



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĞU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Proces of Iraq

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

Energy Security

Enerji Güvenliği

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Peace Process

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Ethnic and Secterian Groups

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

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Relations with the West

Batı'yla İlişkiler

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1. IRAQ

- **Iraq aims to drive Islamic State from west Mosul within a month**

Iraqi forces aim to dislodge Islamic State militants from west Mosul within a month, despite gruelling urban combat in densely populated terrain, the head of the elite Counter Terrorism Service told Reuters on Thursday.

More details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/iraq-aims-drive-islamic-state-west-mosul-within-month/>

- **Amal Clooney calls on UN to bring Islamic State to justice over genocide in Iraq**

The British-Lebanese human rights lawyer called for the UN to quit its "inaction" and begin gathering evidence to convict the militants of international crimes. Mrs Clooney, who is married to actor George, said IS has declared to "destroy" the Yazidi ethnic group by committing murder, rape and forced conversions while also attacking Christians, and Shia and Sunni Muslims.

More details:

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/amal-clooney-calls-on-un-to-bring-islamic-state-to-justice-over-genocide-in-iraq-35518218.html>

- **Czech Planes Arrive in Iraq; 13 Killed in Iraq**

The Iraqi military received two Czech-made L-159 fighter jets, bringing the number of these Czech planes to eight total. At least 13 were killed and 11 were wounded: In Taji, one person was killed and three more were wounded in a blast. A teacher was shot dead on a highway between Baquba and Khalis. In Abu Ghraib, a roadside bomb wounded two soldiers.

More details:

<http://original.antiwar.com/updates/2017/03/09/czech-planes-arrive-in-iraq-13-killed-in-iraq/>

- **Liberating Mosul and Raqqa: The end of evil?**

Many pillars of extremism must be tackled after liberating Mosul and Raqqa. They are responsible for spreading extremist ideology, brainwashing people and gaining new followers. No PR or self-promotion can be made fighting these pillars. Eliminating them takes time and enormous effort, the results of which cannot be privatized by certain players.

More details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1066026>

- **Baghdad Expects Liberating Mosul within a Month**

As the battle to liberate Mosul continued on Thursday, head of Iraq's counterterrorism service CTS, Lieutenant General Talib Shaghati said that Iraqi forces are persistent to oust ISIS militants from the entire city of Mosul within a month, despite facing tough fighting in densely populated areas.

More details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/2017/03/article55369040/baghdad-expects-liberating-mosul-within-month>

- **Isil leader al-Baghdadi has 'given up on Mosul and fled into desert'**

US and Iraqi officials believe the leader of Isil, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, has left operational commanders behind with diehard followers to fight the battle of Mosul, and is now hiding out in the desert, focussing mainly on his own survival.

More details:

<http://www.independent.ie/world-news/middle-east/isil-leader-albaghdadi-has-given-up-on-mosul-and-fled-into-desert-35517932.html>

- **Civilians flee Mosul as Iraqi forces smash remaining ISIS fighters**

Mosul is being shattered as Iraqi forces pound fighters from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in the long-awaited campaign to take back the city. ISIS forces captured Mosul in 2014. On Thursday, residents of this once-wealthy city fled with their bundles of possessions, sometimes, with just the clothes on their backs.

More details:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/civilians-flee-mosul-as-iraqi-forces-smash-remaining-isis-fighters/>

- **UN: Up to 450,000 IDPs expected in cramped Mosul camps**

There may not be enough space in camps to accommodate the tens of thousands of internally displaced people (IDP) currently fleeing their homes in western Mosul amid intense fighting in the city, a United Nations official has said.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/03/450000-idps-expected-cramped-mosul-camps-170309103448101.html>

- **KRG Seeking closer Diplomatic Ties with Canada**

Kurdistan Region's top diplomat is requesting that Canada upgrade its current trade office in Erbil to a Consulate General, according to The Canadian Press. The Kurdistan Regional government (KRG) is seeking to have a closer economic and political relationship with Canada, which has a military presence in Iraq.

More details:

<http://www.iraqdailyjournal.com/story-z14924657>

- **Financial crisis delays opening KRG office in Ankara**

The Turkish government approved the opening of a Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) representation office in Ankara last year, but the crippling financial situation has been an obstacle to its establishment.

More details:

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/060320178>

- **Iraqi troops retake two Mosul sectors as they press towards city center**

Iraqi troops reported Thursday morning that they have retaken the Moalimeen neighborhood and the Silo of Mosul in the western half of the city from ISIS militants and that they are pushing into Naft and New Mosul neighborhood in the center.

More details:

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/090320171>

- **Mosul church turned into IS religious police base**

The elegant columns of a west Mosul church stand plastered with Islamic State group propaganda after the jihadists' infamous religious police took over the Christian place of worship.

