



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

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1. IRAQ

- **Erbil Hands Over a Protest Letter to the Iranian Consulate Accusing It of Running the Recent Demonstrations**

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) handed over an official letter to the Iranian consulate in Erbil expressing its protest and concern over the statements of the Secretary-General of Iran's Expediency Council, Mohsen Rezai that the Iranian protests were planned and managed by Erbil. The Foreign Relations Department of the Kurdistan Regional Government said in a press statement: "The official of external relations in the Kurdistan Regional Government, Falah Mustafa held a meeting with Deputy General Consul General Siamak Borhani and handed him an official letter expressing the protest and concern of the Kurdistan Regional Government about the statements of the Secretary-General of Iran's Expediency Council Mohsen Rezai, who said that the Iranian protests were planned and run by Erbil. "

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?6WgnfdnyrQSMh%252b9mr4VAKw%253d%253d

- **Iraq's Elections Could Be Postponed: MP**

Due to disagreements between the political factions in Baghdad, the upcoming parliamentary elections of Iraq may be put off, said a Kurdish member of the Iraqi parliamentary. "There were arguments during Monday's session at the Iraqi house of representatives between some factions which are not confident about the current situation [to hold the election]," said MP Adil Nouri.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/405766>

- **Iraqi forces arrest more IS members, make ground gains in Kirkuk purge**

Iraqi forces on Tuesday advanced further and made more arrests as a recent operation continues to clear areas in Kirkuk province from remnant Islamic State militants. The Popular Mobilization Forces said through their media that troops, backed by Iraqi army divisions completed the clearing of five villages northeast of the town of Hawija, Islamic State's former stronghold in Kirkuk.

More Details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=42508

- **Two Islamic State hotbeds destroyed during military operation in Diyala**

Two Islamic State hotbeds were destroyed Tuesday during a military operation at Hawi al-Azim area in northern Diyala, a military commander was quoted as saying. Speaking to Alghad Press on Tuesday, Commander of Tigris Operations Lieutenant General Mazhar al-Ezzawi said, “Security forces destroyed two hideouts of Islamic State and detonated a booby-trapped vehicle during a military operation that was launched on Monday to cleanse the western parts of Hawi al-Azim area in northern Diyala from Islamic State remnants.”

More Details:

<https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/two-islamic-state-hotbeds-destroyed-military-operation-diyala/>

- **Jabouri calls on Saudi Arabia to help in rebuilding destroyed areas**

Iraqi Parliament Speaker Salim al-Jabouri has met with Saudi Ambassador to Iraq Abdulaziz Al-Shammari at Jobouri's office in Baghdad, the Parliament Speaker media office said in a statement on Tuesday. During the meeting, they confirmed that the Middle East is currently at a difficult stage that requires uniting efforts to overcome these crises.

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/22102/Jabouri-calls-on-Saudi-Arabia-to-help-in-rebuilding-destroyed-areas>

- **US strikes deal with UN agency on funding for minority groups in Iraq**

The Trump administration has reached a deal with the United Nations' international development agency to provide more funding for ethnic and religious minorities in Iraq. \$55 million of a \$75 million tranche of aid money to the U.N. Development Program's Funding Facility for Stabilization will go to addressing minority groups in areas of Northern Iraq re-taken from the Islamic State, USAID said Monday.

More Details:

<http://thehill.com/policy/international/368027-us-strikes-deal-with-un-development-agency-on-funding-for-minority>

- **Systemic Crisis In Kurdistan Region Of Iraq – Analysis**

To achieve stability and prosperity, the Kurdish Region of Iraq needs to address the politicization of its institutions. This problem has been years in the making, and it will take considerable effort to enact meaningful reforms. However, doing so is the best path forward for Iraqi Kurds. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has been facing a systemic crisis since its establishment in 1992. First,

despite many attempts to depoliticize the KRG's Peshmerga armed forces, they remain divided. The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) were two armed groups fighting the Iraqi state during 1970s and 1980s, and they have kept their military and security forces under their own control even after the rise of KRG.

More Details:

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/09012018-systemic-crisis-in-kurdistan-region-of-iraq-analysis/>

- **Mortar Barrage on Tuz Khormato; 26 Killed in Iraq**

The United States has struck a deal with the United Nations to deliver more aid to ethnic and religious minority groups in Iraq. At least 26 people were killed, and 15 more were wounded in recent violence: In Mosul, a mass grave containing the bodies of 20 women was excavated. A mortar attack on Tuz Khormato left 12 wounded, including children. Turkman M.P. Jasim Mohammed Jaafar blamed the attack on Kurdish rebels.

More Details:

<http://original.antiwar.com/updates/2018/01/08/mortar-barrage-tuz-khormato-26nbpskilled-iraq/>

- **CSC Discusses Investment Opportunities in Iraq**

The Council of Saudi Chambers (CSC) held on Monday a workshop on promising investment opportunities in Iraq organized by Saudi-Iraqi Business Council in the presence of Undersecretary of Ministry of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources for Corporate Affairs Dr. Abid bin Abdullah Al-Saadoun and representatives of a number of government agencies and businessmen.

