



# MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

## GÜNLÜK ORTADOĞU BÜLTENİ

**Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries**

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

**The Restructuring Proces of Iraq**

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

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Batı'yla İlişkiler

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**15 FEBRUARY 2017**

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## 1. IRAQ

- **Islamic State kidnap 16 civilians from Anbar security-held region**

Islamic State militants have kidnapped 16 civilians from a region in Anbar to an unknown destination, the region's mayor said. Muayyad Farhan told Alsumaria News Wednesday that IS militants had kidnapped the civilians from al-Rouda, a district on the road between Rahaliyah and Ramadi which, he said, is totally empty of security presence. He urged the government to secure a pathway for Rahaliyah civilians.

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/islamic-state-kidnap-16-civilians-anbar-security-held-region/>

- **MP From Sadr Movement: We Will Not Allow Holding Any Elections With The Current Electoral Commission**

MP for the Ahrar bloc of the Sadr Movement, Abdul Aziz Dalimy stressed that "his movement has nothing to do with the demonstrations and the Ahrar bloc determined to change the Electoral Commission because it is politicized and built on political quotas and every member belongs to a certain party." He told the National Iraqi News Agency / NINA / "We will not allow holding elections according to this Commission and we will strive with all legal means to change it and we are with the demands of the masses for an independent commission."

More Details:

[http://www.ninanews.com/News\\_Details.aspx?ts2Y8yBx4Mb3k%252fz9K2KQyw%253d%253d](http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?ts2Y8yBx4Mb3k%252fz9K2KQyw%253d%253d)

- **Karbala-Anbar Security Trench Still Concerning some Locals**

In response to growing concerns over a trench between Shi'ite Karbala and Sunni Anbar provinces, a local official reiterates the project is part of a security plan only. Member of Karbala provincial council, Mahfouz Tamimi, said on Tuesday that Karbala has previously been targeted by terrorist attacks due to its neighboring province of Anbar where once Islamic State (IS) militants were in control.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/330415>



- **Isis claims propaganda 'more powerful than atomic bomb' as group forms strategy for survival**

Isis' propaganda will continue to radicalise followers and inspire terror attacks long after the group's self-declared caliphate has been destroyed, a new report has warned. The terrorist group is losing swathes of territory in its Iraqi stronghold of Mosul as enemy forces advance on its de-facto capital of Raqqa in Syria, but continues to churn out online magazines, videos and continual updates on its "operations" to followers around the world.

More Details:

[http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En\\_NewsReader/59369065-0de6-4ee2-bc03-9ff0625db7ba/Isis-claims-propaganda--more-powerful-than-atomic-bomb--as-group-forms-strategy-for-survival](http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/59369065-0de6-4ee2-bc03-9ff0625db7ba/Isis-claims-propaganda--more-powerful-than-atomic-bomb--as-group-forms-strategy-for-survival)

- **Injured Yazidi toddler to reunite with family**

After about four months apart, 2-year-old Dilbireen Muhsin soon may be reunited with his family. The Yazidi boy, whose name means "wounded heart" in Kurdish, was taken to the United States late last year to receive medical treatment for severe burns on his face. He was left in the care of a Michigan woman while his parents and newborn brother were in Iraq, trying to be by Dilbireen's side and, mostly recently, facing President Donald Trump's travel ban.

More Details:

[http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN\\_Direje.aspx?Jimare=39741](http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=39741)

- **Iraqi forces detain 54 ISIS terrorists during raids on eastern Mosul**

Iraqi security forces have captured 54 ISIS terrorists including top leaders in the organization during raids at al-Zohour area in eastern Mosul, Joint Operations Command said on Tuesday. Brig. Mohamed al-Jabouri said that the Iraqi forces cordoned off al-Zohour area upon a tip off received by the army intelligence offices located in the area that ISIS elements are in the neighborhood.

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/6052/Iraqi-forces-detain-54-ISIS-terrorists-during-raids-on-eastern-Mosul>

- **ISIS 'chemical chief' killed in Iraq's Mosul**

A notorious ISIS senior commander and the mastermind of the group's Chlorine-filled missiles were mysteriously assassinated in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. Abu Yahya al-Iraqi was allegedly assassinated near his house in al-Islah al-Zeraei neighborhood while the terror organization was retreating from the district.

More Details:

<https://www.almazdarnews.com/article/isis-chemical-chief-killed-iraqs-mosul/>

- **UN prods Iraq on electoral reforms**

Iraq's parliament should implement the electoral reform called for by protesters, the UN's top envoy said on Tuesday, days after a demonstration pressing those demands turned violent. A full turnover of the electoral panel's members and an overhaul of the electoral law were the two main demands of a recent wave of protests led by the movement of populist Shiite Muslim cleric Moqtada Sadr.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/9d703c9a-73c7-4ee6-8625-5c70d574d978.aspx>

- **From Iraq, with love: Refugee family embraced in US days before travel ban**

It took three years for Mohammed Hameed to go through the immigration process to get to America from Iraq despite his dangerous service as a translator for the U.S. Army. He and his family landed at Newark International Airport just three weeks before President Donald Trump signed an executive order banning travel from his country and six other Muslim-majority nations. "We escaped that fate. The whole thing, arrival and getting in was so easy," he told Metro.

