



# 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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**Ethnic and Secterian Groups**

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**Relations with the West**

Batı'yla İlişkiler

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**14 MARCH 2017**

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## 1. IRAQ

- **In Mosul, a heavy but not crushing blow to ISIS**

Iraqi troops have surrounded western Mosul and military leaders vow it's only a matter of time until they crush the last major stand of the Islamic State group in Iraq. But the militants are positioning themselves to defend the remains of its so-called "caliphate" in Syria and wage an insurgent campaign in Iraq.

More Details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4935061,00.html>

- **Iraqi police recapture railway station, garage near Mosul's Old City**

Iraqi Federal Police recaptured Tuesday a railway station near western Mosul's Old City as forces sweep through areas near the strategic Islamic State stronghold. Alsumaria News said in breaking news that Federal Police took over the Nineveh Railway Station, with operations continuing to clear western Mosul from IS militants amid tough resistance from the group coupled with inclement weather conditions. Other news reports said the police also took over the nearby Baghdad Garage

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/iraqi-police-recapture-railway-station-near-mosuls-old-city/>

- **West Mosul: No Escape from Smell of Blood**

A person walking in the liberated streets of western Mosul does not miss the smell of fire and death. The first smell emanates from the ruins of a shooting between Iraqi forces and ISIS militants in the Old City. The second smell comes from the bodies of Iraqi and foreign militants that fill the narrow streets next to the still wet spots of blood covering the roads and walls of western Mosul.

More Details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/d-abdullah/news-middle-east/west-mosul-no-escape-smell-blood>

- **Iraq: Hundreds Detained in Degrading Conditions**

The Iraqi interior ministry is holding at least 1,269 detainees, including boys as young as 13, without charge in horrendous conditions and with limited access to medical care at three makeshift prisons, Human Rights Watch said today. At least four prisoners have died, in cases that appear to be linked to lack of proper medical care and poor conditions and two prisoners' legs have been amputated, apparently because of lack of treatment for treatable wounds.

More Details:



<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/13/iraq-hundreds-detained-degrading-conditions>

- **Sunni politician warns U.S. of mounting civilian casualties in Mosul**

A prominent Iraqi Sunni politician on Monday warned Washington the acceleration in a military campaign in western Mosul to drive out Islamic State jihadists was causing a sudden surge in civilian casualties that threatened to undermine the effort to crush the militants. Khamis Khanjar, who has used his leverage to lobby the U.S. administration and the Iraqi authorities to ensure the major campaign in Mosul minimizes civilian losses among its population, said at least 3,500 civilians have been killed since the push into the western side of the side last month.

More Details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-sunni-idUSKBN16L05P?rpc=401&>

- **Iraqi army advance slowed at edge of Mosul's Old City**

The anti-IS coalition is on the edge of the Old City and close to capturing the third of Mosul's five bridges. But strong resistance from jihadists and bad weather has slowed down the progress of the Iraqi military. Iraqi forces reportedly made new gains but were also slowed down in their attempt to retake western Mosul on Monday. State troops have pushed so-called "Islamic State" (IS) militants into Mosul's Old City, having captured territory at the edge of the historic neighborhoods, and just south of the old bridge.

More Details:

<http://www.dw.com/en/iraqi-army-advance-slowed-at-edge-of-mosuls-old-city/a-37922752>

- **Kurdish president Barzani expresses appreciation to US support in war on ISIS**

Kurdistan Region's President Masoud Barzani on Monday received a United States government delegation headed by Mr. Brett McGurk, the Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIS. "President Barzani and Mr. McGurk spoke of the latest developments insofar as the Mosul operation is concerned," the Kurdistan Region's Presidency said.

More Details:

<http://aranews.net/2017/03/kurdish-president-barzani-expresses-appreciation-to-us-support-in-war-on-isis/>

- **Iraqi delegation in Riyadh for political, economic talks**

An Iraqi delegation arrived in Riyadh on Sunday to discuss political and economic issues of mutual concern between the two countries, a Saudi Foreign Ministry spokesman told Arab News. The

meetings were headed by the Saudi Foreign Ministry undersecretary for political and economic affairs, Dr. Adel bin Siraj Mirdad, and the Iraqi Foreign Ministry undersecretary for bilateral affairs, Nazar bin Eisa Al-Khairallah.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1067596/saudi-arabia>

- **Iran and Iraq are making it harder for Saudi Arabia to prop up oil prices**

Though OPEC has managed to achieve a high standard of compliance, it has mostly been due to the oversized cut by the largest member of the group—Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, the actions and statements of the second and third largest producers in OPEC are throwing worrying signs at the oil bulls.