More Details:

<http://www.spa.gov.sa/viewfullstory.php?lang=en&newsid=1706936>

- **Mass Grave of ISIL Victims Discovered in Iraq**

Iraqi security forces unearthed yet another mass grave containing the bodies of at least 20 women tortured and slain by ISIL terrorists near the Northern city of Mosul, which was once the Takfiri group's main stronghold in the Arab country. "Relics of 20 women were found inside a mass grave while removing debris in western Mosul," Iraqi Police Colonel Omar al-Hajjar said on Monday, Middle East News reported.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13961019000521>

- **Mövenpick Hotels signs for property in Basra, Iraq**

Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts will open a new property in Basra early this year as it looks to capitalise on the city's status as Iraq's economic capital and a regional oil and gas hub. The global hospitality firm has signed a deal with Akeel Ibraheem Al-Khalidy to manage the five-star Mövenpick Hotel Basra, a 152-key property that is on track to open its doors in the first quarter of 2018.

More Details:

<http://www.breakingtravelnews.com/news/article/moevenpick-hotels-signs-for-property-in-basra-iraq/>

- **Kuwait will host Iraq reconstruction conference in February**

Kuwait will host an international summit in February on the reconstruction of war-torn Iraq. In co-operation with the World Bank and private companies, the conference — scheduled to be held from February 12-14 — will devote its second day to the role of the private sector and civil society organisations in reconstruction. Kuwait's deputy foreign minister Khaled Al Jarallah said that despite "past wounds", a reference to Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, his country had a "moral, humanitarian and Arab" duty to support its neighbour.

More Details:

<https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/kuwait-will-host-iraq-reconstruction-conference-in-february-1.693987>

- **KDP Favours Holding Kurdistan Elections before Iraq's**

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), the major Kurdish political faction in the region, desires the Kurdistan Region to hold the parliamentary elections before other polls in Iraq this year, said senior KDP official Hemin Hawrami. "All Kurdistan parties need to unify and run as a united list for the Iraqi Parliament elections especially," Hawrami suggested in a tweet on his official account.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/kurdistan/405765>

- **British Troops Deploy To Iraq In Fight Against So-Called Islamic State**

British soldiers are on their way to Iraq to be part of the US protection force in Operation Shader. 3 SCOTS will help provide security for US troops at Al-Asad Airfield in Iraq and also help train local Iraqi forces. It's one of the first times the US has given a foreign unit such a role.

More Details:

<http://www.forces.net/news/british-troops-deploy-iraq-fight-against-so-called-islamic-state>

- **Children of Terror Left Behind in Iraq**

Both of Maya's parents were Islamic State suicide bombers. Her four siblings were among their victims. Plump, smiling and younger than two years old, Maya may never know anything of her past. "Maya" is not her real name.

More Details:

<https://www.voanews.com/a/children-terror-left-behind-iraq-islamic-state/4198481.html>

- **Teachers in Mosul learn to cope with traumatised pupils**

On a classroom whiteboard in the battered city of Mosul the words "rediscovering how to smile" outline the heartbreaking task of Iraqi teachers striving to heal their students' mental scars after brutal Islamic State group rule. Dozens of Iraqi teachers -- many battling trauma themselves -- have gathered at a university, where instructor Nazem Shaker seeks to guide them in helping children still struggling to cope months after IS was driven from the devastated city.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86700>

2. SYRIA

- **Israeli air strikes, rockets target Syrian military position**

The Israeli army overnight carried out air strikes and fired rockets at targets in Syria, causing damage near a "military position", the Syrian army said in a statement on Tuesday. The Israeli air force carried out strikes on the Qutayfeh area northeast of Damascus, hitting near the military position and causing the Syrian army to retaliate and "hit one of its planes", the army said.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86698>

- **US supports territorial integrity of Syria**

The US remains committed to supporting Syria's territorial integrity and a "united Syria", a senior State Department official said Monday. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to restrictions on talking to the media, was responding to a question by Anadolu Agency about media reports that northern parts of Syria held under the SDF, a group dominated by the terrorist PKK/PYD, would be recognized as an independent region by the US.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180109-us-supports-territorial-integrity-of-syria/>

- **Russian troops remaining in Syria can fight terror attacks on bases: Kremlin**

Moscow says the number of Russian troops remaining in Syria following the collapse of Daesh is sufficient for defending its bases against any possible militant attacks. “That contingent that remains, the military infrastructure that remains, at the Hmeimim and Tartus military bases, they are completely capable of fighting these occasional terrorist acts,” Dmitry Peskov, the Kremlin’s spokesman, told a conference call on Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/01/09/548337/Russia-Syria-bases-terrorist-attacks-Kremlin-spokesman-Peskov>

- **Russian Bases in Syria Attacked by 13 Drones**

Russia said that fighters have used unmanned airplanes against its military base Hymeim and its naval base Tartus in Syria. The defense ministry announced that attacks on Saturday night were successfully stopped by Russian troops and did not cause casualties or destruction. They used 13 armed unmanned aircrafts, TASS reported. The Russian troops were able to catch six unmanned aircraft and seven were destroyed by the air defense. According to the Ministry of Defense, the means used in the attacks could only be obtained from developed countries with high technology capabilities.

More Details:

<http://www.novinite.com/articles/186848/Russian+Bases+in+Syria+Attacked+by+13+Drones>

- **At least 130 civilians killed in Syria's Eastern Ghouta in 11 days**

Shelling and air strikes on Eastern Ghouta, which the Syrian regime forces have besieged for four years, have killed at least 130 civilians in the last 11 days, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said on Tuesday. The semi-rural area east of the Syrian capital is home to around 400,000 inhabitants and is targeted almost daily by regime forces trying to flush out opposition factions and militant groups.