More Details:

<http://www.metro.us/news/from-iraq-with-love-refugee-family-embraced-in-us-days-before-travel-ban/zsJqbm---4iZe8B7mojPHI/>

- **Thousands in Iraq pay homage to victims of Baghdad protest**

Thousands of Iraqis, mostly supporters of prominent cleric Moqtada Sadr, gathered in Baghdad Tuesday to pay their respects to seven people killed last week during a protest for electoral reform. Wearing black and waving Iraqi flags, the crowd laid flowers on mock coffins during a large but peaceful ceremony in the Iraqi capital's Tahrir square, where Saturday's deadly rally also took place.

More Details:

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/news/world/thousands-in-iraq-pay-homage-to-victims-of-baghdad-protest/article/485844>

- **Official: U.S. military used depleted uranium for first time since 2003 Iraq invasion**

Officials have confirmed that the U.S. military, despite vowing not to use depleted uranium weapons on the battlefield in Iraq and Syria, fired thousands of rounds of the munitions during two high-profile raids on oil trucks in Islamic State-controlled Syria in late 2015. The air assaults mark the first

confirmed use of this armament since the 2003 Iraq invasion, when it was used hundreds of thousands of times, setting off outrage among local communities, which alleged that its toxic material caused cancer and birth defects.

More Details:

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/ct-us-military-depleted-uranium-syria-20170214-story.html>

- **Valentine's Day returns to Iraq's IS-free east Mosul**

Valentine's Day returned Tuesday to the eastern sector of the Iraqi city of Mosul from where the Islamic State group was expelled last month, at least for a group of enthusiastic schoolchildren. "My feelings for you flow like a river, and will flow on for the rest of my life," young volunteers recited in front of the children at one school, as plastic roses, balloons and heart-stickered pens were handed around.

More Details:

<http://www.france24.com/en/20170214-valentines-day-returns-iraqs-free-east-mosul>

- **Iraq Plans for Enormous Boost To Refining Capacity**

Iraq's government is ambitious and it wants to make the most of the country's oil and gas reserves. Plans for an expansion of the country's refinery network have been circulating for years, but the war with IS has put these on hold. What's worse is that the prospects for these plans are gloomy unless it gets a significant amount of external help. Before the war with IS engulfed OPEC's second-largest exporter, plans were to add five new refineries to the network over a period of 20 years, starting in 2008. At the time, the refining capacity of Iraq stood around 886,000 bpd.

More Details:

<http://oilprice.com/Energy/Crude-Oil/Iraq-Plans-For-Enormous-Boost-To-Refining-Capacity.html>

- **Terrorist Attack Kills 3, Injures 10 in Baghdad, Iraq**

Three people were killed and 10 injured in a car bomb blast in the southwest of this capital today, said security sources. The explosion occurred in the industrial district, in Al Bayaa, and left considerable damages in the surrounding buildings and shops.

More Details:

<http://www.plenglish.com/index.php?o=rn&id=9297&SEO=terrorist-attack-kills-3-injures-10-in-baghdad-iraq>



- **An Iraqi-Kurdish precedent for proposed Syrian 'safe zones'?**

In light of President Donald Trump's plan to establish "safe havens" for Syrian refugees within their own country's borders there has been discussion and speculation centred on what such zones might look like - and where exactly they might be located. Some have pointed out, citing the Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia as a precedent, that safe zones could necessitate as many as 30,000 troops to protect the Syrian civilians seeking sanctuary inside them.

More Details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/indepth/2017/2/14/an-iraqi-kurdish-precedent-for-proposed-syrian-safe-zones>

- **KRG representative: Britain to continue supporting Kurdistan Region after IS**

The Kurdistan Regional Government representative to the United Kingdom stated on Monday that Britain will continue its military and political support of the Kurdistan Region after the Islamic State (IS) is defeated. Karwan Jamal Tahir, the KRG Representative to the Britain told Kurdistan24 that since the beginning of the war against the IS, Britain has been supporting the Kurdistan Region and its Peshmerga forces and this support will continue.

More Details:

<http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/6261f7bd-8e26-45a4-8ef0-085900786406/KRG-representative--Britain-to-continue-supporting-Kurdistan-Region-after-IS>

- **Mosul is still a dangerous flashpoint in fight against Islamic State**

President Trump has long made it clear that destroying the so-called Islamic State is one of his main priorities, and that one plan being considered is to deploy a U.S. Army brigade to help defeat IS in its main base of Raqqa in Syria. That, though, depends on the success of another operation: the Iraqi-led offensive to expel IS from Iraq's second city of Mosul. If that crucial battle isn't won, Trump's plans may be knocked back just when he needs to demonstrate that his troubled administration really can wield global authority.

