



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

Economy News

Ekonomi Haberleri

Peace Process

Barış Süreci

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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05 APRIL 2017

NO: 2352

1. IRAQ.....	4
• 40-50 Years Needed to Clear Weapons in Iraq And Syria, Says UN	4
• U.N. Estimates 300,000 Civilians Displaced by Battle of Mosul	4
• UN expands civilian camps as Mosul airstrikes resume	4
• Four ISIS leaders killed as Iraqi forces encircle strategic mosque	4
• Trump's son-in-law Kushner upbeat on Iraq's Military Alliance Retaking Mosul	5
• 3 major church groups join hands to rebuild thousands of homes destroyed by ISIS in Iraq.....	5
• On the Ground in Mosul: the face of a new Iraqi Military, Forged in war	5
• Iraqi Army Starts Military Operation to Recapture Anbar Districts	5
• Iraqi forces tell Mosul civilians to stay away from IS targets	6
• Erdogan Demands 'Immediate' Removal of Kirkuk Flags.....	6
• Next phase of Euphrates Shield operation to include Iraq: President Erdoğan.....	6
• Kurdistan's ruling parties to discuss referendum with Baghdad	6
• Kuwaiti warplane enters Iraqi airspace: Safwan authorities.....	7
• Iraq Borrows Technology from American Backyards To Bomb ISIS	7
• ISIS calls President Trump "an idiot who does not know what Syria or Iraq or Islam is"	7
• Kurdistan Region to debut new oil pipeline	7
• Iraq's compliance with oil cut at 98%, more production coming	8
• Iraq's President, Prime Minister, meet with OPEC Secretary-General in Baghdad	8
• Daesh Slaughters Over 30 Mosul Residents for Trying to Flee Fighting.....	8
2. SYRIA.....	8
• Turkey hopes Russia won't veto UN bid on Syrian gas attack.....	8
• Syrian army targets al-Nusra positions in Homs	9
• UN Secretary-General 'Deeply Disturbed' by reported chemical weapons attack in Syria	9
• The EU disagrees with the Trump administration over Assad's role in Syria.....	9
• Syrians risk all in flight from Raqqa	9
• Kuwaiti FM heads to Brussels for Syria's future conference.....	9
• Russia shouldn't veto resolution on Syria: Deputy PM	10
• Syrian Army Rejects Claims of Chemical Weapons Use in Idlib, Blames Militants	10
• France says Assad's Allies enabling him to Act with impunity in Syria	10
3. IRAN.....	10
• Iran, Hungary to boost nuclear energy ties	10
• No Luxembourg Court Verdict Issued on Iranian Assets Freeze: CBI Chief.....	11
• Iran 'not concerned' by Indian threat to cut oil imports	11
• Iran Prepared to Join Hands with Russia on Fight against Terror: President.....	11
• Iran keen on expanding ties with Singapore	11
• Saudi-led alliance not against Iran: Pakistan	11
• Iran-EU Economic Exchanges Enter Wait-and-See Mode	12
• Bahrain says Trump understands Iran better than Obama did.....	12
• Iranian MP Slams UAE for Imprudent, Irresponsible Policies	12

• Syrian Opposition in Geneva: Iran Regime Is an Invading Force and an Enemy	12
4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE.....	13
• With prison strike, Barghouti hopes to prove Palestinian street still his	13
• Jerusalem Family Self-Demolishes Its Own Home To Avoid High Penalties And Fines.....	13
• EU denounces Israel’s West Bank demolitions policy	13
• Israel: A cruel, apartheid state	13
• Hamas Moves to Soften Charter, But Still Won't Recognize Israel	14
• Army Seriously Injures One Palestinian, Abducts Eight, In Bethlehem.....	14
• Dublin City Hall to raise Palestinian flag in solidarity against 'brutal' Israeli occupation.....	14
• Hamas Gives Israel’s Agents One Week to Repent	14
• Israeli soldiers arrested for rape of female colleague.....	15
• 'Likud has become nationalist; religious have no representation'.....	15
5. JORDAN and LEBANON.....	15
• At White House, Jordan king to present Arab view on peace.....	15
• Jordan, Egypt sign gas supply deals.....	16
• Egypt keen on coordinating with Jordan on different issues, Sisi tells King Abdullah II	16
• Jordan’s King Abdullah arrives in US to continue Arab push for Middle East peace	16
• Jordan withdraws ambassador to Morocco after King Mohammed was a no-show at the Arab Summit	16
• Hariri, Merkel Discuss Syrian Refugee Crisis	17
• ‘Chemical’ Massacre in Idlib Defies the World.....	17
• Lebanon Calls On UN to Press Israel to Reveal Location of Landmines	17
• Lebanon Treats Refugees as a Security Problem—and It Doesn’t Work	17
• Lebanese Foreign Minister welcomed to NZ.....	18
6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA.....	18
• Azerbaijan and Saudi Arabia discuss military and military-technical cooperation	18
• Iraqis have good reason to believe Saudi Arabia state sponsor of terror: Abadi	18
• Trump Ordered 70 Airstrikes in Yemen, Twice as Many as Last Year of Obama	19
• Yemen army liberates three post in Al Jawf Governorate	19
• Qatar Foreign Minister meets EU official	19
• Qatar attends Arab meeting of electricity & power experts.....	19
• Bahrain says Trump understands Iran better than Obama did.....	20
• Bahrain Arms Sales Belie US Commitment to Human Rights.....	20
7. EGYPT.....	20
• Jordan, Egypt sign gas supply deals.....	20
• Egypt’s oil companies plan return to Libya	20
• Egypt continues to suffer from WWII landmines	21
• Egypt implementing serious reform programme with IMF: Al-Sisi	21
• Egypt Tries ISIS Ring on Charges of Terrorism.....	21
• Donald Trump tells Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, US and Egypt will fight Islamic militants together	21
• Egypt's external debt up 40.8 percent amid currency flotation	22
• Zohr gas field discovery renews interest in the region	22
• Murdered Giulio Regeni's family begs Pope Francis to seek truth during papal visit to Egypt	22
8. NORTH AFRICA.....	22

