



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĞU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Proces of Iraq

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

Energy Security

Enerji Güvenliği

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Peace Process

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Ethnic and Secterian Groups

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

Non State Actors

Devlet-dışı Aktörler

Relations with the West

Batı'yla İlişkiler

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02 MARCH 2017

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1. IRAQ

- **Civilians, IS fighters killed in west Mosul mosque strike, residents say**

A number of civilians and Islamic State members were killed in an attack that hit a mosque run by the militants and damaged neighboring houses in the west of the Iraqi city of Mosul on Wednesday, three residents said on Thursday. The Omar al-Aswad mosque, in the al-Faruq district of the old city center, was hit by an airstrike, three residents in the same area told Reuters by phone.

More Details:

http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-mosque-idUSKBN1690J3?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Reuters%2FworldNews+%28Reuters+World+News%29&rpc=401

- **Civilian death toll grows amid ISIS attempts to disrupt Mosul siege, UN figures show**

The Mosul region has suffered the highest number of civilian casualties among Iraq's provinces in February, according to new UN estimates, as the US-backed coalition tightens its grip on densely populated western neighborhoods of the ISIS-held city. A total of 329 civilians were killed and 613 injured across Iraq in February, in "acts of terrorism, violence, and armed conflict," according to new figures by UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The Iraqi military operation to retake Mosul from Islamic State [IS, formerly ISIS/ISIL] and its desperate attempts to hold ground apparently caused a serious surge in civilian casualties.

More Details:

<https://www.rt.com/news/379139-mosul-civilian-casualties-soar/>

- **Iran, Iraq co-op against instrumental use of human rights, necessary: Deputy FM**

Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Abbas Araqchi has stressed the need for Tehran-Baghdad cooperation to fight against instrumental use of human rights. In a meeting with the Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari on Wednesday, Araqchi said that certain countries use human rights as a tool to serve their own interests.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82449709/>

- **In 'farewell speech', Baghdadi admits IS has lost Iraq**

Islamic State chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has asked the group's non-Arab fighters to either return to their countries or detonate themselves, promising them "72 women in heaven". Islamic State chief

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has acknowledged the group's defeat in Iraq in a 'farewell speech' and ordered his non-Arab fighters to either return to their countries or detonate themselves, according to media reports.

More Details:

<http://www.rediff.com/news/report/in-farewell-speech-baghdadi-admits-islamic-state-has-lost-iraq/20170302.htm>

- **Two British medics who joined IS killed in Iraq**

Two British medics who abandoned studies in Sudan to join the Islamic State militant group with other students have been killed in fighting in Iraq, the BBC repon Wednesday. Ahmed Sami Khider and Hisham Fadlallah died at the weekend, the BBC said, with Khider believed to have been killed in a convoy trying to leave Mosul, which US-backed Iraqi forces are trying to retake from IS militants.

More Details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/3/2/two-british-medics-who-joined-is-killed-in-iraq>

- **Kirkuk governor says Kurds should engage in direct talks with Washington**

The Governor of Kirkuk Najmadin Karim who is currently visiting the US says the Kurdish government should hold direct talks with the new administration about the future of Iraq and the Kurdistan Region after the anticipated demise of Islamic State IS in the country

More Details:

<http://ekurd.net/iraqi-kurdistan-news-in-brief-march-2-2017-2017-03-02>

- **Kurds, Turkmen concerned about Iran-Iraq Kirkuk oil deal**

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the Turkmen of Kirkuk are concerned about the Iran-Iraq deal to export Kirkuk oil to Iran. On Tuesday, Falah Mustafa, head of the KRG's Department of Foreign Affairs told Kurdistan24 that Baghdad cannot unilaterally decide on Kirkuk. According to the Iraqi Constitution and the signed agreements, Baghdad should not make a unilateral decision on Kirkuk without the KRG's notice and participation because those areas are protected by the Kurdistan Region security forces, Mustafa said.

More Details:

<http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/economy/0e47a6db-c99f-4de3-bf4e-3db9e14befde/Kurds--Turkmen-concerned-about-Iran-Iraq-Kirkuk-oil-deal>

- **Islamic State kidnaps 25 civilians attempting to flee its Kirkuk stronghold**

Islamic State militants have kidnapped 25 civilians for attempting to flee the group's strongholds in southwestern Kirkuk, a source said Thursday as refugees numbers continue to soar amid battles between the group and Iraqi troops. Alsumaria News quoted a source within pro-government militias at the town of Hawija as saying that the extremist group kidnapped early in the morning 25 people from al-Zab region after setting them up in an ambush.