More Details:

[http://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/Voices/2017/02/14/Mosul-is-still-a-dangerous-flashpoint-in-fight-against-Islamic-State/7271487100619/?utm\\_source=sec&utm\\_campaign=sl&utm\\_medium=1](http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Voices/2017/02/14/Mosul-is-still-a-dangerous-flashpoint-in-fight-against-Islamic-State/7271487100619/?utm_source=sec&utm_campaign=sl&utm_medium=1)

- **First Daesh Tank Attack in Iraq May Indicate Existence of 'Vile Criminal Racket'**

Commenting on the recent reports of the first documented Daesh tank attack against the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), Russian defense analyst Vladimir Bogatyrev suggested that the heavy weaponry may not be mere war trophies, and that the jihadists could be acquiring the war

machines through some sort of "disgusting criminal racket." On Monday, the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) reported that the Daesh militants used tanks in their attack against them in northern Iraqi Sinjar mountains near the border with Syria.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201702151050693204-daesh-iraq-tank-attack/>

## 2. SYRIA

- **Kazakhstan Postpones Syrian Peace Talks By One Day**

Kazakhstan's Foreign Ministry announced it is delaying by one day talks on the Syrian civil war that were due to start on February 15. Russia, Iran, and Turkey were to be involved in the talks, which were also to include delegations from the Syrian government and rebel groups. Some of those delegations have already arrived in the Kazakh capital, Astana, for the talks.

More Details

<http://www.rferl.org/a/kazakhstan-syrian-peace-talks-postponed-astana/28310568.html>

- **Uninvited Syrian PYD Kurds 'not expecting much' from Astana talks**

Syrian Kurds do not expect any breakthrough from the intra-Syrian talks in Astana, chairman of the Kobani provincial government of Syrian Kurdistan, Anwar Muslim, told Sputnik on Tuesday, saying that a holding ceasefire in Syria was already a good sign.

More Details

<http://ekurd.net/syrian-kurds-expecting-astana-2017-02-15>

- **The truth about the battle for Aleppo after the information war dust has settled**

Streets bombed into an eerie urban wasteland. After months of crippling siege, more than 100,000 people were trapped in the city's rebel-held east during the final months of last year as government bombs rained down on homes and hospitals and troops moved in after four years of trying. The government's victory in Aleppo dealt the heaviest blow yet to Syria's rebels and marked the start of an endgame for the country's bitter war.

More Details

<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/world/the-truth-about-the-battle-for-aleppo-after-the-information-war-dust-has-settled-20170215-gudq0j.html>

- **US Not Coordinating Strikes in Palmyra with Russia amid Anti-Daesh Advancement**

Daesh recaptured Palmyra last December and the terror group's gains in the historic city prompted the Syrian army to launch an offensive to retake it. Russia's General Staff stated on Saturday that the Syrian army has been advancing toward the city.

More Details

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201702151050688245-us-not-coordinating-russia-daesh/>

- **To defeat terrorists and bring peace in Syria**

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, during a recent joint press conference with Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al Jubeir, said that Islamophobia is fuelling terrorism. The UN head made this remark after his talks, on Friday, with the Saudi king in Riyadh on regional issues. "One of the things that fuels terrorism is the expression in some parts of the world of Islamophobic feelings and Islamophobic policies and Islamophobic hate speech," Guterres said at the press conference, adding that "this is the best support that Daesh can have to make its own propaganda".

More Details

<http://jordantimes.com/opinion/editorial/defeat-terrorists-and-bring-peace-syria>

- **Don't look away... Syria isn't over yet**

The bloody scenes of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's scorched-earth campaign in Eastern Aleppo have faded from the news, yet the killing in Syria continues. As you read this, thousands of peaceful activists are still being murdered in the Assad's regime's industrial-scale torture system, and nearly 1 million Syrians are still trapped under siege.

More Details

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2017/02/14/dont-look-away-syria-isnt-over-yet.html>

- **Jordan, Lebanon Call for Sustaining Ceasefire in Syria**

Jordan's King Abdullah II and Lebanese President Michel Aoun reiterated their support for sustaining ceasefire in Syria during a summit held on Tuesday in Amman. Aoun arrived in Jordanian capital Amman on Tuesday for his first visit to the Hashemite Kingdom since assuming the presidency last October.

More Details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/2017/02/article55367455/jordan-lebanon-call-sustaining-ceasefire-syria>

- **Iranian, Russian officials review latest developments in Syria**

Representative of Iran and Russia held talks on the latest developments in Syria and the process of maintaining truce in that country. The talks in the Kazakh capital of Astana on Tuesday afternoon were held between heads of the Iranian and Russian delegations Hossein Jaber Ansari and Alexander Lavrentiev respectively.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82431229/>

### 3. IRAN

- **Iran's Exiled Prince to US, Israel: Don't Fall into Tehran's 'Trap'**

Iran's exiled crown prince, Reza Pahlavi, is urging the United States and Israel not to fall into a "trap" by escalating their disputes with the Iranian government into a military conflict.

More Details

<http://www.voanews.com/a/iran-exiled-prince-warns-us-israel-against-falling-into-tehrans-trap/3725189.html>

- **Iran welcomes Persian Gulf states' message of coop.**

A few minutes before departing Tehran for Muscat on Wednesday morning, Hassan Rouhani told reporter that six Persian Gulf countries have recently conveyed a message to Iran through the Kuwaiti government on settling disputes and development of cooperation through dialogue.

More Details

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/123573/iran-welcomes-Persian-Gulf-states-message-of-coop>

- **Jaberi meets with Putin's, Syria UN envoys in Astana**

Delegations of Iran and Russia attending the second round of international Syrian talks in the Kazakh capital Astana met Tuesday afternoon as headed by Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab-African Affairs, Hossein Jaber Ansari, and Vladimir Putin's special envoy for Syria, Alexander Lavrentyev.