• Algeria-EU twinning to boost industrial innovation in Algeria	22
• Iran Regime's Lies Citing Tunisian President and Algerian Prime Minister, Ridicules of Instability and Growing Isolation.....	23
• BDB rejects including Haftar in any Libyan political compromise	23
• UK, Germany affirm support to Libyan Government of National Accord	23
• Former Tunisian President Reflects on Arab Spring, Transition to Democracy	23
• Tunisia charges British DJ over call to prayer remix.....	24
• Kuwaiti MoI meets Tunisian counterpart.....	24
• Jordan withdraws ambassador to Morocco after King Mohammed was a no-show at the Arab Summit	24
• 169 Gambian illegal migrants deported home from Libya after prison ordeal	24
9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN	25
• Blast in Pakistani city of Lahore kills at least six.....	25
• Terror & extremism have no link to Islam: IIUI president.....	25
• Afghanistan strongly reacts at Pakistani violations along Durand Line	25
• 18 Suicide Bombers, 8 Foreign Militants Killed in Southern Afghanistan	25
• Japan Provides Over \$12 Million for Irrigation And Fiscal Support.....	25
• Alliance won't interfere in Yemen conflict: Asif	26
• Sartaj calls for more dialogue at all levels between Pakistan, US	26
• President Trump should tell Pakistan to 'knock off ' its Jihad-centric habits, says leading American expert	26
• Afghan peace possible but firm practical plan needed	26
• EU asks Pakistan to take full benefit of GSP Plus	27
10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST.....	27
• Suspected Syrian chemical attack is 'savagery': PM.....	27
• Turkish lawmaker seeks UN action over Idlib attack.....	27

1. IRAQ

- **40-50 Years Needed to Clear Weapons in Iraq And Syria, Says UN**

The United Nations says it will take 40 to 50 years to clear the mines, improvised explosive devices and other unexploded ordnance from Iraq and Syria.

More details:

<http://www.outlookindia.com/newswire/story/40-50-years-needed-to-clear-weapons-in-iraq-and-syria-says-un/967742>

- **U.N. Estimates 300,000 Civilians Displaced by Battle of Mosul**

The good news from the latest report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is that 94,500 Iraqis have returned to their homes in the besieged city of Mosul. The bad news is that 392,000 of them left, producing a net refugee crisis of some 300,000 displaced civilians.

More details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/04/04/un-300000-civilians-displaced-by-battle-of-mosul/>

- **UN expands civilian camps as Mosul airstrikes resume**

The UN said on Tuesday it is expanding camps for displaced people around Mosul, as airstrikes resumed on Daesh positions in Iraq's second largest city. More than 300,000 people have fled Mosul since the start of the US-backed campaign in October, the office of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq said in a statement.

More details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1079376/middle-east>

- **Four ISIS leaders killed as Iraqi forces encircle strategic mosque**

At least four ISIS leaders, including a Kurd, were killed by coalition jets in the neighborhood of Tenk in the embattled western half of the city of Mosul, Iraqi Military Intelligence announced on Tuesday, amid advances by security forces. According to the statement, warplanes of the US-led coalition located the leaders' hideouts and targeted them, killing four.

More Details:

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/04042017>

- **Trump's son-in-law Kushner upbeat on Iraq's Military Alliance Retaking Mosul**

President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, voiced optimism about the long-term U.S. alliance with Iraq's military and its campaign to retake Mosul from Islamic State on Tuesday, as he visited a base about 10 miles (16 km) from the city.

More details:

http://www.newsweek.com/iraq-islamic-state-donald-trump-mosul-isis-jared-kushner-579225?piano_t=1

- **3 major church groups join hands to rebuild thousands of homes destroyed by ISIS in Iraq**

The hope among Christians in Iraq that God will restore their land ravaged by the Islamic State (ISIS) appears to be starting to bear fruit. In an auspicious move, three major church groups are joining hands to rebuild more than 12,000 houses destroyed or damaged by ISIS militants on the Plains of Nineveh in Iraq, the Assyrian International News Agency reported.

More details:

<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/3.major.church.groups.join.hands.to.rebuild.thousands.of.homes.destroyed.by.isis.in.iraq/106755.htm>

- **On the Ground in Mosul: the face of a new Iraqi Military, Forged in war**

In the battle for Mosul, the Iraqi Army has deployed a variety of its best units, including the 9th Armored Division, the black-clad Special Operations Forces and the Federal Police. Gunfire sounds in the background. In an adjacent alleyway, Islamic State snipers keep watch for movement. On the roof above our heads the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) are pouring fire into buildings occupied by the terrorists.

More details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/On-the-ground-in-Mosul-The-face-of-a-new-Iraqi-military-forged-in-war-486112>

- **Iraqi Army Starts Military Operation to Recapture Anbar Districts**

Iraqi army forces, backed by pro-government tribal fighters, mounted an operation to drive ISIL terrorists out of two districts in the country's troubled Western province of Anbar, and establish full control over them.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960116000224>

- **Iraqi forces tell Mosul civilians to stay away from IS targets**

Iraqi army planes dropped down safety directives to Iraqi citizens at some provinces, including Mosul, telling them to stay away from Islamic State targets. The Joint Operations Command, which leads the war against IS members in Iraq, said Wednesday its air force planes dropped down leaflets containing directives to citizens to ensure their safety during operations targeting IS locations at their respective areas.