More details:

<http://www.timeslive.co.za/world/2017/03/10/Mosul-church-turned-into-IS-religious-police-base1>

- **Islamic State mortars, snipers take toll on Iraqi forces in Mosul**

At a field clinic near the front line in Mosul, an Iraqi Federal Police officer lay in discomfort on a stretcher, a drip in his arm and bandage plastered over his chest from where shrapnel from a mortar shell had pierced his sternum.

More details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-military-idUSKBN16H004?rpc=401&>

- **Iraq oil Minister says Compliance is 85%**

Iraq's Oil Minister Jabar al-Luaibi said the country's compliance rate with the OPEC crude oil production cut agreement has reached 85 percent. Al-Luaibi was speaking at the sidelines of the CERAWEEK energy conference, and added that although oil production in Iraq was increasing, exports were at the rates agreed by the cartel's members in November, without providing any further details.

More details:

<http://www.iraqdailyjournal.com/story-z14924708>

- **Islamic State fighters returning to UK 'pose huge challenge'**

Security officials in Britain are urgently preparing for the return of hundreds of UK nationals who went to fight for Islamic State, following an expected defeat of the group in Iraq and Syria.

More details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/mar/09/islamic-state-fighters-returning-to-uk-pose-huge-challenge>

- **Syrian MP confirms Damascus' approval for cross-border Iraqi airstrikes on Daesh**

On Wednesday, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Abadi claimed Syrian President Bashar Assad had approved Iraqi airstrikes against Daesh on Syrian soil. Several airstrikes has already been carried out in late February in response to a deadly car bombing in Baghdad.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703101051436127-syria-iraq-airstrikes-daesh/>

- **Grand Ayatollah Noori Hamedani: Iran, Iraq unity beneficial for Islamic Umma**

The Grand Ayatollah made the remarks in a meeting with Iran's new Ambassador to Iraq Iraj Masjedi. He said that embassies of Iran and Iraq should try to maintain and expand unity among the two nations and do not allow enemies sow discord in Islamic Umma.

More details:

http://en.abna24.com/news/iran/grand-ayatollah-noori-hamedani-iran-iraq-unity-beneficial-for-islamic-umma_816808.html

- **Iraqi troops recapture western Mosul hotel**

Iraqi government forces recaptured a hotel building in western Mosul from Islamic State militants in an overnight raid, a security source said.

More details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/iraqi-troops-recapture-western-mosul-hotel/>

2. SYRIA

- **New round of Syria talks set for March 23, UN Envoy say**

UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura called for holding new round of UN-backed intra-Syrian talks in Geneva on March 23. “Syria’s government and opposition groups are invited to resume peace talks in Geneva on March 23,” the UN envoy said in a press conference in New York on Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://sana.sy/en/?p=101664>

- **Putin, Erdogan to discuss major economic projects, Syrian settlement**

Presidents of Russia and Turkey Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan are due to discuss in Moscow on Friday joint projects in energy and war on terror, the Kremlin press service said.

More Details:

<http://tass.com/politics/934747>

- **Suspected coalition raids kill 23 civilians in Syria: monitor**

The civilian death toll in air strikes thought to have been conducted by a US-led coalition on a jihadist-held Syrian village on Thursday has risen to 23, a monitor said.

More Details:

<http://www.defencetalk.com/suspected-coalition-raids-kill-23-civilians-in-syria-monitor-69442/>

- **No one is paying attention to the 2nd Islamic State that's emerging in Syria**

A new Islamic State is being constituted in Syria, and no one is paying attention—yet. “There’s a second Islamic State that has emerged,” says Theo Padnos. “...Nobody knows what is happening in the northwestern corner of Syria. I know because I’m in touch with some of these people, and they’re making videos all the time. We just haven’t connected the dots.”

More Details:

<http://www.businessinsider.com/second-islamic-state-in-syria-nobodys-noticing-2017-3>

- **Israel Warns Russia That Iran's Presence in Syria Blocks Peace Deal**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has told Russian President Vladimir Putin there can never be peace in Syria as long Iran maintains troops and advisers there.

More Details:

<http://www.rferl.org/a/israel-netanyahu-warns-russia-putin-iran-presence-syria-blocks-peace-deal/28361149.html>

- **Airman Re-Enlists While Refueling F-22 over Syria**

Staff Sgt. Rebecca Rains was flying 30,000 feet in the air when she recited the oath to re-enlist in the U.S. Air Force -- and not just anywhere.

More Details:

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/03/09/airman-re-enlists-while-refueling-f-22-over-syria.html>

- **U.S. walks tightrope with latest Syria troop plan**

Rolling around 200 U.S. Marines backed with howitzers into northern Syria, the United States is shifting from working quietly behind the scenes in Syria's conflict, turning instead toward overt displays of U.S. force in an attempt to shape the fight.

