



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

MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

17 MAY 2017

NO: 2372

1. IRAQ.....	4
• ISIS Attack near Jordan Border; 81 Killed in Iraq	4
• Iraqi Turkmen to propose 'special status' for Kirkuk	4
• Trump continues US national emergency with respect to Iraq.	4
• Kurdish Peshmerga and Shia paramilitary forces to continue cooperation in Iraq: PMU official	4
• Iraqi Forces Break into the Last Terrorist Stronghold in Mosul	5
• Convert or die, says Shia leader to Iraqi Christians.....	5
• Iraqi deportations: the airlines helping the Home Office deport refugees to war zones	5
• 90% of Iraq's Mosul freed from IS, said Iraqi army officials.....	5
• As defeat of Islamic State nears, Americans and Iraqis start negotiating presence of U.S. troops	6
• The barbaric use of child soldiers in Iraq.....	6
• Iraq supports OPEC continued oil output reduction	6
• Iraq's Hatra retaken from IS militants, but still vulnerable	6
• US trumpets Mosul gains, but Iraq says more aid needed	7
• Iraq's Sadr Urges Tehran-Riyadh Dialogue.....	7
• Soaring Temperatures Next Challenge for Mosul Displaced: IOM.....	7
• KRG aiming for same-day announcement of election results in next vote.....	7
• Iraqi forces warn Mosul residents to avoid using cars, motorcycles	7
• Peace in Iraq	8
2. SYRIA.....	8
• Syria dismisses US allegations about executing, burning prisoners as lies	8
• Syria Opposition Expresses Reservations on De Mistura's 'Constitutional Mechanism'	8
• Syrians brave mines, execution to flee IS in Raqa	9
• Syrian army declares al-Qaboun a safe area	9
• Syrian civilians killed in airstrike blamed on US	9
• Syrian Kurdish council condemns arrest of KDP reporter by Rojava Asayish	9
• 23 Civilians Killed in US Airstrike on Albu Kamal, Syria	10
• Low expectations as Syria talks resume in Geneva	10
3. IRAN	10
• Rouhani's staying president to help Iran's rail industries	10
• Iran Election Rules Require One-Shot Announcement of Results: Minister	10
• Iranians in Pakistan counting hours for upcoming polls	11
• Iran election results to be announced all at once: Interior minister	11
• Iran, India stress implementation of Chabahar agreement	11
• Unemployment central to Iran election.....	12
• Iran UN ambassador: Women worst affected by Middle East crises	12
• Iran changes course of road to Mediterranean coast to avoid US forces.....	12
• Jahangiri bows out of election campaign in favor of Rouhani	12
• Iran Forced to Change Course in Kurdish Areas of North East Syria	13

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE.....	13
• US Officials: Trump's Intel Leak Endangered Life of Spy Placed Inside ISIS by Israel	13
• Israeli Settler Shoots Stone-throwers in West Bank, Palestinian Wounded, Army Says	13
• Israeli minister reportedly says it is time to assassinate Syria's Assad	13
• Trump's UN envoy: 'Western Wall is part of Israel'	14
• Peace talks could dilute Hamas' power.....	14
• PA chairman cheers prisoners, praises terrorists.....	14
• Palestinians insist on two-state solution.....	14
• Gaza citizens remain biggest losers of decadelong political dispute	15
• Narendra Modi says India hopes for united Palestine	15
• Nikki Haley calls for US to move embassy to Jerusalem	15
5. JORDAN and LEBANON.....	15
• Relocating German troops to Jordan 'costly, unrealistic'	15
• Jordan and Israel fall out over deadly Jerusalem shooting	16
• Trump to call Jordan's King Abdullah amid intel report.....	16
• Lebanese Delegation in Washington to Avert US Sanctions Threat.....	16
• Jumblatt via Twitter: President Supposed To Be Invited To Us, Islamic Summit.....	16
• Sheikh Naim Qassem criticizes UN over hostility towards Hezbollah	17
• Groundbreaking Beirut Pride Defiant in Face of Homophobic Threats	17
• Lebanon Central Bank Governor Highlights Strong Monetary Position.....	17
• Lebanon lauds Russia's political support — minister.....	17
• Lebanese Mufti receives Saudi Acting Chargé D'Affaires.....	18
6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA.....	18
• U.S. Signs Defense Deal with United Arab Emirates with Eye on Iran	18
• Abu Dhabi Crown Prince talks terrorism with US secretary of state	18
• Intl. activists warn about Yemen's human crisis	18
• Qatar Doesn't Support Muslim Brotherhood, No Future For Assad In Syria – FM	19
• Oman, UK to hold military exercise in 2018.....	19
• Qatari Emir, Saudi FM discuss relations	19
• SsangYong Motor reenters Saudi Arabia after a 4 year absence	19
• Top Bahrain activist denied bail - rights group.....	19
• DP World working to support Dubai's economic and industrial development plans says Group Chairman and CEO.....	20
• Yemen's Army Draws up New Plan to Free Hodeidah City	20
7. EGYPT.....	20
• Egypt in \$750million debt payout to oil firms	20
• Egypt's future rests on its people's shoulders	20
• Egypt's Sisi: Newly-discovered gas fields to save about \$3.6 bln yearly	21
• Trump to Sisi: See you soon in Cairo	21
• The Muslim Brotherhood Lobbies Congress	21
• Pope Francis' Egypt visit could spark Sunni-Shiite dialogue.....	21
• USD inflows to Egypt reach \$45bn in 6M.....	22
• Egypt signs deal with Visa to develop infrastructure for financial transactions	22
• Al-Sisi expresses support of political agreement in Burundi.....	22