More details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/iraqi-forces-tell-mosul-civilians-stay-away-targets/>

- **Erdogan Demands 'Immediate' Removal of Kirkuk Flags**

Turkey became strongly involved on Tuesday in the crisis that erupted last week after a decision to fly the Kurdish flag above public buildings and institutions in the Iraqi city of Kirkuk. Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan asked the Kurds to "go back from this mistake" and "immediately bring the flag down," warning that relations with Turkey could be hurt if they don't act.

More details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/d-abdullah/news-middle-east/erdogan-demands-immediate-removal-kirkuk-flags>

- **Next phase of Euphrates Shield operation to include Iraq: President Erdoğan**

The next stages of the recently concluded Euphrates Shield Operation will be broader, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said April 5, suggesting that Turkey would move on areas in Iraq. Speaking in a joint interview with NTV and Star, Erdoğan described the Euphrates Shield Operation as the first stage of Turkey's counter-terrorism road map, saying expanded stages would follow.

More details:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=111631&NewsCatID=352>

- **Kurdistan's ruling parties to discuss referendum with Baghdad**

A delegation from the two main Kurdish parties is scheduled to visit Iraqi officials to discuss the independence referendum and hoisting Kurdistan flag in Kirkuk.

more details:

<http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/8ecfa780-b9e3-4608-a037-4a1f4149c13f/Kurdistan%E2%80%99s-ruling-parties-to-discuss-referendum-with-Baghdad>

- **Kuwaiti warplane enters Iraqi airspace: Safwan authorities**

Iraqi authorities said a Kuwaiti military plane entered Iraqi airspace over Safwan in Basra governorate and broke the sound barrier, terrifying residents of the area. Safwan authorities asked the Kuwaiti government to ‘make an apology’ to residents of the area for causing them a scare.

More details:

<http://news.kuwaittimes.net/website/kuwaiti-warplane-enters-iraqi-airspace-safwan-authorities/>

- **Iraq Borrows Technology from American Backyards To Bomb ISIS**

Iraqi soldiers are attaching badminton shuttlecocks on the back of grenades and dropping them from commercial drones on the Islamic State.

More details:

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/04/04/iraq-borrows-technology-from-american-backyards-to-bomb-isis/>

- **ISIS calls President Trump “an idiot who does not know what Syria or Iraq or Islam is”**

In the terror group’s first official statement directed towards President Donald Trump, the Islamic State’s spokesmen Abi al-Hassan al-Muhajer said the United States is “being run by an idiot.”

More details:

<http://www.salon.com/2017/04/04/isis-calls-president-trump-an-idiot-who-does-not-know-what-syria-or-iraq-or-islam-is/>

- **Kurdistan Region to debut new oil pipeline**

A new oil pipeline to move crude from fields in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to Turkey is nearing completion, local media wrote on Monday. The 35-kilometre feeder system will link the Atrush and Shaikan fields, operated by TAQA and Gulf Keystone Petroleum, respectively, with the main Kurdistan crude pipeline that moves crude to Ceyhan export hub in Turkey.

More details:

<http://www.theoilandgasyear.com/news/kurdistan-region-to-debut-new-oil-pipeline/>

- **Iraq's compliance with oil cut at 98%, more production coming**

Iraq's compliance with the oil output cut agreed to late last year stood at 98% in March, oil minister Jabar al-Luaibi said Sunday, as he addressed an energy forum in his country.

More details:

<http://www.kallanishenergy.com/2017/04/04/iraqs-compliance-to-oil-cut-at-98-more-production-coming/>

- **Iraq's President, Prime Minister, meet with OPEC Secretary-General in Baghdad**

OPEC Secretary-General, Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo has met with the President of Iraq, Fuad Masum, in Baghdad. The Iraqi President commended the OPEC Secretary-General on the successful meetings of the Organisation held among OPEC Member Countries and OPEC and non-OPEC oil producers, which led to the historic decisions taken at the 170th and 171st Meetings of the OPEC Conference, including the Declaration of Cooperation in late 2016.

More details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302606841>

- **Daesh Slaughters Over 30 Mosul Residents for Trying to Flee Fighting**

Daesh terrorists killed 30 civilians and left their bodies in the streets of Mosul to stop others from fleeing the northern Iraqi city, according to Iraqi Army Colonel Ahmed Jabouri. Islamists killed more than 30 civilians and left their bodies in the streets of Mosul to stop others from fleeing the northern Iraqi city under offensive by national forces, an Iraqi army colonel said Tuesday.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201704041052292435-mosul-daesh-killings-civilians/>

2. SYRIA

- **Turkey hopes Russia won't veto UN bid on Syrian gas attack**

Turkey has expressed hopes that Russia will not use its right to veto on a potential resolution at the United Nations Security Council following a deadly gas attack, allegedly conducted by the Syrian army, around Idlib that killed around 100 civilians.

More Details:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=111632&NewsCatID=510>

- **Syrian army targets al-Nusra positions in Homs**

A Syrian army unit destroyed a position for Jabhat al-Nusra terrorists, an explosives cache, and vehicles rigged with explosives in Deir Ful village in the northern countryside of Homs central province, a military source told SANA .

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124585/Syrian-army-targets-al-Nusra-positions-in-Homs>

- **UN Secretary-General ‘Deeply Disturbed’ by reported chemical weapons attack in Syria**

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he was deeply disturbed by the reports of alleged use of chemical weapons in an air strike in the Khan Shaykhun area of southern Idlib, Syria, killing scores of civilians on Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302607010>

- **The EU disagrees with the Trump administration over Assad's role in Syria**

The EU has reasserted that Bashar al-Assad has no future in Syria; just days after the Trump administration said his departure was no longer a priority for settling the conflict.

More Details:

<http://www.businessinsider.com/eu-syria-trump-assad-2017-4>

- **Syrians risk all in flight from Raqqa**

People from Raqqa are fleeing their city under cover of night as US-backed forces close in on the Daesh terror group stronghold, running a gauntlet of minefields and hostile fighters instead of risking death in a major battle expected to begin soon.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/region/syrians-risk-all-flight-raqqa>

- **Kuwaiti FM heads to Brussels for Syria’s future conference**

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah left to Brussels yesterday to take part in the ‘Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region,’ which takes place today.