More Details:

<http://www.businessinsider.com/iran-and-iraq-ramp-up-oil-production-2017-3>

- **Unearthing atrocities in Iraq's newest mass graves**

Sunni militia member Sgt. Major Yasser Ahmed, left, fellow militia members Captain Omar Hasan, center, and Salam Khalaf survey remains at a mass grave created by Islamic State outside his village south of Mosul on March 9, 2017. Locals have been unearthing and attempting to identify remains. As the Iraqi-led coalition advances into Mosul, residents returning to surrounding villages have discovered several large mass graves and, impatient that government officials won't handle the landmine-laced sites, are starting themselves.

More Details:

<https://www.stripes.com/news/middle-east/unearthing-atrocities-in-iraq-s-newest-mass-graves-1.458500#.WMee-NSLRkg>

- **'ISIS trapped & going to die': US reaffirms rules of engagement in Mosul**

As the fighting in Mosul rages on, the number of civilian casualties and displacements has grown significantly. While vowing to avoid civilian casualties by all means, the US is adamantly helping to maintain the siege until every single jihadist dies there. Air strikes targeting Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS/ISIL) fighters in the Iraqi city of Mosul are frequently killing civilians, a number of residents who lost loved ones have been telling RT recently. While the Islamic State is known to use men, women, and children as human shields in Mosul, the city's residents have also accused the coalition of indiscriminate bombing.

More Details:

<https://www.rt.com/news/380609-mosul-trapped-isis-civilians/>

- **Former US President Bush in Favor of Kurdistan Independence**

There are many Kurdish migrants around the world who still endorse their homeland and actively take part in efforts aiming at the establishment of a sovereign state for their people, but there are few people like the young Kurdish-American student Rozheen Zebari who delivers the message to world leaders and influential people like former US President George W. Bush.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/reports/336321>

- **Leadership Council approves PUK's roadmap**

The Leadership Council of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan had (PUK) approved the Party's roadmap and will start convening with other Kurdish parties. On Monday, March 14, 2017 PUK's Leadership Council had convened in order to approve a roadmap for the party which includes the entire sensitive issues such as the issues of, oil and gas, reactivation of Kurdistan parliament, solution for Kurdistan presidency, mutual government and real balance, the relation between Kurdistan and Baghdad, reform, referendum, and some other important issues.

More Details:

[http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN\\_Direje.aspx?Jimare=39973](http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=39973)

- **Iraq forces hit stiff resistance in Mosul's Old City**

More than 65,000 fled their homes in the past two weeks as Iraqi fighters push into the city's densely populated west. Iraqi forces battling ISIL faced tough resistance from snipers and mortar rounds on Monday as they tried to advance on Mosul's Old City and a bridge across the Tigris River in their campaign to retake it.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/iraq-forces-hit-stiff-resistance-mosul-city-170313201054439.html>

- **Two goals in two countries**

The US' increased aerial and ground forces involvement in the war against Daesh in and around Mosul must aim not only to deal the terrorist organisation a death blow, but also to try and contain Iran's growing role in Iraq. Tehran has expanded its military intervention in Iraq to boost the Shiite



forces operating on Iraqi soil, a move coinciding with the US administration of President Donald Trump' increased hostility vis-à-vis Iran.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/opinion/editorial/two-goals-two-countries>

- **Iraqis Capture IS Women's Prison, Free Detainees**

Advancing Iraqi forces in western Mosul have captured a textile factory that Islamic State (IS) used to as a jail to hold women, officials inside the city told VOA. "The Islamic State imprisoned nearly 300 women in the building," Gayath Surchi, the speaker of Patriotic Union of Kurdistan party in Mosul told VOA.

More Details:

<http://www.voanews.com/a/iraqis-capture-islamic-state-womens-prison-free-detainees/3763636.html>

- **Rubble and ash in Mosul museum retaken from Islamic State**

Iraqi forces inspect the damaged interior of the destroyed museum of Mosul on March 13, 2017 after it was recaptured by Iraqi forces from Islamic State (ISIL) group fighters. Iraqi forces seized the museum from IS on March 7 as they pushed into west Mosul as part of a vast offensive to oust the jihadists from the northern city

More Details:

<http://www.9news.com.au/world/2017/03/14/08/30/rubble-and-ash-in-mosul-museum-retaken-from-islamic-state>

- **Female Iraqi MP proposes law that encourages men to marry multiple women for financial benefits**

A member of Iraq's parliament has put forward a proposal to legalise polygamy in the country to "protect the dignity" of widows, divorced women, and older women who choose not to marry. The government could provide financial incentives such as tax allowances to encourage men to marry more than one woman, Jamila al-Ebeidi told media at Baghdad's parliament's building on Sunday, citing increased rates of divorce as a social problem which puts women in financially dangerous positions.