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/islamic-state-kidnaps-25-civilians-attempting-flee-kirkuk-stronghold/>

- **Iraqi archeologists learn new techniques for restoring artifacts after ISIS**

As Iraqi forces fight to take back Mosul from the Islamic State group, archaeologists trained by the British Museum are preparing for another battle -- trying to save what they can of the city's heritage. One of the world's leading institutions for the study of ancient Iraq, the London museum has been training Iraqi experts for the past year in high-tech methods to preserve and document their history.

More Details:

<http://www.ctvnews.ca/world/iraqi-archeologists-learn-new-techniques-for-restoring-artifacts-after-isis-1.3294229>

- **New Trump immigration order won't have blanket ban on Iraq, sources say**

President Donald Trump's new executive order on travel and immigration won't include a blanket ban on citizens from Iraq, White House officials tell ABC News. The newly revised order, made to replace a prior order that limited travel and immigration from seven predominantly Muslim countries in the Middle East and Africa, was expected Wednesday after a federal court judge temporarily halted the original order in early February.

More Details:

<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/trump-immigration-order-blanket-ban-iraq-sources/story?id=45843647>

- **Iraqi forces block IS Mosul counter-attack**

US-backed Iraqi forces advancing in the Islamic State group's stronghold in western Mosul have fought off a counter-attack by the militants during bad weather in the early hours of Thursday. Some militants were able to get near elite Iraqi units in the southwestern part of the city, hidden among people displaced by the fighting, a senior officer told Reuters.

More Details:

<http://www.9news.com.au/world/2017/03/02/18/05/iraqi-forces-block-is-mosul-counter-attack>

- **Germany Sentences Ex-Iraqi Soldier for Photo Of IS Fighters' Severed Heads**

The man was arrested on charges of degrading and demeaning people while he was fighting the extremist militia in Iraq in March 2015. A former Iraqi Army officer who sought asylum in Germany has been given a 20-month suspended sentence for having held up the severed heads of two Islamic State fighters for a photograph in Iraq.

More Details:

<http://www.rferl.org/a/germany-iraq-soldier-sentenced-i-s-severed-heads/28342714.html>

- **129 Killed in Iraq; Dozens Freed from ISIS Prisons**

Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has apparently admitted defeat in Iraq and told his fighters to return home or commit suicide. The admission came in a speech that was distributed among militant preachers on Tuesday. Albania announced it is sending an as yet undetermined number of troops to assist in operations against the Islamic State militants.

More Details:

<http://original.antiwar.com/updates/2017/03/01/129-killed-in-iraq-dozens-freed-from-isis-prisons/>

- **US: Unlikely to Increase American Troops in ISIS Fight in Syria, Iraq**

The commander of the US-led coalition forces in Iraq and Syria expressed doubt on Wednesday that Washington could possibly increase the number of troops deployed in the two countries to combat ISIS militants, as Russian warplanes bombed US-backed fighters in several small villages in northern Syria after mistaking them for jihadists.

More Details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/2017/03/article55368476/us-unlikely-increase-american-troops-isis-fight-syria-iraq>

- **Two Iraq Shia militia leaders killed west of Mosul in a week**

A military commander in the Iraqi Shia paramilitary organisation, the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF), has been killed in clashes with Daesh in the area of Tal Afar, west of Mosul. The killing is the second such slaying of a PMF military commander in the past week alone. The Iran-backed PMF, a formal part of the Iraqi military since last year, has been formally deployed west of Mosul since the operation to recapture Iraq's second city from Daesh extremists began on 17 October 2016. During

that time, the PMF has fought to capture the Turkmen-majority city of Tal Afar, about 60 kilometres west of Mosul.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170301-two-iraq-shia-militia-leaders-killed-west-of-mosul-in-a-week/>

- **West Mosul fighting pushes over 28,000 Iraqis to flee**

Over 28,000 people have fled since the start of a drive to retake west Mosul, as Iraqi forces closed in Wednesday on a road linking the city with a jihadist-held town to the west. West Mosul is the largest population centre still controlled by the Islamic State group, and its recapture would mark the effective end of the cross-border “caliphate” leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced from a mosque in the city more than two years ago.

More Details:

<http://www.manilatimes.net/west-mosul-fighting-pushes-28000-iraqis-flee/314977/>

- **Revised Trump immigration order, delayed after speech, will not ban citizens from Iraq**

President Trump’s new executive order on immigration will not include a blanket ban on citizens from Iraq, among a host of other revisions meant to allay legal and diplomatic concerns, people familiar with the matter said. Late on Tuesday, the White House scrapped plans for Trump to sign a revised travel ban Wednesday afternoon, a person familiar with the matter said, marking the third time the administration has put off the matter since the president said that dangerous people might enter the country without a prohibition in place.