More Details:

<http://news.kuwaittimes.net/website/kuwaiti-fm-heads-brussels-syrias-future-conference/>

- **Russia shouldn't veto resolution on Syria: Deputy PM**

In the wake of an apparent chemical weapons attack that has shocked the world, Turkey's deputy prime minister expressed hope Tuesday that Russia would not veto a UN Security Council resolution against the Syrian regime.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/russia-shouldnt-veto-resolution-on-syria-deputy-pm/789105>

- **Syrian Army Rejects Claims of Chemical Weapons Use in Idlib, Blames Militants**

The responsibility for the chemical attack in Idlib lies with militants and their patrons, the Syrian Army said.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201704041052292018-syrian-army-idlib-militants-chemical-weapons/>

- **France says Assad's Allies enabling him to Act with impunity in Syria**

French President Francois Hollande directly blamed Syrian government forces for a suspected chemical weapons attack in rebel-held areas of northern Syria and said his allies were emboldening him to act with impunity.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Breaking-News/France-says-Assads-allies-enabling-him-to-act-with-impunity-in-Syria-486078>

3. IRAN

- **Iran, Hungary to boost nuclear energy ties**

Iran and Hungary will sign a contract on expanding cooperation on nuclear energy to further cement bilateral ties, Hungarian Deputy PM Zsolt Semjén said

More Details:

<http://iran-daily.com/News/190302.html>

- **No Luxembourg Court Verdict Issued on Iranian Assets Freeze: CBI Chief**

Valiollah Seif, the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), said a Luxembourg court responsible for freezing \$1.6 billion of Iranian assets in the European country has not issued a final verdict on the case yet.

More Details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/04/05/1370947/no-luxembourg-court-verdict-issued-on-iranian-assets-freeze-cbi-chief>

- **Iran 'not concerned' by Indian threat to cut oil imports**

Iran's oil minister dismissed India's decision to cut oil imports from Tehran in 2017/18 by a fifth as a threat on Wednesday, in an escalation of a dispute over a giant gas field contract.

More Details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-eneegy-india-idUSKBN1770YM>

- **Iran Prepared to Join Hands with Russia on Fight against Terror: President**

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani strongly condemned the recent deadly terrorist attack in Russia's Saint Petersburg metro station, and said Tehran is prepared to cooperate with Moscow in the fight against terrorism.

More Details:

<http://ifpnews.com/wired/2017/04/iran-prepared-join-hands-russia-fight-terror-president/>

- **Iran keen on expanding ties with Singapore**

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Morteza Sarmadi met with Singapore's Senior Minister of State (SMS) for Defense and Foreign Affairs Mohamad Maliki Osman and the accompanying delegation on Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124581/Iran-keen-on-expanding-ties-with-Singapore>

- **Saudi-led alliance not against Iran: Pakistan**

Foreign Secretary Tehmina Janjua said on Tuesday that it was difficult for Pakistan to maintain equal relations with both the countries, but Pakistan would not go against Iran's interests.

More Details:

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/05-Apr-17/saudi-led-alliance-not-against-iran-pakistan>

- **Iran-EU Economic Exchanges Enter Wait-and-See Mode**

Since the signing and implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, European businesses have shown great interest in reentering Iran. Trade between Iran and the EU has already picked up considerably.

More Details:

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/economy-domestic-economy/61783/iran-eu-economic-exchanges-enter-wait-and-see-mode>

- **Bahrain says Trump understands Iran better than Obama did**

Bahrain's foreign minister said on Tuesday that U.S. President Donald Trump understood the region and the threats posed by their common adversary Iran better than Barack Obama.

More Details:

<http://www.businessinsider.com/bahrain-says-trump-understands-iran-better-than-obama-did-2017-4>

- **Iranian MP Slams UAE for Imprudent, Irresponsible Policies**

An Iranian lawmaker has criticized the UAE's imprudence and irresponsible behaviour towards the regional crises, saying Iran seeks to ease tensions in the region and foster friendly relations with the Persian Gulf littoral states.

More Details:

<http://ifpnews.com/exclusive/2017/04/iranian-mp-slams-uae-imprudent-irresponsible-policies/>

- **Syrian Opposition in Geneva: Iran Regime Is an Invading Force and an Enemy**

While denouncing the Iranian regime's interventions in Syria, a member of the Syrian opposition delegation in Geneva and spokesman for the Syrian Free Army 'Issam Al Reis' emphasized in his interview with the Iranian Resistance's Satellite TV on solidarity of the Syrian revolution and people with the Resistance of Iran.

More Details:

<http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/terrorism-fundamentalism/22470-syrian-opposition-in-geneva-iran-regime-is-an-invading-force-and-an-enemy>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **With prison strike, Barghouti hopes to prove Palestinian street still his**

Jailed Palestinian leader Marwan Barghouti wants all of the 2,890 Fatah party prisoners in Israeli jails, as well as those from other movements, to go on an indefinite hunger strike on April 17, Palestinian Prisoners' Day.

More Details

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/with-prison-strike-barghouti-hopes-to-prove-palestinian-street-still-his/>

- **Jerusalem Family Self-Demolishes Its Own Home To Avoid High Penalties And Fines**

A Jerusalem family from Beit Hanina neighborhood, north of occupied East Jerusalem, demolished its own home, Tuesday, to avoid excessively high penalties and fines, imposed by the City Council, in addition to the extremely expensive bills it would pay, if the city demolished their property.

More Details

<http://imemc.org/article/jerusalem-family-self-demolishes-its-own-home-to-avoid-high-penalties-and-fines/>

- **EU denounces Israel's West Bank demolitions policy**

The European Union has expressed frustration with Israel over its demolition of Palestinian homes in the occupied West Bank, with the EU ambassador taking the unusual step of reading out a joint statement denouncing the practice.