More Details

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/123574/Jaberi-meets-with-Putin-s-Syria-UN-envoys-in-Astana>

- **High Potentials for Wide-Ranging Tehran-Europe Relations**

President Hassan Rouhani said the settlement of the 12-year nuclear dispute between Iran and western powers, and the subsequent removal of anti-Iran sanctions have prepared the ground for deepening cooperation between Tehran and the European Union.

More Details

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/national/59605/high-potentials-for-wide-ranging-tehran-europe-relations>

- **Do Iranian MPs want to send working women back home?**

On Jan. 15, Iranian lawmakers approved a new law that would oblige state-run and public organizations to accept early retirement requests of female employees who have worked at least 20 years, without pushing any age limit. At present, the age limit for early retirement of women covered by the Social Security Organization (SSO) is 52. The law needs to be approved by the constitutional watchdog, the Guardian Council, before going into effect.

More Details

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/02/iran-working-women-pension-reform-social-security.html>

- **Iran unveils Tous marine outboard gasoline engine**

Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Hossein Dehqan has unveiled a marine outboard gasoline engine dubbed Tous through an official ceremony in Tehran. Addressing the ceremony on Tuesday, Dehqan said the marine engine was totally designed and manufactured by Iranian experts, adding that the propulsion system was one of the most important parts of vessels.

More Details

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/02/14/510523/Iran-Hossein-Dehqan-Tous-gasolinefueled-outboard-marine-engine-nuclear-energy>

- **Chuck Todd Thinks Flynn Resignation the Biggest Scandal since Iran-Contra**

MSNBC's Chuck Todd was beside himself Tuesday as he described the resignation of National Security Adviser Michael Flynn as, "Day one of what is arguably the biggest presidential scandal involving a foreign government since Iran-Contra." Todd's reference to the Iran-Contra Affair — a major scandal for the administration of Ronald Reagan involving illegal dealings with multiple foreign governments and eventually dozens of criminal indictments — came after General Flynn was asked to resign on Monday.



More Details

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/02/14/chuck-todd-thinks-flynn-resignation-the-biggest-scandal-since-iran-contra/>

- **Iran: Signing Trade Deals in Swedish Ambassador's Residence in Tehran**

According to terrorist Quds Force's Tasnim news agency, several trade deals, including opening Iran-Sweden chamber of commerce, were signed during Swedish PM and his accompanying delegation's visit to Tehran. The strange part of the story, however, is that the deals were signed in Swedish Ambassador's residence in Tehran!

More Details

<http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/iran-world/22169-iran-signing-trade-deals-in-swedish-ambassador-s-residence-in-tehran>

- **Brain Drain From Iran**

Iran is ranked number one in 'brain drain' among 91 developing and non-developed countries, according to a report by the IMF. According to the report, each year between 150 to 180 thousand educated Iranians leave their country to continue their education abroad.

More Details

<http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/society/22166-brain-drain-from-iran>

## 4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Netanyahu and the noose: Case closed against student**

Jerusalem District Court closes case against Bezalel art student due to lack of culpability two months after a controversial poster lampooning Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was displayed on the academy's walls.

More Details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4922604,00.html>

- **Jewish Business Leaders to Lobby for cut to UN Funding**

As Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meets with US President Donald Trump on Wednesday, a delegation of Jewish business and communal leaders will lobby Congress to defund US allocations for

the United Nations, as stated in a bill proposed recently by Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Ted Cruz (R-TX).

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/Jewish-business-leaders-to-lobby-for-cut-to-UN-funding-481569>

- **Palestinian teens detail their torture at the hands of Israeli authorities**

Two Palestinian teenagers held in Israel's Ofer detention center have been shot, abused, and tortured during their detention and interrogation by Israeli authorities, according to a statement released Tuesday by the Palestinian Committee for Prisoners' Affairs.

More Details:

<http://www.maannnews.com/Content.aspx?id=775469>

- **Cabinet says new land planning body vital for protection of Palestinian estate**

In its weekly meeting in Ramallah on Tuesday, the Palestinian cabinet discussed the work of the new Land and Water Planning Commission, which it said was vital for the protection of Palestinian property.

More Details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=BVkW13a52396857909aBVkW13>

- **Trump welcomes Israel's Netanyahu for Middle East talks**

President Donald Trump will host Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House on Wednesday, their first meeting since the inauguration and one that promises to shape the contours of Middle East policy for the years ahead.

More Details:

<http://www.nasdaq.com/article/trump-welcomes-israels-netanyahu-for-middle-east-talks-20170215-00058>

- **Palestinian rights group says Israeli PM Netanyahu trying to shift the subject**

In dealing with such a divisive US president on Wednesday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will also face some potential pitfalls. Key constituencies, including congressional Democrats and many American Jews, oppose Trump's policies, while at home Netanyahu is under pressure from his hard-line allies to push for policies that Trump may not support.