More Details:

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/news/nation/2017/03/01/revised-trump-immigration-order-delayed-after-speech-will-not-ban-citizens-from-iraq/pMvbwUgCx4mE2MwALML28O/story.html>

2. SYRIA

- **Syrian Regime Succumbs to Russian Pressure, Accepts Discussing ‘Political Transition’**

Five days after kicking off the fourth round of the intra-Syrian talks in Geneva, Russia succeeded on Wednesday in making a political breach by convincing the Syrian regime to accept discussions on a “political transition” in the war-torn country. Following a meeting with UN chief negotiator Staffan de Mistura in Geneva, Syria’s main opposition High Negotiations Committee (HNC) leader Nasr al-Hariri said: “We had a lengthy discussion with de Mistura and his team. The issue of political transition is now the main subject on the table of political discussions currently taking place in Geneva.”

More Details

<http://english.aawsat.com/2017/03/article55368463/syrian-regime-succumbs-russian-pressure-accept-discussing-political-transition>

- **Cement giant admits 'unacceptable' practices at Syria plant**

Cement maker LafargeHolcim admitted on Thursday it had resorted to "unacceptable practices" to continue operations at one of its now-closed factories in Syria. The admission comes after sources close to the case told AFP in January that the French government had filed a legal complaint against Lafarge for buying oil in Syria to power the Jalabiya factory, in violation of sanctions.

More Details:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-4274104/LafargeHolcim-says-unacceptable-practices-kept-Syria-plant-open.html>

- **Sights set for Modest Achievements in Syria Talks**

The United Nations envoy to Syria is working round the clock in a bid to secure a modest victory in the fourth round of talks held in Geneva. Staffan de Mistura is due for another round of meetings Thursday marking a week of bilateral talks with the government delegation and opposition groups.

More Details

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/E/EU_SYRIA?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-03-02-02-54-16

- **Syrian regime used chlorine gas on civilians in East Aleppo: UN Commission concludes**

In a report released on Wednesday by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, UN investigators have concluded that Syrian regime security forces attacked civilians with chlorine gas, a chemical agent prohibited under international law, in Aleppo's eastern neighbourhoods last year.

More Details

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302600560>

- **ISIL pulls back from Syria's Palmyra**

ISIL fighters have withdrawn from much of the Syrian oasis city of Palmyra as government forces slowly enter its ravaged ancient ruins because of land mines and suicide bombers, a war monitor said on Thursday.

More Details

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/isil-pulls-syria-palmyra-170302072902496.html>

- **US: Unlikely to Increase American Troops in ISIS Fight in Syria, Iraq**

The commander of the US-led coalition forces in Iraq and Syria expressed doubt on Wednesday that Washington could possibly increase the number of troops deployed in the two countries to combat ISIS militants, as Russian warplanes bombed US-backed fighters in several small villages in northern Syria after mistaking them for jihadists.

More Details

<http://english.aawsat.com/2017/03/article55368476/us-unlikely-increase-american-troops-isis-fight-syria-iraq>

- **Syrian army, militias push into Palmyra in anti-Daesh offensive**

The Syrian army and its allies have entered Palmyra as part of an operation to oust Islamic State militants from the ancient city, a monitoring group said on Wednesday. "The Syrian troops accompanied by their allies backed by Russians planes have entered the first neighborhood of al Mutakadeen which is located in the western sector of city," Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, told dpa.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/syrian-army-militias-push-palmyra-anti-daesh-offensive-944652>

- **Syrian refugees make up almost 4 percent of Istanbul's population**

Almost 4 percent of Istanbul's population is made up of Syrian refugees, according to a new report. The Marmara Municipalities' Union's Migration Policies Center report stated that nearly 540,000 Syrian nationals are currently residing in Istanbul, Turkey's largest city.

More Details

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=110349&NewsCatID=341>

- **UN: Syria air force bombed Aleppo aid convoy**

A Syrian government aircraft deliberately bombed a humanitarian convoy, killing 14 aid workers and halting relief operations, UN investigators said today in a report identifying war crimes committed by both sides in Syria's war.

More Details

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170301-un-syria-air-force-bombed-aid-convoy/>

- **Russia inadvertently struck US-backed Syrians, says US general**

A Russian airstrike in northern Syria hit US-backed Syrian Arab forces who are part of the fight against the Daesh (Islamic State) group, a senior US general said Wednesday. Russia denied responsibility, saying in a written statement that it had adhered to US guidance on avoiding friendly forces in that area.

More Details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1061976/middle-east>

3. IRAN

- **Turkey, Iran presidents meet to defuse tensions**

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan agreed today to improve ties, including in the fight against terrorism, Iran's state news agency IRNA said, following some angry exchanges between the regional rivals.

More details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170301-turkey-iran-presidents-meet-to-defuse-tensions/>

- **Iran's new EOR law not in conflict with IPC**

Iranian parliament has passed a law demanding Oil Ministry to increase the oil and gas recovery rate, SHANA reported. The enhanced oil recovery (EOR) is vital for Iran, because its in-situ oil reserves stand at 712 billion barrels with natural recovery rate below 15 percent. Even after gas and water re-injection, the recovery rate roughly reaches 25 percent.