More Details:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iraq-marriage-women-polygamy-mp-legislation-jamila-al-ebeidi-a7627071.html>

- **Iraq Denies Deployment of 2,000 US Forces**

The Iraqi army dismissed reports claiming that the US has sent 2,000 military forces to al-Anbar province. Iraq's Joint Operation Command Center in a statement denied the report, saying that the news has been released to divert the public opinion from the Iraqi forces' great victories in the fight against terrorism.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951223001514>

## 2. SYRIA

- **David Duke Heaps Praise on Syrian Dictator in Bizarre Series Of Tweets**

Former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke was busy on Twitter this weekend, showing his support for Syrian President Bashar Assad in a string of tweets after weighing in favorably on Iowa Rep. Steve King's latest xenophobic remarks. On Sunday night, Duke tweeted a photo of Assad and praised his marriage and apparent love of children.

More Details

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/david-duke-bashar-assad\\_us\\_58c6e623e4b0428c7f121864?section=us\\_politics](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/david-duke-bashar-assad_us_58c6e623e4b0428c7f121864?section=us_politics)

- **Syria without Assad**

Syrian warring parties had met in Geneva on March 4, 2017. The agenda of the negotiations was revolving around three major areas, i.e., establishment of a new constitution, accountable governance and peaceful transition under United Nations supervised elections within 18 month.

More Details

<http://pakobserver.net/syria-without-assad/>

- **Russia Delivers Over Seven Tonnes of Aid to Syria**

The aid was delivered by two humanitarian missions. One took almost two tonnes of bread and 4.5 tonnes of other food items, as well as essentials such as blankets and bedding, to those in need in the Aleppo province, according to the statement. Another mission delivered food and children's school accessories to Qatana in the Damascus province.

More Details

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703141051550138-russia-syria-seven-tonnes-aid/>

- **After Syria, Russia looks to flex influence in Libya**

Russia appears to be flexing its influence in North Africa, according to reports based on diplomatic sources. Having intervened in Syria, the Soviet country is now reportedly attempting to play a similar role in Libya, which has been in a state of flux since leader Muammar Gaddafi was deposed in 2011.

More Details

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/after-syria-russia-looks-flex-influence-libya-1611370>

- **Why Trump's Syria 'Surge' Will Fail**

Last week President Trump significantly escalated the US military presence in Syria, sending some 400 Marines to the ISIS-controlled Raqqa, and several dozen Army Rangers to the contested area around Manbij. According to press reports, he will also station some 2,500 more US troops in Kuwait to be used as he wishes in Iraq and Syria.

More Details

<https://www.lewrockwell.com/2017/03/ron-paul/us-syria/>

- **Politicization of Syria's conflict hampers humanitarian effort – Red Cross delegation head to RT**

The numerous actors involved in the highly-politicized and publicized Syrian conflict makes the humanitarian work much more difficult, but the Syrian government remains one of the most reliable partners for aid organizations, the head of the Red Cross in Syria told RT.

More Details

<https://www.rt.com/news/380610-syria-red-cross-humanitarian/>

- **Iran backs Syria not in word, but in action**

President Bashar al-Assad asserted the embargo of the West and Europe helps destruction and deadly attacks of the terrorists pushing Syrians to leave their country to other places, like Europe. In a statement to Western media outlets, President al-Assad said that the priority of the Syrian people now is to fight terrorism, adding “it’s a luxury now to talk about politics while you’re going to be killed maybe in a few minutes, you have terrorist attacks.

More Details

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124221/iran-backs-Syria-not-in-word-but-in-action>

- **Assad Brands Foreign Troops 'Invaders,' Complains Trump Is Not Talking to Him**

In an interview with China's Phoenix TV transcribed by Syria's SANA News, President Bashar Assad complained about foreign "invaders" operating on Syrian soil without his permission and said that while he hopes for cooperation with the new U.S. administration, he has not communicated with President Donald Trump yet.

More Details

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/03/13/assad-brands-foreign-troops-invaders-complains-trump-isnt-talking-to-him/>

- **Casualties Feared in Car Bomb Explosion in Syria's Homs amid Ceasefire**

The explosion took place in the Wadi Dahab neighborhood in southern Homs, according to the source. The news comes amid the nationwide Syrian ceasefire that came into force on December 30 is backed by Russia and Turkey; it has been holding up in general, despite continued reports of violations. The UN Security Council passed a resolution in December supporting the effort.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703141051561500-car-bomb-homs/>

- **Syria has become 'torture chamber': UN rights chief**

The UN rights chief warned Tuesday that a "tidal wave of bloodshed" over more than six years of war in Syria had effectively turned the country into a "torture chamber". "As the conflict enters its seventh year, this is the worst man-made disaster the world has seen since World War II," said Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

More Details:

<http://www.france24.com/en/20170314-syria-has-become-torture-chamber-un-rights-chief>

### 3. IRAN

- **Zarif gives Netanyahu lesson in Jewish scripture**

Iranian officials harshly criticized Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for his accusations against Iran over a biblical story from 2,500 years ago. During an open session of parliament March 12, Speaker Ali Larijani said, "It is necessary to discuss two points about the leader of the Zionist regime [Israel]. First, he has distorted the history of pre-Islamic Iran, and he has reversed the events." Larijani continued, "Apparently, he knows neither history nor has he read the Torah. Of course more cannot be expected from a nefarious Zionist to spread lies like this."

