



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĞU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Proces of Iraq

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

Energy Security

Enerji Güvenliği

Economy News

Ekonomi Haberleri

Peace Process

Barış Süreci

Ethnic and Secterian Groups

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

Non State Actors

Devlet-dışı Aktörler

Relations with the West

Batı'yla İlişkiler

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16 JUNE 2017

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1. IRAQ

- **Dozens of IS militants killed in airstrike by Iraqi troops in Hawija**

Dozens of Islamic State militants were killed, while hideouts were destroyed in an airstrike launched against Hawija district in Kirkuk, the War Media Cell reported.

More Details

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/dozens-militants-killed-airstrike-iraqi-troops-hawija/>

- **Barzani: Amicable Divorce from Iraq “the Only Solution”**

An amicable divorce from the federal government of Iraq is the “only solution” to Iraq’s woes and wider regional instability, Kurdistan Region President Masoud Barzani said during his recent interview with the Foreign Policy.

More Details

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/kurdistan/358042>

- **Putin: 'Kurdish Military Very Effective', Russia Has No Grounds to Break Ties**

Moscow will not sever ties with Kurds; President Putin said lauding Kurdish fighters' contribution to the fight against terrorism.

More Details

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=40523

- **Exclusive: Parts freed so far in Mosul explained on map**

Iraqi Joint Operations Command has released a map showing the areas controlled by ISIS terrorist organization in Mosul were shrinking, The Baghdad Post reported Thursday.

More Details

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/12109/Exclusive-Parts-freed-so-far-in-Mosul-explained-on-map>

- **Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Forces Cross into Syria with Heavy Weapons**

Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) once again entered Syrian territories, a few hours after a regime military delegation visited Baghdad and following the US deployment of two rocket launchers in al-Tanf military camp at the Syrian-Iraqi-Jordanian border.

More Details

<https://english.aawsat.com/youssef-diab/news-middle-east/iraqs-popular-mobilization-forces-cross-syria-heavy-weapons>

- **Iraqi detainees in Michigan fear deportation**

Brianna Al-Dilami met her Iraqi husband the day he came to America in 1998 and they've been together ever since. But her husband was arrested by US immigration officers last weekend, and she has been searching for answers about his fate, fearing he'll be sent back to Iraq.

More Details

<http://us.cnn.com/2017/06/16/us/aclu-files-against-ice-for-iraqi-nationals/index.html>

- **Demonstrators Demand Arrest of Former PM Maliki; 46 Killed in Iraq**

Demonstrators in Baghdad called for the prosecution of former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki over the “three scourges” (the fall of Mosul, the Camp Speicher massacre, and corruption in government) that they blame him for. Maliki currently serves as one of three vice presidents, but he has intimated that he wants to become premier again.

More Details

<http://original.antiwar.com/updates/2017/06/15/demonstrators-call-arrest-maliki-46-killed-iraq/>

- **David Pratt: The suffering people of Mosul need our help now more than ever**

Remember Mosul? Not that long ago our television news bulletins and newspaper reports almost daily featured harrowing accounts of the battle to liberate Iraq’s second largest city from two years of rule by the jihadists of the Islamic State (IS) group.

More Details

http://www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/15351340.David_Pratt_The_suffering_people_of_Mosul_need_our_help_now_more_than_ever/

- **Mosul Old City residents spend hungry, fearful Ramadan under Daesh rule**

For Salam, a resident in the Daesh-held Old City of Mosul, the holy fasting month of Ramadan this year is the worst he has seen in a lifetime marked by wars and deprivations. “We are slowly dying from hunger, boiling moldy wheat as soup” to break the fast at sunset, the 47 year-old father of three said by phone from the district besieged by Iraqi forces, asking to withhold his name fearing the militants’ retribution.

More Details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1115641/middle-east>

- **Kurdish independence: Breaking an Iraq that was never whole to start with?**

Over the last 100 years following the Sykes-Picot agreement that divided the Middle East, the imperialist pact has become somewhat unbreakable, even though the out-dated agreement doesn't reflect any real socio-political realities on the ground. The Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) recent referendum decision has fueled a series of questions and hot debates in the region and is being discussed in a pendulum either one-Iraq policy or Kurds' willingness for the independence.

More Details

<https://www.dailysabah.com/op-ed/2017/06/16/kurdish-independence-breaking-an-iraq-that-was-never-whole-to-start-with>

- **Police ban face veil to guard Iraq's post-Daesh Mosul**

Iraqi women walk freely around a street market in Mosul, their hair wrapped in brightly coloured scarves and face uncovered after police banned the conservative black veil mandatory under extremist rule.

More Details

<http://jordantimes.com/news/region/police-ban-face-veil-guard-iraq%E2%80%99s-post-daesh-mosul>

- **Iraq Dethrones Saudi Arabia as India's No.1 Oil Supplier**

Iraq has been India's largest supplier of crude oil for the last three months, shipping data from Bloomberg has revealed. This means that OPEC's number-two has dethroned the cartel's leader—Saudi Arabia—which has been the top supplier in the world's fastest-growing market in terms of oil consumption.