More details:

<http://en.trend.az/iran/business/2727471.html>

- **New chapter in Tehran-Paris ties: Envoy**

Iran's Ambassador to France Ali Ahani says that Tehran-Paris relations have entered a new chapter. After the July 2015 nuclear deal and the Jan 2016 visit of the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani to Paris, a new period opened in bilateral relations of the two sides, Ahani said at Iran-France economic forum.

More details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82449787/>

- **Iran's President: Strong ECO to Boost Stability in Region**

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani highlighted the positive impacts that development of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) will have on stability in the region, saying he had constructive talks with Turkish and Pakistani leaders to serve that purpose.

More details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/03/02/1343667/iran-s-president-strong-eco-to-boost-stability-in-region>

- **Factional Feuding Flare in Iran over May Presidential Elections**

With so-called presidential election being two months away, factional feuding is escalating among various groups within the ruling clerical establishment.

More details:

<http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/iran-sham-election/22266-factional-feuding-flare-in-iran-over-may-presidential-elections>

- **Iran dismisses UAE FM's allegations on interfering with Yemen**

Iran's foreign ministry on Wednesday rejected as "baseless" the charges made by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) foreign minister about Iran's interference in Yemen, Tasnim news agency reported.

More details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/02/c_136094970.htm

- **Armenian president calls for broadening of Iran-EU ties**

Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian underlined the importance of economic cooperation between European companies and Iranian firms from Yerevan's perspective.

More details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82449520/>

- **Egyptian-Iranian détente a boon for the region and beyond**

With the resurgence of "firstness" (i.e. America First), with all its ominous implications of narrow nationalism, there is a profound global need for a "dialogue of civilizations." This call is not new, having originally been proposed by former reformist Iranian president Mohammad Khatami and most recently echoed by the Grand Imam of Cairo's Al-Azhar in a speech before the German Bundestag in 2016.

More details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/411567/Egyptian-Iranian-d%C3%A9tente-a-boon-for-the-region-and-beyond>

- **Iran, Austria discuss technological co-op**

Senior Iranian and Austrian officials in a meeting in Vienna reviewed ways to widen cooperation in technology. The meeting was held by Iran's Vice-President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari and Austria's Minister of Transport, Innovation and Technology Jörg Leichtfried, according to IRNA.

More details:

<http://iran-daily.com/News/188600.html>

- **Norway Calls for Broadening of Bilateral Ties with Iran**

Norwegian Envoy in Iran John Mikal Kvistad called for the further expansion of mutual cooperation between Tehran and Oslo.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951211001158>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **For Netanyahu, Gaza report risks his 'Mr Security' reputation**

A report severely criticising Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's leadership in the 2014 Gaza war may weaken the self-styled "Mr Security", analysts say.

More details:

<http://www.timeslive.co.za/world/2017/03/02/For-Netanyahu-Gaza-report-risks-his-Mr-Security-reputation1>

- **Israeli soldier appeals jail sentence for killing helpless Palestinian**

An Israeli soldier, sentenced to 18 months in prison for shooting dead a wounded Palestinian man in the occupied West Bank last year, has filed an appeal against his manslaughter conviction and already-lenient jail term.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/03/02/512663/Israeli-soldier-Elor-Azaria-murder-conviction-killing-Palestinian-Abdel-Fattah-alSharif-West-Bank-alKhalil>

- **Israel MP benefited from controversial law on illegal Jewish outposts**

A far-right Israeli MP who backed a controversial law retroactively “legalising” illegal Jewish outposts built on privately-owned Palestinian land will personally benefit from the legislation, because his home is one of several thousand covered by the provision, activists have revealed.

More details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/02/israel-mp-benefited-from-controversial-law-on-illegal-jewish-outposts>

- **No cause in the world can justify terrorism: Israel envoy Daniel Carmon**

As India and Israel mark the 25th anniversary of their full diplomatic relations, Israel ambassador to India Daniel Carmon has reiterated his country's support to India on the issue of terrorism saying that no cause in the world can justify the menace.

More Details:

http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/57425830.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

- **US urged U.N. Human Rights Council to reform its agenda and end its “obsession with Israel.”**

President Trump's administration confirmed it is reviewing the United States’ participation in the U.N. Human Rights Council, warning Wednesday that it wants the international body to reform its agenda and end its “obsession with Israel.”

More details:

<http://www.asiantribune.com/node/90180>

- **Israel Quietly Begins Exporting Natural Gas to Jordan amid Political Sensitivities**

Israel has begun quietly exporting natural gas to Jordan after two Jordanian companies – Arab Potash and Jordan Bromine – were connected to Israel’s national pipeline network. The deliveries to the two companies, which operate plants on the Jordanian side of the Dead Sea, began in January, but all the sides involved opted to keep a low profile because of the political sensitivities in Jordan about doing business with Israel.