More Details

<http://imemc.org/article/jerusalem-family-self-demolishes-its-own-home-to-avoid-high-penalties-and-fines/>

- **Israel: A cruel, apartheid state**

Israel is an apartheid state; make no mistake about that. And it is a tumor in the region. A tumor that had been incessantly bloating as it illegally feeds off Palestinians and their lands through murder, imprisonment and a host of other crimes. Apartheid, to refresh your memory, is a system of institutionalized racial, social, economic and political segregation and deprivation of a group of people.

More Details

<http://saudigazette.com.sa/opinion/israel-cruel-apartheid-state/>

- **Hamas Moves to Soften Charter, But Still Won't Recognize Israel**

Hamas, the militant Palestinian movement that controls the Gaza Strip, may seek to project a more moderate image when its revised ideological charter is released. But that doesn't extend to accepting Israel. The Islamist movement is aiming to mend fences with Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi, who considers Hamas an extension of the Muslim Brotherhood, and to repair a split with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas by accepting a temporary territorial compromise in the West Bank, veteran Hamas figures and political analysts said.

More Details

<https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2017-04-04/hamas-moves-to-soften-charter-but-still-won-t-recognize-israel>

- **Army Seriously Injures One Palestinian, Abducts Eight, In Bethlehem**

Israeli soldiers invaded, on Wednesday at dawn, the Deheishe refugee camp, south of the West Bank city of Bethlehem, and clashed with local youths, before shooting and seriously injuring a young man, and abducted eight Palestinians during violent searches of homes, in Bethlehem district, including three in Deheishe.

More Details

<http://imemc.org/article/army-seriously-injures-one-palestinian-abducts-eight-in-bethlehem/>

- **Dublin City Hall to raise Palestinian flag in solidarity against 'brutal' Israeli occupation**

Israel has strongly condemned the decision by a Dublin City Council subcommittee on ceremonies to raise the Palestinian flag over city hall in solidarity with the Palestinian people "who have lived under brutal Israeli occupation." According to the decision Tuesday, the flag will be raised on May 15th, marking 50 years since the territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip came under Israeli control.

More Details

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4945464,00.html>

- **Hamas Gives Israel's Agents One Week to Repent**

Hamas said on Tuesday it would offer a "week of redemption" for collaborators with Israel to avoid arrest and punishment, within a campaign to avenge last month's assassination of Mazen Faqha, a senior official in Ezzeddine al-Qassam Brigade, Hamas' military wing. A security official in Gaza Strip

said that Hamas security bodies have launched a major campaign against “agents” for Israel, during which several collaborators have been arrested.

More Details

<http://english.aawsat.com/kifah-ziboun/news-middle-east/hamas-gives-israels-agents-one-week-repent>

- **Israeli soldiers arrested for rape of female colleague**

Two Israeli military soldiers held under suspicions of raping a female soldier, had their arrests extended on Tuesday, according to local reports. The unidentified suspects, who both served in the elite unit of Shayetet 13 along with their victim, were arrested last week after the female soldier complained to the military Criminal Investigation Division.

More Details

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/4/5/israeli-soldiers-arrested-for-rape-of-female-colleague>

- **'Likud has become nationalist; religious have no representation'**

Former Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon criticized the Likud party and its leader, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. In an interview with Radio 103 FM, Ya'alon said that "there is no doubt that there is a lack of leadership at the moment. The Likud party has switched from being a national movement to being a nationalist movement."

More Details:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/227797>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **At White House, Jordan king to present Arab view on peace**

Jordan's King Abdallah will be able to deliver an Arab consensus on Mideast peace when he meets with President Donald Trump at the White House on Wednesday, after a recent summit hosted by the monarch renewed an Arab offer of recognition of Israel in exchange for Palestinian statehood. Could the revived Arab plan, coupled with Trump's stated eagerness to strike a deal, signal an opening for restarting stalled Israeli-Palestinian talks?

More Details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1079386/middle-east>

- **Jordan, Egypt sign gas supply deals**

Egypt's Minister of Petroleum Tarek El-Molla has signed four gas deals with Jordanian officials on the sidelines of the third Jordan International Energy Summit held on Monday in Amman. The deals included a memo to import and export natural and liquefied gas, in addition to other deals brokered by the Jordanian-Egyptian Fajr Company for Natural Gas Transmission and Supply.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/jordan-egypt-sign-gas-supply-deals-958940>

- **Egypt keen on coordinating with Jordan on different issues, Sisi tells King Abdullah II**

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi told King Abdullah II of Jordan during a meeting in Washington on Tuesday that Egypt is keen on coordinating and consulting with Jordan periodically on different issues.

More Details

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/262285/-.aspx>

- **Jordan's King Abdullah arrives in US to continue Arab push for Middle East peace**

Jordan's King Abdullah arrived in Washington on Tuesday as part of a new effort to show president Donald Trump that the Arab world is united in a push for peace in the Middle East. He arrived as the second-wave in a diplomatic tag team, a day after Egyptian president Abdel Fattah El Sisi was welcomed to the White House and ahead of an expected visit by Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas later this month.

More Details

<http://www.thenational.ae/world/americas/jordans-king-abdullah-arrives-in-us-to-continue-arab-push-for-middle-east-peace>

- **Jordan withdraws ambassador to Morocco after King Mohammed was a no-show at the Arab Summit**

Jordan has announced today that it will be removing its ambassador to Morocco from office, signalling a crack in the diplomatic relations between the two countries. There has been speculation by some that this decision comes as a result of Moroccan King Mohammed VI being a no-show at the Summit, hosted this year at the Dead Sea in Jordan.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/loop/jordan-withdraws-ambassador-morocco-after-king-mohammed-was-no-show-arab-summit-958890>

- **Hariri, Merkel Discuss Syrian Refugee Crisis**

Lebanese Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri met on Tuesday with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin, to discuss the Syrian refugee crisis and means to promote bilateral relations. In a joint news conference held at the outset of the meeting, Merkel said: “Lebanon hosts more than one million Syrian refugees, and you can imagine the sheer dimension of this burden as compared to the size of the state and its population.”