• Egypt plans new controls on social media	22
8. NORTH AFRICA.....	23
• Algeria to resume flights to Libya, reopen embassy in Tripoli soon	23
• Nigeria, Morocco sign two bilateral agreements	23
• New US\$350 Million Program Unleashes Opportunities for Financial sector growth in Morocco	23
• Tunisia extends state of emergency for one month	23
• Malta, Tunisia should do more to tackle migration, Italian parliamentary commission says...	24
• German oil firm accused of withholding \$900m from Libya	24
• Can Libyan Government National Accord overcome 40 years of conflict over oil?.....	24
• Cautious progress in Libya's oil output	24
• Libya's Marshall Haftar may use politics in addition to force	25
• Sound Energy prepares for Morocco bid	25
9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN	25
• Nawaz meets Putin as Xi also joins in.....	25
• Strong political will needed to eradicate terrorism	25
• MoD: 71 Rebels Killed, 53 Injured, 10 Suspicious Detained.....	25
• Taliban suffer heavy casualties in Laghman operations: Local officials	26
• Armed Attackers Storm RTA TV Station In Jalalabad	26
• Iranians in Pakistan counting hours for upcoming polls	26
• Pakistan keen to expand co-op with Azerbaijan	26
• UK agencies claim heroin found on Pakistan International Airlines flight	27
• Kulbhushan Jadhav death sentence: Pakistan's military courts represent a deeper politico- military agenda.....	27
10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST.....	27
• Turkey welcomes Egyptians who fled coup: Ex-minister	27
• US to increase cooperation on Turkey's fight against PKK, Mattis tells Işık.....	27

1. IRAQ

- **ISIS Attack near Jordan Border; 81 Killed in Iraq**

According to Iraqi authorities, the Islamic State militants are in control of less than five square miles of Mosul. Baghdad hopes to declare victory before the commencement of Ramadan, which is expected in about ten days.

More Details:

<http://original.antiwar.com/updates/2017/05/16/isis-attack-near-jordan-border-81-killed-in-iraq/>

- **Iraqi Turkmen to propose 'special status' for Kirkuk**

Turkmen parties will submit a proposal to the Iraqi government on how to govern majority-Turkmen areas, including calls to give the northern city of Kirkuk a "special status", an Iraqi Turkmen leader said Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/iraqi-turkmen-to-propose-special-status-for-kirkuk/819747>

- **Trump continues US national emergency with respect to Iraq.**

President Donald Trump continued the national emergency with respect to the stabilization of Iraq, the White House said on Tuesday. In a letter to Congress, Trump said obstacles remain with respect to the orderly reconstruction of Iraq, restoring peace and security and developing the country's institutions.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/us/201705171053679617-usa-iraq-national-emergency/>

- **Kurdish Peshmerga and Shia paramilitary forces to continue cooperation in Iraq: PMU official**

Ahmed al-Asadi, the spokesperson of the Shia paramilitary Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), on Tuesday rejected reports by Kurdish media that there is no coordination between the PMU and Peshmerga forces in northern Iraq.

More Details:

<http://aranews.net/2017/05/kurdish-peshmerga-and-shia-paramilitary-forces-to-continue-cooperation-in-iraq-pmu-official/>

- **Iraqi Forces Break into the Last Terrorist Stronghold in Mosul**

Iraqi government forces stormed today Al-Najjar district, the last connecting with the besieged Old City of Mosul, where they claim to have reconquered almost 90 percent of the west of that town.

More Details:

<http://plenglish.com/index.php?o=rn&id=12953&SEO=iraqi-forces-break-into-the-last-terrorist-stronghold-in-mosul>

- **Convert or die, says Shia leader to Iraqi Christians**

Dozens of Iraqi Christian families filed a lawsuit against the head of the Iraq's Shia Waqf (Iraqi Shia Endowment Fund), Sheikh Alaa al-Moussawi, on charges of incitement against Christians.