More Details:

<http://www.thestandard.com.hk/breaking-news.php?id=84882>

- **UN supports 2-state solution of Israeli-Palestinian conflict**

The United Nations is supportive of the two-state solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Farhan Haq, deputy spokesman for the UN secretary-general, told Sputnik.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/123571/UN-supports-2-state-solution-of-Israeli-Palestinian-conflict>

- **Israeli-Palestinian peace may not be two-state solution: White House**

The Trump administration suggested Tuesday that peace between the Israelis and Palestinians may not come in the form of a two-state solution — a position that could represent a dramatic shift from former President Barack Obama, who said he saw no alternative.

More Details:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/israeli-palestinian-peace-may-not-be-two-state-solution-white-house/article34026044/>

- **Lebanese president calls on Arab League to protect Jerusalem**

Lebanese president Michel Aoun on Tuesday called on the Arab League to unite for the sake of protecting the character of Jerusalem, warning that Israel wanted to “Judaize Palestine.”

More Details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/lebanese-president-calls-on-arab-league-to-protect-jerusalem/>

## 5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Israel Pledges to Place Jordan’s Gas Needs before Its Own, Letter Shows**

Israel has committed to Jordan that it will give Jordanian natural gas needs preference over Israel’s in times of shortages, according to a letter signed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz.

More Details:

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/business/1.771775>

- **Jordan Steps Up its War on ISIS in Syria**

On February 5, Jordan launched airstrikes in southern Syria, directed at the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) and Jaysh Khalid bin Al Waleed. Occurring shortly after King Abdullah II's meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow in late January and with US President Donald Trump in Washington at the beginning of February, Jordan's stepped-up action in Syria underscores Amman's continued pivot toward Russia and commitment to continuing coordination with Moscow in Syria.

More Details:

<http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/jordan-steps-up-its-war-on-isis-in-syria>

- **King, Lebanese President hold talks**

His Majesty King Abdullah II and Lebanese President Michel Aoun held a summit on Tuesday on cementing Jordanian-Lebanese ties as well as regional developments, including the Syrian crisis and its ramifications on the two countries.

More Details:

[http://www.petra.gov.jo/Public\\_News/Nws\\_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site\\_id=1&NewsID=289334&CatID=13](http://www.petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=289334&CatID=13)

- **Lebanon's PM vows not to bend to foreign powers**

Lebanon's Prime Minister Saad Hariri stressed on Tuesday that the country's decision is in the hands of the Lebanese state and not in the hands of individuals, leaders or regional or international powers.

More Details:

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-02/15/c\\_136056943.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-02/15/c_136056943.htm)

- **Lebanese President blasts Israel's 'Judaization'**

Lebanese President Michel Aoun on Tuesday urged Arab nations to come together to "protect" the multi-faith character of Jerusalem, accusing Israel of trying to "Judaize Palestine".

More Details:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/225009>

- **Aoun, Hariri's Hezbollah comments lay bare Lebanon's political divide**

Lebanon's Prime Minister called Hezbollah's arms illegitimate on Tuesday after its President said the group's military wing was vital to its security, spelling out the country's political divisions more clearly than at any time since they took office.

More Details:

[http://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-politics-hariri-hezbollah-idUSKBN15T2FX?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+Reuters%2FworldNews+%28Reuters+World+News%29&rpc=401](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-politics-hariri-hezbollah-idUSKBN15T2FX?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Reuters%2FworldNews+%28Reuters+World+News%29&rpc=401)

- **Saudi Campaign continues distributing aid to Syrians in Lebanon**

Saudi National Campaign through its office in Lebanon with the participation of Saudi Chargé D'Affaires in Lebanon Walid bin Abdullah Bukhari has continued the distribution of relief aid to 2100 Syrians in Lebanon.

More Details:

<http://sites.alriyadh.com/en/article/1155882/Saudi-Campaign-continues-distributing-aid-to-Syrians-in-Lebanon>

- **UN Warns Lebanese President not to Arm Hezbollah**

The United Nations has warned Lebanon's President Michel Aoun not to arm Hezbollah following comments Aoun made on Egyptian TV on Sunday. In a tweet posted on Monday, UN Coordinator Sigird Kaag warned that UN Resolution 1701 prohibits Lebanon from arming Hezbollah.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/UN-warns-Lebanese-president-not-to-arm-Hezbollah-481494>

- **Hezbollah Launches Crowdfunding Campaign to Finance Fight against Israel**

The Lebanese terror group Hezbollah has started a crowdfunding campaign in order to finance its activities against Israel, Ynet reported on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://www.thetower.org/4567-hezbollah-launches-crowdfunding-campaign-to-finance-fight-against-israel/>



## 6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Bahrain attends World Government Summit**

Deputised by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, Deputy Premier Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al-Khalifa led Bahrain's delegation to the World Government Summit, which concluded yesterday in Dubai.

More details:

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppId=30463&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=>

- **President Rouhani heads for Oman**

President Hassan Rouhani left Tehran for Muscat, Oman, on Wednesday to reinforce regional ties and cooperation. Rouhani has been invited by Sultan of Oman Qaboos bin Said al Said and Emir of Kuwait Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for a one-day tour to Oman and Kuwait.

More details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82430933/>

- **Turkey's Erdogan Completes Visit to Saudi Arabia for Talks on Economy, Syria**

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan completed a trip to Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, landing in Qatar on Tuesday evening after meeting with Saudi King Salman and discussing regional security.