More Details:

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/business/1.774758>

- **Army Abducts A Palestinian Near Jerusalem**

Israeli soldiers invaded, on Thursday at dawn, Hizma town, and northeast of occupied East Jerusalem, searched homes and abducted a young Palestinian man.

More details:

<http://imemc.org/article/army-abducts-a-palestinian-near-jerusalem/>

- **Palestinian Bedouins fear forcible transfer by Israel**

UN and international NGOs warn that risk of forcible transfer could affect around 7000 Palestinians living in Area C.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/03/palestinian-bedouins-fear-forcible-transfer-israel-170301083631032.html>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Jordanian King and British PM hold talks on Mideast issues**

King Abdullah II of Jordan and British Prime Minister Theresa May, on Wednesday, held talks that focused on the latest regional and international developments, and prospects for cementing relations between the two countries at various levels.

More details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302600556>

- **Berri says no to parliament extension, 1960 Law and vacuum**

Lebanon Speaker Nabih Berri rejected on Wednesday three possible scenarios .He stressed his objection to extending the parliament's term, to holding upcoming elections under the 1960 law and to plunging the country into parliamentary vacuum.

More details:

<http://yalibnan.com/2017/03/02/berri-says-no-to-parliament-extension-1960-law-and-vacuum/>

- **As US pressures Iran, parallel tensions grow between Israel and Hezbollah**

A decade of relative calm along the Israel-Lebanon border is being rattled as both Israel and Hezbollah threaten each other. The threats were provoked by the Trump administration signaling an intent to roll back the growing influence of Iran, Hezbollah's sponsor.

More details:

<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2017/0301/As-US-pressures-Iran-parallel-tensions-grow-between-Israel-and-Hezbollah>

- **Hezbollah's Diplomacy in Qalamoun**

The past several weeks have been good for Hezbollah—both in their domestic stronghold in Lebanon and their Syrian areas of operation. In Lebanon for example, President Michel Aoun recently went out of his way to uncharacteristically praise the group's militia.

More details:

<http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/syriasource/hezbollah-s-diplomacy-in-qalamoun>

- **Lebanon Launches Plan of Ministry of Women Affairs**

Civil society organizations are looking positively to all the political pledges that are being made in Lebanon on the importance of empowering the role of women in society.

More details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/2017/03/article55368414/lebanon-launches-plan-ministry-women-affairs>

- **Jordan court upholds 10-year sentence for man who killed sister for 'family honor'**

Jordan's Court of Cassation has upheld a recent Criminal Court ruling sentencing a 20-year-old man to 10 years in prison for murdering his teenage sister, claiming "family honor," in Zarqa in April 2014.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/jordan-court-upholds-10-year-sentence-man-who-killed-sister-family-honor%E2%80%9999-944424>

- **Merehbi, Al Bukhari discuss Saudi aid to displaced Syrians, host communities**

Minister of State for Displaced, Moiin Merehbi, stressed during his meeting with the Saudi embassy's Charge d'Affaires, Walid Al-Bukhari, "the depth of the relationship with Saudi Arabia (...) and utter gratitude and appreciation to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdul Aziz,

the Saudi government and brotherly people on their permanent care and support for Lebanon and the Lebanese."

More details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/75955/Merehbi-Al-Bukhari-discuss-Saudi-aid-to-displaced-Syrians-host-communities>

- **Senate President conveys King message to Swiss President**

Senate President, Faisal al-Fayez, conveyed a message from His Majesty King Abdullah II to President of the Swiss Confederation, Doris Leuthard, regarding relations between the two countries.

More details:

http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=34325&title=Senate%20President%20conveys%20King%20message%20to%20Swiss%20President#.WLffRG_yjIU

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Saudi Arabia pledges international market integration amid Aramco mania**

Saudi Arabia is committed to integrating its markets with the rest of the world, the country's financial market regulatory body told CNBC, as massive hype builds for the debut listing of state-owned oil and gas company Saudi Aramco.

More Details

<http://www.cnbc.com/2017/03/02/saudi-arabia-bets-on-market-integration.html>

- **New Agreements Crown Historic Saudi-Indonesian Summit**

Jakarta-Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud said on Wednesday that challenges currently facing the world, mainly the phenomenon of terrorism, necessitate that all parties deepen dialogue, and intensify efforts to confront them.

More Details

<http://english.aawsat.com/2017/03/article55368456/new-agreements-crown-historic-saudi-indonesian-summit>

- **Devices seized in Yemen raid offer some clues to Al-Qaida tactics**

Computers and cellphones seized during a deadly special operations raid in Yemen in January offer clues about attacks Al-Qaida could carry out in the future, including insights into new types of hidden explosives the group is making and new training tactics for militants, according to U.S. officials.