More Details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/5/16/convert-or-die-says-shia-leader-to-iraqi-christians>

- **Iraqi deportations: the airlines helping the Home Office deport refugees to war zones**

Home Office is trying to deport dozens of refugees to Iraq, with at least 30 people currently held in detention centres awaiting forced removal. But instead of using high-profile charter flights, the Home Office is now turning to a handful of major airlines to take Iraqi deportees as scheduled passengers: Royal Jordanian, Turkish Airlines, and Qatar Airlines. Strong resistance by deportees and supporters may yet win out though, and several flights have been cancelled in the last week.

More Details:

<https://corporatewatch.org/news/2017/may/16/iraqi-deportations-airlines-helping-home-office-deport-refugees-war-zones>

- **90% of Iraq's Mosul freed from IS, said Iraqi army officials**

Iraqi forces have recaptured nearly 90 percent of west Mosul from the Islamic State group and jihadists in the city are on the "brink of total defeat", officers said Tuesday, according to Agence France-Presse.

More Details:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/90-of-iraqs-mosul-freed-from-is-said-iraqi-army-officials/>

- **As defeat of Islamic State nears, Americans and Iraqis start negotiating presence of U.S. troops**

With U.S. and Iraqi officials talking of the imminent defeat of the Islamic State in Iraq, President Trump faces a challenge to swing a deal that President Obama failed to nail down: an agreement with Baghdad to keep U.S. forces in Iraq after the fighting ends.

More Details:

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/may/16/donald-trump-faces-iraq-sofa-after-isis-defeat/>

- **The barbaric use of child soldiers in Iraq**

There are many barbaric aspects to the wars in Iraq, but perhaps few are as grim as the use of child soldiers by various armed groups. The recruitment of child soldiers under the age of 18 is a war crime according to international law, yet, particularly in Iraq, there has been a widespread use of boys, some of them scarcely old enough to clothe themselves. One wonders what the future holds for these scarred and brutalized children, and what a terrible legacy evil men have inflicted on post-war Iraq.

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/10660/The-barbaric-use-of-child-soldiers-in-Iraq>

- **Iraq supports OPEC continued oil output reduction**

The Iraqi government Tuesday announced its backing to continued reduction of oil output, a move taken previously by OPEC and non-OPEC oil ministers.

More Details:

<http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2612331&Language=en>

- **Iraq's Hatra retaken from IS militants, but still vulnerable**

Iraq is assessing the rehabilitation needs of the ancient city of Hatra, near Mosul in the country's north, after retaking it from the Islamic State (IS) on April 26. The jihadist group had occupied the site since 2014 and in March 2015 bulldozed some of the ruins, which date back to the second century and include ancient architecture and other priceless antiquities.

More Details:

[http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/05/hatar-iraq-heritage-unesco-tourism.html](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/05/hatra-iraq-heritage-unesco-tourism.html)

- **US trumpets Mosul gains, but Iraq says more aid needed**

During a visit south of Mosul on Monday, a senior US official praised territorial gains against the Islamic State group in Iraq, but local officials cautioned more aid is needed to rebuild following victories against the extremists.

More Details:

http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/ef37a211-c3be-4615-ba7a-0c8d9a8a2738

- **Iraq's Sadr Urges Tehran-Riyadh Dialogue**

Iraqi prominent Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr on Monday urged Saudi Arabia and Iran to engage in “serious dialogue” with a view to averting what he described as a potential “sectarian war” in the region. “We have been pleased with recent positive developments in Saudi Arabia-Iraq relations,” Sadr declared in a statement released by his office on Monday, Al-Bawaba News reported.

More Details:

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/national/64632/iraq-s-sadr-urges-tehran-riyadh-dialogue>

- **Soaring Temperatures Next Challenge for Mosul Displaced: IOM**

It was hard enough coping with flight from conflict-hit areas during the winter months. Now, for the hundreds of thousands of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Mosul, summer heat is the new challenge. Having survived ISIL, most families are now bracing themselves to face their second most dangerous enemy – the sizzling sun and the sweltering temperatures that come with it.

More Details:

<http://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/soaring-temperatures-next-challenge-mosul-displaced-iom-enar>

- **KRG aiming for same-day announcement of election results in next vote**

The election commission in the Kurdistan Region is working to find a mechanism whereby election results are announced the same day and for that negotiations are being held with a vote counting company and various political parties.

More Details:

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/160520171>

- **Iraqi forces warn Mosul residents to avoid using cars, motorcycles**

Iraqi forces warned residents living in areas still under the control of Islamic State (ISIS) in western Mosul to avoiding using motorcycles and cars in the city. Commander of Nineveh Operation,

Abdulmir Yaralla, said on Tuesday (May 16) that the hour is close in regards to liberating the western side of the city and he called on civilians to avoid using motorcycles and cars.

More Details:

<http://www.nrttv.com/en/Details.aspx?Jimare=14496>

- **Peace in Iraq**

It is reported that Iraq's Ambassador to the Holy See has suggested to Pope Francis to consider visiting Iraq. His idea is to sow peace where there has been long sectarian violence since the fall of Saddam Hussein.