More details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/02/14/erdogan-saudi-arabia-talks-syria-economy/>

- **12 Saudi soldiers killed in recent Yemen border fighting**

At least 12 Saudi soldiers have died on the southern border since early February, according to an unusual series of official reports released as the country fights Yemeni rebels.

More details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/2/15/12-saudi-soldiers-killed-in-recent-yemen-border-fighting>

- **Visit has special significance: Qatari envoy**

Qatar's Ambassador to Turkey Salem Mubarak Al-Shafi (pictured) said yesterday visit of Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Qatar comes in context of continuous coordination and cooperation between the two sides.

More details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/14/02/2017/Visit-has-special-significance-Qatari-envoy>

- **Somali Official Says Somaliland Deal with UAE Corrupt, Illegal**

Officials in Somalia and breakaway Somaliland took bribes in exchange for authorizing a United Arab Emirates military base in the port city of Berbera, according to Somalia's auditor general.

More details:

<http://www.voanews.com/a/somali-official-says-somaliland-deal-with-uae-corrupt-illegal/3724682.html>

- **Dubai's Emaar says to reopen fire-hit Address hotel by year-end**

Dubai's Emaar Properties intends to reopen its landmark Address Downtown hotel by the end of the year, some two years after the skyscraper was gutted by fire following an electrical fault, its chairman told Al-Arabiya TV on Tuesday.

More details:

<http://www.arabianbusiness.com/dubai-s-emaar-says-reopen-fire-hit-address-hotel-by-year-end-663432.html>

- **Child killed in Islamic State attack on Yemen's Houthis**

A child was among three people killed in a suicide car bomb attack on a sports club in a rebel-held town of central Yemen on Tuesday, a provincial official said, as the Islamic State group claimed responsibility.

More details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/2/14/child-killed-in-islamic-state-attack-on-yemens-houthis>

- **Bahraini Police Quash Shi'ite Protest on Anniversary Of Arab Spring Uprising**

Antigovernment demonstrators clashed with police in Bahrain on February 14 on the sixth anniversary of the island kingdom's Arab Spring uprising.

More details:

<http://www.rferl.org/a/bahrain-anniversary-protest-quashed-arab-spring/28310609.html>

- **. Daman adopts news measure to confirm members' eligibility to receive Abu Dhabi Basic Plan**

National Health Insurance Company, Daman, has announced that it has adopted a new measure to validate residents' eligibility for the Abu Dhabi Basic Plan, as per health insurance laws and regulations.

More details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302597831>

## 7. EGYPT

- **Libyan Rival Parties Agree to Hold Parliamentary, Presidential Vote in 2018**

The leaders of rival Libyan governments agreed to hold both the presidential and parliamentary elections in the crisis-torn country in 2018, a spokesman of the Egyptian Armed Forces said Wednesday.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201702151050688778-libya-parliamentary-presidential-elections/>

- **Egyptian mediation between Hafter and Serraj fails**

Attempts by the Egyptian government to mediate a peace deal between Presidency Council leader Faiez Serraj and Field Marshal Khalifa Hafter were in ruins this evening after the field marshal refused to meet Serraj.

More details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/02/14/egyptian-mediation-between-hafter-and-serraj-fails/>

- **Parliament confirms 9 new ministers in Cabinet reshuffle**

Egypt's Parliament appointed nine new ministers on Tuesday in the latest Cabinet shakeup. The ministers to join Prime Minister Sherif Ismail's government are to oversee agriculture, parliamentary affairs, investment and international cooperation, trade, local development, planning, education, higher education and transport. Four deputy ministers were also appointed to the agriculture and planning ministries.

More Details:

<http://www.madamasr.com/en/2017/02/14/feature/politics/parliament-confirms-9-new-ministers-in-cabinet-reshuffle/>

- **Egypt To Draft Schedule To Pay \$3.5B Dues To Oil Firms**

Egypt expects to soon draft a repayment schedule to pay US\$3.5 billion in arrears it owes to foreign oil and gas companies, Egyptian Petroleum Minister Tarek El Molla said on Tuesday.

More details:

<http://oilprice.com/Latest-Energy-News/World-News/Egypt-To-Draft-Schedule-To-Pay-35B-Dues-To-Oil-Firms.html>

- **Israeli Envoy to Cairo Ordered to Stay Home due to Threats**

The leaders of rival Libyan governments agreed to hold both the presidential and parliamentary elections in the crisis-torn country in 2018, a spokesman of the Egyptian Armed Forces said Wednesday.

More details:

[http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/ML\\_ISRAEL\\_EGYPT?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-02-14-11-46-10](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/ML_ISRAEL_EGYPT?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-02-14-11-46-10)

- **Persona non grata: Potential Sisi Tunisia visit sparks anger**

The potential visit of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi to Tunisia has sparked controversy within domestic politics with many political figures expressing anger at President Bejj Caid Essebsi's apparent invite of his Egyptian counterpart.

More details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/2/14/persona-non-grata-potential-sisi-tunisia-visit-sparks-anger>

- **Egypt tycoon returns to politics to demand greater freedoms**

Egyptian billionaire Naguib Sawiris said on Tuesday that he is returning to politics to press for more freedoms in the North African country, after keeping his distance out of frustration.

