



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

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1. IRAQ

- **Jubouri Confirms The Continuation Of The Work Of The Parliament Until The Adoption Of The Laws Of The Budget And Legislative And Local Elections**

Speaker of the House of Representatives Salim al-Jubouri confirmed the continuation of the work of the House of Representatives until the adoption of the laws of the general budget and legislative and local elections. "There will be hosting for representatives of government agencies in future sessions," Jubouri told a news conference.

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?5isWddiaVtrrOczfKtylVg%253d%253d

- **U.K. defense minister Williamson arrives in Baghdad: reports**

British Defense Minister Gavin Williamson arrived in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, on Thursday in a surprise visit, Iraqi media reports said. The reports said Williamson was going to discuss bilateral cooperation, political and security situation in Iraq with Iraqi officials.

More Details:

<https://www.iraqinews.com/baghdad-politics/u-k-defense-minister-williamson-arrives-baghdad-reports/>

- **Kurdistan Electoral Commission Sets 14th April as Date of Elections**

Kurdistan Independent High Elections Commission (KIHEC) on Wednesday held a meeting to set a date for the upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections in the Kurdistan Region. According to the information obtained by BasNews, the commission decided for the polls to be held on 14th April this year.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/kurdistan/404535>

- **Iranian-backed militias in Iraq form political coalition, aim to challenge Baghdad in elections**

The heads of several powerful Iranian-backed militias in Iraq are banding together to form a Shia political movement, designed specifically to take on the ruling party of Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi in the country's upcoming parliamentary elections. The new Iraqi political faction, dubbed the Mujahedeen Coalition, includes representatives from the Shia-led Badr Organization, Asa'ib Ahl al-

Haq — also known as the Khazali Network — Kata'ib Hezbollah, and other Shia militias that battled the Islamic State, or ISIS, under the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) banner.

More Details:

http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/1151b482-1195-4f51-87e9-5ccb07ea08ba

- **Patriotic Union fraction is supporting lowering Parliamentarian retiree benefits**

A member of Kurdistan Parliament in PUK Fraction stated, Patriotic Union is with all the refinements that the Government is doing for the public's sake and also pointed out, no PUK Parliamentarian is against lowering retirement benefits. Dr. Rewaz Fayaq member of Kurdistan Parliament in Patriotic Union Fraction stated: That project which is prepared by the Government and Kurdistan Parliament for refinements in employees and retiree salaries, Patriotic Union fraction is completely backing it up and any work that is for public's sake is approved by Patriotic Union.

More Details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=42465

- **Over 4,000 corpses still under rubble of Mosul – MP**

MP of Nineveh governorate Farah Seraj described on Thursday the living conditions of Mosul residents as "tragic". Seraj also urged the Iraqi government to support the internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their homes and areas. In a statement, Seraj said that over 4,000 corpses still lie under the rubble of the Old city of Mosul that suffered massive destruction to both its buildings and infrastructure.

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/21896/Over-4-000-corpses-still-under-rubble-of-Mosul-MP>

- **ISIS launches mass-suicide bombing offensive against Iraqi forces near border with Syria**

The Islamic State terrorist group has launched a mass-suicide bombing attack against Iraqi forces near the Syrian border. Iraqi troops managed to repel the attack, but only just. According to military-affiliated sources, on Tuesday, Iraqi forces operating near the Syrian border were attacked by scores of ISIS suicide bombers utilizing both car bombs and vest bombs in what appears to have been a desperate attempt by the terrorist group to overrun the positions of pro-government forces after many failed raids in previous weeks.

More Details:

<https://www.almazdarnews.com/article/isis-launches-mass-suicide-bombing-offensive-iraqi-forces-near-border-syria/>

- **Pakistan attaches great importance to its ties with Iraq, Netherlands: President**

President Mamnoon Hussain on Wednesday said that Pakistan attached great importance to its relations with Iraq and the Netherlands, and was keen to expand ties with both the countries in all fields, including economic, culture and education. He was talking to the outgoing Ambassador of Iraq Dr Ali Al-Rahmani and Ambassador-designate to Netherlands Shujjat Ali Rathore, who called on him separately here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

More Details:

<https://www.brecorder.com/2018/01/03/390494/pakistan-attaches-great-importance-to-its-ties-with-iraq-netherlands-president/>

- **Judge orders potential release of hundreds of illegals from Iraq**

A federal judge in Michigan has ordered the government to give bond hearings in preparation for releasing hundreds of illegal immigrants from Iraq into the community, saying the Constitution protects them from indefinite detention in the U.S. U.S. District Judge Mark A Goldsmith, an Obama appointee, earlier had halted deportations for nearly 300 Iraqis, saying that although they had long been ordered removed, conditions on the ground in Iraq had changed and they deserved new hearings.