More Details

<http://oilprice.com/Energy/Oil-Prices/Iraq-Dethrones-Saudi-Arabia-As-Indias-No1-Oil-Supplier.html>

- **Iraqi Kurdistan News in brief – June 16, 2017**

Massoud Barzani said when asked whether negative backlash from its neighbors could result in the Kurdistan region's isolation after decision to hold a referendum on independence, he said Kurds would rather die of starvation than live under oppression. He told the Foreign Policy "If this decision is made by referendum and the reaction is to isolate us, let our people die,"

More Details

<http://ekurd.net/iraqi-kurdistan-news-in-brief-june-16-2017-2017-06-16>

- **"Iraq's Rambo" out of favour with his own militia after brutally violent videos**

His name is Abou Azrael, but he's better known as "Iraq's Rambo" — the muscle-bound symbol of the fight against the Islamic State group in Iraq. He is known for directing elaborate and violent punishments against ISIS forces, carried out by the Shiite militia that he leads, the Brigades of the Imam Ali. However, videos of him mistreating corpses started circulating online at the beginning of June — and they could see him lose his hero status.

More Details

<http://observers.france24.com/en/20170615-iraqi-rambo-out-favour-own-militia-after-brutally-violent-videos>

- **'Death sentence' deportation of Iraqi Christians stayed after ACLU court action**

The American Civil Liberties Union is trying to prevent the Trump administration from deporting 114 Iraqi Christians who were arrested in Michigan earlier this month. Christian Today reported the crackdown on the Chaldean Christians, some of whom were said to have criminal records. 'Many who were picked up are not hardened criminals but for the last decades have been great citizens,' said the local Chaldean bishop in Detroit, where there is the largest community of Chaldean Christians outside Iraq.

More Details

<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/death.sentence.deportation.of.iraqi.christians.stayed.after.aclu.court.action/110004.htm>

- **Kurdish independence vote to include disputed areas**

Kurdish parties are continuing negotiations and meetings to discuss the details of the referendum on Kurdish independence from Iraq, which is scheduled for 25 September. Meanwhile, officials have demanded that the referendum only include disputed areas to find out if residents in these areas want independence

More Details

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170615-kurdish-independence-vote-to-include-disputed-areas/>

- **Kirkuk council to defend raising Kurdistan flag in Baghdad court**

The head of the Kirkuk Provincial Council has received a request to appear before an administrative court in Baghdad in connection with a legal challenge to the Council's decision to fly the Kurdistan flag over the government buildings in March.

More Details

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/150620171>

- **Iraq: Mental health needs mount after years of war**

Iraq's recent history has been dominated by wars. Generations of Iraqis have grown up in shattered families, living in camps or among the rubble of their home towns. Each conflict has left its scars, both visible and invisible. In Amriyat Al Fallujah camp where more than 50,000 people live, MSF teams treat patients for physical and mental wounds.

More Details

<http://www.msf.org/en/article/iraq-mental-health-needs-mount-after-years-war>

2. SYRIA

- **Syria: UN disarmament chief reports progress in destroying chemical weapons facilities**

The United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, reported to the Security Council that "some progress" has been made over the past month in the implementation of its 2013 resolution on the elimination of chemical weapons in Syria. However, recalling a statement by the Secretary-General, she warned that continued use of chemical weapons in Syria is not only horrific in its own right, but also profoundly damaging to the international community's confidence in its non-proliferation architecture.

More Details:

http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56990#.WUN_LtSLTGg

- **In Syria's Raqa, anti-IS fighters advance at night**

Faced with an onslaught of weaponised drones, mortar rounds and snipers, US-backed fighters in Syria's Raqa say the cover of night is a good ally against Islamic State group jihadists. The Syrian Democratic Forces are battling to oust the extremists from the northern city after breaking into its first neighbourhood last week.

More Details:

<http://www.france24.com/en/20170616-syrias-raqa-anti-fighters-advance-night>

- **UN opening new Syria aid route to reach Raqqa displaced**

The UN expects to open a new Syria aid corridor on Thursday, which may help get supplies to desperate people fleeing the Daesh terror group stronghold of Raqqa. "Courageous humanitarian workers have been now travelling for days to open a new corridor from Aleppo in the west to Qamishli," Jan Egeland, head of the UN-backed aid taskforce for Syria, told reporters in Geneva.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/region/un-opening-new-syria-aid-route-reach-raqa-displaced>

- **Syrian refugees head home on foot from Turkey**

Carrying suitcases, shopping bags and toddlers, thousands of refugees walked back home into Syria from Turkey on Thursday ahead of the Eid festival that marks the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Turkey has taken in some 3 million Syrian migrants since the start of civil war in 2011, making it home to the world's largest refugee population.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/25c8a836-1356-4511-b95e-dc6e3de23242.aspx>

- **Clashes between Terrorist Groups in Syrian South**

Members of the so-called Syrian Free Army, supported by the United States, clashed with the group Jaish Haqlid Ibn al Walid, allied to the Islamic State (IS), in the southern area of Damascus, according to reports today by military sources. The combats took place around the hill Adwan, an area close to the city of Deraa, the administrative center to the province with the same name, around 100 kilometers south from the Syrian capital, the sources said.

More Details:

<http://www.plenglish.com/index.php?o=rn&id=14309&SEO=clashes-between-terrorist-groups-in-syrian-south>

- **The army restores the majority of oil facilities by liberating strategic Ark oil field in Palmyra countryside**

Homs, SANA-By liberating Ark oil field from ISIS terrorist organization, the Syrian Arab army, supported by its allies, has restored the majority of the oil facilities in the Syrian Badyah. Those important economic installations were substituted into dens for the Takfiri organization during the recent time and became an important resource to fund its criminal acts all over the Syrian territories.