More Details

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/iran-purim-netanyahu-zarif-larjani-esther-persia-history.html>

- **Iran designs Russian T-90 look-alike**

Russia has been keen to sell Iran military equipment and technology since the sanctions were lifted on the Islamic theocracy and the billions started flowing from the Obama administration. In fact, you could say that President Obama was the best thing that ever happened to the Russian armament industry. You could also say Hezbollah, the Iranian terror army in Lebanon and Syria, feels the same about Mr. Obama, as they were surely the recipient of all those pallets of billions in cash, but that's another story.

More Details

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/mar/13/iran-designs-russian-t-90-look-alike/>

- **Son of Detained Iranian Opposition Leader Karrubi Sentenced To Jail**

The son of a detained Iranian opposition leader has been sentenced to six months in jail on charges of distributing propaganda against the government, his family and Iranian state media said on March 13.

More Details

<http://www.rferl.org/a/son-detained-opposition-leader-karroubi-sentenced-jail-publishing-letter-demanding-open-trial/28368084.html>

- **Iran among world big missile powers: Senior MP**

Addressing a meeting of the thinkers, victims of Human Rights and Non-Governmental Organizations about instances of violation of human rights by America, Boroujerdi said the reason why the Zionist regime didn't dare attack Iran's nuclear facilities like those of Iraq's was prevalence of culture of sacrifice and martyrdom in Iran.

More Details

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82463934/>

- **Sudan Denies Iranians Visa for ICAPP Meeting**

Top officials of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP) boycotted a planned meeting in Sudan in protest at the African country's refusal to grant an Iranian delegation visa, an Iranian political activist said.



More Details

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/03/14/1354915/sudan-denies-iranians-visa-for-icapp-meeting>

- **Bright future ahead of Tehran-Baku relations**

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always attached great importance to the expansion of relations with its neighbors, Azerbaijan Republic in particular. As two developing Muslim countries, Iran and Azerbaijan Republic have always enjoyed numerous commonalities.

More Details

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124157/Bright-future-ahead-of-Tehran-Baku-relations>

- **President Rouhani sends message to Kuwaiti emir**

President Hassan Rouhani of Iran has penned an official message to Kuwait's Emir Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, amid a series of recent high-profile contacts between Iran and the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf region. Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait City Alireza Enayati submitted President Rouhani's message to Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Khalid Al Hamad Al Sabah on Monday.

More Details

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/03/14/514253/Iran-Kuwait-Rouhani-Sabah-communication>

- **Iran, Uzbekistan Discuss Closer Ties in Diverse Areas**

High-ranking diplomats from Iran and Uzbekistan exchanged views about a range of issues, including ways to boost bilateral relations and cooperation in various spheres.

More Details

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/03/14/1354848/iran-uzbekistan-discuss-closer-ties-in-diverse-areas>

- **Iran ready for further coop. with UN Population Fund**

Foreign Minister Zarif voiced Iran's readiness to cooperate with the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) for drawing new population policies given the country's gradual aging society. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif made the remark in a Monday meeting with the newly-appointed UNFPA Representative in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Leila Joudane.

More Details

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124220/Iran-ready-for-further-coop-with-UN-Population-Fund>

#### 4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Hamas Claims to Moderate With New Charter, but Still Wants to Destroy Israel**

The Islamist terrorist group Hamas is drafting a new platform that will endorse a Palestinian state based on the 1949 armistice lines in an effort “to present a more pragmatic and cooperative face to the world,” The New York Times reported Thursday.

More Details:

<http://www.thetower.org/4706-hamas-claims-to-moderate-with-new-charter-but-still-wants-to-destroy-israel/>

- **Top Trump Adviser Greenblatt to meet today with Netanyahu, Abbas**

US President Donald Trump’s special representative for international negotiations, is scheduled to arrive in Israel on Monday, three days after Trump’s phone call with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas about ways to advance the Middle East diplomatic process.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Top-Trump-adviser-Greenblatt-due-today-484013>

- **Palestinians protest over PA-Israel security ties**

The killing of a prominent Palestinian political activist in the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah by the Israeli occupation army last week has once again exposed one of the most controversial truths of the Palestinian Authority (PA), a semi-governmental body ruling three million Palestinians in the West Bank.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/03/palestinians-denounce-pa-israel-security-coordination-170313103710942.html>

- **Israeli Security Forces Stymie Hamas Plots in West Bank**

Israel’s internal security service has in recent weeks broken up several Hamas terror cells run by West Bank College students, The Jerusalem Post reported Sunday.