More Details:

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/jan/3/judge-orders-potential-release-hundreds-illegals-i/>

- **Anti-ISIS Operations Continue near Mosul; 21 Killed in Iraq**

The head of the Muqadadiya City Council, Adnan al-Tamimi, warned that Islamic State militants are become more active in the area. At least 23 people were killed, and 10 more were wounded in recent violence: In Baghdad, one person was killed and three were wounded by a blast in Doura.

More Details:

<http://original.antiwar.com/updates/2018/01/03/anti-isis-operations-continue-near-mosul-21-killed-iraq/>

- **Qatar eyes investment in Iraq upstream projects**

Qatar Petroleum (QP) has confirmed that it plans to invest in Iraq's upstream businesses and at the moment the company is exploring best ways to enter the market, a report said. QP President & CEO Saad Sherida Al Kaabi yesterday said he had met with Iraq's Oil Minister Jabar Al Luaibi and had conveyed QP's interest in investing Iraq's upstream business. The Iraqi minister had welcomed that, he said, according to a report in the Peninsula newspaper.

More Details:

http://www.tradearabia.com/news/OGN_334990.html

- **Iraq promises new laws to protect rights of Palestinian refugees**

The Palestinian Ambassador to Iraq, Ahmed Aqel, said the Speaker of Iraq's Parliament, Salim Al-Jubouri, has promised him to find a legal formula during the next few days to preserve the Palestinian refugees' rights in Iraq. The ambassador met with Al-Jubouri in his office in Baghdad to discuss the issue of Palestinian refugees in Iraq and other issues.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180104-iraq-promises-new-laws-to-protect-rights-of-palestinian-refugees/>

2. SYRIA

- **Two Russian servicemen killed in Syria mortar attack**

Russia's defence ministry on Thursday said two servicemen had been killed in a mortar attack by Islamist militants in Syria on New Year's Eve, but denied media reports seven military planes had been destroyed. "As darkness fell, the Hmeimim air base was subjected to sudden mortar shelling from a mobile group of militants. As a result of the shelling, two servicemen were killed," the defence ministry said in comments carried by news agencies.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86638>

- **Assad drops almost 70,000 barrel bombs on Syria, study finds**

Bashar al Assad's regime has dropped almost 70,000 barrel bombs on Syria during the country's near seven-year civil war, according to a report released this week. The report, published by the non-profit Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), is perhaps the most extensive study into the use of

the indiscriminate crude weapon and tracks how it became synonymous with the Assad regime's brutal war apparatus.

More Details:

<https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/assad-drops-almost-70-000-barrel-bombs-on-syria-study-finds-1.692570>

- **UN aid wing sounds alarm on rising violence in nthrn Syria**

The United Nations humanitarian wing and its partners in Syria on Wednesday expressed deep concern about the protection and wellbeing of tens of thousands of civilians in north-eastern Hama and southern Idlib governorates, following increased hostilities, which have reportedly resulted in scores of deaths and injuries and displacement in the area.

More Details:

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO1801/S00020/un-aid-wing-sounds-alarm-on-rising-violence-in-nthrn-syria.htm>

- **Thousands displaced by fighting in Syria's Idlib**

Nahar al-Raheel has been through this before. The Syrian man has been displaced for the past seven years, "running from one place to the other". "If God doesn't help us, no one can," he says from an open field in Idlib province, where he is among about 200,000 other displaced Syrians who fled deadly fighting in areas across the country.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/tens-thousands-displaced-fighting-continues-idlib-syria-180104074612049.html>

- **Russia denies report that 7 planes destroyed in Syria attack - TASS**

Russia denied a report in daily newspaper Kommersant that seven Russian planes had been destroyed by rebel shelling at Syria's Hmeymim air base on Dec. 31, the TASS news agency on Thursday quoted the defence ministry as saying. At least four Su-24 bombers, two Su-35S fighters and an An-72 transport plane, as well as an ammunition depot, were destroyed by the shelling, Kommersant said on its website, citing two "military-diplomatic" sources.

More Details:

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-planes/russia-denies-report-that-7-planes-destroyed-in-syria-attack-tass-idUKKBN1ETOW1?rpc=401&>

- **French female jihadists should face trial in Syria: govt**

Female French jihadists arrested in Kurdish-held parts of Syria should face justice there so long as they can be guaranteed a fair trial, the French government said on Thursday. Debate has been swirling in France over the fate of women who went to Syria to marry Islamist fighters and now find themselves in custody, following a series of defeats for the Islamic State group.

More Details:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-5234723/French-female-jihadists-face-trial-Syria-govt.html>

- **Russian jets suspected to have killed 20 people in bombing run on houses near Damascus**

Suspected Russian jets were reported to have killed at least 20 people today when they bombed two residential buildings in a besieged rebel enclave near Damascus. Residents and a war monitor said at least four bombs were reported to have flattened the buildings in Misraba, also wounding more than 40, while at least 10 people were killed in aerial strikes in nearby towns.