More Details

<http://english.aawsat.com/theaawsat/news-middle-east/hariri-merkel-discuss-syrian-refugee-crisis>

- **‘Chemical’ Massacre in Idlib Defies the World**

Warplanes releasing toxic gas targeted Tuesday the town of Khan Sheikhoun in Idlib, northwestern Syria, massacring dozens of people and injuring hundreds. Many pointed their fingers at the Syrian regime, which denied any responsibility for the attack and described the massacre as “fabricated fake accusations” by the armed fighters.

More Details

<http://english.aawsat.com/youssef-diab-paula-astih-and-najla-habriri/news-middle-east/chemical-massacre-idlib-defies-world>

- **Lebanon Calls On UN to Press Israel to Reveal Location of Landmines**

A Lebanese minister has called on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to press Israel to deliver maps detailing the mines it planted during its various aggression in the country's south, China's Xinhua news agency. Agriculture Minister Ghazi Zeaiter made his remarks on the occasion of the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action.

More Details

<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/wn/newsworld.php?id=1344720>

- **Lebanon Treats Refugees as a Security Problem—and It Doesn’t Work**

Today, at least one in four of Lebanon’s residents is a Syrian refugee. Political deadlock due to intense political fragmentation continues to deny any concrete plan to accommodate this huge population influx.

More Details

<https://tcf.org/content/commentary/lebanon-treats-refugees-security-problem-doesnt-work/>

- **Lebanese Foreign Minister welcomed to NZ**

Foreign Minister Murray McCully has today welcomed Lebanon's Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil to New Zealand. Lebanon is an important partner for New Zealand in the Middle East. During our term on the UN Security Council, we engaged closely with Lebanon on regional issues, including the war in Syria.

More Details

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA1704/S00051/lebanese-foreign-minister-welcomed-to-nz.htm>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Azerbaijan and Saudi Arabia discuss military and military-technical cooperation**

The Minister of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Colonel General Zakir Hasanov, who is on an official visit to Saudi Arabia, met with Deputy Crown Prince, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Defense Minister Muhammad bin Salman. During the meeting, the sides discussed military, military-technical cooperation between the two countries, regional security issues and other issues of mutual interest, defense ministry told APA.

More details:

<http://en.apa.az/azerbaijan-military/azerbaijan-army-azerbaijani-armed-forces/azerbaijan-and-saudi-arabia-discuss-military-and-military-technical-cooperation.html>

- **Iraqis have good reason to believe Saudi Arabia state sponsor of terror: Abadi**

Iraq's Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi says the nationals of his country have good reason to believe Saudi Arabia is a state sponsor of terror. "Many Saudi nationals have carried out terrorist operations in Iraq, and every Iraqi citizen has a right to believe that Saudi Arabia is a supporter of terrorism," he told Lebanon's Al Mayadeen television channel. Saudi Arabia's official radical ideology of Wahhabism, which is known for its lack of tolerance, informs the mindset of ISIS and other terrorist groups worldwide. ISIS has been ravaging Iraq, and neighboring Syria, since 2014.

More details:

http://en.abna24.com/news/middle-east/iraqis-have-good-reason-to-believe-saudi-arabia-state-sponsor-of-terror-abadi_821828.html

- **Trump Ordered 70 Airstrikes in Yemen, Twice as Many as Last Year of Obama**

U.S. President Trump also greenlighted a group operation in Yemen in February that killed more than 30 civilians. The young U.S. administration of Donald Trump has carried out at least 70 airstrikes in Yemen, more than twice as many as those carried out in 2016 under the Obama administration, according to data provided by the Pentagon.

More details:

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Trump-Ordered-70-Airstrikes-in-Yemen-Twice-as-Many-as-Last-Year-of-Obama-20170404-0035.html>

- **Yemen army liberates three post in Al Jawf Governorate**

Yemen National Army units have liberated three posts in Al Jawf Governorate from the rebel militia groups. Yemen News Agency quoted Abdullah Al Ashraf, from Yemeni Army, that dozens of rebels were killed in the hours-long battle that broke out west of the Government Complex in Al Matoon District.

More details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302607001>

- **Qatar Foreign Minister meets EU official**

Foreign Minister H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani met yesterday with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, on the sidelines of the International Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region, being held at the EU headquarters in Brussels.

More details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/05/04/2017/Qatar-Foreign-Minister-meets-EU-official>

- **Qatar attends Arab meeting of electricity & power experts**

The Arab League hosted the third joint meeting of the electricity expert committee and the renewable energy expert committee of the Arab states in Cairo yesterday. The meeting discussed an initiative for cooperation between the energy, water and food sectors in Arab countries as well as the promotion of cooperation among Arab countries and regional and international.

More details:

<http://www.qna.org.qa/en-us/News/17040418380058/Qatar-Attends-Arab-Meeting-for-Electricity-and-Renewable-Energy-Experts>

- **Bahrain says Trump understands Iran better than Obama did**

Bahrain's foreign minister said on Tuesday that U.S. President Donald Trump understood the region and the threats posed by their common adversary Iran better than Barack Obama.

More details:

<http://www.businessinsider.com/bahrain-says-trump-understands-iran-better-than-obama-did-2017-4>

- **Bahrain Arms Sales Belie US Commitment to Human Rights**

The New York Times reported last Thursday that the US State Department has decided to lift human rights as a condition for the sale of F-16 fighter jets and other weapons to Bahrain, a small, Sunni, family-ruled kingdom in the Persian Gulf. Ostensibly, the justification that Secretary of State Rex Tillerson gave for his decision was that Bahrain is a key ally in the fight against Iran-supported Houthis in Yemen. The US Navy Fifth Fleet is also home-ported in Bahrain.