More Details:

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/03/10/world/u-s-walks-tightrope-latest-syria-troop-plan/#.WMJYP9SLSmU>

- **UN World Food Programme Provides School Meals to 15,000 Aleppo Children**

According to reports, UN World Food Programme (WFP) has delivered school meals to some 15,000 Syrian children attending public primary schools in Aleppo city since the beginning of March.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703091051421544-un-syria-food/>

- **Russia, Germany Interested In Making Geneva Process on Syria Permanent - FM Lavrov**

Moscow and Berlin are interested in making sure that the "Geneva process" on Syria becomes permanent and effective, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Thursday following talks with his German counterpart, Sigmar Gabriel, Russia's TASS news agency reported.

More Details:

<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/wn/newsworld.php?id=1336489>

3. IRAN

- **Economic improvement 'failed to translate into daily life of public'**

Leader of the Islamic Revolution has told Assembly of Experts members they have a great mission with far-reaching impacts on the future of the country.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124116/Economic-improvement-failed-to-translate-into-daily-life-of>

- **China hopeful Saudi and Iran can resolve problems**

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Wednesday that he hopes Saudi Arabia and Iran can resolve their differences through talks, speaking ahead of a visit by the Saudi king to China, Reuters reported.

More Details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/411795/China-hopeful-Saudi-and-Iran-can-resolve-problems>

- **Iran, Singapore keen on boosting all-out ties**

A senior Singaporean official in a meeting with the Iranian Ambassador to Singapore Javad Ansari appealed for reinforcement of the two countries cooperation.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82459160/>

- **Defiant Iran successfully tests another ballistic missile**

Iran's semi-official Fars news agency reported Thursday that the country's Revolutionary Guard successfully tested another ballistic missile, while boasting that Iran's efforts to build a "better" home-made version of the Russian S-300 missile defense system were well on their way.

More Details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/defiant-iran-successfully-tests-another-ballistic-missile/>

- **Iran's economic progress limited despite lifting sanctions**

Iran's supreme leader criticised the country's slow pace of economic recovery on Thursday despite the lifting of sanctions and called on President Hassan Rouhani's government to champion greater self-sufficiency, state TV reported.

More Details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/191267-Irans-economic-progress-limited-despite-lifting-sanctions>

- **Supreme Leader Raps US Criticism of Iran Elections**

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei lambasted Washington for its allegations against elections in Iran, reminding the scandalous presidential election held in the US recently.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951219000827>

- **UK Banks Afraid of Doing Business with Iran Due to Lack of Anti-Fraud Measures**

British banks are refraining from doing business with Iranian counterparts despite the lifting of legal limits on such deals because the Iranian banks "aren't up to the same anti-money-laundering and financial fraud standards," The Wall Street Journal reported Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://www.thetower.org/4691-uk-banks-afraid-of-doing-business-with-iran-due-to-lack-of-anti-fraud-measures/>

- **Iranian envoy calls for expansion of Tehran-Paris relations**

Iranian Ambassador to Paris Ali Ahani, in a meeting here on Thursday evening with a number of French university students, called for expansion of Tehran, Paris all-out relations.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82459105/>

- **Iranian Kurdish parties to unite activities to confront Iran**

Six of the biggest Kurdish parties met last week in order to organize joint Kurdish New Year celebrations on 21 March and to organize a joint struggle to fight against the Iranian government.

More Details:

<http://aranews.net/2017/03/iranian-kurdish-parties-unite-activities-confront-iran/>

- **FM: Serbia Ready to Take Every Step to Broaden Ties with Iran**

Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić underlined his country's enthusiasm for the further expansion of relations and cooperation with Iran, using every means.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951219000313>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Qatar Urges International Community To Take On The Responsibility Of Ending Israeli Occupation**

Qatar has once again urged the international community to take on the responsibility of ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, stop the ongoing aggressions, and lift the unjust siege imposed on Gaza Strip, Qatar News Agency (QNA) reported.

More Details

<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/wn/newsworld.php?id=1336620>

- **Israel-Palestine Conflict: Trump to Speak With Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas**

President Donald Trump has scheduled a phone call Friday with the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas for the first time, according to an official schedule released by the White House. The phone call is supposed to take place at 12:15 P.M. EST (7:15 P.M. Israel time).

More Details

<http://www.ibtimes.com/israel-palestine-conflict-trump-speak-palestinian-president-mahmoud-abbas-2505867>

- **Israeli Soldiers, Police, Detained 89 Palestinian Workers This Week**

Israeli soldiers and police officers have detained, this week alone, 89 Palestinians workers “for entering Israel without permits,” and shut down twelve construction sites for hiring them.

More Details

<http://imemc.org/article/israeli-soldiers-police-detained-89-palestinian-workers-this-week/>

- **End the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine**

As the coordinator of the Jewish Voice for Peace chapter in Las Vegas, please allow me to set the record straight regarding the Sunday commentary, “Fighting an anti-Israeli movement.”