More Details:

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/russian-jets-suspected-to-have-killed-20-people-in-bombing-run-on-houses-near-damascus-a3731681.html>

- **232 people killed by torture in Syria last year**

The Syrian Network for Human Rights has documented the cases of 232 people killed last year while being tortured by the main actors of the conflict in Syria. Of these, 211, including one child and two women, were tortured to death by the Syrian regime. In a report issued on Tuesday, the organisation gave details of one person tortured to death by Daesh, and four people, including a child, killed under torture by Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham. Furthermore, seven people were killed in this way by armed opposition factions; five were killed by the Kurdish autonomous region forces; and four by other parties.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180103-232-people-killed-by-torture-in-syria-last-year/>

3. IRAN

- **Ebadi urges Iranians to keep up protests**

Iranian Nobel Peace laureate Shirin Ebadi urged the people of Iran to engage in civil disobedience and press on with nationwide protests that are posing the boldest challenge to its leaders since pro-reform unrest in 2009. Saudi-owned pan-Arab daily Asharq Al-Awsat quoted Iran's most famous human rights lawyer as saying Iranians should stay on the street and that the constitution gave them the right to hold demonstrations.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86639>

- **UN officials call on Iran to respect protesters' rights**

U.N. officials are calling on Iran to respect protesters' rights and release any who have been arbitrarily arrested while demonstrating peacefully. A spokesman said Wednesday that Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is urging respect for rights. He's also stressing that demonstrations should be peaceful.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/mideast/2018/01/03/un-officials-call-on-iran-to-respect-protesters-rights>

- **Hezbollah says Iran controlling protests in 'good way'**

Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah said Wednesday that the ongoing protests in Iran were not rooted in political issues and were being handled by the regime in a good way. "The crisis in Iran is due to economic reasons, not political," Nasrallah said in an interview with Lebanese al-Mayadeen channel. The Lebanon-based group leader noted the incident erupted following some banks announced bankruptcy and added that some political circles were involved and then the protests gained a political dimension.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/hezbollah-says-iran-controlling-protests-in-good-way/1021972>

- **Iran's army ready to confront 'dupes of Great Satan'**

Iran said on Thursday that its army was ready to intervene to quell unrest in the country, a day after the Revolutionary Guards chief announced the "end of the sedition". Anti-regime protests broke out nationwide last week, during which at least 21 people were killed and hundreds were arrested.

More Details:

<https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/iran-s-army-ready-to-confront-dupes-of-great-satan-1.692672>

- **Iran disbands terrorist cell seeking unrest**

Iran's Ministry of Intelligence announced on Thursday that a terrorist cell missioned to provoke more unrests in Iran was dismantled and its members were arrested following a clash with the security forces. 'An armed terrorist cell, which was assigned to explode and kill innocent people in order to keep the recent unrest going, had infiltrated Iran,' the Ministry said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82785751>

- **Why the young people of Iran are rising up in protest**

Roohbeh Mirebrahimi is an Iranian-American journalist living in New York City. He is currently the editor-in-chief of the Persian-language publication Iran in the World. Here, he discusses the recent unrest that has roiled his homeland, leading to the deaths of 21 people and the arrests of 450 protesters. I've lived in New York City for 12 years, and this is the second time I've watched from afar as protests erupted in Iran.

More Details:

<https://nypost.com/2018/01/03/why-the-young-people-of-iran-are-rising-up-in-protest/>

- **Protests in Iran are no reason to kill the nuclear deal**

Opponents of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal have seized on the popular protests engulfing Iranian cities as a new reason for attacking the agreement. It is of no relevance to them that the protesters themselves are not denouncing the deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), or calling for foreign sanctions against Iran. The logic, rather, seems to be that because protesters are criticising their government, foreign powers should, in solidarity, similarly attack the Tehran authorities by imposing economic penalties.

More Details:

<http://www.iiss.org/en/politics%20and%20strategy/blogsections/2018-4cda/january-d748/protests-in-iran-are-no-reason-to-kill-the-nuclear-deal-74cf>

- **Anti-Revolutionary Terrorist Team Disbanded in Northwestern Iran**

An anti-revolutionary terrorist team which had entered Iran with to launch armed attacks in false flag operations to heighten anti-government sentiments was disbanded in the Northwestern city of Piranshahr in West Azarbaijan province, a security official said on Thursday. "An armed anti-revolutionary team which had recently penetrated Iran with the mission to conduct blasts and kill people in false flag operations to heighten anti-establishment sentiments for continued unrests was identified by the intelligence forces in Piranshahr," the official who asked to remain unnamed due to the sensitivity of his job told FNA.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13961014000584>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Israeli military to reopen probe into disabled Gazan's death**