More Details:

<http://sana.sy/en/?p=108217>

- **Russia questions US Himars missile deployment in Syria**

It said it was not impossible the two Himars launchers being set up in al-Tanf would be used against troops fighting so-called Islamic State. The launchers were reportedly brought in from Jordan to Tanf, which is used by rebels and Western Special Forces.

More Details:

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-40296879?intlink_from_url=&link_location=live-reporting-story

- **Who will control a liberated Raqqa?**

As the liberation of Raqqa city moves into its second week and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) declares areas cleared of ISIS militants, Arab tribesmen known as the Syrian Elite Forces (SEF) are tasked with restoring civil order to the war-torn city. "While they are not taking part in the SDF's current seizure of Raqqa, they could in the future and their participation with the SDF after the city's liberation will be critical to restoring security and governance to Raqqa's citizens," the spokesperson for the US-led global coalition to defeat ISIS, Col. Ryan Dillon, told Rudaw English.

More Details:

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/analysis/15062017>

- **US Actions in Syria led to a Great Number of Casualties: UN**

According to BBC News, a group of UN experts, investigating the military crimes stated, that the U.S.-led International Coalition strikes on Raqqa led to a great number of casualties among civilians. In general, for the past week the International Organization recorded more than 300 casualties as a result of coalition's actions.

More Details:

<https://en.insidesyriamc.com/2017/06/15/us-actions-in-syria-led-to-a-great-number-of-casualties-un/>

- **UN urges Russia, Iran and Turkey to free up aid to Syria**

The United Nations urged Russia, Iran and Turkey on Thursday to open up areas of Syria to the delivery of humanitarian aid in "de-escalation" zones whose parameters the three are meant to finalise. The three countries brokered a deal in the Kazakh capital, Astana, in May to create four de-

escalation zones in Syria. Russia said on Tuesday that the next round of negotiations in Astana was likely to be held in early July.

More Details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/15/06/2017/UN-urges-Russia,-Iran-and-Turkey-to-free-up-aid-to-Syria>

3. IRAN

- **Iran dismantles terrorist group in southeastern province**

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has dismantled a Takfiri terrorist group in the southeastern province of Sistan-and-Baluchestan, killing and wounding a number of the terrorists.

More Details:

<http://en.alalam.ir/news/1983770>

- **From Tehran to Beirut: Shia militias aim to firm up Iran's arc of influence**

The town of Ba'aj is deserted and broken. Its streets are blocked by overturned cars, its shops are shuttered and the iron gates of its ravaged homes groan in a scorching wind.

More Details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/16/from-tehran-to-beirut-shia-militias-aim-to-firm-up-irans-arc-of-influence>

- **The Senate Has Voted Nearly Unanimously for New Sanctions on Russia and Iran**

The U.S. Senate voted nearly unanimously on Thursday for legislation to impose new sanctions on Russia and force President Donald Trump to get Congress' approval before easing any existing sanctions on Russia .

More Details:

<http://fortune.com/2017/06/16/russia-iran-us-senate-sanctions/>

- **Pentagon: U.S. Will Act Against Iran-Backed Syria Militias Only in 'Self-Defense'**

The U.S.-led coalition does not "seek" to offensively fight against the Iran-backed Shiite militias in Syria who recently fired on American troops for the first time, but it is ready to "defend itself" if they attack, a Pentagon spokesman tells Breitbart News.

More Details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/06/15/pentagon-u-s-well-prepared-to-defend-itself-from-iranian-backed-militias-if-they-attack-again/>

- **Iranian Forces Kill Two, Arrest Five Sunni Muslim Militants In Southeast Iran**

Iranian forces have killed two suspected members of an armed Sunni Muslim group in southeastern Iran and arrested five others, a minister said, accusing Saudi Arabia of "sponsoring terrorists" in the country.

More Details:

<https://www.rferl.org/a/iranian-forces-kill-two-arrest-five-sunni--muslim-militants-southeast-iran-sistan-baluchistan/28557911.html>

- **Saudi Arabia Certainly Behind Terrorist Attacks in Tehran: Italian Analyst**

A political expert based in Milan highlighted the Saudi regime's role in recent deadly attacks in the Iranian capital of Tehran that were claimed by Daesh (ISIS or ISIL) terrorist group, saying Saudi Arabia was "certainly" behind the incidents.

More Details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/06/16/1436766/saudi-arabia-certainly-behind-terrorist-attacks-in-tehran-italian-analyst>

- **Iran: Regime Terrified of Widespread Social Welcoming of Iranian Resistance Justice Movement**

Two weeks after failing to engineer Iran's farce presidential election, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei is terrified of the two slogans, "No to murderer, no to demagogue, and "My vote is regime change," and the subject of seeking justice for the 1988 massacre victims.

More Details:

<http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/ncri-statements/human-rights/23013-iran-regime-terrified-of-widespread-social-welcoming-of-iranian-resistance-justice-movement>

- **France and Iran, two years after the nuclear deal**

Nearly Two years have passed since Iran and the major world powers reached a diplomatic agreement in Vienna over the Islamic Republic's deeply disputed nuclear activity. Under the terms of that accord, known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Tehran promised to

roll back significant elements of its programme in return for the lifting of various international sanctions.

More Details:

<http://mondediplo.com/outsidein/france-and-iran-two-years-after-the-nuclear-deal>

- **India wants Iran to reciprocate on gas field award: Pradhan**

Having stood by Iran in its tough times, India expects Tehran to reciprocate by awarding rights of the coveted Farzad-B gas field to its discoverer, ONGC, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said.