More Details

<http://www.reviewjournal.com/opinion/letters/letter-end-the-illegal-israeli-occupation-palestine>

- **In First Appearance since Election, Bill Clinton Talks of Missed Opportunities for Israeli-Palestinian Peace**

Former U.S. President Bill Clinton spoke in public for the first time since the 2016 election, appearing on Thursday at a Washington, D.C. event in honor of the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Clinton used the stage to praise Rabin, and to warn about the dangers of "an us versus them world" and of an increased global support for nationalism.

More Details

<http://www.haaretz.com/us-news/1.776383>

- **Hezbollah Recruits Palestinians to Kill Israelis**

Israeli security authorities arrested a suspected Palestinian member of Hezbollah for planning terrorist attacks against Israelis, Israel's domestic security agency announced on Thursday. A subsequent Shin Bet interrogation revealed that Hezbollah recruited Yusef Yasser Suylam, 23, via a Facebook page.

More Details

<http://www.newsmax.com/SteveEmerson/hezbollah-facebook/2017/03/09/id/777893/>

- **When Israel's Court has to prevent Palestinian land theft**

The head of a corporate legal department tells the CEO that his plan to take over a plot of privately owned land for use by the company could land him in hot water with the authorities. What would

the CEO do if his erudite legal adviser were to declare that he would not be able to defend the firm against legal challenges to such a takeover?

More Details

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/israel-high-court-justice-regularization-law-settlements.html#ixzz4auAACyov>

- **Abbas meets Jewish delegation from US to discuss settlements, two-state solution**

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Thursday met with a delegation from the Jewish reform movement in the United States, where he discussed the peace process and Israel's continued expansion of illegal settlements in occupied Palestinian territory as an impediment to the process.

More Details

<http://www.maannnews.com/Content.aspx?ID=775877>

- **Gazans protest Israeli law limiting Muslim prayer call**

Palestinians on Thursday protested in the Gaza Strip to condemn this week's Knesset vote in which Israeli MPs approved a first reading of proposed legislation restricting the use of loudspeakers to amplify the Muslim call to prayer.

More Details

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/09/03/2017/Gazans-protest-Israeli-law-limiting-Muslim-prayer-call>

- **Israel seals off W. Bank, Gaza for Jewish Purim holiday**

The Israeli authorities on Thursday evening geared up to seal off the occupied West Bank and the blockaded Gaza Strip in advance of the upcoming Jewish holiday of Purim. "Coinciding with Purim... and based on the decision of Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman, it was decided to impose a closure on the Palestinian territories," Yoav Mordechai, coordinator of Israeli government activities in the occupied territories, said in a statement.

More Details

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israel-seals-off-w-bank-gaza-for-jewish-purim-holiday/767805>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **A fragile Arab consensus: Michel Aoun and the road to the Arab summit**

Over the years the Lebanese have got used to the idea that many, if not all, of their leaders' political statements and actions can be easily reversed or simply swept away without any form of accountability or consequences. However, the hail of criticism generated by the recent remarks of Lebanese President Michel Aoun in support of Hezbollah might be the exception to the aforementioned rule.

More Details

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/falling-arab-consensus-michael-aoun-and-road-arab-summit-2049246045>

- **Aoun confirms necessity to ensure development in all Lebanese regions**

President of the Republic, Michel Aoun, confirmed on Thursday his interest in all Lebanese regions and their balanced development. President Aoun expressed his determination to pursue a new law for parliament elections, based on justice and balance.

More Details

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/76375/Aoun-confirms-necessity-to-ensure-development-in-all-Lebanese-regions>

- **Report: Aoun to Raise Electoral Law at Cabinet before End of Month**

After stalled efforts between political parties to find a new electoral law for Lebanon's looming parliamentary elections, President Michel Aoun is expected to raise the thorny file at the cabinet before the end of the month, An Nahar daily reported on Thursday. The daily added that Aoun is set to propose staging the polls based on a proportional representation system, dividing each of Lebanon's governorates into two districts or more while keeping the regions of Aley and Chouf as a single district.

More Details

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/226686-report-aoun-to-raise-electoral-law-at-cabinet-before-end-of-month>

- **Lebanon appoints new armed forces commander**

Lebanon's cabinet on Wednesday appointed Joseph Aoun as commander of Lebanon's armed forces after promoting him to the rank of general, according to Lebanon's official news agency.

More Details

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/09/03/2017/Lebanon-appoints-new-armed-forces-commander>

- **U.S. delivers new assistance to Lebanon's Internal Security Forces**

The U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon highlighted Thursday the delivery of approximately one million U.S. dollars' worth of equipment to the Lebanon Internal Security Forces (ISF).

More Details

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/10/c_136116701.htm

- **Hariri receives investors, municipal federations and Akkar delegations**

Prime Minister Saad Hariri expressed his satisfaction with the political climate prevailing in the country. "We have effectively contributed to the transfer of Lebanon from the phase of political division to a new phase of understanding and stability, and we will take all necessary measures to save the country from the problems and challenges it faces," he said, speaking to a delegation of the Akkar Spiritual Gathering he met at the Grand Serail.