More Details:

<http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20170517/letters/Peace-in-Iraq.648178>

2. SYRIA

- **Syria dismisses US allegations about executing, burning prisoners as lies**

'The accusations that the Syrian government had created a so-called crematorium in the Sednaya prison are not true, just like previous claims of 'chemical weapons' and 'barrel bombs dropping' repeated by the US administration,' the ministry underscored, adding, 'These accusations .. are a figment of the imagination of this administration and its agents.' A source in the ministry, meantime, said that the US government is 'spreading such fake news to justify meddling and hostile policies towards independent countries'.

More Details:

<http://en.alalam.ir/news/1969143>

- **Syria Opposition Expresses Reservations on De Mistura's 'Constitutional Mechanism'**

UN Special envoy to Syria Staffan de Mistura sought on Tuesday to achieve a breakthrough in the "negotiations stalemate" by suggesting a new mechanism on legal and constitutional issues, but opposition forces expressed their reservations on the proposal. A leading opposition member told Asharq Al-Awsat on Tuesday that during the sixth round of Syrian peace talks in Geneva, de Mistura proposed a special mechanism for discussing Syria's new constitution, to be the base on which negotiations would later be built.

More Details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/theaawsat/news-middle-east/syria-opposition-expresses-reservations-de-misturas-constitutional-mechanism>

- **Syrians brave mines, execution to flee IS in Raqa**

The main section of a camp for the displaced in the northern Syrian town of Ain Issa is full, but civilians fleeing the Islamic State group keep on arriving. The camp is a stark affair, with dusty tents flapping in the wind atop white gravel that covers inhabitants in a fine white dust.

More Details:

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/news/world/syrians-brave-mines-execution-to-flee-is-in-raqa/article/492798>

- **Syrian army declares al-Qaboun a safe area**

After 3 months of heavy battles in al-Qaboun district in Syria's capital Damascus, the army is now in full control of the district. Syrian forces mopping up the district, found many signs of foreign support for terrorist groups. Press TV's Zahraa al-Derzi has visited the district and filed this report.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/05/17/522165/Syria-army-declares-alQaboun-safe-area>

- **Syrian civilians killed in airstrike blamed on US**

Several civilians were killed in an airstrike on an Islamic State held village in northern Syria, activists have reported. It was not immediately clear who is behind the airstrike south east of the extremist group's de facto capital of Raqqa, and various activists groups reported different casualty tolls.

More Details:

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/worldnews/2017/05/16/news/syrian-civilians-killed-in-airstrike-blamed-on-us-1027165/>

- **Syrian Kurdish council condemns arrest of KDP reporter by Rojava Asayish**

The Kurdish National Council (KNC) on Tuesday condemned the arrest of Zagros TV reporter Barzan Hussein, who was arrested on 13 May in Rumelan town in Syria's northeastern Hasakah province. "The journalist Barzan Hussein has been arrested three times and has been threatened more than once, his camera was confiscated, but he was able with great courage to convey the voice of the Kurdish National Council (KNC) in Girke Lege area," the KNC said in a statement. "He was like the unknown soldier in the pursuit of truth."

More Details:

<http://aranews.net/2017/05/syrian-kurdish-council-condemns-arrest-kdp-reporter-rojava-asayish/>

- **23 Civilians Killed in US Airstrike on Albu Kamal, Syria**

A US-led coalition air strike on Monday killed 23 civilians in a Syrian town held by Daesh on the border with Iraq, a monitor said. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the strike on the town of Albu Kamal hit around 3:00 am local time.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/23-civilians-killed-us-airstrike-albu-kamal-syria-975002>

- **Low expectations as Syria talks resume in Geneva**

A new round of Syria peace talks has opened in Geneva as the government in Damascus fiercely denied it used a prison crematorium to hide evidence of thousands of murdered detainees. Five previous rounds of UN-backed negotiations have failed to yield a solution to the six-year conflict and hopes for a major breakthrough remain dim.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/05/expectations-syria-talks-resume-geneva-170516084606967.html>

3. IRAN

- **Rouhani's staying president to help Iran's rail industries**

If President Hassan Rouhani wins a second term on May 19 his administration will be a source of great hope for Iran's rail industries, according to a businessman in the sector. "Our situations grew better only a year or two ago. In the few years that preceded, our products had been stalled," Ahmad Hosseini Semnani, factory director at Kosar Wagon Company told Trend May 16.

More Details:

<http://en.trend.az/iran/business/2755501.html>

- **Iran Election Rules Require One-Shot Announcement of Results: Minister**

Speaking at a television program on Tuesday night, Rahmani Fazli said results of the ballot counts in the Friday's election should not be publicized at intervals according to the rules, stressing that he himself would announce the official results only once. The minister also predicted that the president-elect would be known at the Friday's polls without the need for a run-off, considering the withdrawal of candidates and the coalitions in recent days.