More Details:

<http://www.thetower.org/4708-israeli-security-forces-stymie-hamas-plots-in-west-bank/>

- **Israel to Accelerate Arab Home Demolitions**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has ordered the acceleration of Arab home demolitions in Israel, an Israeli rights group revealed, earlier this week.

More Details:

<http://imemc.org/article/israel-to-accelerate-arab-home-demolitions/>

- **PFLP Won't Run in Palestinian Elections, Condemns PA Repression**

Anger has grown against the Palestinian Authority, which people condemn for its increased coordination with the Israeli occupying state.

More Details:

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/PFLP-Wont-Run-in-Palestinian-Elections-Condemns-PA-Repression-20170313-0014.html>

- **Sisi seeks warmer ties with Hamas**

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi has ordered his government to open up to Hamas, sources in Gaza told i24news on Sunday.

More Details:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/226575>

- **Pro-Palestinian activist: Zionism and feminism don't go together**

Liberal American Jews, many of whom are involved in causes for gender and racial justice, have recently found themselves alienated by those movements' stances on Israel.

More Details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/pro-palestinian-activist-zionism-and-feminism-dont-go-together/>

- **Defense Chief Lieberman Suggests Stripping Arab Lawmakers of Citizenship under Deal with Palestinians**

Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman said on Monday that a solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict should include stripping Arab citizens of Israel - including lawmakers - of their citizenship.

More Details:

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.776977>

- **Palestinian issue puts Jordanian-Israeli Peace on ice**

A banner of Ahmad Daqamseh, the Jordanian soldier convicted of killing seven Israeli schoolgirls twenty years ago, hangs high above a street in the northern Jordanian city of Irbid. It welcomes him home upon his release from prison and lauds him as “the lion of the [Jordan] Valley” for his murders.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Analysis-Palestinian-issue-puts-Jordanian-Israeli-peace-on-ice-484107>

## 5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Jordan: A Strong Move for Justice Reform**

Proposals from a royal committee to reform Jordan’s justice system are an important step forward, Human Rights Watch said today. The government and parliament should act swiftly to put the proposals into effect.

More Details:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/14/jordan-strong-move-justice-reform>

- **Mongolian Ambassador to Jordan presents credentials**

On March 5, Ch.Bayarmunkh, Non Resident Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mongolia to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan presented his diplomatic credentials to Abdullah II bin Al Hussein, King of Jordan.

More Details:

<http://en.montsame.mn/politics/9126>

- **Jordanian investments in Egypt total \$512m**

The ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to Egypt said on Monday that Jordanian investments in the Egyptian market reached \$512 million in 1,527 companies.

More Details:

<http://english.mubasher.info/news/3070811/Jordanian-investments-in-Egypt-total-512m>

- **King visits Royal Air Force Command**

His Majesty King Abdullah, the Supreme Commander of the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF), visited on Monday the Royal Jordanian Air Force Command.

More Details:

<http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=34445#.WMeigtSLSmU>

- **Israel Wants to Send Lebanon Back to 'Middle Ages' in Next War**

A far-right Israeli minister said Lebanese civilians must be direct targets in a future war over Hezbollah's rising political sway in Lebanon.

More Details:

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Israel-Wants-to-Send-Lebanon-Back-to-Middle-Ages-in-Next-War-20170313-0028.html>

- **Lebanon's PM to address B&R conference in Beirut**

Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri was invited on Monday to attend a Belt and Road Initiative-related conference slated for April 6 in Beirut, according to a statement by the prime minister's media office.

More Details:

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/14/c\\_136127042.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/14/c_136127042.htm)

- **Iran Reportedly Built Weapons Factories in Lebanon for Hezbollah**

The Iranian Revolutionary Guards have built a number of weapons production factories in Lebanon and handed them over to Hezbollah, which has been running the production lines for the past three months, Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Jarida recently reported.

More Details:

<http://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/iran/1.777038>

- **Parties React to Bassil's Latest Electoral Law Proposal**

Progressive Socialist Party sources on Monday lashed out at the latest electoral law format that was proposed by Free Patriotic Movement chief Jebran Bassil earlier in the day.

More Details:



<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/226884-parties-react-to-bassil-s-latest-electoral-law-proposal>

- **Hariri chairs meeting on Lebanese goods protection and discusses Silk Road with Kassab**

The President of the Council of Ministers Saad Hariri chaired this morning at the Grand Serail a ministerial meeting that included Ministers Ali Hassan Khalil, Ghazi Zaiter, Moen Merabi, Hussein Hajj Hassan and Raed Khoury, and advisor Mazen Hanna. Discussions focused on the economic situation in the country.

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/76541/Hariri-chairs-meeting-on-Lebanese-goods-protection-and-discusses-Silk-Road-with-Kassar>

- **President, chief of defense forces visit Estonian soldiers serving in Lebanon**

Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid and commander of the defense forces Gen. Riho Terras were on Friday and Saturday in Lebanon where they also visited the members of the Estonian defense forces serving in the United Nations Interim Force (UNIFIL) in Lebanon as well as the country's leaders.