More Details:

<http://www.thestatesman.com/business/india-wants-iran-to-reciprocate-on-gas-field-award-pradhan-1497512255.html>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Lieberman: Israel Willing to Supply Electricity to Gaza, but They Must Pay First**

Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman took a tough stance on the power shortage in the Gaza Strip on Thursday, saying that Israel was willing to supply electricity to the Strip, "but they must pay first." "We must make this clear, especially to the international community," Lieberman told the Tel Aviv International Salon forum.

More Details:

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.796106>

- **Gal Gadot smear an anti-Israel rant**

There's no foundation to Azeezah Kanji's smearing of Israeli movie star Gal Gadot as someone who supports "violence against the women, children and men of Palestine . . ."

More Details:

https://www.thestar.com/opinion/letters_to_the_editors/2017/06/16/gal-gadot-smear-an-anti-israel-rant.html

- **Israel hopes GCC rift will 'intensify Hamas' isolation'**

Israel is seeking to exploit the rift between a Saudi-led bloc of Arab states and Qatar to advance its strategic interests in the region both against the Palestinian movement Hamas and against Iran, according to Israeli analysts. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt severed ties

with Qatar more than a week ago, accusing it of supporting "terrorism" and being too close to Iran. US President Donald Trump's visit to the region last month appears to have spurred the campaign against Doha.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/06/israel-hopes-gcc-rift-intensify-hamas-isolation-170615093612036.html>

- **Greece, Israel, Cyprus to speed up Mediterranean pipeline efforts**

Greece, Israel and Cyprus said on Thursday they would speed up plans for the development of a pipeline channeling gas to Europe from newly discovered east Mediterranean reserves. European governments and Israel agreed in April to move forward with a Mediterranean pipeline project to carry natural gas from Israel to Europe, setting a target date of 2025 for completion.

More Details:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-greece-israel-natgas-idUSKBN1962XK?il%253D0>

- **Vatican, Israel closer to resolving property, tax issues**

The Vatican and Israel may finally be ready to resolve outstanding bilateral issues and fully finalize the Fundamental Agreement governing relations between the two states. A joint statement issued Wednesday following a meeting the previous day at the Vatican of the Bilateral Permanent Working Commission between the Holy See and the State of Israel expressed hope for a "rapid conclusion" of decades-long talks.

More Details:

<https://www.jta.org/2017/06/15/news-opinion/israel-middle-east/vatican-israel-closer-to-resolving-property-tax-issues>

- **UN Last Hurdle Before Israel Can Rid Itself of the Palestinians**

The conspiracy – a real one – was much in evidence last week during a visit to the region by Nikki Haley, Washington's envoy to the United Nations. Her escort was Danny Danon, her Israeli counterpart and a fervent opponent of Palestinian statehood. Danon makes Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu look moderate. He has backed Israel annexing the West Bank and ruling over Palestinians apartheid-style. Haley appears unperturbed. During a meeting with Netanyahu, she told him that the UN was "a bully to Israel". She has warned the powerful Security Council to focus on Iran, Syria, Hamas and Hezbollah, instead of Israel.

More Details:

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/un-last-hurdle-before-israel-can-rid-itself-of-the-palestinians/5594776>

- **Putin: Israel's Sharon warned me against trusting anyone in Middle East**

Russian President Vladimir Putin discusses Middle East tensions and reveals private conversations he had with former prime minister Ariel Sharon in the four-part documentary, "The Putin Interviews," aired by Showtime this week.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Putin-Israelis-Sharon-warned-me-against-trusting-anyone-in-Mideast-496929>

- **Watch: 500 IDF commandos participate in large-scale drill in Cyprus**

IDF commandos and Israeli Ari Force aircraft have completed a 4-day drill in Cyprus alongside the local military. The IDF has conducted many military exercises abroad but this is the first time that the footage of such a drill is being released to the public.

More Details:

<http://www.jerusalemonline.com/news/politics-and-military/military/watch-idf-commandos-train-in-cyprus-29123>

- **Israel Probing if Ex-Premier Committed Offence in Prison**

Israel's Justice Ministry says it has asked the police to investigate whether the country's imprisoned former prime minister committed a "criminal offense" while behind bars. It said Thursday that the book Ehud Olmert is writing contains "sensitive security issues" and his lawyer was caught leaving the prison with a chapter on "secret operations" not approved by the censor for publication.

More Details:

<https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2017-06-15/israel-probing-if-ex-premier-committed-offence-in-prison>

- **Russia, Palestine agree to expand anti-terror cooperation**

Russian and Palestinian deputy foreign ministers, Oleg Syromolotov and Tayseer Jaradat, have agreed to expand bilateral cooperation in combatting international terrorism, Russia's Foreign Ministry said on Thursday following bilateral consultations on anti-terrorism issues held in Moscow.

More Details:

<http://tass.com/politics/951664>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Kabbara meets ILO delegation, Indian ambassador**

Minister of Labor, Mohammad Kabbara, received a delegation from the International Labor Organization (ILO), with talks touching on the project which will be implemented in partnership between the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the International Labor Organization. The said project, financed by Germany, aims at improving infrastructure. The project is expected to see the light soon.