The Israeli military announced on Thursday it is reopening an investigation into the death of a paraplegic Palestinian man in the Gaza Strip who died during a violent protest along the border with Israel. The military said it will examine the circumstances of Ibrahim Abu Thraya's death last month after new information emerged. Palestinian medical records in Gaza obtained by The Associated Press (AP) show he was killed by a bullet that struck him in the head.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/mideast/2018/01/04/israeli-military-to-reopen-probe-into-disabled-gazans-death>

- **Iran 'ready to support' Palestinian resistance**

Deputy Chief of Hamas Political Bureau Saleh al-Arouri said Wednesday that Iran's government's attitude towards the Palestinian cause was clear and steady. "Tehran government is ready to support the Palestinian resistance," Arouri said in a program on Qatar-based Al Jazeera channel. He stated that Iran did not recognize the legitimacy of the Israeli formation.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/iran-ready-to-support-palestinian-resistance/1021975>

- **Israel opens probe into death of wheelchair-bound Palestinian**

Israel's military said Thursday it was opening an investigation into the death of a wheelchair-bound Gazan man, with Palestinian officials saying he was shot by a sniper during clashes with Israeli forces.

Ibrahim Abu Thurayeh, a 29-year-old whose family said had lost his legs in a 2008 Israeli strike, was shot in the head by a sniper during protests and clashes along the Gaza border on December 15, according to the health ministry in Gaza.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86643>

- **Norway 'has not changed' Palestinian NGO funding policy**

Norway's representative in Palestine has denied claims that her government's policy of funding Palestinian NGOs has been changed, Safa news agency reported on Wednesday. Hilde Haraldstad insisted that all reports claiming otherwise and published in the past few weeks were based on Israeli propaganda. Speaking during a meeting with the Palestinian under-secretary for US affairs in his office in Ramallah, Haraldstad pointed out that her office issued a website statement in this regard. This stressed that Norway is going ahead with its funding of Palestinian and Israeli NGOs based on the belief that the government in Oslo is an active partner in the efforts leading towards a two-state solution.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180104-norway-has-not-changed-palestinian-ngo-funding-policy/>

- **Palestinian teen first to be killed by Israel in 2018**

Israeli forces have shot dead a Palestinian teen on the northern outskirts of the occupied West Bank town of Ramallah, according to Palestinian officials. The Palestinian health ministry identified the 17-year-old boy as Musab Firas al-Tamimi from the village of Deir Nitham, where Wednesday's shooting took place.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/palestinian-teen-killed-israel-2018-180103154409357.html>

- **EU Condemns Israel's 'Terrorist' Bill, Says Death Penalty is 'Inhuman'**

The European Union (EU) has condemned the preliminary endorsement of a bill at the Israeli parliament which would ease conditions for courts to sentence "terrorists" to death, saying the measure is "incompatible with human dignity." The death penalty "constitutes inhuman and degrading treatment, does not have any proven deterrent effect and allows judicial errors to become irreversible and fatal," a statement released by the EU read on Wednesday.

More Details:

<https://www.albawaba.com/news/eu-condemns-israels-terrorist-bill-says-death-penalty-inhuman-1069196>

- **Trump’s Threat to Cut Palestine Funding Could Inflict ‘Untold Suffering’**

US President Donald Trump is bringing a businesslike approach to negotiating on the international stage by threatening to cut funding to groups that don’t agree with his vision for a way forward. First, Trump axed more than \$255 million in aid funding to Pakistan for its alleged harboring of terrorist groups who attack US troops in Afghanistan. On Tuesday, Trump vowed to cut US aid money to the Palestinian Authority for its refusal to negotiate with Israel.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/world/201801041060506654-trump-threat-palestine-funding-cut-suffering/>

- **Israeli forces detain seven Palestinians from West Bank**

Israeli forces Thursday conducted multiple predawn raids across the West Bank, detaining seven Palestinians, said Palestine Prisoner’s Society (PPS). Israeli forces detained three Palestinians after storming and ransacking their family homes in Salem village, east of Nablus in the northern West Bank.

More Details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=tHousna95913860328atHousn>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Jordan, China ‘keen on better ties, regional peace’**

Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on Wednesday stressed both countries' keenness to develop Jordanian-Chinese ties. In a telephone conversation, they also went over regional developments, mainly those related to the Palestinian issue, Syrian crisis and international efforts in the war against terrorism, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/jordan-china-keen-better-ties-regional-peace%E2%80%9999>

- **Government slams terrorist Nigeria blast**

The Jordanian government on Wednesday denounced the terrorist bomb attack that hit a mosque in the northeastern Nigerian town of Gamboru, and took at least the lives of ten people and injured

several others. Minister of State for Media Affairs and Government Spokesperson, Mohammed Al-Momani, said repeated schemes to target worshipping sites and civilians worldwide proves the hideous mentality of terrorists, and concomitantly stresses the dire need to foster relevant int'l cooperation to phase out this phenomenon and address its root causes.