More Details

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/76407/Hariri-receives-investors-municipal-federations-and-Akkar-delegations>

- **UN Report Says Escalated Hizbullah Rhetoric Increases War Risk with Israel**

Secretary-General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres denounced in a periodic report on the implementation of resolution 1701, the recent statements made by Hizbullah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah against Israel, rejecting "deterrence" justifications which "increases the risk of tension and could lead to renewed war," An Nahar daily reported on Friday.

More Details

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/226729-un-report-says-escalated-hizbullah-rhetoric-increases-war-risk-with-israel>

- **India lauds Jordan's exceptional humanitarian assistance: President Mukherjee**

President Pranab Mukherjee has lauded Jordan's exceptional humanitarian assistance in hosting refugees from its war torn neighborhood despite the tremendous strain on its socio-economic resources.

More Details

<http://www.aninews.in/newsdetail-Mg/MzAzNDMx/india-lauds-jordan-039-s-exceptional-humanitarian-assistance-president-mukherjee.html>

- **Jordan seeks further support from the World Bank**

Jordanian Prime Minister Hani Mulki on Thursday called for more support from the World Bank to Jordan, the state-run Petra news agency reported. Mulki made the remarks at a meeting with World Bank's vice president for the Middle East and North Africa, Hafez Ghanem, where he said Jordan is seeking more technical and financial support for the government's development programs and reform efforts.

More Details

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/10/c_136116518.htm

- **Tax changes cause Jordan buyers to look for smaller properties**

Despite oversupply, Government tax breaks in Jordan and competitive offers from developers resulted in a stable sales market, says a new market report. Apartment rental rates in Amman rose 1%, on average over Quarter 4 2016, with year-on-year at 3%, according to the latest report from leading real estate consultancy, Asteco.

More Details

<http://www.opp.today/tax-changes-cause-jordan-buyers-to-look-for-smaller-properties/>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Iran to Catch Up with Qatar in South Pars Gas Production: VP**

Iranian First Vice-President Eshaq Jahangiri said the country will soon reach Qatar in terms of producing gas from the huge offshore South Pars gas field, which it shares with the Arab country in the Persian Gulf. Iran's oil production in West Karoun's oil field in the south was 60,000 barrels per day (bpd) in the early days of President Hassan Rouhani's administration (summer of 2013), Jahangiri said in a ceremony on Thursday.

More details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/03/09/1350524/iran-to-catch-up-with-qatar-in-south-pars-gas-production-vp>

- **Qatar proposed Kazakhstan mutual facilitation of visa regime**

Qatar proposed Kazakhstan to facilitate visa issuing on a mutual base, reports the embassy of Kazakhstan. "The agreement on deliverance from visa regime for the holders of diplomatic passports will come into force soon. As for the holders of civil passports, Qatar initiated this issue- to facilitate it on a mutual base, or issue them on arrival to the airport. This question is being considered," said Askar Shokybayev, ambassador of Kazakhstan to Qatar.

More details:

<http://www.kaztag.kz/en/news/detail.php?ID=528289>

- **Dubai Economy Tracker points to strong growth**

The Emirates NBD Dubai Economy Tracker Index (DET) eased slightly to 56.2 in February from the two-year high reached in January, according to new data released today by the lender. The DET in February was higher than the average reading for 2016, signaling an acceleration in economic growth at the start of this year.

More details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/460fc761-82dc-44f0-9eb5-7676d4eb0b9f.aspx>

- **Five-sided Meeting in London on Yemen's Political Solution**

Foreign ministers of five countries are expected to meet in London on Monday to discuss prospects of a political settlement to the crisis in Yemen. UN Envoy to Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed will brief the attendees on the outcome of his latest meetings with the concerned parties, according to the envoy's spokesperson, Charbel Raji.

More details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/2017/03/article55369034/five-sided-meeting-london-yemens-political-solution>

- **January raid in Yemen killed 4 to 12 civilians: US**

Up to a dozen civilians died during a controversial January raid against Al Qaeda in Yemen, but an investigation did not uncover "bad judgment" during the operation, the head of US forces in the Middle East said. Speaking before the Senate Armed Services Committee, General Joe Votel said "somewhere between four and 12 casualties" resulted from the US raid, which was authorized by US President Donald Trump a few days after his inauguration.

More details:

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/news/world/january-raid-in-yemen-killed-4-to-12-civilians-us/article/487568>

- **What King Salman's grand tour of Asia says about Saudi Arabia's new priorities**

The six week triumphal progress of Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud through Asia, to my best knowledge unparalleled in modern times, may seem just quaint – but it is much more. My sense is that this first tour through Asia in half a century by a Saudi monarch has significance that we would do well to take careful note of.