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/80443/Kabbara-meets-ILO-delegation-Indian-ambassador>

- **Report: Vote Law Takes Final Step After Parliament Vote Friday**

The parliament will convene on Friday to vote on the newly approved electoral law amid reports claiming that the parliament's term will be extended for 12 months instead of 11, al-Joumhouria daily reported. Reports circulated a day earlier claimed that the parliament's term will be extended for one year, although it has been announced that the polls will be staged on May 6, 2018, said the daily.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/231505-report-vote-law-takes-final-step-after-parliament-vote-friday>

- **How corruption and complicity threaten Lebanon's marine life**

The European Union stands accused of turning a blind eye to a growing environmental catastrophe in Lebanon. Namely, the dumping of two million tonnes of toxic waste directly into the Mediterranean, which threatens to wipe out fish stocks and kill the endangered turtles which lay their eggs at Sidon every year. The EU is also being blamed for wasting €16 million (Dh66 million) in funding on waste management plants that barely function, with two local "sorting and composting plants" closed and another defunct because its equipment was stolen.

More Details:

<http://www.thenational.ae/arts-life/the-review/how-corruption-and-complicity-threaten-lebanons-marine-life>

- **AUB and USAID Celebrate the Graduation of 44 USP Scholars**

the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the American University of Beirut (AUB) celebrated the graduation of 44 scholars from Lebanese public schools, who successfully

completed the University Scholarship Program (USP). Through USP, USAID supports public school graduates with full four-year scholarships including tuition fees, housing expenses, medical insurance, textbooks, and a monthly stipend. Equal numbers of male and female scholars are selected in a highly competitive environment, based on fairness and transparency as well as diversity, where all Lebanese districts are represented. Since the beginning of the program in 2010, 745 scholars have been granted scholarships that allowed them to study at AUB and the Lebanese American University.

More Details:

<https://www.albawaba.com/business/pr/aub-and-usaid-celebrate-graduation-44-usp-scholars-986610>

- **UAE Ambassador hosts Iftar reception for Lebanese Information Minister**

Hamad Saeed Al Shamsi, UAE Ambassador to Lebanon, on Wednesday held an Iftar reception for Lebanese Information Minister, Melhem Riachi, and a number of media personnel at the embassy headquarters in Beirut. Speaking at the event, Al Shamsi praised the media for their major role in covering the news, great challenges and responsibilities they face, especially in the Arab world.

More Details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302619224>

- **Will Lebanon's new electoral law end the stalemate?**

A new electoral law is expected to be ratified by Lebanon's parliament on Friday, paving the way for the first parliamentary elections in eight years. On Wednesday, ministers announced that Lebanon will be holding the long-delayed legislative elections in May 2018 after the country's cabinet approved a new electoral law, staving off a fresh political crisis that threatened to leave the country without a parliament.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/06/lebanon-electoral-law-stalemate-170615064815219.html>

- **Mulki vows gov't support to media sector**

Prime Minister Hani Mulki on Thursday stressed the government's support for the Jordan Press Association (JPA), under Royal directives which aim to improve the journalism profession and the condition of its members, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported. During a meeting with JPA President Rakan Saaideh, JPA Vice President Yanal Barmawi and members of the association's council, the premier highlighted the government's "respect and appreciation" for the association's

national role, which he described as “responsible and reflecting the conscience” of society and its problems.

More Details:

<http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/mulki-vows-gov%E2%80%99t-support-media-sector>

- **King congratulates Queen Elizabeth on national day**

His Majesty King Abdullah on Thursday sent a cable of congratulations to UK's Queen Elizabeth II on the occasion of her birthday, the National Day of Britain. His Majesty extended his best wishes to the queen and wished the British people further progress and prosperity.

More Details:

http://petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=306174&CatID=13

- **Sakr presses charges against 10 over affiliation to ISIS**

The Government's Commissioner at the Military Court, Judge Sakr Sakr, on Thursday pressed charges against 10 individuals over affiliation to ISIS. Five of those charged are already arrested and carry the Lebanese, Syrian, Palestinian, and Yemeni nationalities.

More Details:

<http://mtv.com.lb/EN/News//715943/>

- **Lebanon's Gemayel Criticizes 'Flawed' Electoral Law**

Head of Lebanon's Kataeb Party MP Nadim Gemayel slammed on Thursday the new parliamentary electoral law that was approved by the government, saying that it was flawed and lacked “unified standards.” He declared during a press conference that proportional representation in an electoral law was “acceptable if it is done right,” but it is rejected because it was “disfigured in this new project.”

More Details:

<https://english.aawsat.com/theaawsat/news-middle-east/lebanons-gemayel-criticizes-flawed-electoral>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Gulf Crisis: Saudi Media Provoke Morocco Over its Neutrality**

Morocco's neutrality in the Gulf crisis and its offer to mediate between the Gulf countries appears to have upset Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates whose state-owned media have made "provocative" moves towards Moroccan territorial integrity.

More Details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/06/219970/gulf-crisis-saudi-media-morocco/>

- **Qatari Port Sees Opportunity in Embargo**

The Saudi-led embargo on Qatar means that container lines can longer use deepwater terminals in the UAE for Qatari transshipment cargo, causing disruption to supply chains and forcing carriers to reroute cargo through Omani ports on the Arabian Sea. But the suspension of transshipment at the UAE's giant Jebel Ali and Khalifa ports may also be an opportunity for Qatar's biggest seaport, Hamad Port.