More Details:

<https://www.trtworld.com/mea/at-least-130-civilians-killed-in-syria-s-eastern-ghouta-in-11-days-14034>

- **Kremlin comments on drone attack against Russian base in Syria**

Russian forces remaining in Syria are strong enough to repel militants' attacks, but more intensive political settlement efforts are required, Russian presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov told the media on Tuesday, when asked if the militants' attack against the Hmeymim air base with the use of drones was evidence the pullout of the Russian contingent from Syria had been premature.

More Details:

<http://tass.com/politics/984240>

- **Syria's Albou Kamal Border Crossing Opens Iran-Beirut Route**

After regaining control of the border crossings with Iraq in Deir al-Zour and Albou Kamal, the Syrian regime is preparing to resume customs operations at each of these two points and therefore facilitate linking them with land border points in Lebanon. The regime's General Customs Department had already started exchanging goods at the beginning of the new year and a large number of customs personnel have been relocated there.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1138051/syria%E2%80%99s-albou-kamal-border-crossing-opens-iran-beirut-route>

- **Chinese embassy in Syria issues red alert**

Chinese embassy officials in the Syrian capital of Damascus issued a red alert Sunday night, calling on all Chinese nationals in the country to be safe and prepared for any emergency after a massive explosion killed at least 30 and injured 70 in Idlib, Northeastern Syria. So far no group has come forward claiming responsibility for Sunday's attack. According to local sources, the explosion stemmed from fighting between anti-Syrian forces in the rebel-controlled governorate.

More Details:

<http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/0109/c90000-9313223.html>

- **Syria: 13 million people in desperate need as seventh war-torn winter sets in, UN warns**

With millions of desperate people across Syria now facing their seventh winter of war, the United Nations warned on Tuesday that intensified military operations in the country's north are forcing families to flee, in the cold, to areas without enough resources to support them. "While some parts of Syria are witnessing a welcome reprieve from hostilities, many others face intensified military operations and conflict," UN Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric told the regular briefing in New York, noting that more than 13 million people in the country need basic aid and protection.

More Details:

<https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syria-13-million-people-desperate-need-seventh-war-torn-winter-sets-un>

3. IRAN

- **Iran tells world to prepare for US withdrawal from nuclear deal**

Iran warned the world on Monday to prepare for the possible withdrawal of the United States from the landmark nuclear deal agreed in 2015. "The international community must be prepared for the US possibly pulling out of the JCPOA," said deputy foreign minister Abbas Araghchi, using the technical name for the nuclear deal.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86692>

- **US, UK 'Failed' to Destabilize Iran through Recent Protests - Supreme Leader**

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Tuesday that the United States and the United Kingdom had "failed" to create unrest in Iran during recent mass protests in the country. "Once again, the nation tells the US, Britain, and those who seek to overthrow the Islamic Republic of Iran from abroad that 'you've failed, and you will fail in the future, too,'" Khamenei wrote on his Twitter page.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201801091060615449-us-uk-failure-destabilization-iran/>

- **Iran: National Security Council Investigates Death of Hashemi Rafsanjani**

The cause of death of Iran's former President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani is once again stirring controversy after his son Yasser announced that President Hassan Rouhani rejected a report by the Supreme National Security Council of the Islamic Republic (SNSCI) concerning the details of Rafsanjani's death. SNSCI sent a letter to Rouhani demanding to shelve the case, however the president rejected the demand, ordering the council to re-investigate the whole case.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1138036/iran-national-security-council-investigates-death-hashemi-rafsanjani>

- **Mossad: We have eyes and ears in Iran**

The Iranian regime is expanding its influence across the Middle East, warned Israel's chief foreign intelligence expert at a Finance Ministry meeting Tuesday. Yossi Cohen, who heads Israel's Mossad national intelligence and special operations agency, said that Tehran is gaining footholds across the Middle East, with few encumbrances.

More Details:

<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/240444>

- **Germany protests to Iran after verdict in spying trial**

The German government has protested to the Iranian ambassador following the conviction of an Iranian agent for spying on targets including a former German lawmaker who headed a German-Israeli friendship group. The Pakistani man was convicted in Berlin last year of espionage and sentenced to more than four years in prison. His targets included Reinhold Robbe, who headed the German-Israeli Association.

More Details:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/germany-protests-to-iran-after-verdict-in-spying-trial/2018/01/09/df7d74de-f52a-11e7-9af7-a50bc3300042_story.html?utm_term=.1f8f64b1679e

- **The App Powering the Uprising in Iran**

The streets of Iran are calming down after more than a week of protests about fundamental issues—jobs, corruption, the cost of food—that quickly took on political overtones. Many demonstrators called for an end to the theocratic regime's costly adventures outside Iran's borders, and, in a few cases, an end to that regime altogether. The demonstrations took place more or less spontaneously in cities and towns all over the country, and the government at first appeared confused, with hardliners blaming moderates, moderates blaming hardliners, and, of course, many in the regime claiming this was all a plot by Iran's foreign enemies: the U.S., Israel, and Saudi Arabia. But by late last week, the government had largely reasserted control over the streets, and the big question that looms is, "What next?"

More Details:

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-app-powering-the-uprising-in-iran>

- **EU to host meeting with Iran on nuclear treaty Thursday**

The European Union is to host a meeting with the foreign ministers of Iran, France, Germany and Britain to discuss the state of a landmark nuclear agreement with Iran. EU foreign affairs chief

Federica Mogherini convened Thursday's meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Jawad Zarif "to ensure a full and continued implementation" of the 2015 agreement.