More Details:

[http://www.baltictimes.com/president\\_chief\\_of\\_defense\\_forces\\_visit\\_estonian\\_soldiers\\_serving\\_in\\_lebanon/](http://www.baltictimes.com/president_chief_of_defense_forces_visit_estonian_soldiers_serving_in_lebanon/)

## 6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Yemen's 'London Meeting' Tackles Ending War**

Representatives of the Yemen quartet, as well as the Sultanate of Oman, met on Monday in the British capital, London, to discuss prospects of a political settlement to end the war in the country.

More details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/abdul-hadi-habtoor-and-saeed-al-abyad/uncategorized/yemens-london-meeting-tackles-ending-war>

- **Saudi-led airstrikes kill at least 28 Houthi fighters in northern Yemen**

At least 28 Houthi fighters were killed on Monday in Saudi-led coalition airstrikes and artillery barrages by the Yemeni army in the northwestern Hajjah province near the Saudi border, according to the Yemeni army.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/saudi-led-airstrikes-kill-least-28-houthi-fighters-northern-yemen-949450>

- **Gulf may consolidate, merger speculation dominate Dubai**

Gulf stock markets look set to consolidate on Tuesday in the absence of fresh news, although merger speculation may continue to dominate Dubai.

More details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/mideast-stocks-idUSL5N1GR0GV?rpc=401&>

- **Saudi-Japanese cooperation hailed**

Secretary of the Japanese Muslims Association, Shaikh Amin Tokomats, has expressed his pleasure at the current visit of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, to Japan.

More details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302602761>

- **China eyes Mideast markets**

China's offer to mediate talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia indicates that Beijing is aware of the consequences of escalating tensions between Tehran and Riyadh.

More details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82463889/>

- **Oman's State Council to discuss Draft Cultural Heritage Law on Tuesday**

A draft of the proposed Cultural Heritage Law will be taken up by the State Council for discussion on Tuesday. The draft has been referred to the State Council by the Council of Ministers. The State Council will hold today its 5th session of the second annual sitting of the sixth term.

More details:

<http://timesofoman.com/article/104870/Oman/Government/Oman's-State-Council-to-discuss-Draft-Cultural-Heritage-Law-on-Tuesday>

- **Over 1,500 Children Dead in 2 Years of Saudi War on Yemen: UN**

The ongoing Saudi aggression on Yemen has killed nearly 7,700 people, including at least 1,564 children, since Riyadh started attacks on the impoverished Arab country two years ago, UN agencies said.

More details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/03/14/1354926/over-1-500-children-dead-in-2-years-of-saudi-war-on-yemen-un>

- **Nationwide Rallies Held in Bahrain in Support of Sheikh Qassim**

Bahraini people from every walk of life on Monday staged rallies across the country to express their solidarity with Sheikh Isa Qassim, the spiritual leader of Shiites in the Persian Gulf country, ahead of a planned trial of the top cleric.

More details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/03/14/1354882/nationwide-rallies-held-in-bahrain-in-support-of-sheikh-qassim-photos-videos>

- **Mohammad holds talks with Salman**

His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, on Monday held talks with Prince Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Bahrain's Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and first Deputy Prime Minister, on bilateral relations and ways to strengthen them.

More details:

<http://gulfnews.com/news/uae/government/mohammad-holds-talks-with-salman-1.1993471>

## 7. EGYPT

- **Egypt tends to postpone issuance of automotive industry strategy**

There is a tendency for Egyptian authorities to postpone the issuance of the automotive industry strategy and discuss it again in light of the European Union (EU) car manufacturers' observations.

More details:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/03/14/618327/>

- **Belarus ready to develop all-round cooperation with Egypt**

Belarus reaffirms the readiness to develop all-round cooperation with Egypt, Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko said as he met with Mohamed Al-Assar, Minister of Military Production of Egypt, on 14 March, BelTA has learned.

More details:

<http://eng.belta.by/president/view/belarus-ready-to-develop-all-round-cooperation-with-egypt-99429-2017/>

- **The U.S. Should Not Be Egypt's Accomplice**

Donald Trump drew lots of criticism during the campaign for his unceasing praise of President Vladimir Putin of Russia. His laudatory words for another despot, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt, attracted less attention, though they could well signal a dangerous shift in American policy.

More details:

[https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/14/opinion/the-us-should-not-be-egypts-accomplice.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/14/opinion/the-us-should-not-be-egypts-accomplice.html?_r=0)

- **General prosecutor approves release of Egypt's former President Mubarak**

Egypt's general prosecutor, Nabil Sadek, approved on Monday the release of former ousted president Mohamed Hosni Mubarak from custody following the recent acquittal issued to Mubarak of charges of killing protesters, sources asserted to Daily News Egypt.

