

Issue Date: **July 14, 1978**

## Middle East: Arab League Boycotts South Yemen; Other Developments

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The Arab League decided July 2 to "freeze" political and diplomatic relations and suspend economic and cultural ties with South Yemen. The action, taken at the second day of an emergency meeting in Cairo, was in retaliation for the Aden government's alleged involvement in the assassination June 24 of North Yemeni President Ahmed Hussein al-Ghashmi. [See 1978 [South Yemen: President Deposed, Executed; Other Developments](#)]

A communique adopted by 15 League representatives accused South Yemen of "criminal action" in violation of the organization's charter. The conferees stopped short of granting North Yemen's request to expel South Yemen from the Arab League. North Yemen had requested the emergency meeting.

Seven other members--Syria, Libya, Algeria, Iraq, South Yemen, Djibouti and the Palestine Liberation Organization--boycotted the conference. The resolution was not binding on them.

Djibouti apparently stayed away because of its sensitive position on the Horn of Africa, across the Red Sea from South Yemen. The other six members had been boycotting League meetings since December 1977 in protest against Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's Middle East peace initiative. [See 1977 [Egypt Cuts Diplomatic Relations With 5 Arab States...Acts After Anti-Sadat Meeting in Tripoli](#)]

### North Yemen Accused of Invasion

North Yemen was accused of invading South Yemen July 2. South Yemeni Communications Minister Mahmoud Osheish charged at a news conference in Beirut July 3 that North Yemeni forces had "rolled into our northwestern province last night, occupying two border villages and shelling scattered areas" in the region.

Osheish called on Arab socialist states to "repulse... North Yemen's military aggression." He rejected North Yemen's accusation that a South Yemeni infantry unit and three air force pilots had defected to North Yemen. Osheish also denied North Yemen's claims that Soviet and Cuban troops dominated South Yemen's armed forces.

North Yemen denied July 4 that its forces had invaded South Yemen. A government official acknowledged fighting in the area, but said it was being waged between supporters of assassinated President Salem Rubaya Ali and forces of the ruling National Liberation Front.

### South Yemen Purge

The secretary general of South Yemen's National Liberation Front, Abdel Fattah Ismail, announced June 28 that nine members of the group had been expelled following a successful power struggle against President Salem Rubaya Ali. He reported the appointments of several new army commanders.

Ismail also disclosed that in July the Front's three parties would merge to form a single Communist organization to be known as the Vanguard Party. Ismail said Rubaya had opposed the formation of this grouping.

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### [Modern Language Association \(MLA\)](#)

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