More Details:

http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=36893#.Wk4nclVI_cs

- **Hariri Says Govt. Solidarity Intact as Cabinet Convenes amid Aoun-Berri Row**

Prime Minister Saad Hariri reassured Thursday that “solidarity will continue among the government components,” as the Cabinet convened in Baabda amid an ongoing spat between President Michel Aoun and Speaker Nabih Berri. The Cabinet has 43 items on its agenda, topped by a request from the Defense Ministry to refer the case of the Arsal, Ras Baalbek and al-Qaa clashes to the Judicial Council, Lebanon’s highest state security court.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/240397-hariri-says-govt-solidarity-intact-as-cabinet-convenes-amid-aoun-berri-row>

- **Tarawneh: Parliament keen to help resolve media challenges**

Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, Atef Tarawneh, said the House is keen to have a robust media sector and ready to work with competent institutions to help this key sector assume its key role. During discussions with President of the Jordan Press Associations (JPA) Rakan Saaideh on Wednesday , Tarawneh outlined the media' crucial national role and exceptional importance in the volatile region.

More Details:

http://petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=334648&CatID=13

- **Geagea responds to Nasrallah: it is the Lebanese army’s duty to set defense strategy**

The media office of Lebanese Forces Party leader, Samir Geagea, issued this Thursday a statement in response to some of what Hezbollah Secretary General, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, said in his TV interview aired Wednesday night. Geagea underlined in his response a number of points, starting by saying "as always in his conversations, he [Nasrallah] speaks and acts as if there were no Lebanese State. He plans -- and it is known with whom -- thinks, communicates, organizes and talks about strategic military and security matters that are exclusively within the jurisdictions of the Lebanese State."

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/86975/Geagea-responds-to-Nasrallah-It-is-the-Lebanese-Army-duty-to-set-defense-strategy>

- **Sayyed Nasrallah: Axis of Resistance Ready for Great War If Waged**

Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah tackled several regional and international points Wednesday in an interview to Al-Mayadeen TV channel. Starting with the Iranian file, Sayyed Nasrallah indicated that the protests started due to economic problems but it was later politicized, taking advantage of some riots that were highlighted and foreign stances made by US President Donald Trump and his advisor, Zionist PM Benjamin Netanyahu, and Saudi Arabia.

More Details:

<http://english.almanar.com.lb/419967>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Saudi-led air strikes kill rebels, civilians in Yemen**

Saudi-led air strikes have killed dozens of rebels and civilians in the past 24 hours in Yemen's flashpoint province of Hodeida, medical sources said on Thursday. Saudi-led coalition warplanes carried out nine air raids overnight on positions of the Shiite Huthi rebels in the Red Sea province, local sources said.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86642>

- **Yemen's Houthis release ex-president Saleh's spokesman**

Houthi rebels on Wednesday released the spokesman of former Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who was abducted in December. "The Houthis have released Ahmed al-Sufi, the press secretary of slain president," a source from al-Sufi's family told Anadolu Agency.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/yemens-houthis-release-ex-president-saleh-s-spokesman/1021874>

- **Yemeni sources: Nephew of slain former president alive**

Tribal sources in the Yemeni province of Marib have told Al Jazeera that Tareq Abdullah Saleh, the commander of the Presidential Guard and nephew of late ex-president Ali Abdullah Saleh, is still alive

- contrary to earlier reports of his demise. Sources said a photo circulated on social media of Tareq Abdullah Saleh wounded during the same attack that killed the former president on December 4 is old.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/yemeni-sources-nephew-slain-president-alive-180103192914287.html>

- **KSRelief Center Signs Health Projects to Treat the Injured Inside and Outside Yemen**

King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief) signed today health project contracts with a number of international and local partners in the health field along with health institutions inside and outside Yemen to treat injured Yemenis .

More Details:

<http://www.spa.gov.sa/viewfullstory.php?lang=en&newsid=1705516>

- **Senior scholar: Death sentences signify Bahrain regime's inability to silence people**

A member of Bahrain's Ulema (scholars) Council said the Al Khalifa regime's move to sentence six citizens to death in a military court demonstrates the regime's inability to silence the people. Trying civilians in military courts is unacceptable, said Sheikh Mohammad Hassan Khojasteh. "We will not recognize the death sentences issued in these courts," he underlined.