More Details:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/eu-to-host-meeting-with-iran-on-nuclear-treaty-thursday/2018/01/09/029f6c5e-f51e-11e7-9af7-a50bc3300042_story.html?utm_term=.850959741c73

- **Ban urges safeguarding of JCPOA**

Former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged the US to safeguard JCPOA as an assurance of its credibility. Speaking to CNBC on Monday on the sidelines of the UBS China Conference in Shanghai, Ban talked about the Iran nuclear deal and its fast-approaching January 15 deadline. By that date, the Trump administration will have to decide whether to recertify the deal or not.

More Details:

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/131068/Ban-urges-safeguarding-of-JCPOA>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Ahmad Taibi: No deal for Palestine under Donald Trump**

Ahmad Taibi, a prominent Arab member of Israel's Parliament, said a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict under US President Donald Trump would be impossible. Speaking to Al Jazeera from his office in the Knesset, Taibi said there is no political solution on the horizon, despite US statements to the contrary.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/ahmad-taibi-deal-palestine-donald-trump-180109084347066.html>

- **Israel NGO accuses UNICEF of working to blacklist Israeli army**

An Israeli organisation has accused the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and its partner organisations of leading a campaign to include the Israeli army on the UN-blacklist of violators of children's rights. NGO Monitor, which analyses and reports on the output of the international NGO community from a pro-Israel perspective, said that research into UNICEF's activities revealed that the UN organisation's staff working in the occupied Palestinian territories have been working in cooperation with Palestinian organisations to "delegitimise Israel".

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180109-israel-ngo-accuses-unicef-of-working-to-blacklist-israeli-army/>

- **Israel should prevail, but so should Palestine**

The ultra-right wing parties, their actions and their ideology seem to be holding the Netanyahu government at ransom are in fact a liability to the survival of the state of Israel. The image created by these radicals in Israel among the Turkish people are that Israelis hate the Palestinians and they are prepared to erase them from this earth, they have no intention of living side by side with the Palestinian people and that Israel has grand designs to expand its borders all the way into Turkey.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/columns/ilnur-cevik/2018/01/09/israel-should-prevail-but-so-should-palestine>

- **PA leader asks Norway to recognize 'Palestine'**

Rami Hamdallah, the head of the Palestinian Authority (PA) government in Ramallah, on Monday called on Norway to recognize "Palestine". His call came during a meeting with Norwegian Foreign Minister Ine Marie Eriksen Søreide in Ramallah, reported the official PA news agency Wafa.

More Details:

<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/240430>

- **Trump's peace deal: A Gaza-centered Palestine**

On Jan. 2, US Ambassador to Israel David Friedman met with new Zionist Camp leader Avi Gabbay. It was a friendly meeting to give the two men a chance to get to know each other. There were no major revelations and just a single comic pause, when Gabbay asked about the fate of the American peace plan. The ambassador's response was unequivocal: The United States has not abandoned the idea of reaching an arrangement. One might wonder when the Americans would realize that the peace plan idea has abandoned them.

More Details:

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/01/israel-palestinians-us-egypt-saudi-arabia-mahmoud-abbas.html>

- **Palestinian rights groups condemn Israelis death penalty bill**

Three Palestinian human rights organizations have condemned the Israeli law that calls for applying the death penalty against Palestinians involved in killing or injuring Israelis. Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, Al Hurriyat Center, and the Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainee Affairs condemned in a joint statement the death penalty bill, which passed its first reading in the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, earlier this week by a vote of 52 to 49.

More Details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=pLkCCwa95960496225apLkCCw>

- **Netanyahu to Israeli Cabinet: 'UNRWA Must Disappear'**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told his cabinet meeting on Sunday the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) "must disappear." According to the Jerusalem Post, Netanyahu made the remarks at the start of the weekly gathering, addressing recent reports that the US intends to stop funding the agency.

More Details:

<http://www.palestinechronicle.com/netanyahu-israeli-cabinet-unrwa-must-disappear/>

- **Pence to visit Egypt, Jordan, Israel in January**

US Vice President Mike Pence will visit Egypt, Jordan and Israel from Jan. 20 to 23, the White House said on Monday, embarking on a tour originally planned for last month after President Donald Trump recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Pence will hold talks with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, Jordan's King Abdullah and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the White House said in a statement.

More Details:

<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2018/01/08/Pence-to-visit-Egypt-Jordan-Israel-in-January-.html>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Jordan FM, EU's Mogherini discuss Jerusalem**

Jordan's foreign minister and the European Union's foreign policy chief discussed Jerusalem over the phone Monday and agreed on the need to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of a two-state solution, Anadolu reports. In a written statement, Jordan's Foreign Ministry said Ayman

Safadi and Federica Mogherini addressed the results of a meeting of the Arab League ministerial working group hosted by Jordan on Saturday.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180109-jordanian-fm-eus-mogherini-discuss-jerusalem/>

- **Economic reforms should guarantee protection of low-income segment**

His Majesty King Abdullah on Monday voiced appreciation for the “sincere efforts” exerted by the parliamentary committees during 2017, a Royal Court statement said. At a meeting with Lower House Speaker Atef Tarawneh and the presidents of House committees at Al Husseinia Palace, His Majesty stressed that the essential economic reforms being implemented must take into consideration protecting the low-income Jordanians and empowering the middle class.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/economic-reforms-should-guarantee-protection-low-income-segment>

- **State Security Court looked into 14 thousand cases in 2017**

The State Security Court (SSC) issued verdicts in 14, 100 terrorism and drug cases during 2017, with a performance rate that almost hit 100 percent. The court examined 320 terrorism cases and drug-related offences amounted to 13, 830 last year, according to the SSC Chief, Mohammed Afif. Cases looked into last year plunged noticeably, a decrease primarily attributed to the key role of the Jordan Armed Forces and the Anti-Narcotics Department to foil diverse drug trafficking attempts, he added.