More details:

<http://www.scmp.com/business/global-economy/article/2077702/what-king-salmans-grand-tour-asia-says-about-saudi-arabias>

- **The Iran Regime's Cyber Attacks on Saudi Arabia**

Dr. Abdul Razzaq Marjan, a digital expert, told Sky News television: The Iranian regime has directly entered in terrorist cyber war against Saudi Arabia. Now, all carried out attacks against Saudi Arabia is supported by one government and this government is the Iranian regime. All cyber attacks in 2016 were related to important political events.

More details:

<http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/iran-world/22333-the-iran-regime-s-cyber-attacks-on-saudi-arabia>

- **More Citizens of Saudi Arabia Have Joined Islamic State than Any Other Country**

Sunni Saudi Arabia shares an estimated 500-mile-long border with war-ravaged Iraq. Nevertheless, Fox News reports that the Saudi jihadists crossed into Iraq over the border the country shares with both Turkey and Syria. The news outlet learned from unnamed Iraqi intelligence sources that jihadist from the Saudi kingdom comprise nearly one-third (up to 30 percent) of all ISIS terrorists in Iraq, adding that "Saudis comprise the largest single contingent of ISIS fighters, with Russian Chechens making up the second-largest contingent."

More details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/03/09/report-key-u-s-ally-saudi-arabia-no-1-jihadist-supplier-for-islamic-state/>

- **Mass Civil Disobedience Planned in Bahrain Next Week**

In a statement released on Wednesday, Bahraini revolutionary groups announced that the civil disobedience campaign will start on Tuesday, March 14, and last until Wednesday morning. They

called on the Bahraini people to participate in the mass protest in solidarity with Sheikh Isa Qassim, the spiritual leader of Shiites in the Arab kingdom, as Manama plans to hold the trial of the top cleric on March 14.

More details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/03/09/1350726/mass-civil-disobedience-planned-in-bahrain-next-week>

- **Middle East pressure point: Why Russia needs Bahrain**

The latest developments in the Middle East suggest that Moscow is trying to play on the changing attitudes of the countries in the region towards the United States. The behavior of the U.S. during the events of the Arab Spring, when Washington supported the protesters instead of its ally Hosni Mubarak, is pushing local countries to seek a more stable guarantor of security, which totally meets the interests of Moscow. In this situation, a small Bahrain can become a 'pressure point' for Russia vis-à-vis its rivals in the region.

More details:

<http://rbth.com/international/2017/03/10/middle-east-russia-bahrain-716863>

7. EGYPT

- **Death penalty for Coptic alcohol merchant murderer in Alexandria**

The Alexandria Criminal Court sentenced on Thursday a defendant to death, charged with first-degree murder and caught on CCTV cameras slaughtering a Coptic alcohol merchant earlier in January. The first trial session was held last month. Soon after, the death penalty verdict was sent to the Grand Mufti for consultation and the final sentence was announced today.

More details:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com//news/death-penalty-coptic-alcohol-merchant-murderer-alexandria>

- **Egypt's inflation rate hits 30-year high amid bread shortages**

Egypt's annual inflation rate has hit 31.7 percent, figures for February show, as the government battles protests over bread shortages and a deepening economic crisis. Inflation has soared since the floatation of the Egyptian pound and the slashing of fuel subsidies by President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi in November, as part of a series of economic reforms necessary to secure a bailout loan of \$12bn from the International Monetary Fund.

More details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/egypts-inflation-rises-over-30-cent-704794973>

- **Egyptian army colonel killed, 2 soldiers injured in Sinai bombing**

An Egyptian army colonel was killed on Thursday while two Egyptian soldiers were injured in a bombing attack on an Egyptian police tank in the city of al-Arish in the Sinai Peninsula. Egyptian officials told Ma'an that colonel Yasser Muhammad al-Hadidi, 50, who served as a general security inspector in the southern Sinai was killed while two soldiers were injured after their tank was "targeted and bombed."

More details:

<http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?ID=775867>

- **Egypt reforms must focus on investment: World Bank**

Egypt needs to implement economic reforms aimed at encouraging more private investment and moving away from subsidies toward targeted transfers for the poor, a senior World Bank official said on Wednesday.

More details:

<http://en.aswatmasriya.com/news/details/18542>

- **Disagreement between Egypt, Palestine over proposed amendment to Arab Peace Initiative**

Disagreement seems to be brewing within the Arab League this week between the delegates of Egypt and Palestine in light of a proposed amendment to the wording of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative (also known as the Saudi Initiative) pertaining to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian West Bank and other territories.