More Details:

<http://maritime-executive.com/article/qatari-port-sees-opportunity-in-embargo>

- **Surrounded No More: Qatar's Isolation Begins to Crumble**

As Saudi Arabia and its allies sought to accuse Qatar of sponsoring terrorism and to isolate the country, a number of powerful Middle Eastern states moved to challenge this initiative. Earlier this month, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and about half-a-dozen other countries broke off diplomatic relations with Doha, accusing it of sponsoring terror groups and destabilizing the Middle East.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/world/201706151054675471-qatar-isolation-failure/>

- **Kingdom has Isolated Iran Regionally and Globally**

Saudi Arabia has isolated Iran regionally and globally soon after the Riyadh summit, during which a new international alliance against terrorism and the Tehran regime was formed, said Iranian political writer and analyst Abdur Rahman Mahabadi. Mahabadi, who is also an Iranian Opposition leader, said that everyone agreed before the presidential elections in Iran that the regime was weakening day by day, especially after Khamenei failed to make Ibrahim Raisi the president.

More Details:

<http://sites.alriyadh.com/en/article/1159936/Kingdom-has-isolated-Iran-regionally-and-globally>

- **Iran, Oman Stress Expansion of Parliamentary Relations**

Iranian ambassador to Oman Mohammad Reza Nouri Shahroudi and Oman Consultative Assembly Speaker Khalid Hilal bin Nasser al-Mawali have emphasized the need for enhancement of parliamentary relations between the two countries.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82566392/>

- **Global Lenders Support Qatari Banks Hit by Gulf Rift**

A few large Asian, European and US banks are providing funds to help to keep Qatari banks running smoothly after a rift has dried up financing from the UAE, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, according to banking sources. "We're unscathed so far," one Qatari banker told Reuters news agency on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/06/global-lenders-support-qatari-banks-hit-gulf-rift-170615182403730.html>

- **America and Qatar's Latest Defense Deal**

The Qatar crisis has quickly become one of the Trump administration's most sensitive dilemmas in the Middle East. Since America's close Sunni Arab allies—Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)—took action against Doha earlier this month, the White House has sent the Qataris mixed messages about Washington's position on the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)'s row. At this juncture, it remains unclear what role the Trump administration will play in Saudi/Emirati efforts to pressure the Qataris into capitulation.

More Details:

<http://lobelog.com/america-and-qatars-latest-defense-deal/>

- **UN Urges Greater Support for Efforts to Combat Cholera in Yemen**

Amman – The United Nations urged on Thursday the international community to provide the necessary funding to combat the outbreak of cholera in Yemen and the threat of famine. It warned that the spread of cholera increases the risk of famine. UN humanitarian chief in Yemen, Jamie McGoldrick, warned during a press conference in Amman that the cholera outbreak in the country is depleting aid resources to the point they won't be able to provide food to people threatened by famine through the summer.

More Details:

<https://english.aawsat.com/theaawsat/news-middle-east/un-urges-greater-support-efforts-combat-cholera-yemen>

7. EGYPT

- **Lawmakers talk about boosting their security after Alexandria shooting**

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi suggested Thursday that there should be security for members of Congress when they gather in groups, regardless of whether a senior lawmaker is present.

More Details:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/lawmakers-talk-about-boosting-their-security-after-alexandria-shooting/>

- **Kobler in final Cairo talks**

In Cairo today on what is expected to be his last trip there in his current post, UN special envoy Martin Kobler said it was important to pass on Egypt's views on Libya to his successor. He also spoke of the importance of UN-Egyptian cooperation on Libya continuing in future.

More Details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/06/15/kobler-in-final-cairo-talks/>

- **Egypt Panel Defies Parliament on Red Sea Islands Transfer**

A senior constitutional panel in Egypt has concluded that two courts, which ruled to annul an agreement to transfer control of two Red Sea islands to Saudi Arabia, acted within their jurisdiction.

More Details:

<https://www.voanews.com/a/egypt-saudi-arabia-red-sea-islands/3902049.html>

- **Egypt arrests dozens ahead of proposed island protests**

Egyptian police stormed the homes of political opponents of a disputed 2016 agreement to transfer control of two Red Sea islands to Saudi Arabia, arresting dozens in raids in Cairo and at least 10 provinces across the country.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/06/egypt-arrests-dozens-proposed-island-protests-170615214000313.html>

- **Egypt on the edge as economy plummets**

The tourism industry has been hard hit by several years of political instability and violence in the country. The much-anticipated Arab Spring has been more like an extended winter of discontent for Egypt. The country has been in turmoil since mass protests in 2011 resulted in the ousting of President Hosni Mubarak.

More Details:

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2017-06-15-op-ed-egypt-on-the-edge-as-economy-plummets/#.WUNyG05JbIU>

- **Turkish opposition party head slams Egyptian president**

Opposition Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) leader Devlet Bahçeli has strongly condemned the Egyptian president for suggesting that recent restrictions imposed by some Arab countries on Qatar should be extended to Turkey as well.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkish-opposition-party-head-slams-egyptian-president/842532>

- **Egypt accuses of shipping weapons to South Sudan**

South Sudanese rebels have accused Egyptian, Ugandan, and South Sudanese governments of orchestrating a complex system to send weapons and ammunition to South Sudan in the form of humanitarian aid shipments, saying recent announcement by Cairo to send humanitarian aid to Juba is an attempt to hide the truth. The accusation comes after Egyptian government announced that it is ready to start monthly shipments of humanitarian aid to Juba.

More Details:

<http://www.southsudannewsagency.com/index.php/2017/06/15/egypt-accuses-shipping-weapons-south-sudan/>

- **Sisi, CIA director affirm strong Egypt-US strategic ties during Cairo talks**

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi and CIA Director Mike Pompeo affirmed strong Egyptian-US strategic ties during talks in Cairo on Thursday, presidential spokesman Alaa Youssef said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/270981/-.aspx>

- **Egyptian billet import prices rise on bookings from Turkey**

Prices for imported billet in Egypt pushed up over the past week, as several bookings of Turkish material were heard in the market, sources told Metal Bulletin on Thursday June 15.