More Details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/05/17/1410482/iran-election-rules-require-one-shot-announcement-of-results-minister>

- **Iranians in Pakistan counting hours for upcoming polls**

Iranian nationals in Pakistan are eagerly and impatiently waiting to cast their votes in the upcoming presidential elections and play their own role in the fate and future of their country. Overall five polling stations would be established in different cities in Pakistan for the 12th Iran presidential election which is to be held on May 19, at the Iranian embassy in Islamabad and four consulates in cities of Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar and Quetta.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82533196/>

- **Iran election results to be announced all at once: Interior minister**

Abdolreza Rahmani-Fazli made the remarks in a televised interview on Tuesday, saying this has been enshrined in Iran's Presidential Election Law. Given that some candidates have abandoned their bids and some alliances have been formed to strengthen certain campaigns, it is estimated that the polls would not head into a second round, he added.

More Details:

<http://iran-daily.com/News/192949.html?catid=3&title=Iran-election-results-to-be-announced-all-at-once--Interior-minister>

- **Iran, India stress implementation of Chabahar agreement**

The session was headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar on the Indian side, and Deputy FM for Asia and Oceania Affairs, Ebrahim Rahimpour on the Iranian side. Representatives from ministries of energy and natural resources, economy, industries, commerce and ports organization were present at the meeting, where the sides voiced firm resolve to double efforts for increasing trade transactions and implementing the Chabahar trilateral agreement that was signed with the Afghan side in Tehran last May.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/125415/Iran-India-stress-implementation-of-Chabahar-agreement>

- **Unemployment central to Iran election**

The choice for Iran’s presidential election on May 19 comes down to four men, two of whom are the front runners. Current President Hassan Rouhani – of the Reformists bloc - is facing off against Ebrahim Raisi - a Principalist.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/video/news/2017/05/unemployment-central-iran-election-170517053150795.html>

- **Iran UN ambassador: Women worst affected by Middle East crises**

Expressing his sorrow over the continued crises in the region, Gholamali Khoshroo made the remarks on Tuesday, while addressing a UN Security Council meeting held in New York. “Women in the Middle East region live with a huge fear resulting from the Takfiri ideologies used by extremist and terrorist groups,” he said. “Terrorist groups systematically target women with methods such as slavery, sexual assault, and sexual exploitation.”

More Details:

<http://iran-daily.com/News/192943.html?catid=3&title=Iran-UN-ambassador--Women-worst-affected-by-Middle-East-crises>

- **Iran changes course of road to Mediterranean coast to avoid US forces**

Iran has changed the course of a land corridor that it aims to carve to the Mediterranean coast after officials in Iraq and Tehran feared a growing US military presence in north-eastern Syria had made its original path unviable. The new corridor has been moved 140 miles south to avoid a buildup of US forces that has been assembled to fight Islamic State (Isis). It will now use the Isis-occupied town of Mayadin as a hub in eastern Syria, avoiding the Kurdish north-east, which had earlier been mooted by Iranian leaders as a crucial access route.

More Details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/16/iran-changes-course-of-road-to-mediterranean-coast-to-avoid-us-forces>

- **Jahangiri bows out of election campaign in favor of Rouhani**

The Iranian 1st VP, while stepping aside the presidential elections, invited all to vote for the reformist candidate Hassan Rouhani, “Along with you, I will vote for Rouhani,” said Jahangiri inviting all reformists, principlists and moderates to do the same.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/125412/Jahangiri-bows-out-of-election-campaign-in-favor-of-Rouhani>

- **Iran Forced to Change Course in Kurdish Areas of North East Syria**

Iran is diverting the course of a land corridor it aims to carve through Syria ultimately linking Tehran, through Iraq, to the Mediterranean coast, in order to avoid a confrontation with US-backed forces marching on the Islamic State group stronghold of Raqqa, according to recent media reports. Opening up the land corridor has been a long-term strategic aim of Tehran.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/iran-forced-change-course-kurdish-areas-north-east-syria-975110>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **US Officials: Trump's Intel Leak Endangered Life of Spy Placed Inside ISIS by Israel**

US officials have reportedly said that US President Donald Trump's intelligence disclosure to Russian officials last week has put at risk a spy placed inside ISIS by Israel.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/US-officials-Trumps-intel-leak-endangered-life-of-spy-placed-inside-ISIS-by-Israel-490968>

- **Israeli Settler Shoots Stone-throwers in West Bank, Palestinian Wounded, Army Says**

An Israeli settler shot and moderately wounded Wednesday morning a Palestinian he claims attacked him with stones along the West Bank's main highway. The settler claims he acted in self-defense.

More details:

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.789718>

- **Israeli minister reportedly says it is time to assassinate Syria's Assad**

An Israeli minister under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Tuesday that, based on recent reports of new atrocities, it is time to "eliminate (President) Assad."