More Details:

http://en.abna24.com/news/bahrain/senior-scholar-death-sentences-signify-bahrain-regimes-inability-to-silence-people_875704.html

- **Dubai Supreme Council of Energy strengthens cooperation with Bahrain's National Oil & Gas Authority**

Ahmed Buti Al Muhairbi, Secretary-General of the Dubai Supreme Council of Energy, has received a high-level delegation from the National Oil and Gas Authority in Bahrain, headed by Jassim Issa Al Shirawi, Director-General of Oil and Gas Affairs and Hisham Zabari, Senior Advisor in the Oil and Gas Authority.

More Details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302658126>

- **Saudi Arabia and Iran's rivalry is key to the Middle East in 2018**

Another turbulent year in the Middle East has drawn to a close, but there will be no respite in 2018 from the regional chaos that is underpinned by the inflamed rivalry of Saudi Arabia and Iran. The young crown prince Mohammed bin Salman has consolidated power, embarking on an unprecedented cultural revolution and economic reforms in Riyadh, but his foreign policy ambitions have yet to bear fruit. Instead they will continue to sap lives and resources in neighbouring Yemen, the Arab world's poorest country, unless a political settlement is reached.

More Details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/04/2018-saudi-arabia-iran-rivalry-key-middle-east-year-ahead>

- **Saudi Arabia security “part and parcel” of Sudan’s security: Minister**

Sudan’s Minister of International Cooperation Idris Sulieman Wednesday stressed the strategic relations between Riyadh and Khartoum saying Saudi Arabia’s security is part and parcel of Sudan’s national security. Sulieman told reporters following his meeting with Saudi Arabia Ambassador to Khartoum Ali bin Hassan Jafar that Saudi Arabia is the largest trade partner of Sudan, pointing to its tremendous investments in the various fields in Sudan.

More Details:

<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article64411>

7. EGYPT

- **Egypt proposes to dismiss Sudan from dam talks**

Amid an ongoing standoff over a multi-billion dollar dam project on the Nile River, Egypt proposed for Sudan's exclusion from the negotiations and to proceed with Ethiopia only, while getting the World Bank involved to resolve the conflict, according to an Ethiopian newspaper, Addis Fortune. The Construction of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), the largest hydroelectric dam project in Africa, has poisoned relations between Egypt, Eritrea and Sudan. The dispute centers on control of a share of the waters of the Nile that stretches 6,695 km (4,184 miles) from Lake Victoria to the Mediterranean and is the economic lifeblood of all three countries.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/mideast/2018/01/04/egypt-proposes-to-dismiss-sudan-from-dam-talks>

- **Roadside bomb kills police officer in Egypt's Sinai**

An Egyptian police officer was killed Wednesday when his vehicle struck a roadside bomb in the northern Sinai Peninsula, according to an Egyptian security source. Egyptian state media quoted an unnamed security source as saying that the incident had occurred in northern Sinai's Bir al-Abd region.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/roadside-bomb-kills-police-officer-in-egypts-sinai/1021895>

- **Egypt: Israel vote on Jerusalem violates international law**

Egypt's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ahmed Abu Zaid on Wednesday described the new "united Jerusalem" law – which will make it more difficult to change Jerusalem's status or boundaries – as a violation of international legitimacy on Jerusalem, Anadolu reports. Late Monday, the Knesset (Israel's parliament) approved a bill making it necessary to obtain the approval of 80 out of 120 assembly members — rather than a simple majority — to change Jerusalem's official status or municipal boundaries.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180104-egypt-israel-vote-on-jerusalem-violates-intl-law/>

- **Russia's Putin signs decree resuming flights with Cairo**

Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a decree resuming air traffic with Cairo, Russia's state news agency Sputnik said on Thursday. Moscow grounded all civilian passenger flights to Egypt in 2015 over security concerns after a Russian A321 airbus crashed in Sinai shortly after taking off from Sharm El-Sheikh. All 224 people on board were killed in the crash.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/286569/Egypt/Politics-/BREAKING-Russias-Putin-signs-decree-resuming-fligh.aspx>

- **Khaled Ali's appeal against prison sentence is adjourned again**

A Dokki appeals court in Giza adjourned on Wednesday the appeal filed by rights lawyer and presidential hopeful Khaled Ali against a three-month prison sentence on charges of offending public decency, to March 7. The appeal was adjourned due to the non-attendance of three Union of Radio and Television (Maspero) technical experts who were scheduled to examine the authenticity of the videos allegedly showing Ali committing an "obscene gesture" in public – which Ali claims were fake.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/khaled-alis-appeal-against-prison-sentence-is-adjourned-again/>