More Details:

http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=36933#.WIS1zq5I_cs

- **Gemayel Calls for Inquiry over Negligence of Authorities in Waste File**

Kataeb MP Sami Gemayel pushed for the formation of a parliamentary inquiry commission to hold the authorities accountable over their negligence in tackling the solid waste crisis in Lebanon, the National News Agency reported on Tuesday. Gemayel lamented that the “MPs will not approve the waste management plan before the legislative elections,” are due.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/240626-gemayel-calls-for-inquiry-over-negligence-of-authorities-in-waste-file>

- **Gov't vows zero tolerance against assaults on investors**

Prime Minister Hani Mulki on Monday said a recent assault on an investor by a group of individuals is unacceptable, alien to the Jordanian society and tantamount to an assault on the state of law. The prime minister said that this assault, albeit an individual incident, harms the Kingdom's reputation and its values, vowing that such acts will be dealt firmly and fairly. He stressed that his government will exercise zero tolerance with such acts and pursue stiffer penalties against the perpetrators.

More Details:

http://petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=335313&CatID=13

- **Aoun meets Salameh, cables Jordan King**

President of the republic, Michel Aoun, met, at Baabda palace on Tuesday, with Lebanese Central Bank's Governor, Riyad Salameh, with whom he discussed the current financial situation in the country. During the meeting, Salameh reassured his host, highlighting the monetary stability and the continuous support the Central Bank is providing for the national economy.

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/87072/Aoun-meets-Salameh-cables-Jordan-King>

- **Lebanon's Michel Hayek predicting a war with Israel in 2018, says its wall will not protect it**

Michel Hayek, Lebanon's Nostradamus recited his predictions for 2018 during an interview with MTV on December 31, 2017. Hayek is predicting a stable Lebanese currency and economy , but is also predicting major bombing similar the 2005 bomb attack that killed former PM Rafik El Hariri.

More Details:

<http://yalibnan.com/2018/01/08/lebanons-michel-hayek-predicting-a-war-with-israel-in-2018-says-its-wall-will-not-protect-it/>

- **Remote camp on Jordan-Syria border getting UN aid by crane lift**

United Nations agencies began on Monday delivering aid for the first time in six months to some 60,000 Syrian refugees stranded in a desolate area near where Syria's border meets the Jordanian and Iraqi frontiers, aid agencies and Jordanian officials said. Foreign Ministry sources said Jordan had agreed with U.N. agencies to allow a one-off aid delivery after receiving assurances all future provisions would come from U.N. stores inside Syria.

More Details:

<http://news.trust.org/item/20180108180510-vhh1v/>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Qatar: UN report proof Saudi-led blockade illegal**

A blockade against Qatar by several fellow members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is arbitrary and negatively impacting the people of the region, according to a new UN investigation. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain, as well as Egypt, cut diplomatic, trade and travel ties with Qatar in June last year, accusing it of supporting "terrorism". Doha strongly denies the charge.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/qatar-report-proof-saudi-led-blockade-illegal-180108152547009.html>

- **Saudi Arabia transfers Ritz-Carlton detainees to Al-Ha'ir prison**

The Saudi authorities have transferred the remaining detainees being held in the Ritz-Carlton hotel to Al-Ha'ir prison, south of Riyadh, Al-Araby Al-Jadeed news site reported. Sources told the news site that nearly 60 detainees were transferred to the most high security prison in the Kingdom. The prisoners include Prince Al-Waleed Bin Talal as Prince Turki Bin Abdullah and a number of government officials who refused to make the large financial payments for their release.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180109-saudi-arabia-transfers-ritz-carlton-detainees-to-al-hair-prison/>

- **Sons of Almarai Founder Arrested in Saudi Arabia over Protest**

The sons of the billionaire founder and chairman of Saudi dairy company Almarai were among 11 princes detained following a protest last Thursday, according to reports. The kingdom's public prosecutor said on Saturday that the group was arrested after gathering at the historic Qasr Al-Hokm palace in Riyadh to demand the cancellation of a decree that stopped state payments of utility bills for royal family members.

More Details:

<https://www.albawaba.com/business/sons-almarai-founder-arrested-saudi-arabia-over-protest-1071388>

- **Saudi Arabia pressures Canada over stance on Yemen war: report**

The Canadian embassy in Riyadh has faced pressure and threats by Saudi officials unhappy with Ottawa's calls for an immediate end to hostilities in war-ravaged Yemen and an independent investigation into allegations of human rights abuses committed by all sides, according to reports in Saudi opposition media. Citing an anonymous source "close to the Canadian embassy," the UK-based Al-Khaleej Online Arabic-language publication reported last week that Saudi officials have exerted sustained pressure on Canadian diplomats "to stop the Canadian campaign against the war in Yemen" and have threatened to withdraw unspecified Saudi investments in Canada.