More details:

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2017/05/17/israeli-minister-reportedly-says-it-is-time-to-assassinate-syrias-assad.html>

- **Trump's UN envoy: 'Western Wall is part of Israel'**

Speaking in an interview with CBN, Nikki Haley stresses that while she is unaware of official US policy, she firmly believes Kotel to be 'part of Israel'; mixed signals continue to flow out of the White House on Trump administration's position, with national security advisor McMaster refusing to directly answer questions on the matter, and Sean Spicer only acknowledging the Kotel's religious significance and geographic location.

More details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4963344,00.html>

- **Peace talks could dilute Hamas' power**

Earlier this month, Khaled Meshaal, political leader of the Hamas movement, announced that his successor will be Ismail Haniyeh, prime minister of Gaza between 2007 and 2014. This means that the center of gravity of that Palestinian movement will now switch from Meshaal's exile in Qatar to Gaza. It also indicates that the charismatic Haniya, assisted by Yehiya Sinwar, the new, belligerent leader of Hamas' military wing, will now take a more militant stance vis-à-vis Israel.

More details:

<http://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/op-ed/article150905917.html#storylink=cpy>

- **PA chairman cheers prisoners, praises terrorists**

Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas during his trip to India praised "martyred" terrorists as well as the jailed terrorists who are on a hunger strike, calling them "heroes."

More details:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/229760>

- **Palestinians insist on two-state solution**

Just days ahead of President Donald Trump's Middle East trip, the Palestinian envoy to the United States said any new Israeli-Palestinian peace push must be based on a two-state solution but that the US administration had yet to present an actual plan for reviving negotiations.

More details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/59bf32ce-c434-4d32-9c30-d1259973598d.aspx>

- **Gaza citizens remain biggest losers of decadelong political dispute**

In a new move to clamp down on Hamas in the Gaza Strip, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas issued a presidential decree April 20 exempting Gaza citizens from the fees of services rendered by the ministries, institutions and bodies affiliated with the Palestinian Authority (PA). The decision includes first-time service fees, which go to the treasury of the Hamas-run Ministry of Finance in Gaza.

More details:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/05/palestine-president-expempt-gaza-taxes-pressure-hamas.html#ixzz4hJd3SWXO>

- **Narendra Modi says India hopes for united Palestine**

In a significant assertion ahead of his visit to Israel likely in July, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said “India has been unwavering in its support of the Palestinian cause” but added that New Delhi hopes to see a “sovereign, independent, united and viable Palestine, co-existing peacefully with Israel”.

More details:

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/current-affairs/170517/modi-says-india-hopes-for-a-united-palestine.html>

- **Nikki Haley calls for US to move embassy to Jerusalem**

U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley on Tuesday night called for the embassy to be moved from Tel Aviv, Israel, to Jerusalem despite the Trump administration's apparent stalling on the issue.

More details:

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/nikki-haley-calls-for-us-to-move-embassy-to-jerusalem/article/2623322>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Relocating German troops to Jordan 'costly, unrealistic'**

The German government hinted on Monday at the possibility of moving the personnel to Jordan after lawmakers were denied for a visit the Incirlik Air Base. However, experts wary on Berlin's possible move, saying that it now would be rational

More details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2017/05/17/relocating-german-troops-to-jordan-costly-unrealistic>

- **Jordan and Israel fall out over deadly Jerusalem shooting**

An Israeli Cabinet minister called off a long-planned visit to Jordan on Tuesday for a joint scientific venture following a spat between the countries over a deadly shooting in Jerusalem.

More details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/5/16/jordan-and-israel-fall-out-over-deadly-jerusalem-shooting>

- **Trump to call Jordan's King Abdullah amid intel report**

Jordan says King Abdullah II is to speak by phone later Tuesday to President Donald Trump. The Royal Court says arrangements for the call were made last week.

More details:

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/trump-call-jordans-king-abdullah-amid-intel-report/>

- **Lebanese Delegation in Washington to Avert US Sanctions Threat**

In light of concerns that the US administration might impose new financial sanctions against Lebanon, a parliamentary delegation began a visit to Washington to ward off the threat, media reports said on Wednesday.

More details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/230092-report-lebanese-delegation-in-washington-to-avert-us-sanctions-threat>

- **Jumblatt via Twitter: President Supposed To Be Invited To Us, Islamic Summit**

"Since Lebanon has that distinguished feature of sectarian diversity, and since its president is Christian, it would have been better to invite him as President of the Republic to the American-Islamic summit," Walid Jumblatt, head of the Democratic Gathering, said via Twitter this morning.

More details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/79328/Jumblatt-via-Twitter-President-supposed-to-be-invited-to-US-Islamic-summit>

- **Sheikh Naim Qassem criticizes UN over hostility towards Hezbollah**

Sheikh Naim Qassem made the remarks on Monday in Beirut when he received United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Sigrid Kaag. He that UN Chief's fresh report on 1559 and 1701 resolutions was miserable attempt to incite the Lebanese against the Hezbollah resistance movement and its role.