More details:

<http://lobelog.com/bahrain-arms-sales-belie-us-commitment-to-human-rights/>

7. EGYPT

- **Jordan, Egypt sign gas supply deals**

Egypt's Minister of Petroleum Tarek El-Molla has signed four gas deals with Jordanian officials on the sidelines of the third Jordan International Energy Summit held on Monday in Amman. The deals included a memo to import and export natural and liquefied gas, in addition to other deals brokered by the Jordanian-Egyptian Fajr Company for Natural Gas Transmission and Supply.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/jordan-egypt-sign-gas-supply-deals-958940>

- **Egypt's oil companies plan return to Libya**

The Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation (EGPC) and Egypt's petroleum projects construction company Petrojet are looking to reactivate their presence on Libya. Both had meetings today to that effect with Presidency Council deputy leader Ahmed Maetig as well as with Mustafa Sanalla, the head of the National Oil Corporation.

More details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/04/04/egypts-oil-companies-look-to-return-to-libya/>

- **Egypt continues to suffer from WWII landmines**

This year may have unusually seen no casualties from landmines remaining in Egypt from World War II, due to stepped up efforts, and survivors of landmine explosions continue to call for more state support. Survivors continue to call for more action from the state.

More details:

<http://www.madamasr.com/en/2017/04/04/feature/politics/egypt-continues-to-suffer-from-wwii-landmines/>

- **Egypt implementing serious reform programme with IMF: Al-Sisi**

During his five-day visit to the US, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi held a meeting in Washington on Monday evening with members of the American-Egyptian Chamber of Commerce, headed by its president and CEO, Thomas J. Donohue. The president stated in his speech that Egypt has become secure and stable and has gained all of its democratic entitlement.

More details:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/04/04/egypt-implementing-serious-reform-programme-imf-al-sisi/>

- **Egypt Tries ISIS Ring on Charges of Terrorism**

Egyptian authorities on Monday decided to try a terror ring before a criminal court on charges of plotting for terrorist attacks. Prosecution investigations in northeastern Egypt revealed that ring members received training from leaders affiliated with terror group ISIS.

More details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/waleed-abdul-rahman/news-middle-east/egypt-tries-isis-ring-charges-terrorism>

- **Donald Trump tells Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, US and Egypt will fight Islamic militants together**

US President Donald Trump moved to reset US relations with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi on Monday after the prior Obama administration's strained ties, giving him firm backing and vowing to work together to fight Islamic militants.

More details:

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/donald-trump-tells-abdel-fattah-alsisi-us-and-egypt-will-fight-islamic-militants-together-20170404-gvd2e2.html>

- **Egypt's external debt up 40.8 percent amid currency flotation**

Egypt's total external debt rose by 40.8 percent year-on-year in the first half of the fiscal year 2016-2017, while domestic public debt increased by 28.9 percent in the same period, the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) announced.

More details:

<http://lb.shafaqna.com/EN/LB/3343362>

- **Zohr gas field discovery renews interest in the region**

With the recent establishment of the Egyptian Gas Regulator, Mediterranean Energy Regulators (MEDREG) met in Cairo recently where they discussed the independence of regulators, their financial autonomy and gas market models, MEDREG said in a press release. MEDREG is the Association of Mediterranean Energy Regulators, which brings together 25 regulators from 21 countries, spanning the EU, the Balkans and North Africa.

More details:

<https://www.neweurope.eu/article/energy-regulators-examine-egypts-role-mediterranean-gas-industry/>

- **Murdered Giulio Regeni's family begs Pope Francis to seek truth during papal visit to Egypt**

The family of Italian citizen Giulio Regeni, who was tortured and murdered in Egypt in 2016, has appealed to Pope Francis to demand justice for the murdered student. The pontiff is due to travel to Egypt for a two-day visit on 28 April, and will meet President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and the grand imam of the al-Azhar mosque and university complex.

More details:

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/giulio-regeni-family-begs-pope-francis-shed-light-sons-murder-egypt-ahead-papal-visit-1615270>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Algeria-EU twinning to boost industrial innovation in Algeria**

An institutional twinning between Algeria and a European consortium (France-Spain -Finland) has been officially launched on Tuesday in Algiers to help the Industry and Mines Ministry in its industrial innovation strategy.

More details:

<http://en.aps.dz/economy/17607-algeria-eu-twinning-to-boost-industrial-innovation-in-algeria>

- **Iran Regime's Lies Citing Tunisian President and Algerian Prime Minister, Ridicules of Instability and Growing Isolation**

Tunisian Presidential Spokesman Reza Buqazi denied the remarks attributed by Iran regime to Tunisian President al-Baji Qaed al-Sabasi in his meeting with Tehran's Minister of Culture and Guidance.

More details:

<http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/iran-world/22464-iran-regime-s-lies-citing-tunisian-president-and-algerian-prime-minister-ridicules-of-instability-and-growing-isolation>

- **BDB rejects including Haftar in any Libyan political compromise**

Benghazi Defense Brigades (BDB) denounced the stance of the Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR) in which it conditioned its return to the dialogue table with including the leader of Dignity Operation Khalifa Haftar in the political process.

More details:

<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/bdb-rejects-including-haftar-any-libyan-political-compromise>

- **UK, Germany affirm support to Libyan Government of National Accord**

British Ambassador to Libya, Peter Millett, and the German Ambassador to Libya, Christian Buck, on Monday affirmed their countries' support to Libya's Government of National Accord (GNA), in an attempt to bolster the North African country's security and stability.