More Details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/egypt-tycoon-promises-return-politics-demand-greater-freedoms-1992926273>

- **Egypt court sentences journalist to 6 months in prison**

An Egyptian court has sentenced on Tuesday a journalist and the legal adviser for the dissolved Freedom and Justice Party to six months in jail.

More Details:

<http://en.aswatmasriya.com/news/details/18468>

- **How Trump's economic policies could hurt Egypt**

The World Bank's global growth forecast for 2017 has something for everyone — from doubt, to caution, to cautious optimism. And while not mentioning US President Donald Trump by name, the report makes it clear his policies could change things considerably for much of the world, including Egypt, for better or for worse.

More Details:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/02/trump-withdrawal-trans-pacific-partnership-suez-canal-egypt.html#ixzz4YjzggAue>

## 8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Babaammi presents in Dubai Algeria's policy for economic diversification**

Minister of Finance Hadji Babaammi has presented Tuesday in Dubai, where he is taking part in the fifth World Government Summit, Algeria's strategy for the diversification of economy, the ministry said in a statement.

More details

<http://en.aps.dz/economy/16687-babaammi-presents-in-dubai-algeria-s-policy-for-economy-diversification>

- **Algeria, Mauritania willing to strengthen cooperation in vocational training**

Minister of Vocational Training and Education Mohamed Mebarki and Mauritanian Minister of Employment, Vocational Training and Information and Communication Technologies Dia Moctar Malal expressed, Tuesday in Algiers, their "common willingness" to strengthen cooperation in the field of vocational and technical training and education.

More details

<http://en.aps.dz/economy/16694-algeria,-mauritania-willing-to-strengthen-cooperation-in-vocational-training>



- **Morocco must Accept Western Sahara Independence**

The Polisario Front said Tuesday that since Morocco has rejoined the African Union and accepted the group's principles it must recognize Western Sahara's independence - or it could face possible sanctions or even requests to leave the regional organization.

More details;

[http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/UN\\_UNITED\\_NATIONS\\_WESTERN\\_SAHARA?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-02-14-17-53-20](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/UN_UNITED_NATIONS_WESTERN_SAHARA?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-02-14-17-53-20)

- **PM in Berlin: democratic model in Tunisia shows advent of democracy in Arab and Muslim world is possible**

"The democratic model in Tunisia proves that the advent of democracy in the Arab and Muslim world is possible," Prime Minister Youssef Chahed, said at a conference held at the headquarters of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation "Democratic Transition and Young Tunisians". The PM, who is making a two-day official visit in Berlin, pointed out that "Tunisia is a bridge between Europe and Africa."

More details

<http://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/8714317-pm-in-berlin->

- **Speed up migrant returns, Germany urges Tunisia**

German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Tuesday pushed Tunisia's prime minister to speed up the returns of rejected asylum seekers, as Tunis rebuffed criticism that it was blocking repatriations.

More details

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/25144421-d2dd-4f91-a30d-721d3c7bed34.aspx>

- **Merkel presses Tunisia to cooperate on deportations**

German Chancellor Angela Merkel told Tunisian Prime Minister Youssef Chahed on Tuesday that she wanted to speed up deportations of rejected asylum seekers from the North African country, Reuters reported. The two met in Berlin just under two months after a Tunisian whose asylum application had been rejected attacked a Christmas market in the German capital, killing 12.

More details

<http://www.politico.eu/article/merkel-presses-tunisia-to-cooperate-on-deportations/>

- **Minister of Defence meets with Deputy Secretary-General at European External Action Service**

The fight against terrorism and the protection of borders and development projects in the border Saharan areas were discussed at a meeting held Tuesday evening in Tunis by Minister of National Defence, Farhat Horchani and Deputy Secretary-General at the European External Action Service (EEAS) Pedro Serrano.

More details

<http://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/8714308-minister-of-defence>

- **Egyptian army enters Libyan territories to free 133 Egyptian nationals from Ajdabiya**

The Egyptian military spokesperson announced on Tuesday that army forces from Egypt were able to free 133 Egyptian nationals, who had previously been kidnapped in Libya. The statement did not give details about the nature of the kidnappers, but described it as “one of the criminal militant gangs” in the region of Ajdabiya, south of Benghazi.

More details

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/egyptian-army-enters-libyan-territories-to-free-133-egyptian-nationals-from-ajdabiya/>

- **Libya still in the mire as another anniversary passes**

Libya's transition has been bogged down by insecurity and chaos, leaving the country looking like a "failed state" six years after the NATO-backed uprising that ended Moamer Kadhafi's rule.

More details

<http://www.france24.com/en/20170215-libya-still-mire-another-anniversary-passes>

- **Libya rivals agree to hold 2018 presidential elections**

Libya's conflicting factions agreed to hold presidential elections by February 2018, during a meeting which brought together the rival army chief and the head of the country's unity government in Cairo on Tuesday. The UN-backed Government of National Accord head Fayez al-Sarraj and Marshal Khalifa Haftar attended the meeting along with Egyptian officials, including Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry and the army Chief of Staff, Mahmoud Hejazi.

