

## Yemeni Civil War: UAR Gas Use Charged

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) charged in a report dated May 21 (made public in Washington July 27) that UAR planes had killed 318 persons May 10, 17 and 18 in poison-gas attacks on 5 pro-royalist villages in southern Yemen. Several hundred additional Yemenis were reported killed in other UAR poison-gas attacks during May, June and July. The charge of the gassing of Yemeni civilians was coupled with reports that part of the Egyptian military force, fighting on the side of the republican Yemeni government in the civil war, was being evacuated from the country in the aftermath of the UAR's devastating defeat in the Arab-Israeli war. [See 1967 [Middle East: UAR Gasses Yemenis](#)]

The ICRC said that 75 persons had died in the first poison-gas raid, which had been an attack May 10 on Gahar and Gadafa. The report said ICRC medical teams and observers, responding to a rescue appeal from the 2 villages May 11, were unable to reach the scene until May 15-16 because UAR planes had bombed the 2-truck ICRC rescue convoy. (The ICRC had given the Egyptian authorities "due notice" of the convoy's "line of march and timetable.")

The ICRC report said Gadafa came under attack again when poison-gas raids by UAR planes May 17-18 caused 243 deaths in Gadafa and the villages of Gabas, Nofal and Gadr.

Gases used were reported to be mustard gas, phosgene and a gas that kills by paralyzing the central nervous system.

The ICRC had first mentioned the UAR gas attacks, without giving details, in a press report issued June 2. The Red Cross that day also had appealed to the Yemeni republican government, the UAR, the Yemeni royalists and Saudi Arabia, which supported the royalists in the civil war, "not to resort in any circumstances whatever to the use of asphyxiating gases or any other similar toxic substances" in the fighting. The ICRC disclosed June 5 that it had "made representations" to the UAR over the bombing of the Red Cross rescue convoy heading for Gahar and Gadafa.

A U.S. State Department statement July 27, without mentioning Cairo by name, condemned the gas attacks on Yemeni royalists "as inhumane and entirely contrary to the laws of nations." The statement added that Washington "would support international action to deal with this problem." The department also disclosed a letter in which U.S. Ambassador-to-UN Arthur J. Goldberg had expressed the Administration's "concern over the growing number of indications that gas is once again being used by the UAR air force against the local population in Yemen." Goldberg's letter was a reply to Representative Lester L. Wolff (D., New York), who had asked why the Administration had taken no action on the reported use of gas in Yemen.

Reports from Yemen said other poison-gas attacks by UAR planes had killed about 50 persons in several villages near Khaulan July 2 and 3, about 150 persons (350 wounded) in the northern town of Hajjah July 15 and about 30 persons in El Urr and Al Hamran July 23.

Mecca radio had reported June 1 that UAR jets May 29 had dropped 50 poison-gas bombs on villages in the Ben Hashish area, 12 miles from Sana. An earlier Yemeni report said 60 persons had been killed when UAR bombers had dropped poison-gas bombs and napalm on Sarawah May 28.

British intelligence sources in Aden reported July 6 that UAR planes June 2 had killed 45 persons with poison-gas and bombs dropped on the Yemeni royalist-held village of Ben Sham.

An Agence-France Presse report from Aden June 16 said that Egyptian troops withdrawn from Hajja had been attacked by Yemeni tribesmen as they fled to the Red Sea evacuation port of Hodeida. The tribesmen were described as neither proroyalist nor pro-republican but just anti-Cairo. Other UAR troops were said to have been pulled out of Marib, about 80 miles east of Sana, the republican capital.

Royalist sources reported June 19 that the major portion of the UAR garrison in Sana had been withdrawn and that about 300 Egyptian troops had been slain by royalist soldiers as the Egyptians were trying to make their way to Hodeida.

Aden radio reported July 30 that Cairo had threatened to withdraw all of its remaining 25,000 troops from Yemen if the republican regime did not share the cost of maintaining the UAR force there. Egypt was said to have asked the Sana regime to provide more troops to defend the towns of Maydi and Haradh, near the Saudi Arabian border, recently captured from the royalists by Egyptian troops.

The Saudi Defense Ministry had charged May 12 that UAR planes May 11 had killed 3 Saudis and wounded 4 when they bombed "civilian targets" in 3 separate raids carried out against the Saudi border town of Najran.

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