More details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170404-uk-germany-affirm-support-to-libyan-government-of-national-accord/>

- **Former Tunisian President Reflects on Arab Spring, Transition to Democracy**

Former President of Tunisia Moncef Marzouki discussed the ideological differences that led to the Arab Spring and the importance of democracy and the fight against corruption in an event at the Kennedy School on Tuesday night.

More details:

<http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2017/4/5/marzouki-reflects-on-arab-spring/>

- **Tunisia charges British DJ over call to prayer remix**

British DJ faces charges in Tunisia of "offending public morality" after his set included a remix of the Muslim call to prayer.

More details:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/227777>

- **Kuwaiti Mol meets Tunisian counterpart**

Kuwait's visiting Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah met Tuesday with Tunisian Interior Minister Hedi Majdoub in Tunis.

More details:

<http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2600811&Language=en>

- **Jordan withdraws ambassador to Morocco after King Mohammed was a no-show at the Arab Summit**

Jordan has announced today that it will be removing its ambassador to Morocco from office, signalling a crack in the diplomatic relations between the two countries.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/loop/jordan-withdraws-ambassador-morocco-after-king-mohammed-was-no-show-arab-summit-958890>

- **169 Gambian illegal migrants deported home from Libya after prison ordeal**

A hundred and sixty nine Gambian migrants returned home on Tuesday, after journeying across the Sahara in harsh conditions only to get stuck in Libya, most in jails far short of their intended destination in Europe, Reuters reported.

More details:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/169-gambian-illegal-migrants-deported-home-from-libya-after-prison-ordeal/>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Blast in Pakistani city of Lahore kills at least six**

The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility for a suicide attack on army personnel that killed at least six people and wounded 18 in the eastern Pakistani city of Lahore on Wednesday.

More details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-blast-idUSKBN1770FQ>

- **Terror & extremism have no link to Islam: IIUI president**

Officials of the International Islamic University in Islamabad (IIUI) say the twin scourge of terrorism and extremism has no link to Islam, a religion that sets great store by peace and brotherhood.

More details:

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2017/04/05/terror-extremism-have-no-link-islam-iiui-president>

- **Afghanistan strongly reacts at Pakistani violations along Durand Line**

The Afghan government has strongly condemned the growing work by the Pakistani authorities along the Durand Line, calling it a unilateral move.

More details:

<http://www.khaama.com/afghanistan-strongly-reacts-at-pakistani-violations-along-durand-line-02514>

- **18 Suicide Bombers, 8 Foreign Militants Killed in Southern Afghanistan**

At least eighteen suicide bombers and eight foreign militants were killed along with several other insurgents during the clearance operations in southern Zabul province of Afghanistan, the country's defense ministry said.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960116000509>

- **Japan Provides Over \$12 Million for Irrigation And Fiscal Support**

The Government of Japan has contributed over USD 12 million to the Government of Afghanistan to support improvement of irrigation systems in Afghanistan and to provide fiscal support to the Government of Afghanistan, the Japanese embassy said in a statement.

More details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/politics.html>

- **Alliance won't interfere in Yemen conflict: Asif**

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Tuesday that the 39-nation military alliance, put together by Saudi Arabia and to be led by Pakistan's former army chief Gen Raheel Sharif, would not interfere in the ongoing conflict in Yemen.

More details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1324945/alliance-wont-interfere-in-yemen-conflict-asif>

- **Sartaj calls for more dialogue at all levels between Pakistan, US**

Prime Minister's Adviser on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz has called for more dialogue and communication at all levels between Pakistan and the United States.

More details:

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/04/05/sartaj-calls-for-more-dialogue-at-all-levels-between-pakistan-us/>

- **President Trump should tell Pakistan to 'knock off ' its Jihad-centric habits, says leading American expert**

The United States needs to ask Pakistan to knock off its jihad-centric habits and stop the relentless witch hunt of liberals and reformers, whose only real crime is wanting to have a saner Pakistan, says Ms Christine Fair, Associate Professor at Georgetown University's Security Studies Program, in an article published in 'The National Interest'.

More details:

<http://www.aninews.in/newsdetail-NA/MzA3NTI3/president-trump-should-tell-pakistan-to-039-knock-off-039-its-jihad-centric-habits-says-leading-american-expert.html>

- **Afghan peace possible but firm practical plan needed**

Pakistan Adviser to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz called terrorism a common enemy of both Afghanistan and Pakistan, but "advised" that the ongoing conflict in the war-battered nation could only be resolved through an Afghan-led political settlement, not by military means.

More details:

<http://thekabultimes.gov.af/index.php/editorial/13564-afghan-peace-possible-but-firm-practical-plan-needed.html>

- **EU asks Pakistan to take full benefit of GSP Plus**

European Union Ambassador to Pakistan Jean Francois Cautain has stressed that public and private sectors of Pakistan would have to work together to take full advantage of the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) Plus status, which has been granted till 2023.

More details:

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1374421/eu-asks-pakistan-take-full-benefit-gsp-plus/>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Suspected Syian chemical attack is 'savagery': PM**

Turkey's prime minister has condemned Tuesday's "inhumane" suspected chemical weapons attack in Syria which killed more than 100 civilians. "The inhumane savagery in Idlib, Syria this morning, unfortunately, shocked all of us deeply," Binali Yildirim said at the Prime Ministry office in Dolmabahce Palace in Istanbul.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/187394/suspected-syian-chemical-attack-is-savagery-pm>

- **Turkish lawmaker seeks UN action over Idlib attack**

A leading Turkish parliamentarian called on the UN to take action over Tuesday's suspected chemical attack in Syria which killed more than 100 civilians. Taha Ozhan, who chairs the Turkish parliament's Foreign Affairs Commission, said on Wednesday he condemned the attack. Ozhan called on the UN and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to investigate the attack in Idlib and previous similar incidents carried out by Bashar al-Assad's forces.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkish-lawmaker-seeks-un-action-over-idlib-attack/789380>

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*

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