More Details:

<http://www.rcinet.ca/en/2018/01/08/saudi-arabia-pressures-canada-over-stance-on-yemen-war-report/>

- **Yemen's Parliament Convenes Next Month with Participation of General People's Congress MPs**

The Yemeni government is preparing to hold the country's first parliament session in the temporary capital, Aden, early next month, a Yemeni high-ranking official said on Monday. The official said the government was able to reach the necessary quorum required to hold the session by driving a large number of representatives of late former President Ali Abdullah Saleh's General People's Congress (GPC) and other parties to the meeting.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1137896/yemen%E2%80%99s-parliament-convenes-next-month-participation-general-people%E2%80%99s-congress>

- **Civilians continue to bear the brunt of Yemen's war**

The three-year war in Yemen has killed more than 10,000 people. The fighting has reached most parts of the country, even areas deep in Yemen's mountain ranges. In Al Shaqab village, on the country's front line, Ahmed Ghaleb's family has paid heavily in the fighting.

More Details:

<https://www.trtworld.com/middle-east/civilians-continue-to-bear-the-brunt-of-yemen-s-war-14047>

- **King of Bahrain receives Saudi Interior Minister**

King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of the Kingdom of Bahrain received here today Saudi Minister of Interior Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud in the presence of Bahraini Interior Minister Lt-General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa. During the meeting, Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud conveyed greetings of

King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, to the King of Bahrain. In turn, the King of Bahrain sent his greetings to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and the Crown Prince.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1221691/saudi-arabia>

- **Qatar-France ties reviewed January 09 2018 01:06 AM**

HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi yesterday met the French political adviser, Pascal Lamy, the inter-ministerial delegate in charge of the preparation of the French candidature for the World Expo 2025. The meeting discussed bilateral relations and ways of supporting and developing them, as well as enhancing prospects for co-operation. The meeting was attended by a number of officials at the Foreign Ministry.

More Details:

<http://www.gulf-times.com/story/577504/Qatar-France-ties-reviewed>

- **Kuwaiti Emir Calls for Gulf State Unity as Saudi, Qatar Freeze Continues**

The emir of Kuwait has called for unity between the Gulf States in the face of deteriorating relations, arguing that the Arabian Peninsula will soon face “challenges” that cannot be overcome by individual states. Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, who has ruled the tiny Gulf nation of Kuwait since 2006, spoke during the opening ceremony of the 38th summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a trade bloc made up of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201801091060604316-kuwait-gulf-states-cooperation-speech/>

7. EGYPT

- **Iran urges support to Palestine in meeting with Egyptian envoy**

Iranian parliamentary official Hossein Amir-Abdollahian held a meeting with head of Egyptian interest section office in Tehran to discuss the Palestinian issue and combating terrorism. Iranian Parliament's General Director for International Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian held a meeting on Tuesday with Yasser Othman, head of Egyptian interest section office in Tehran.

More Details:

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/131069/Iran-urges-support-to-Palestine-in-meeting-with-Egyptian-envoy>

- **Sisi under spotlight as Egypt sets late March election date**

Egypt will hold a presidential election in late March, authorities said on Monday, starting the countdown towards a likely second term in office for incumbent Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. Sisi has yet to announce his candidacy for the ballot, which was scheduled for March 26-28. But he is widely expected to run, having won a landslide victory in the previous election in 2014, the year after - as a military commander - he led the overthrow of elected president Mohamed Mursi of the Muslim Brotherhood.

More Details:

<https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/08/01/2018/Sisi-under-spotlight-as-Egypt-sets-late-March-election-date>

- **Egypt's parliament extends nationwide state of emergency for three months**

Egypt has extended its nationwide state of emergency for a further three months, starting 13 January, based on a decree issued by Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi on January 2nd. The decree was approved by parliament in a plenary session on Tuesday, with a two-thirds majority in favour.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/287823/Egypt/Politics-/Egypts-parliament-extends-nationwide-state-of-emerg.aspx>

- **NEC announces presidential elections of 2018 to start on 26 March**

Egypt's National Electoral Commission (NEC) announced that 2018 presidential elections would begin abroad on 16 March, 26 March for Egypt, during a press conference on Monday. Elections inside Egypt will take place along three days, starting from 16 to 18 March, and will continue inside Egypt on 26 to 28, and the result will be announced on 2 April.

More Details:

<https://dailynewsegypt.com/2018/01/08/nec-announces-presidential-elections-2018-start-26-march/>

- **Opposition party leader blasts 'counter-campaigns' against presidential hopefuls**

The head of the Socialist Popular Alliance Party, Medhat al-Zahed, blasted the counter-campaigns faced by politicians who announced their intention to run in March's presidential election. In Monday's phone-in with the celebrated TV show 'Al-Ashera Masaan', hosted by Wael al-Ebrashy, Zahed brought up the hostile campaigns against rights lawyer Khaled Ali and former ambassador Maasoum Marzouk, who stated they would run for the 2018 presidency.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/opposition-party-leader-blasts-counter-campaigns-against-presidential-hopefuls/>