More details:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/03/13/618319/>

- **Sisi pardons 203 young protesters**

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi meets with his Prime Minister Sherif Ismail, other ministers and senior State officials at the Ittihadiya presidential palace in Cairo yesterday.

More details:

<http://www.gulf-times.com/story/537390/Sisi-pardons-203-young-protesters>

- **Egyptian Foreign Ministry Says Cairo Received No Invitation to Astana Talks**

Egyptian Foreign Ministry Spokesman said on Monday that the country has received no invitation to take part in the international meeting on Syria in Astana as an observer but is prepared to consider it, if such an invitation is received.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951223001381>

- **Egyptian-German parliamentary friendship association formed in Cairo**

The association will do its best to reinforce cooperation between Egypt and Germany, especially in the area of fighting terrorism and illegal migration, according to Egypt's parliament speaker.

More details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/260856/-.aspx>

- **Second part of giant Pharaonic statue unearthed in Cairo**

An Egyptian-German archaeological mission extracted Monday the second part of a newly discovered statue, possibly of king Ramses II, from its pits in Ain Shams district of Cairo.

More details:

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/14/c\\_136126104.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/14/c_136126104.htm)

- **Prosecutor orders release of Egypt's ousted leader**

An Egyptian prosecutor on Monday ordered that former president Hosni Mubarak be freed from the Cairo military hospital where he has spent much of the past six years.

More details:

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/news/world/2017/03/13/prosecutor-orders-release-egypt-ousted-leader/H7IY6yWxIsiJCNd7ncn2fj/story.html>

- **Egypt's currency float decision finally pays off**

Most Egyptian businessmen are finally giving off an air of optimism these days, thanks to the three-year, \$21 billion (Dh77.1 billion) loan programme signed in November with the International Monetary Fund.

More details:

<http://gulfnews.com/business/analysis/egypt-s-currency-float-decision-finally-pays-off-1.1993391>



## 8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Algeria, France have “excellent” relations based on consultations and cooperation**

The Speaker of the People’s National Assembly Mohamed Larbi Ould Khelifa affirmed Monday that Algeria and France have “excellent” relations based on consultations and cooperation, calling for further coordination notably in terms of security and stability in the region,” said a communiqué of this institution.

More Details

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/17288-algeria,-france-have-%E2%80%9Cexcellent%E2%80%9D-relations-based-on-consultations-and-cooperation>

- **Algeria to receive \$42.7M in EU funding for renewable energy projects**

Algeria, a member of OPEC, will get support in its efforts to diversify its economy with a \$42.7 million package supporting renewable energy, the EU said. Members of a bilateral consortium met in Brussels to sign off on the multi-million dollar package to back an economic reform agenda. The European Union said it was offering financial support for renewable energy and the promotion of energy efficiency.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/algeria-oil-%2442.7m-in-eu-funding-for-renewable-energy-projects-949500>

- **Russian commandos sent to support rebel Libyan general: report**

Russia appears to have deployed Special Forces to an airbase in western Egypt near the border with Libya in recent days, US, Egyptian and diplomatic sources say, a move that would add to US concerns about Moscow's deepening role in Libya.

More Details

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/russian-special-forces-sent-suppoer-libyan-rebel-general-report-1173737716>

- **Qatari-Libyan relations discussed**

Qatari Foreign Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, has met with President of the Libyan State Supreme Council, Dr. Abdulrahman Al Sawihli, and his accompanying delegation.

More Details

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302602741>

- **New Report Paints Positive Economic Picture for Morocco**

Morocco is predicted to be a “relative outperformer” in North Africa over the medium term, according to a new report from the BMI Research Group, a part of Fitch Group. Over the next few years, the research group predicts that investor interest in Morocco will increase. “Investor interest in the country as an export-oriented manufacturing hub for the European market and increasingly to West Africa, as well as relative security compared to the rest of the MENA region, will bode well for Morocco’s underlying growth momentum in the next few years.”

More Details

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/03/210796/new-report-paints-positive-economic-picture-morocco/>

- **Morocco, France discuss means to further strengthen military cooperation**

The Inspector General of Morocco's army Fathallah El Ouarrak and the Chief of Staff of the French Army Jean-Pierre Dosser discussed here on Monday means to further develop military cooperation. Talks between the two generals addressed the modalities of strengthening the technical agreements and arrangements that bind the armies of the two countries, the Moroccan Royal Armed Forces (FAR) said in a statement.

More Details

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/14/c\\_136126136.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/14/c_136126136.htm)

- **Tunisian coastguard seize huge cocaine haul**

A huge haul of 31 kilos of pure cocaine - with a street value of \$6 million - was seized off Tunisia's Mediterranean coast, the country's coastguard announced Monday.