More details:

<http://www.madamasr.com/en/2017/03/09/feature/politics/disagreement-between-egypt-palestine-over-proposed-amendment-to-arab-peace-initiative/>

- **Egypt: Archaeologists Find 'Probable' Ramses II Statue in Cairo**

Archaeologists in Egypt have made what's described as one of the most important ever discoveries. A joint Egyptian-German team in Cairo have found parts of two statues, one of which it's thought depicts Ramses the Great, the Pharaoh who was the most powerful and celebrated ruler of ancient Egypt more than 3,000 years ago.

More details:

http://www.euronews.com/2017/03/09/egypt-archaeologists-find-probable-ramses-ii-statue-in-cairo?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+euronews%2Fen%2Fnews+%28euronews+-+news+-+en%29

- **The real reason behind thaw in EU-Egypt tensions**

It seems bizarre that only a year has passed since the European Parliament called for a halt to military aid and weapons sales to Egypt following the killing of the Italian student, Giulio Regeni, in Cairo. Member states demanded back then, in March 2016, that Egyptian authorities stop their human rights violations. They also ruled out any new cooperation initiatives from the Egyptian side, saying Egypt's ongoing repression meant relations could not carry on as normal.

More details:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/egypt-relations-europe-improve-meetings.html>

- **Mubarak goes free**

After six years of legal proceedings the Court of Cassation — Egypt's highest judicial authority — issued a final ruling on 2 March acquitting former president Hosni Mubarak of any responsibility for the killing of hundreds of protesters during the 25 January 2011 Revolution against his rule.

More details:

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/19878.aspx>

- **Egypt investment minister, UK ambassador sign \$150 mln loan agreement**

British ambassador to Cairo John Casson and Egypt's Minister for Investment and International Cooperation Sahar Nasr signed on 8 March a joint declaration of intent paving the road for a UK loan guarantee of \$150 million to help Egypt implement its economic programme, the UK embassy announced on Thursday in an official press release.

More details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/12/260614/Business/Economy/Egypt-investment-minister,-UK-ambassador-sign--mln.aspx>

- **Nasr heads Egyptian-Kazakh ministerial committee, signs cooperation protocol**

Sahar Nasr, Minister of Investment and International Cooperation, headed the fifth session of the Egyptian-Kazakh ministerial committee for economic, scientific, and technical cooperation, attended by Arystanbek Mukhameduly, the Kazakh minister of culture and sports.

More details:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/03/09/nasr-heads-egyptian-kazakh-ministerial-committee-signs-cooperation-protocol/>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Bouteflika doing very well: PM**

Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who has rarely appeared in public since a crippling stroke in 2013, is doing "very well," the country's prime minister said on Thursday. Speculation has mounted about the veteran president's health since he suffered a bout of bronchitis in February, forcing German Chancellor Angela Merkel to cancel a scheduled visit to Algiers at the last minute.

More details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/d373008d-f893-4b5a-8b2c-e3f8e63a6593.aspx>

- **Tunisia, Algeria sign agreements during Tunisian-Algerian Joint Commission**

The Algerian Prime Minister Abdelmalak Sellal and his Tunisian counterpart Youssef Chahed co-presided on Thursday the 21st session of the Tunisian-Algerian joint high commission during which several agreements were signed between the two neighboring countries.

More details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/10/c_136116554.htm

- **Algeria, crucial partner in fight against terrorism**

Algeria is a "crucial partner" for Spain in the fight against terrorism, said Thursday in Algiers, Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Alfonso Maria Dastis Quecedo.

More details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/17245-algeria,-crucial-partner-in-fight-against-terrorism>

- **UK-funded camps in Libya 'indefinitely detaining asylum seekers'**

British-funded refugee camps in Libya are implementing the indiscriminate and indefinite detention of asylum seekers in the conflict-riven country, the UK government's official aid watchdog has warned.

More details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/mar/10/uk-funded-camps-in-libya-indefinitely-detaining-asylum-seekers>

- **Libyan Parliamentarian Blames UK, Italy for Attacks on Oil Fields in the East**

On Tuesday, the Libyan parliament situated in the country's eastern city of Tobruk voted to withdraw from a unity government agreement following the attacks on the country's main oil-production area in the east. Parliamentarian Tarik al-Jarushi told Sputnik Arabic which European countries were behind these attacks and why.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/africa/201703091051414712-uk-italy-libya-attacks/>

- **Morocco jails Frenchman for 'terrorist' links**

A Moroccan appeals court has sentenced a Frenchman to four years in prison after he was convicted of financially supporting a "terrorist" cell, a case that has alarmed rights groups.

More details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1066036/middle-east>

- **Over 18,000 Sub-Saharanans Seek to Regularize Their Migration Status in Morocco**

Irregular migrants have been filed in Morocco, from the launch of the 2nd phase of this operation until March 8, Minister for Moroccans Living Abroad and Migration Affairs, Anis Birou, said.

More details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/03/210567/over-18000-sub-saharans-seek-to-regularize-their-migration-status-in-morocco/>

- **Sellal received in Tunis by speaker of Tunisian Parliament**

Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal has been received, Thursday in Tunis, by the speaker of Tunisia's Assembly of People's Representatives, Mohamed Ennaceur.