- **Sisi vows to protect Egypt's share of Nile water**

President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi vowed to protect Egypt's share of the Nile water and capitalize on its usage, Al-Masry Al-Youm reported. During the opening of several projects, including a water desalination and treatment center, in 10th Ramadan city on Monday, Sisi announced Egypt is undergoing its biggest project in its history in the treatment of sewage water. Sisi also vowed he will not allow a water crisis to occur, adding, "every person in Egypt must have his needs of water to serve his agricultural activities, in addition to drinking water." "We are doing what we can to maximize the usage of water. We are constructing a station, and we are ready," Sisi said.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptdailynews.com/detail/sisi-vows-to-protect-egypts-share-of-nile-water>

- **Egypt to sue New York Times following leaks**

Egyptian lawyer Tariq Mahmood has filed a complaint with the First Attorney General of the Alexandria Appeals Office against the New York Times and the newspaper's Cairo bureau chief, Declan Walsh, accusing them of publishing false news. In his statement, Mahmood reported that the NYT published a story via its correspondent, David de Kirkpatrick, in which it was claimed that an Egyptian intelligence officer instructed several Egyptian TV talk show hosts and celebrities to downplay US President Donald Trump's decision to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180109-egypt-to-sue-new-york-times-following-leaks/>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Protests in Tunisia over austerity**

One person was killed on Monday during clashes between security forces and protesters in a Tunisian town, the government said, as demonstrations over rising prices and tax increases spread in the North African country. A man was killed during a protest against government austerity measures in Tebourba, 40 km (25 miles) west of Tunis, the interior ministry said in a statement. He had had chronic breathing problems and died due to suffocation from inhaling tear gas, it said.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86697>

- **Nigerian migrants return from Libya back to square one**

Many Nigerians returning home after being trapped in Libya still hope to reach Europe one day. Migrants escaping economic hardship and hoping to reach Europe by sea have often found themselves being exploited by human traffickers after arriving in Libya.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/nigerian-migrants-return-libya-square-180109094222431.html>

- **One Killed as Protests against Rising Prices Build up in Tunisia**

Protests against a set of austerity measures including price and tax hikes swept across Tunisia leaving one person dead. Clashes between Police and hundreds of protesters took place in Tebourba, some 40 km (25 miles) from Tunis leaving one killed and Five people wounded, the Tunisian news agency said.

More Details:

<http://northafricapost.com/21638-one-killed-protests-rising-prices-build-tunisia.html>

- **Minister of interior on working visit to Algeria January 7 and 8**

Interior Minister Lotfi Brahemi is making a working visit to Algeria on January 7 and 8, at the invitation of his Algerian counterpart Nouredine Bedoui, the Interior Department announced in a statement. Algerian Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia received Interior Minister Lotfi Brahemi on Monday in Algiers, according to the Algerian Press Agency (APS). This visit is part of the 'consultation meetings between officials of the two countries,' said APS, quoting a statement from the services of the Algerian Prime Minister.

More Details:

<http://tdailynews.net/story-z9685890>

- **Major General Hamel discusses with president of AU Commission in Addis Ababa**

The Director General of National Police and president of the African Police Cooperation Mechanism (Afrapol), Major General Abdelghani Hamel met Monday, in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) with the president of the African Union Commission (AU) Moussa Faki Mohamed and thus, on the sidelines of his participation to the works of the 13th ordinary meeting of African heads of police, said the DGSN in a communiqué.

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/22194-major-general-hamel-discusses-with-president-of-au-commission-in-addis-ababa>

- **Libya not yet ready for democracy: Hafter**

Khalifa Hafter, commander of the Libyan National Army (LNA), the Libyan army recognized by the Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR), has said that Libya is not ready yet for democracy. Speaking to the French-language Jeune Afrique, Hafter warned that the upcoming 2018 Libyan elections must bring a solution to the country's current blood shedding, and that if the ongoing chaos in Libya continued after the planned elections, he would say enough is enough and take action.

More Details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2018/01/09/libya-not-yet-ready-for-democracy-hafter/>

- **Morocco Takes Part in AU's 13th Security and Safety Services Meeting**

Morocco is participating in the 13th Ordinary meeting of African chiefs of defense and heads of security and safety services, taking place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting was inaugurated on Monday, January 8. The meeting was opened by a minute of silence in tribute to peacekeepers and victims of violence in Africa.

More Details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2018/01/237875/morocco-takes-part-aus-13th-security-safety-services-meeting/>

- **Fourteen persons placed into custody, following protests in Tunis (Selliti)**

Fourteen persons among those arrested during the protest movements that erupted in several areas of the capital were placed into custody, said Tuesday spokesman for the Tunis Court of First Instance Sofiene Selliti. Charges against them include "acts of premeditated vandalism on public roads and refusal to obey the orders of a public officer while on duty preventing him from discharging his mission," Selliti pointed out to TAP.

More Details:

<https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/9736168-fourteen-persons>

- **Western military zone's commander visits Ras Ajdair, Zuwara to review security challenges**

The commander of the western military zone, Osama Joaili, visited Monday Zuwara and Ras Ajdair border with Tunisia after the clashes that took place over the last couple of days between his forces and the forces securing the coastal road and the border. Joaili visited Zuwara military training center and met with the officers to discuss the security measures needed to secure the city.

More Details:

<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/western-military-zone%E2%80%99s-commander-visits-ras-ajdair-zuwara-review-security-challenges>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Pentagon says US ready to work with Pakistan to combat terrorism**

The United States says it stands ready to work with Pakistan for the resolution of security aid suspension issue and to combat terrorist groups without distinction, Radio Pakistan reported. According to Radio Pakistan, Pentagon spokesperson Col. Rob Manning told reporters in Washington that United States hopes that Islamabad will take decisive action against the terrorist and militant groups.