More details:

http://en.abna24.com/news/middle-east/sheikh-naim-qassem-criticizes-un-over-hostility-towards-hezbollah_830195.html

- **Groundbreaking Beirut Pride Defiant in Face of Homophobic Threats**

It may be the Paris of the Middle East, but until recently living out their romances on the streets of Beirut was unthinkable for Lebanon's LGBT community. A law forbidding "sexual intercourse against nature" was regularly used to prosecute gay people.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/loop/groundbreaking-beirut-pride-defiant-face-homophobic-threats-975094>

- **Lebanon Central Bank Governor Highlights Strong Monetary Position**

The Lebanese government will extend Central Bank Governor Riad Salameh's term, which was due to expire this summer, a governmental source told Asharq Al-Awsat. The source said that during a cabinet session on Tuesday, Lebanese ministers would renew, for the sixth time, the governor's term until 2023, in a measure aimed at reassuring the Lebanese banking sector, which regards Salameh as the guarantor of Lebanon's monetary position.

More details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/thaerabbass/news-middle-east/lebanon-central-bank-governor-highlights-strong-monetary-position>

- **Lebanon lauds Russia's political support — minister**

The Lebanese information minister says the country needs 'a mediator like Russia that will help the Lebanese and other local nationalities to solve their problems'

More details:

<http://tass.com/world/946077>

- **Lebanese Mufti receives Saudi Acting Chargé D'Affaires**

The Grand Mufti of Republic of Lebanon Sheikh Abdel-Latif Derian received here today Acting Chargé D'Affaires of the Saudi Embassy in Lebanon Counselor Walid bin Abdullah Bukhari.

More details:

<http://sites.alriyadh.com/en/article/1159105/Lebanese-Mufti-receives-Saudi-Acting-Charg-DAffaires>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **U.S. Signs Defense Deal with United Arab Emirates with Eye on Iran**

The United States has signed a new defense cooperation agreement with the United Arab Emirates, which like Saudi Arabia regards Iran as a strategic adversary that is fomenting conflicts throughout the Middle East.

More Details;

<https://www.rferl.org/a/us-signs-defense-deal-united-arab-emirates-eye-on-iran/28492609.html>

- **Abu Dhabi Crown Prince talks terrorism with US secretary of state**

Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan met with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to discuss ways to increase cooperation to fight terrorism, extremism and violence in the Middle East.

More Details;

<http://www.arabianbusiness.com/abu-dhabi-crown-prince-talks-terrorism-with-us-secretary-of-state-674300.html>

- **Intl. activists warn about Yemen's human crisis**

With the deteriorating humanitarian crisis in Yemen due to a severe cholera outbreak, international aid organizations have urged Saudi Arabia to lift its aerial and naval blockade on the impoverished nation to allow humanitarian aid into the country. Our correspondent in Sana'a Mohammed al-Attab has more in this report.

More Details;

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/05/17/522162/Intl-activists-warn-about-Yemen-human-crisis>

- **Qatar Doesn't Support Muslim Brotherhood, No Future For Assad In Syria – FM**

Qatar does not support the Muslim Brotherhood and sees no place for Bashar Assad in the future of Syria, the Gulf nation's top diplomat told Arab News in an exclusive interview.

More Details;

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/17052017-qatar-doesnt-support-muslim-brotherhood-no-future-for-assad-in-syria-fm/>

- **Oman, UK to hold military exercise in 2018**

Sayyid Badr bin Saud bin Harib Al Busaidi, Minister Responsible for Defence Affairs met Michael Fallon, United Kingdom Secretary of Defence at his Office in the UK Department of Defence on Tuesday.

More Details;

<http://timesofoman.com/article/109207/Oman/Government/Oman--UK-to-hold-military-exercise-in-2018>

- **Qatari Emir, Saudi FM discuss relations**

H.H. the Qatari Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, and Adel bin Ahmed Al Jubeir, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom Saudi Arabia, have discussed bilateral relations.

More Details;

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302614285>

- **SsangYong Motor reenters Saudi Arabia after a 4 year absence**

SsangYong Motor Co., the South Korean unit of India's automaker Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., said Wednesday it has reentered Saudi Arabia after a four-year absence, as part of its efforts to expand into the Middle East market.

More Details;

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20170517000623>

- **Top Bahrain activist denied bail - rights group**

A leading Bahraini human rights activist was denied bail on Tuesday on charges of writing an editorial critical of the government, a pro-opposition rights group reported.

More Details;

<http://in.reuters.com/article/bahrain-security-rights-idINKCN18C2AJ?rpc=401&>

- **DP World working to support Dubai's economic and industrial development plans says Group Chairman and CEO**

DP World and its industrial park operator NIP (National Industries Park) will continue to back the Dubai Plan 2021 and play a key role in enhancing the Emirate's position as a leading economic, industrial and commercial hub according to Group Chairman and CEO, Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem.