More details

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/2/15/libya-rivals-agree-to-hold-2018-presidential-elections>

## 9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **NATO resolves to defeat terror in Afghanistan**

NATO has decided to stay in Afghanistan with 13,000 troops to train, assist and advise Afghan security forces to defeat terrorism and stabilise the war-torn country. Jens Stoltenberg, the alliance secretary-general, expressed the view during a question-answer session at a pre-ministerial meeting press conference in Brussels.

More details

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2017/02/15/nato-resolves-defeat-terror-afghanistan>

- **Ukrainians mark 28th anniversary of Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan**

It's been 28 years since the Soviet Army officially withdrew its troops from Afghanistan; the bloody Soviet-Afghan war that lasted over nine years (late 1979 – early 1989) claimed lives of dozens of thousands of servicemen on the both sides. However, civilians took much more serious casualties over the period; about two million of them perished in ten years of the conflict.

More details

<http://112.international/politics/ukrainians-mark-28th-anniversary-of-soviet-withdrawal-from-afghanistan-14123.html>

- **Confronting Afghanistan's peace dilemma**

Afghanistan marked 28th anniversary of the then Soviet Union withdrawal from Afghanistan amid hopes that a widely-anticipated peace deal with Hezb-e-Islami party of Afghanistan led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar might ease security challenges by encouraging other fighting groups, including the Taliban to join the peace process.

More details

<http://thekabultimes.gov.af/index.php/editorial/13088-confronting-afghanistan%E2%80%99s-peace-dilemma.html>

- **28th anniversary of Red Army withdrawal from Afghanistan**

Exploiting deteriorating relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, Russia found this chance to expand their influence in all fields and in our vital veins gradually. The Soviets managed to disseminate their ideology and policy among the young educated generation of our country and finally inclined a number towards them expecting to use them one day as a means for further expansion of their influence south wards.

More details

<http://thekabultimes.gov.af/index.php/opinions/politics/13087-28th-anniversary-of-red-army-withdrawal-from-afghanistan.html>

- **NATO Mission in Afghanistan Is To Fight Terrorism: Stoltenberg**

Meanwhile, the UN has said that the terrorists waging war against the Afghan people are getting political, moral and financial support from outside the country. Speaking ahead of a defense ministers meeting in Brussels, NATO secretary general Jens Stoltenberg has said that the alliance is committed to combatting terrorist groups operating in Afghanistan and will not allow Afghanistan to become a safe haven for them.

More details

<http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/nato-mission-afghanistan-fight-global-terror-stoltenber>

- **Pakistan considers expanding Mi-35 contract with Russia-military official**

Islamabad is considering the expanding of the contract on the delivery of the Mil Mi-35 helicopters from Russia, a high-ranking military official in Pakistan told Sputnik.

More details

<https://sputniknews.com/world/201702151050693154-pakistan-russia-mi-35/>

- **China says will enhance counter-terrorism with Pakistan**

China's Foreign Ministry has said that it will take steps to boost counter-terrorism cooperation with key ally Pakistan.

More details

<http://www.aninews.in/newsdetail-NA/Mjk5OTQw/china-says-will-enhance-counter-terrorism-with-pakistan.html>

- **Ex-Pakistan opener Jamshed arrested, released in Britain**

A Pakistan Cricket Board official has confirmed that former international batsman Nasir Jamshed and another man were arrested and then released on bail in Britain amid an investigation into alleged spot fixing in the Pakistan Super League.

More details

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/sports/article132808894.html>

- **Suicide Attack Kills Four in Northwestern Pakistan**

A suicide bomber has killed four people, including two police officers, and injured four in an attack targeting the administrative headquarters of a tribal region in the country's northwest.

More details

<http://www.rferl.org/a/pakistan-suicide-attack-northwestern-pakistan-kills-four/28310576.html>

- **U.N. Refugee Agency Must Break Its Silence on Pakistan**

Pakistan to end all police abuses and stop threatening mass deportations, Afghan refugees will continue to leave Pakistan involuntarily, under pressure. The UNHCR should not play a part in these violations of international law. If it believes giving refugees cash is the best way to help them survive destitution and insecurity back home, it should first recognize publicly that the returns are not voluntary.

More details

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/02/14/un-refugee-agency-must-break-its-silence-pakistan>

## 10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Erdogan thanks Saudi king's hospitality during visit**

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warmly thanked Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and the people of Saudi Arabia on Tuesday evening following his brief visit to the Saudi capital Riyadh. In a message posted on the president's official Arabic Twitter account, Erdogan said: "I want to give my special thanks to the Saudi king and to the brotherly Saudi people for their kind reception and great hospitality during my visit to Riyadh."

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/erdogan-thanks-saudi-kings-hospitality-during-visit/750499>

- **17 Daesh terrorists, 7 FSA fighters killed in clashes in northern Syria**

Turkish airstrikes and artillery shelling have killed 17 Daesh terrorists as part of the operation to liberate the northern Syrian town of al-Bab from terrorists, the military said Wednesday. The statement issued by the Turkish military provided up-to-date information on the developments that took place between Feb. 14, 7 a.m. (GMT 4 a.m.) to Feb. 15, 7 a.m. local time.

More Details:



<https://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2017/02/15/17-daesh-terrorists-7-fsa-fighters-killed-in-clashes-in-northern-syria>

*\*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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