More Details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/266491-pentagon-says-us-ready-to-work-with-pakistan-to-combat-terrorism>

- **Senate slams Gilani for pro-Pakistan remarks**

Some members of the Mesharano Jirga or upper house of the parliament on Tuesday termed the recent remarks of Syed Ahmad Gilani, head of the Mahaz-i-Melli party, against the national interest of Afghanistan and demanded an apology from Gilani. Three days back, Gilani told a gathering that he did not accept the claims that the Taliban leaders were in other places such as Pakistan. The government made these claims due to its weakness because the government and US has failed and made wrong claims. Most of the Taliban leaders were in Afghanistan, he said.

More Details:

<https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2018/01/09/senate-slams-gilani-pro-pakistan-remarks>

- **Sanaullah Zehri resigns as Balochistan chief minister amid political crisis**

Nawab Sanaullah Zehri resigned as Balochistan chief minister on Tuesday after Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi remained unable to contain a mushrooming political crisis in the province. His resignation was promptly accepted by Balochistan Governor Muhammad Khan Achakzai, DawnNews reported. Opposition lawmakers were to table a no-confidence motion against CM Zehri in the provincial assembly the same day, but Zehri was reportedly asked to resign ahead of the session to spare his party — the PML-N — further embarrassment on the matter.

More Details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1381816/sanaullah-zehri-resigns-as-balochistan-chief-minister-amid-political-crisis>

- **Differences with some judges, not Supreme Court: Nawaz**

Former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) President Nawaz Sharif said on Tuesday that he has no differences with the Supreme Court but with certain judges who did not decide [his case] on merit. He made the remarks while meeting a group of lawyers led by Naseer Bhutta in the presence of Maryam Nawaz, Punjab Governor Rafique Rajwana and PML-N Chairman Raja Zafarul Haq.

More Details:

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/176019-judgments-not-judges>

- **Afghan woman killed, 8 civilians wounded in Pakistani artillery shelling**

A woman was killed and eight other civilians were killed in artillery shelling from the other side of Durand Line in eastern Kunar province of Afghanistan. According to the local officials, the incident took place on Monday after the Pakistani military opened artillery shelling on Sarkano district.

More Details:

<https://www.khaama.com/afghan-woman-killed-8-civilians-wounded-in-pakistani-artillery-shelling-04229>

- **“I Support Any Process Which Public Views Considered,” Dr. Abdullah**

Chaired by Chief Executive Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, the Council of Ministers (CMs) held meeting on Monday, a statement from the CE office said. At the outset, CE Abdullah said giving vote of confidence to the minister of water and energy by lower house of the parliament was gained due to his efforts and works on construction of dams in the country, the statement further said.

On discussions about electronic ID cards, Dr. Abdullah said it was related to national identity of the Afghan people, the statement added.

More Details:

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

- **Ghani Says Mol Hiring Will No Longer Be Relationship-Based**

The president said the police will be responsible for ensuring the safety and security around the upcoming elections. President Ashraf Ghani on Tuesday said at the 10th graduation ceremony of Afghan police forces from the national police academy that "hiring should be conducted based on the police's rules and regulations and no more personal recommendations should be accepted."

More Details:

<http://www.toloneews.com/afghanistan/ghani-says-moi-hiring-will-no-longer-be-relationship-based>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Assad regime striking moderate opposition in Syria hampers political process, FM says**

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said Tuesday that the Assad regime forces were targeting the moderate opposition "on the pretext of fighting Nusra terrorist group." Çavuşoğlu warned that such a move would undermine the political settlement process in Syria. Receiving a question at the parliament on the latest developments in Idlib, Çavuşoğlu told reporters that the sides who would soon be coming together for the upcoming Sochi talks should not be engaged in such acts, adding that this attitude of the regime forces would "hamper the prospects for a political solution."

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2018/01/09/assad-regime-striking-moderate-opposition-in-syria-hampers-political-process-fm-says>

- **Turkey should support Iran's territorial integrity: MHP**

The leader of the Turkish opposition Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) said Tuesday that Turkey should show clear support for Iran's political unity and territorial integrity. At his party's parliamentary group meeting on Tuesday, Devlet Bahçeli slammed the U.S. and Israel for supporting the recent anti-government protests in Iran. Bahçeli said such matters are Iran's internal affairs.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/politics/turkey-should-support-irans-territorial-integrity-mhp/1025989>

- **Turkish police arrest ISIL-linked Iraqi national**

An Iraqi national was arrested Monday in central Turkey for his suspected links to the ISIL terrorist organization, according to a police official. The suspect, identified by the initials M. H. A. K, was arrested in central Kayseri province in an operation launched by Turkish police's anti-terrorism teams, said the official, who asked not to be named due to restrictions on talking to the media.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/197649/turkish-police-arrest-isil-linked-iraqi-national>

- **Erdogan says Turkey will continue its military operation in northern Syria**

Turkey's military will continue its operation in Syria's Afrin and Manbij regions, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Tuesday during a parliamentary address to his governing AK Party. In 2016, Turkey launched Operation Euphrates Shield on its Syrian border to eradicate what it called a "corridor of terror", made up of the dual threat of Daesh and YPG, a Syrian group which is supported by the US but is considered by Turkey to be affiliated with the PKK.

More Details:

<https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/erdogan-says-turkey-will-continue-its-military-operation-in-northern-syria-14051>

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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