More Details

<https://www.metalbulletin.com/Article/3725581/Latest-news/Egyptian-billet-import-prices-rise-on-bookings-from-Turkey.html>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Tunisia state of emergency extended throughout the summer**

A state of emergency in Tunisia was yesterday extended for a further four months – effectively wiping out the summer holiday season. It was imposed after a suicide attack on a police bus in November 2015.

More Details:

<http://www.travelweekly.co.uk/articles/281333/tunisia-state-of-emergency-extended-throughout-the-summer>

- **Amnesty criticizes Tunisia for arrests for no Ramadan fast**

"Imprisoning someone for smoking a cigarette or eating in public is an absurd violation of an individual's personal freedoms. Failing to conform to religious and social customs is not a criminal offence," said Heba Morayef, North Africa Research Director at Amnesty International, said in a statement issued on Tuesday.

More Details:

http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/generalnews/2017/06/15/amnesty-criticizes-tunisia-for-arrests-for-no-ramadan-fast_13607a66-89e6-4323-9744-643a9cd4ab34.html

- **Algeria's Belhadj slams boycott of Qatar**

Co-founder of Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front, Sheikh Ali Belhadj, has criticised the siege imposed by a number of Gulf and Arab countries on Qatar. In an interview with Quds Press, Belhadj strongly criticised the involvement of Islamic institutions and using them to achieve political purposes against the State of Qatar.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170615-algerias-belhadj-slams-boycott-of-qatar/>

- **Algeria's new government likely to prioritise social stability over policy reform, although protests will continue to intensify**

Abdelmadjid Tebboune was appointed as prime minister of Algeria on 25 May, following parliamentary elections earlier in the month. Tebboune, a veteran politician who formerly served as housing minister, replaced Abdelmalek Sellal. The new government line-up contained 15 new ministers, but few surprises, although long-time foreign minister Ramtane Lamamra was replaced by Abdelkader Messahel, who formerly held the Maghreb and Arab affairs portfolio.

More Details:

<http://www.janes.com/article/71469/algeria-s-new-government-likely-to-prioritise-social-stability-over-policy-reform-although-protests-will-continue-to-intensify>

- **Algeria, UAE discuss Gulf crisis in Algiers**

Algerian Foreign Minister Abdelkader Messahel on Thursday held talks with Advisor at the UAE Ministry of Presidential Affairs, Fares al-Mazrouei, as the developments of the Gulf crisis was in the agenda.

More Details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-06/16/c_136369203.htm

- **Eastern Libya tries to wrest control of oil supply again**

Libya's plans to lift oil production to 1m barrels a day this summer hit another political obstacle after the eastern government ordered deliveries handled by Swiss-based Glencore to halt because of its connection to Qatar. The order affects approximately 190,000 b/d of oil extracted from the Sarir and Misra fields, in southeast Libya, and exported from Tobruk's Hariga port.

More Details:

<http://www.petroleum-economist.com/articles/politics-economics/middle-east/2017/eastern-libya-tries-to-wrest-control-of-oil-supply-again>

- **Libya, a smuggling hypermarket**

Powerless against the disarray and growing anarchy that spreads around smuggling – of oil, gasoline, weapons and people – Hasan Dhawadi, mayor of the Libyan city of Sabratha, raised the alarm. In a press conference on 28 March, Dhawadi complained that this coastal city lacked the necessary means

to stop the small and large-scale trade that had involved entire families for generations and moves tens of millions of euros annually.

More Details:

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/libya-a-smuggling-hypermarket/>

- **UN agency fears for Africans held by gang in Libya**

The United Nations migration agency said it was "deeply concerned" about some 260 Somali and Ethiopian refugees allegedly held and mistreated by criminal gangs in Libya, saying it believed a harrowing video of them posted on social media was authentic. The International Organization for Migration noted the video posted June 9 on Facebook, in which it said many "abused Somalis and Ethiopians are seen huddled fearfully in a concrete room".

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/06/agency-fears-africans-held-gang-libya-170616002938094.html>

- **SA court orders Moroccan ship held over Western Sahara**

A South African court on Thursday ordered the further detention of a Moroccan vessel laden with phosphate mined from the disputed Western Sahara pending a trial to determine the owner of the cargo. The 34 000-tonne vessel from Western Sahara and destined for New Zealand was last month blocked from sailing off due to a court motion seeking that the vessel return its cargo. The motion argued that transportation of goods from disputed Western Sahara is illegal and in violation of international principles.

More Details:

<http://citizen.co.za/news/news-national/1544907/sa-court-orders-moroccan-ship-held-over-western-sahara/>

- **Protests in northern Morocco swell with calls for royal intervention**

Under the banner of the People's Movement, Moroccans have just staged the country's biggest political protest since the "Arab Spring" and some now say that only intervention by their king can defuse a deepening crisis. For months, demonstrators have taken to the streets in Rif region around the northern city of Al-Hoceima to vent their frustrations over the economic, social and political problems of a kingdom that presents itself as a beacon of stability in a turbulent region.

More Details:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-morocco-protests-idUSKBN1961KV>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **UN Chief Trying to Promote Pak-Afghan Cooperation to Fight Terrorism**

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said he was making efforts to promote cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan to jointly fight terrorism “That is important not only for the two countries but for the whole world,” he told reporters on Wednesday in Kabul where he met with President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah among other activities during a brief trip to Afghanistan, according to the transcript of his press conference issued at UN Headquarters in New York.