More Details

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/3/14/tunisian-coastguard-seize-huge-cocaine-haul>

- **Tunisian diplomat seeks outreach with Trump administration**

Tunisia’s top diplomat says the Trump administration should “reach out more” to the tiny North African nation for collaboration against the evolving threat posed by the Islamic State — and to bolster the fragile island of democracy Tunisians are struggling to uphold in the Arab world.

More Details

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/mar/13/khemaies-jhinaoui-tunisia-foreign-minister-hopes-f/>

- **Seeking deeper role in Libya, Russia deploys forces in Egypt**

Moscow appears to have deployed Special Forces to an airbase in western Egypt near the border with Libya in recent days, US, Egyptian and diplomatic sources say, a move that would add to US concerns about Moscow's deepening role in Libya.

More Details

<http://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/russia-deploys-forces-in-egypt-eyeing-deeper-role-in-libya/>

- **Libya Conflicts Worsen and Exports Will Be Affected - Oil Markets Daily**

Libya geopolitical conflicts worsen with the BDB handing over control of the oil ports to the Petroleum Facilities Guard. The Libyan National Army first took control of the oil ports from the PFG, and this presents new conflicts to the battle between East and the West. We see Libya oil production falling further and escalating conflicts will provide a tailwind for global oil rebalancing.

More Details

<http://seekingalpha.com/article/4054684-libya-conflicts-worsen-exports-will-affected-oil-markets-daily>

## 9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Afghan officials: Taliban cut off accused thief's hand, foot**

Afghan officials say that the Taliban have carried out another brutal punishment under their interpretation of Islamic law by cutting off a suspected thief's hand and foot in public.

More Details:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/feeds/canadian-press/world/afghan-officials-taliban-cut-off-accused-thiefs-hand-foot/article34295587/>

- **Afghan, Pakistani traders demand reopening of border**

Business representatives from Afghanistan and Pakistan have called on Islamabad to immediately reopen the border between the two countries, saying the closure is hurting economic and social ties and resulting in massive monetary losses and mutual trust deficit.

More Details:

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/03/14/afghan-pakistani-traders-demand-reopening-of-border/>

- **10 Haqqani militants killed in E. Afghan airstrike: gov't**

At least 10 insurgents of Haqqani militant group were killed Monday after Afghan forces struck their position in the country's eastern province of Paktika, the Interior Ministry said on Tuesday.

More Details:

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/14/c\\_136127811.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/14/c_136127811.htm)

- **Russia hopes to rope in Taliban for Afghan talks**

Russia wants the Taliban's political representatives to join the dialogue initiated by China, Pakistan and Russia and expanded last month when Afghanistan, India and Iran joined the process.

More Details:

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1354603/russia-hopes-rope-taliban-afghan-talks/>

- **Afghanistan hopes to learn from China in poverty alleviation: Afghan ambassador**

Afghanistan looks forward to learning from China's experience and success in poverty alleviation and expects to see significant achievements of bilateral cooperation in 2017, said Janan Mosazai, Afghan Ambassador to China.

More Details:

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2017-03/14/c\\_136126510.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2017-03/14/c_136126510.htm)

- **Pakistan will not transfer weapons of mass destruction to states or non-state actors: Aziz**

Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz on Tuesday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment not to transfer weapons of mass destruction to states or non-state actors.

More Details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1320450/pakistan-will-not-transfer-weapons-of-mass-destruction-to-states-or-non-state-actors-aziz>

- **Pakistan to extend support to Yemen**

Pakistan on Monday said it would continue to extend all possible assistance for the restoration of peace and stability in Yemen while voicing support for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the war-ravaged country.

More Details:

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1354591/pakistan-extend-support-yemen/>

- **Pakistan has ties to terror groups: US lawmaker**

Alleging that Pakistan fosters a relationship with terrorist groups, an influential US lawmaker on Monday urged the Trump Administration to have a final determination on whether the South Asian country is a state sponsor of terrorism.

More Details:

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2017/03/14/pakistan-has-ties-terror-groups-us-lawmaker>

## 10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Chinese Turkish troops to take part in `Pakistan Day` parade**

Chinese and Turkish troops will for the first time take part in the `Pakistan Day` parade to be held at the capital (March 23- Pakistan Day), The Indian Express reports on Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://www.app.com.pk/chinese-turkish-troops-to-take-part-in-pakistan-day-parade/>

- **Turkey's new ambassador to Qatar arrives in Doha**

Turkey's newly appointed ambassador to Qatar arrived in Doha on Monday to take up his new diplomatic responsibilities. Fikret Ozer was received at Doha's Hamad International Airport by a host of Qatari officials and Turkish embassy staff. Ozer succeeds outgoing Turkish Ambassador to Qatar Ahmet Demirok, who served at the post from October 2013 to February 2017.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-s-new-ambassador-to-qatar-arrives-in-doha/770570>



*\*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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