More Details

<http://www.startribune.com/devices-seized-in-yemen-raid-offer-some-clues-to-al-qaida-tactics/415168354/>

- **PM holds talks with Qatari counterpart**

His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa received the Qatari Prime Minister and Interior Minister, Shaikh Abdulla bin Nasser Al Thani at his residence at the Al-Marmar Palace here yesterday.

More Details

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppId=30906&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=1>

- **Qatar, Mauritania sign twinning agreement**

The Head of the Court of Cassation and president of the Judicial Supreme Council Masoud Mohamed al-Amiri met the president of the Supreme Court of Mauritania Yahdedh Mohamed Youssef Sidi and his accompanying delegation yesterday. Talks dealt with mechanisms of enhancing co-operation between the two jurisdictions.

More Details

<http://www.gulf-times.com/story/534843/Qatar-Mauritania-sign-twinning-agreement>

- **Bahrain's human rights strides stressed**

The Kingdom is seeking to achieve an effective partnership with civil society institutions on the basis of transparency, openness and objectivity, according to Assistant Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Faisal bin Jabr Al Dossari.

More Details

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppId=30893&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=>

- **Accounting, finance jobs to be in high demand following changes in Oman's income tax law**

With new amendments in Oman's income tax law in place, accounting and finance professionals as well as new graduates in these fields are expected to be in high demand in the near future.

More Details

<http://www.muscatdaily.com/Archive/Oman/Accounting-finance-jobs-to-be-in-high-demand-following-changes-in-Oman-s-income-tax-law-4yq8>

- **Oman: A kingdom with no successor**

Thinly populated and mountainous, Oman's Dhofar region has played a strategic role since it was the ancient world's source of frankincense and springboard for trade between the Mediterranean and India. Its location still brings attention. Each year hundreds of thousands arrive from across the Middle East to cherish the Khareef, or monsoon, which turns the border between Oman and Yemen a verdant green.

More Details

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/oman-kingdom-no-successor>

7. EGYPT

- **The chances and opportunities of the chancellor's visit to Egypt**

The chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, is paying a two-day visit to Egypt on Thursday, to discuss several political and economic issues between Egypt and the most powerful industrial country in the European Union.

More Details

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/03/02/616880/>

- **World Bank delegation to Egypt to follow up reforms progress**

A senior delegation of the World Bank Group will visit Egypt in the first half of March to hear more about reform policies undertaken by the government to revive the Egyptian economy, Egypt's Minister of International Cooperation Sahar Nasr said Wednesday.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/world-bank-delegation-egypt-follow-reforms-progress-944620>

- **Russia to Set Up Managing Company for Industrial Zone in Egypt Soon**

The managing company that would coordinate establishment of the Russian industrial zone in Egypt will be set up soon, Russia's First Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade Gleb Nikitin said Wednesday.

More Details

<https://sputniknews.com/business/201703021051182024-russia-industrial-zone-egypt/>

- **Saudi FM to visit Cairo amid rising tensions**

Saudi foreign minister Adel al-Jubeir will visit Egypt next week as part of efforts to address tensions between the two countries, Egyptian MPs told reporters on Wednesday. "A number of Egyptian diplomats have visited Saudi Arabia and vice versa in past weeks to prepare the ground for al-Jubeir's visit," said Mostafa Bakri, an independent MP and journalist.

More Details

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/3/2/saudi-fm-to-visit-cairo-amid-rising-tensions>

- **Amnesty accuses Egypt of failing to protect Christians**

Amnesty International on Wednesday accused the Egyptian government of failing to protect hundreds of Coptic Christians who fled their homes in northern Sinai after a series of attacks by Islamic State militants. The London-based rights group said the government's response fits with a pattern of failing to protect the embattled minority, adding that after other sectarian attacks the government sought reconciliation agreements between communities rather than prosecuting those responsible.

More Details

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/3/1/amnesty-accuses-egypt-of-failing-to-protect-christians>

- **Central Bank of Egypt braces for multi-billion-pound microfinance initiative**

Egypt's central bank is preparing the ground to launch a new initiative dedicated for the microfinance sector before the end of this financial year, banking sources with knowledge told Amwal Al Ghad on Wednesday. The Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) plans to allocate 20 billion Egyptian pounds (\$1.2 billion) for the microfinancing activities in the country, the sources added.

More Details

<http://en.amwalalghad.com/business/banks/55352-central-bank-of-egypt-braces-for-multi-billion-pound-microfinance-initiative.html>

- **Egypt Interested in Russia's Shipbuilding Technologies, Deputy PM Rogozin Says**

Egyptian leader Abdel Fattah Sisi expressed "great interest" in adopting Russia's experience in the spheres of civil shipbuilding and aircraft construction, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin said after the meeting with the president in Cairo.