More details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/17242-sellal-received-in-tunis-by-speaker-of-tunisian-parliament>

- **Libya conflict escalates as rival government calls for elections**

Libya's eastern-based parliament has called for elections to be held early next year, after it backed out of a United Nations-brokered peace deal with rival authorities in the capital, Tripoli.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/libya-conflict-escalates-rival-government-calls-elections-947738>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **US Military General says Pak Army Chief needs to be persistent in fight against terror**

A top US military general has said the new Pakistan Army chief has shown signs he is taking action against the Taliban and the Haqqani network but he needs to be "more persistent" in the fight against terror.

More details:

<http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-pak-army-chief-needs-to-be-persistent-in-fight-agst-terror-2348484>

- **Afghanistan's National Priority Plan on Women's Economic Empowerment**

The National Unity Government (NUG) of Afghanistan officially presented the National Priority Plan on Women's Economic Empowerment to its citizens on Thursday.

More details:

<http://wadsam.com/afghan-business-news/afghanistans-national-priority-plan-womens-economic-empowerment-232/>

- **Investigation into ISIL claim of Kabul hospital attack**

As Afghans grieve and funerals are under way, officials assess ISIL claim of hospital assault that killed more than 40.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/investigation-isil-claim-kabul-hospital-attack-170309055515857.html>

- **Trump Admin reviews US policy on Afghanistan: WH**

The Trump Administration is currently conducting a comprehensive review of its policy on Afghanistan, the White House said Thursday without indicating a time line for this.

More details:

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2017/03/10/trump-admin-reviews-us-policy-afghanistan-wh>

- **Japan announces \$7m aid for Afghan refugees**

The Japanese government has announced a \$7 million aid for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP) to support Afghan refugees and host communities in Pakistan.

More details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1319561/japan-announces-7m-aid-for-afghan-refugees>

- **U.S. lawmaker introduces bill to declare Pakistan ‘state sponsor of terrorism’**

An influential U.S. lawmaker has sought a “radical reset” of ties with Islamabad and introduced a bill in the Congress that pushes the American government to declare Pakistan a “state sponsor of terrorism”, or give a detailed justification for not doing so in a limited time.

More details:

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/us-lawmaker-introduces-bill-to-declare-pakistan-state-sponsor-of-terrorism/article17440599.ece>

- **Gen. Votel urges Congress to approve budget for Afghanistan Blackhawk program**

The commander of the United States Central Command General Joseph L. Votel has requested the US Congress to approve the budget for the Afghan forces Blackhawk program.

More details:

<http://www.khaama.com/gen-votel-urges-congress-to-approve-budget-for-afghanistan-blackhawk-program-02364>

- **Proposal under consideration to build 4 more entry gates with Afghan border**

The Senate was informed on Friday that a proposal to construct four more entry gates along the border with Afghanistan is under consideration to effectively monitor the cross border movement of the people.

More details:

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/03/10/proposal-under-consideration-to-build-4-more-entry-gates-with-afghan-border/>

- **ISIS Claims Kabul Hospital Attack But Taliban Remains Main Threat**

The spectacular ISIS-claimed attack on a military hospital in the Afghan capital captured the world's attention but the group is nowhere near as powerful as other terror networks in the region, experts say.

More details:

<http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/isis-claims-kabul-hospital-attack-taliban-remains-main-threat-n731086>

- **Airstrike kills 6 militants in N. Afghan province**

Six Taliban militants including a group commander were killed after unmanned plane attacked their hideout in Chardara district of the northern Kunduz province on Thursday, district governor Zalmai Farooqi said Friday.

More details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/10/c_136118750.htm

- **UN chief mulls talking to India, Pakistan officials on Kashmir**

United Nations: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is mulling the option of talking to senior officials from India and Pakistan on the situation in Kashmir and will see how things can be improved on the ground, his spokesperson has said.

More details:

http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/57573019.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **15,000 Syrian students enrolled in Turkish universities**

Up to 15,000 Syrian students enrolled at Turkish universities last year, the head of the Council of Higher Education of Turkey said Thursday. "Our country welcomes Syrian students," Yekta Sarac told

a conference on Syrian participation in higher education at Mustafa Kemal University in Hatay, a southern province bordering the war-torn nation.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/185992/15000-syrian-students-enrolled-in-turkish-universities>

- **European far right is Daesh 'sibling': Turkish minister**

Far-right political movements in Europe are the “twin siblings of Daesh” terrorist organization, Turkish EU Affairs Minister and Chief Negotiator Omer Celik said Thursday. "Daesh and far-right or racist movements feed into each other. They both threaten political values," Celik said on his official Twitter account, referring to the rise of the far right across the European continent.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/todays-headlines/european-far-right-is-daesh-sibling-turkish-minister/767833>

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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