- **Sisi ratifies law protects women's rights in inheritance**

President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi approved on January 1 the amendments to Inheritance Law 77/1943, imposing strict sanctions on those who disinherit members of a family, particularly women, from receiving their rightful shares. On December 5, the Egyptian Parliament finally approved the amendments submitted by the government to Inheritance Law 77/1943. Under these amendments, punishment of at least three years in prison and a fine ranging between LE 20,000-100,000 (around \$1,119-\$5,595) shall be imposed on violators.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptdailynews.com/detail/sisi-ratifies-law-protects-womens-rights-in-inheritance>

- **Egypt Farmers Enjoy Modest Win in Dispute with Government Over Sugarcane Price**

Egypt's Farmers Syndicate has won a dispute with the government and the agro-business sector over the price of sugarcane, with a tentative agreement reached to raise the current price of EGP 620 to EGP 700 per tonne. Following negotiations between government officials, members of parliament and representatives of Egypt's farmers, Supply Minister Ali Mosilhy informed the Farmers Syndicate that the government agreed to raise the sugarcane price purchased by sugar producers from local farmers, state-run Ahram Arabic reports.

More Details:

<https://egyptianstreets.com/2018/01/04/egypt-farmers-enjoy-modest-win-in-dispute-with-government-over-sugarcane-price/>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Algerian police violently disperse doctors protest**

Human rights groups have condemned the Algerian police for violently dispersing a sit-in organised by resident doctors in Algiers, who have been protesting for weeks over poor working conditions. Images posted on social media show Algerian medical residents, who are still in training but serve as general practitioners in hospitals, with bloodied faces being helped away from the protest at CHU Mustapha Bacha, a university hospital in the capital, on Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/algerian-police-violently-disperse-doctors-protest-180104102545840.html>

- **UAE document exposes Abu Dhabi's plan for Tunisia crisis**

Arabi 21 has obtained a secret UAE document that exposes Abu Dhabi's plan for dealing with the recent crisis in Tunisia. The crisis erupted after the UAE banned Tunisian women from travelling on Emirates Airlines. The four-page document, which is published exclusively by Arabi 21, was issued by The Policies Planning Department at the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation on 27 December. It is addressed to just five top officials including the Foreign Minister, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayid, and the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Anwar Gargash.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180104-uae-document-exposes-abu-dhabis-plan-for-tunisia-crisis/>

- **Polisario Resumes Provocations East of Sahara Security Wall**

Emboldened by Algeria's military and diplomatic cover, the Polisario inaugurated 2018 with a resumption of provocations in the Guerguarat area, the southernmost tip of Morocco's southern provinces, the Sahara. Three armed Polisario men have barred the road for an hour and a half to participants in the Desert Sahara Challenge rally competition departing from Dakhla and bound for Mauritania. With such an aggression, the Polisario has acted on the threats to violate anew the 1991 cease fire agreement by stationing troops on the Guerguarat border crossing with Mauritania, east of the Morocco-built security wall.

More Details:

<http://northafricapost.com/21574-polisario-resumes-provocations-east-sahara-security-wall.html>

- **State Visit of Spanish King Felipe VI to Morocco Postponed till March**

King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia of Spain will not visit Morocco until March, reported Spanish media. The visit, which was scheduled for January 9 was postponed until next March, according to Spanish news outlet Teinteresa.es. A source from the Spanish Ministry of Interior said that "the state trip will take place next March as the exact dates will be specified later."

More Details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2018/01/237669/visit-felipe-vi-morocco/>

- **Afek Tounes receives official invitation to attend meeting of signatories of Carthage Document expected Friday at Carthage Palace**

Afek Tunes political bureau President Karim Helali announced on Wednesday that his party has received an official invitation from the President of the Republic to participate in the meeting of the signatories of the Carthage Document, scheduled for next Friday at the Carthage Palace, under the

Presidency of Beji Caid Essebsi. In a statement to TAP, Karim Helali stressed that his party is still attached to the Carthage Document, as a political platform guaranteeing national unity, even after leaving the government.

More Details:

<https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/9719803-afek-tounes>

- **Over 1.8 million Libyans registered as potential voters, HNEC says**

The High National Elections Commission in Libya (HNEC) has reported that Libyan voters' number reached over 1.8 million. According to the HNEC's daily report on its Facebook page, the newly registered voters until Wednesday were about 400.000 Libyans, with 30.000 voters as an average on a daily basis.

More Details:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/over-1-8-million-libyans-registered-as-potential-voters-hnec-says/>

- **Germany continues to lead foreign financial support for Libya**

Most Libyans are completely unaware that Germany is the largest foreign aid donor to the country: some €233 million was given by Berlin over past year to support a variety of projects in the country. Unlike some foreign governments which try to make sure everyone is aware of their largesse to Libya, the German authorities have said little about it. According to German ambassador Christian Buck, though, there is a logic to the funding.