More Details:

<http://www.app.com.pk/un-chief-trying-to-promote-pak-afghan-cooperation-to-fight-terrorism/>

- **Kabul Explosion: Suicide Bomber Strikes outside Shia Mosque in Afghan Capital**

Two people have been killed and at least five injured in a terrorist attack on a Shia mosque in Kabul, the Afghan Interior Ministry reports. Witnesses reported hearing a blast and gunfire at the al-Zahra mosque, located on the western outskirts of the city, on Thursday night.

More Details:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/kabul-explosion-mosque-shia-muslims-bomb-explosion-attack-claims-afghanistan-latest-updates-today-a7792391.html>

- **Afghan Ambassador Calls on NA Speaker**

National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that a peaceful and stable Afghanistan is in the vital interest of Pakistan and the region. He was speaking to Afghanistan’s Ambassador to Pakistan Dr Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal, who called on him at the Parliament House, Islamabad on Thursday, said a press release. He further said that Pakistan believes in mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbours.

More Details:

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/06/15/afghan-ambassador-calls-on-na-speaker/>

- **Pentagon to Send Almost 4,000 More American Troops to Afghanistan**

The Pentagon will send almost 4,000 additional American troops to Afghanistan in order to break a stalemate in a 16-year-long war, according to the Associated Press, citing a “Trump administration official.” The official told the AP that the move by Defense Secretary James Mattis could be

announced “as early as next week.” A U.S. official told Breitbart News that “no decisions have been made yet.”

More Details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2017/06/15/pentagon-to-send-almost-4000-more-american-troops-to-afghanistan/>

- **Kabul, Islamabad Should Work Out Differences: UN Chief**

On his maiden trip to Kabul, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged the need for a peaceful solution to the Afghan conflict while urging Pakistan and Afghanistan to resolve their differences via dialogue, Turkey's Anadolu Agency (AA) reported. Guterres concluded his one-day trip to the Afghan capital on Thursday. Upon his arrival in Kabul a day earlier, he met with some of the 800,000 Afghans displaced by conflict over the last 18 months.

More Details:

<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/wn/newsworld.php?id=1365044>

- **China Hopes Pakistan and India Keep Hostility Out of SCO**

China has expressed the hope that Pakistan and India will keep their bilateral hostility out of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the Times of India reported. Pakistan and India formally joined the SCO at its summit in Astana, Kazakhstan, last week in the first such expansion of the now eight-member group. A ceremony to formally welcome the two countries to the bloc was held at the SCO headquarters in Beijing on Thursday.

More Details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1339710/china-hopes-pakistan-and-india-keep-hostility-out-of-sco>

- **Pakistan PM Questioned by Panel Over Family Wealth**

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif created history on Thursday, by appearing before investigators probing a corruption case against his family, the first any head of state has done so in Pakistan. Sharif was questioned for three hours by an investigation team over his family's links to alleged offshore accounts named in the Panama Papers.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/pakistan-pm-questioned-by-panel-over-family-wealth/842434>

- **Islamabad's Crippling Economy**

When the Capital Development Authority (CDA) seals a home-based business, the scene left behind resembles a prison. It is characterised by dark rooms, grilled windows with no view, scanty belongings, and unbearable heat.

More Details:

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1436560/islamabads-crippling-economy/>

- **Pak Terror Cause of Kashmir's Plight: India Blasts Islamabad at UNHRC**

Cross-border terrorism promoted by Pakistan is the "fundamental" reason for the unrest in Kashmir, India said at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva while slamming Islamabad for raking up the issue for propaganda purposes and for ignoring its own obligation under UN resolutions to first vacate the illegal occupation of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

More Details:

http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/pak-terror-cause-of-kashmir-s-plight-india-blasts-islamabad-at-unhrc-117061600219_1.html

- **World Sindhi Congress stage anti-Pakistan protest outside UN in Geneva**

Geneva [Switzerland], June 16 (ANI): Members of the World Sindhi Congress (WSC) held anti-Pakistan protests in front of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva against Islamabad's use of brute force against the Sindhi community. The protest held on June 14 was also attended by representatives of the Baloch community, Gilgit and Baltistan, Pakistani occupied Kashmir and human rights defenders of other nations. The WSC protested against enforced disappearances of Sindhi political activists, the China Pakistan Economic Corridor and other human rights abuses against Sindhi people.

More Details:

<http://www.aninews.in/newsdetail-NA/MzlwMDQx/world-sindhi-congress-stage-anti-pakistan-protest-outside-un-in-geneva.html>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkey thanks Tunisia for closing FETO-linked school**

Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has acknowledged Tunisia's support for Turkey following the defeated coup of July 2016, saying the North African country has also shut down a school linked with the Fetullah Terrorist Organization (FETO).

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkey-thanks-tunisia-for-closing-feto-linked-school/842578>

- **Turkey condemns terror attack in Afghan capital**

Turkey has condemned the recent terror attack on a Shia mosque in Afghanistan's capital Kabul, which killed at least one person and injured two others. In a statement on Friday, Turkey's Foreign Ministry expressed "deep sorrow" over Thursday's "inhuman" attack. "We condemn this inhuman terrorist attack at a place of worship during the holy month of Ramadan in the strongest possible terms. We wish Allah's mercy upon those who lost their lives, speedy recovery to the wounded," the statement said.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/190854/turkeys-external-assets-rise-in-april>

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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