More Details

<https://sputniknews.com/world/201703021051177948-egypt-russia-shipbuilding-technologies/>

- **Egyptian parliamentary leaders file criminal complaint against editor**

Egyptian lawmakers should immediately withdraw their criminal complaint against Ibrahim Eissa, editor of Al-Maqal newspaper, and should stop harassing and threatening journalists, the Committee to Protect Journalists said today.

More Details

<https://cpj.org/2017/03/egyptian-parliamentary-leaders-file-criminal-compl.php>

- **Egypt parliament gives final approval for Agadir free trade deal**

Egypt's parliament endorsed Tuesday the presidential decree No. 555/2016 approving an agreement on the recognition of the Agadir authorized economic operator (AEO) signed by the four member countries; Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, and Morocco.

More Details

<http://en.amwalalghad.com/investment-news/industry-trade/55351-egypt-parliament-gives-final-approval-for-agadir-free-trade-deal.html>

- **Prime Minister of Egypt receives UAE Ambassador**

Sherif Ismail, Prime Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt, received Juma Mubarak Al Junaibi, UAE Ambassador to Egypt and its permanent delegate at the Arab League, at the headquarters of the Egyptian Cabinet. During the meeting, Juma Al Junaibi praised the development of the exceptional ties between the UAE and Egypt, and thanked the wise leadership of both countries. He stated that the ties between both countries are a model in Arab relations in terms of its strength and its solid foundations based on appreciation, mutual respect and common interests.

More Details

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302600540>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Algerian Civil Protection, recognized worldwide**

Algerian Civil Protection "has become today recognized worldwide," said Wednesday the Director General of Civil Protection, Colonel Mustapha Lahbiri.

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/17071-algerian-civil-protection,-recognized-worldwide>

- **Siala Meets his Algerian Counterpart in Geneva.**

The GNA Foreign Minister Mohamed Siala met here on Tuesday his Algerian counterpart Ramadan Al Amamra, on the sidelines of the high-level meeting of 34th session of the UN Human Rights Council.

More Details:

http://www.lana-news.ly/eng/news/view/111857/Siala_Meets_his_Algerian_Counterpart_in_Geneva

- **Nine terrorists neutralised in Tizi Ouzou, identified**

The nine terrorists neutralised Tuesday by the Army forces in Tizi Ouzou, have been identified, said Wednesday the National Defence Ministry in a communiqué.

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/17064-nine-terrorists-captured-in-tizi-ouzou-identified>

- **Morocco's Attijariwafa Bank signs deals with Ivory Coast defence ministry**

Attijariwafa Bank, one of Morocco's biggest banks, has signed two agreements with Ivory Coast's Ministry of Defence, according to a statement from the bank.

More Details:

http://af.reuters.com/article/moroccoNews/idAFL5N1GE2P8?feedType=RSS&feedName=moroccoNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+reuters%2FAfricaMoroccoNews+%28News+%2F+Africa+%2F+Morocco+News%29&&rpc=401

- **Morocco: Reducing Gender Inequality Can Boost Growth**

Policies that better integrate women into the economy could help increase overall income and significantly improve Morocco's growth prospects, IMF study finds.

More Details:

<http://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2017/03/01/NA030117-Morocco-Reducing-Gender-Inequality-Can-Boost-Growth>

- **Tunisia to respond to British query over Sousse attack in 2015**

Faced with British suspicion on a "chaotic" police intervention in the attack of Sousse, east of Tunisia, in 2015, Tunisian Interior Minister Hedi Majdoub said Wednesday that his department "will respond at the appropriate time."

More Details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/02/c_136095187.htm

- **India, Tunisia view terrorism as most dangerous for intl**

India and Tunisia identified terrorism as the most dangerous menace to prosperity and international stability as Minister of State for External Affairs M J Akbar held bilateral talks with the top leadership of the North African country.

More Details:

<http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-india-tunisia-view-terrorism-as-most-dangerous-for-intl-2339303>

- **Tripoli tense as militia roadblocks go up again**

Just four days after vicious fighting was bought to a halt by Presidency Council mediation, Tripoli is once again tense this evening as militias erect sand or container roadblocks and armoured vehicles take up positions.

More Details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/03/01/tripoli-tense-as-militia-roadblocks-go-up-again/>

- **Algiers to host next meeting of Libya's neighbouring countries by end March**

The next meeting of Libya's neighbouring countries would be held in Algiers by the end of March, announced Wednesday Minister of Maghreb Affairs, African Union and Arab League Abdelkader Messahel.