More Details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2018/01/03/germany-continues-to-lead-foreign-financial-support-for-libya/>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Japan appreciates Pakistan's anti-terror role**

Pakistan's efforts for regional peace and stability received appreciation from the Japanese government which also acknowledged Islamabad's role in fight against terrorism. Japan's Foreign Minister, Taro Kono called on Army Chief General Qamar Bajwa at General Headquarters (GHQ) on Thursday.

More Details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/264476-japan-appreciates-pakistans-anti-terror-role>

- **Pakistan extends stay of Afghan refugees for a month**

The federal government has agreed to extend for a month proof of registration (POR) cards for Afghan refugees living in Pakistan. The decision came at a federal cabinet meeting on Wednesday -- days after the US blamed Pakistan for sheltering some of the fiercest factions of the Taliban.

More Details:

<https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2018/01/04/pakistan-extends-stay-afghan-refugees-month>

- **SC takes suo motu notice of conditions at Lahore's govt hospitals on 'public complaints'**

Following growing complaints about lack of facilities at public hospitals in Lahore, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Mian Saqib Nisar on Thursday took a suo motu notice of the hospitals' conditions. Justice Nisar directed medical superintendents of 19 hospitals in the city to appear before the Supreme Court with a detailed report on facilities at their respective hospitals.

More Details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1380741/sc-takes-suo-motu-notice-of-conditions-at-lahores-govt-hospitals-on-public-complaints>

- **US accusations cause of concern for civil, military leaders alike: Shehbaz Sharif**

Chief Minister Punjab Shehbaz Sharif said on Friday that the United States is targeting Pakistan, which is a cause of concern for everyone including the civil-military leadership. Shehbaz Sharif was addressing a ceremony at Safe City project Lahore, where he said that despite passing of 70 years, the US is still accusing us and the statements are hurting our self-respect.

More Details:

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/175305-us-accusations-cause-of-concern-for-civil-military-leaders-alike-shehbaz-sharif>

- **Afghan Air Force personnel complete training with GBU-58 munitions**

The Afghan Air Force (AAF) personnel have completed the first round of training with the new GBU-58 munitions as efforts are underway to further bolster the fighting capabilities of the Afghan national defense and security forces. "Advisors with TAAC-Air conducted training with their Afghan Air Force counterparts, paving the way for increased accuracy and offensive capability," the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission said in a short online statement.

More Details:

<https://www.khaama.com/afghan-air-force-personnel-complete-training-with-gbu-58-munitions-04193>

- **Khalil Karzai Meets US Newly Appointed Ambassador**

Hekmat Khalil Karzai, the deputy political affairs of the foreign ministry met with newly appointed US ambassador, his office said in a statement Tuesday. Both sides according to the statement, discussed the second meeting of Kabul Process, which is expected to be attended by representatives from 25 countries and held in Kabul, next month, to focus on peace, counterterrorism.

More Details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/politics/item/31497-khalil-karzai-meets-us-newly-appointed-ambassador.html>

- **Hekmatyar Denies Links with Taliban or Daesh**

If the government had the capacity to attract the Taliban, many of them would join the peace process, says Hezb-e Islami leader. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the leader of the Hezb-e Islami party, says holding the upcoming presidential election is the only way to solve the crisis in the country. Speaking at a press conference in Kabul on Thursday, he said he believes that coalition governments harm a country.

More Details:

<http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/hold-election-end-crisis-afghanistan-hekmatyar>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **PYD cannot represent Syrian Kurds at the upcoming dialogue congress, Kalın says**

Presidential Spokesperson İbrahim Kalın said Thursday that the PKK-linked Democratic Union Party (PYD) or its armed wing People's Protection Units (YPG) cannot represent Syrian Kurds at the upcoming Syrian National Dialogue Congress. Speaking to reporters at a news conference, Kalın said that the attendees of the conference, which will be held in Russia's Black Sea resort of Sochi, should be confirmed by all three guarantor states, which includes Turkey, Russia and Iran.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2018/01/04/pyd-cannot-represent-syrian-kurds-at-the-upcoming-dialogue-congress-kalin-says>

- **Israel, US back Iran protests: Turkish foreign minister**

Turkey's foreign minister on Wednesday said Israel and the U.S. are the only countries supporting ongoing protests in Iran. Speaking to reporters in the capital Ankara, Mevlut Cavusoglu pointed to two people openly supporting the unrest in Iran: "One of them is Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and the other is the U.S. President Donald Trump."

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israel-us-back-iran-protests-turkish-foreign-minister/1021612>

- **Russia, Turkey warn against foreign intervention in Iran's domestic politics**

Russia and Turkey have warned against foreign attempts to interfere in Iran's domestic affairs following recent protests in some Iranian cities over rising prices and economic problems. "We warn the US against any attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran," Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said in an interview with TASS state news agency on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/01/04/547818/Russia-Iran-protests-US-Turkey->

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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