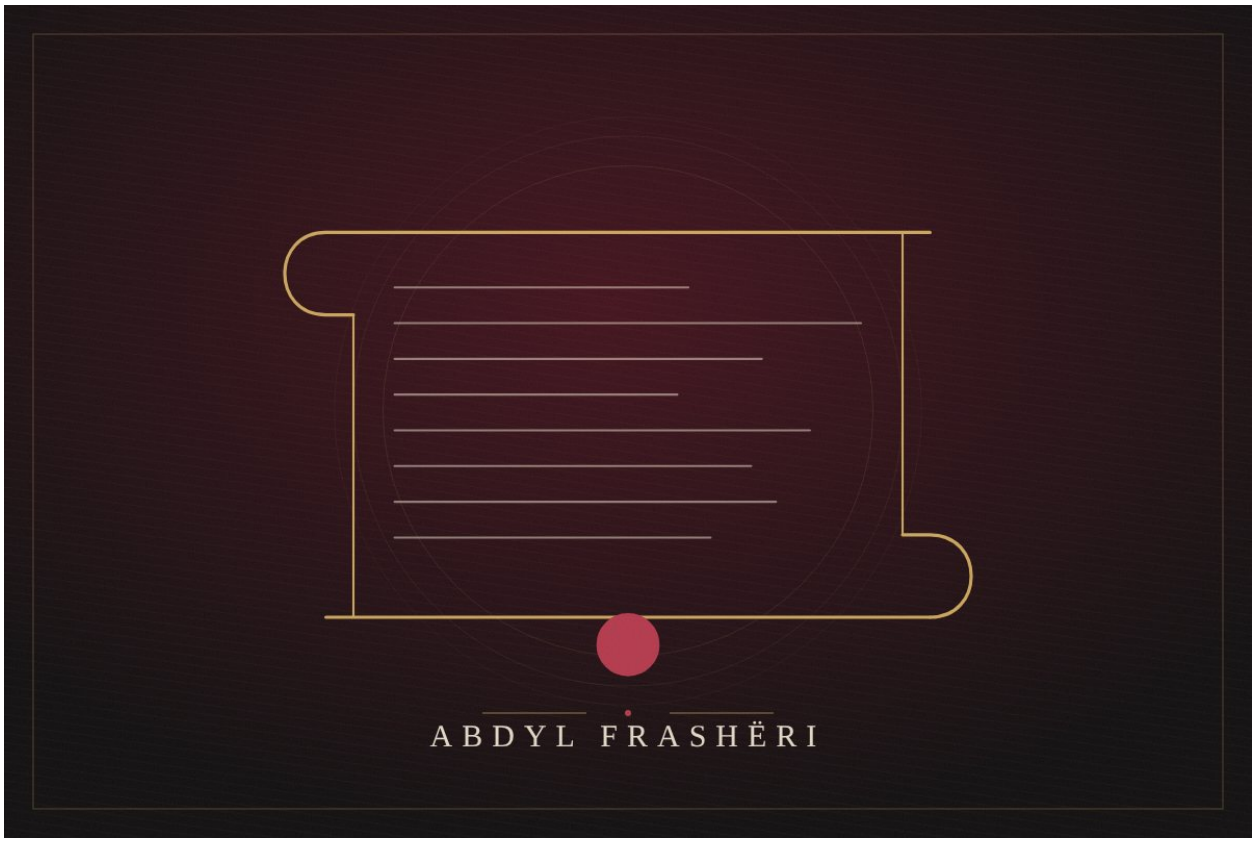
Heritage

Abdyl Frashëri: the diplomat of the League of Prizren

Deputy in the first Ottoman parliament, voice of the League before Europe and prisoner in the castle of Prizren

3 November 2026 / 3 min read

Translated from the Albanian original by the editors.



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Abdyl Frashëri was born on 1 June 1839 in Frashër. He was the eldest brother of Naim and Sami. While his brothers became known for their books, Abdyl became known for political action. In documents of the time his name appears in several forms: Abdyl, Abdul or Abdullah Hysni.

In the Ottoman parliament

In 1876–1877 Abdyl was deputy for Janina in the first parliament of the Ottoman Empire. After the Ottoman defeat in the war with Russia (1877–1878), when it became clear that the Great Powers were deciding the fate of the Balkans, he became chairman of the Albanian Committee of Janina, whose aim was to defend Albanian lands.

The League of Prizren

Abdyl was one of the initiators and leaders of the Albanian League of Prizren in 1878. He was elected chairman of its foreign affairs committee and served as its spokesman before the Sublime Porte. He represented Toskëria and organised regional meetings in the south. He was among those who pushed the League from simple defence of territory towards a demand for an autonomous Albania.

Before Europe

In 1879, together with Mehmet Ali Vrioni, he sent telegrams to the governments in Vienna, Paris and Berlin, and a petition to the Italian prime minister. In April of that year he led a delegation that reached Rome. The aim was to show European governments that the Albanians were a people of their own, with the right to be heard. He also led the Assembly of Gjirokastër, which decided on the creation of an autonomous Albanian state.

> *Abdyl understood something many others in his time did not: the fate of the Albanians was being decided in diplomats' offices too, not only on the battlefield.*

Prison

After the League was crushed in 1881, Abdyl was captured with other members and arrested by the army of Dervish Pasha. A special Ottoman court sentenced him to death. Sultan Abdul Hamid II commuted the sentence to imprisonment with hard labour, which he served in the castle of Prizren from 1882 to 1885. He was then sent to Istanbul and released in 1886 on health grounds, on condition that he take no further part in politics.

He died in Istanbul on 23 October 1892. His remains were brought to Tirana in 1978.

What remains of him

Abdyl Frashëri did not leave books like his brothers. He left something else: the example of a man who took the Albanian question before Europe with memoranda, telegrams

and journeys, when many thought the Albanians had no voice. He opened the way for another generation, which thirty years later would declare independence in Vlorë.

Sources

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Read online: https://www.lexoshpejt.com/en/article/abdyl-frasheri