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/17067-algiers-to-host-next-meeting-of-libya-s-neighbouring-countries-by-end-march>

- **Refugees in Libya: 'Smugglers have lost all humanity'**

The United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, says refugee women and children suffer routine sexual violence and abuse as they try to travel across the Mediterranean to Europe. Al Jazeera's Hoda Abdel

Hamid meets young refugees and migrants who have attempted the perilous journey across the sea from Libya to Italy.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/video/news/2017/03/refugees-libya-smugglers-lost-humanity-170301124013773.html>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **30 Taliban, 6 police killed in north violence**

Thirty Taliban militants and half a dozen police have been killed in insurgency related violence in northern Farah, Faryab and Badghis provinces, officials said Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2017/03/01/30-taliban-6-police-killed-north-violence>

- **Afghanistan appoints Secretary General for Election Commission**

Imam Mohammad Warimach has been appointed as the Secretary General of the Afghanistan Independent Election Commission (IEC) by the government of national unity.

More Details:

<http://www.khaama.com/afghanistan-appoints-secretary-general-for-election-commission-02310>

- **UN Security Council slams deadly attacks in Afghan capital**

The UN Security Council on Wednesday "condemned in the strongest terms the heinous and cowardly terrorist attacks" that occurred earlier in the day in the Afghan capital of Kabul, which killed at least 15 people and injured dozens.

More Details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/02/c_136096145.htm

- **US Military: Number of IS Members in Afghanistan Reduced to 700**

Afghan security forces backed by American air support have conducted "successful" operations against the Islamic State (IS) group in Afghanistan during the past year, reducing the number of its militants to about 700.

More Details:

<http://www.voanews.com/a/afghanistan-islamic-state/3745401.html>

- **Russia rejects Al Jazeera's report on alleged cooperation with terrorists in Afghanistan**

Russia's Foreign Ministry has rejected a report by the Qatar-based TV Channel Al Jazeera, claiming that Moscow cooperates with terrorist groupings in Afghanistan.

More Details:

<http://tass.com/politics/933513>

- **Pakistan, France to deepen bilateral relations by parliamentary exchanges**

Chairman Senate, Mian Raza Rabbani has called for further strengthening the bilateral relations between France and Pakistan through parliamentary exchanges besides boosting cooperation in diversified fields.

More Details:

<http://www.app.com.pk/pakistan-france-to-deepen-bilateral-relations-by-parliamentary-exchanges/>

- **ISIL expands in Afghan-Pakistan areas, widening attacks**

An offshoot of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) group based near the Afghan-Pakistan border is expanding to new areas, recruiting fighters and widening the reach of attacks in the region, members of the movement and Afghan officials said.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/isil-expands-afghan-pakistan-areas-widening-attacks-170302041341156.html>

- **Kyrgyzstan interested in getting access to Pakistan's Karachi and Gwadar ports: PM**

Kyrgyzstan is very interested in getting access to Pakistan's Karachi and Gwadar ports within the frames of implementation of infrastructure projects, said Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan Sooronbai Jeenbekov on March 1 when he met in Islamabad with his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif.

More Details:

<http://akipress.com/news:589558/>

- **Pakistan to make ECO a powerful economic bloc, engine of growth**

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, as elected chairman of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), has said that Pakistan had the location, political stability, and increasing physical infrastructure to achieve common vision for making the 10-member regional group a powerful economic bloc and an engine of growth.

More Details:

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/03/02/pakistan-to-make-eco-a-powerful-economic-bloc-engine-of-growth/>

- **Pakistani diplomat assumes office as new SAARC Chief**

Amjad Hussain B. Sial, a senior Pakistani diplomat, assumed the office of secretary general of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) here on Wednesday.

More Details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/01/c_136094783.htm

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Syrian army deserter flees to Turkey**

A member of the Syrian regime army deserted and fled to Turkey on Thursday, security sources have said. The soldier was found in the southern Turkish border province of Hatay, a security source told Anadolu Agency. The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the soldier had surrendered to Turkish border troops.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/185638/this-is-your-home-turkeys-gormez-tells-refugees>

- **'Turkey will hit PKK/PYD in Manbij unless it retreats'**

Turkey will attack the terrorist PKK/PYD in Manbij, northern Syria "unless the group withdraws," Turkey's foreign minister said Thursday. Speaking to journalists outside the Turkish parliament in Ankara, Mevlut Cavusoglu said that Turkey and the United States "must not face off against each other because of Turkey's fight against other terrorist groups," meaning groups besides Daesh, the main focus of Turkey's Operation Euphrates Shield in northern Iraq.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkey-will-hit-pkk-pyd-in-manbij-unless-it-retreats/762484>

This media summary is prepared by **ORSAM Middle East Research Assistant Firuze Yağmur Gökler. It covers news and commentaries as reported by the national media sources publishing in the Middle Eastern countries. The views expressed are not those of ORSAM and their inclusion does not imply factual accuracy.*

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