More Details;

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/pr/dp-world-working-support-dubai%E2%80%99s-economic-and-industrial-development-plans-says-group-ch>

- **Yemen's Army Draws up New Plan to Free Hodeidah City**

A Yemeni official army spokesman revealed on Tuesday that a new plan has been developed to retake the key port city of Hodeidah from insurgency control.

More Details;

<http://english.aawsat.com/saed-alabyadh/news-middle-east/yemens-army-draws-new-plan-free-hodeidah-city>

7. EGYPT

- **Egypt in \$750million debt payout to oil firms**

The country has outstanding dues of about \$3.5 billion to global oil and gas firms. Separately, Amer said that Egypt has received \$8 billion in investment from 150 global investment funds over the past six months.

More Details;

<https://www.energyvoice.com/oilandgas/139517/egypt-750million-debt-payout-oil-firms/>

- **Egypt's future rests on its people's shoulders**

Unlike several of its neighbors, the Arab world's most populous nation has thankfully succeeded in regaining its political, security and social equilibrium following years of turmoil. Egypt is on the right track, and with wise governance could emerge as a regional success story. Often forgotten is that from 1926 until 1953, Egyptians were among the richest, most educated and progressive Arabs. Cairo was the cleanest and most beautiful city on the planet. Egypt's coffers were overflowing. At one

time, the guinea was made of 7.43 grams of gold, and the dollar bought a mere 25 piastres. In the 1940s, the Egyptian stock exchange was the world's fourth largest.

More Details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1100641>

- **Egypt's Sisi: Newly-discovered gas fields to save about \$3.6 bln yearly**

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said he expected that recently discovered gas fields would save Egypt about \$3.6 billion yearly as they start coming into production, state-run newspapers reported on Tuesday night.

More Details;

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-oil-idUSKCN18C2RS>

- **Trump to Sisi: See you soon in Cairo**

US President Donald Trump has said he wants to visit Egypt as soon as possible, days before he makes his first overseas tour since assuming office.

More Details;

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/5/16/trump-to-sisi-see-you-soon-in-cairo>

- **The Muslim Brotherhood Lobbies Congress**

An innocent-sounding New Jersey-based organization called Egyptian Americans For Freedom And Justice (EAFJ) made the rounds on Capitol Hill May 4 to urge U.S. lawmakers not to support designation of the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization. The visit, which came hours after the Muslim Brotherhood-linked Hasm terrorist organization claimed responsibly for a deadly attack on a security convoy in Cairo, wasn't the first time radical Islamists have masqueraded as human rights activists when seeking to sway American minds and won't be the last.

More Details;

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/05/16/the-muslim-brotherhood-lobbies-congress/>

- **Pope Francis' Egypt visit could spark Sunni-Shiite dialogue**

Interreligious dialogue is an idea that is constantly being reinvented, and despite the recent stagnation in Sunni-Shiite dialogue, many observers believe the situation will change with time. Pope Francis' visit to Egypt on April 28 rekindled hopes that, despite the years of boycott and disputes, the Sunni-Shiite rift will one day come to an end.

More Details;

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/05/egypt-pope-francis-visit-dialogue-end-sunni-shiite-rift.html>

- **USD inflows to Egypt reach \$45bn in 6M**

The governor of the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) said that the Egyptian economy has attracted \$45 billion from the central bank and the banking sector during the last six months.

More Details;

<https://english.mubasher.info/news/3110999/USD-inflows-to-Egypt-reach-45bn-in-6M>

- **Egypt signs deal with Visa to develop infrastructure for financial transactions**

Egypt's Minister of Telecommunication and Information Technology Yasser El-Kadi and president of Visa International Ryan McInerney signed an agreement of cooperation in Cairo on Tuesday to implement a project to develop infrastructure in the country for financial transactions, Al-Ahram Arabic new website reported.

More Details

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/12/268923/-.aspx>

- **Al-Sisi expresses support of political agreement in Burundi**

President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi asserted on Tuesday Egypt's interest in Burundi's efforts towards reaching a political agreement for the country's stability during his meeting with Burundi's chief of the military cabinet of the president, brigadier general Ildephonse Habarurema, according to a statement.

More Details;

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/05/16/al-sisi-expresses-support-political-agreement-burundi/>

- **Egypt plans new controls on social media**

The Egyptian government is considering radical new proposals to restrict citizens' access to social media.

More Details;

<http://edition.cnn.com/2017/05/16/africa/egypt-social-media/index.html>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Algeria to resume flights to Libya, reopen embassy in Tripoli soon**

The Algerian government is mulling over resumption of flights and sea journeys to Libya after the latter's authorities had lodged a request urging the Algerian authorities to do so, according to the Algerian Elmiher newspaper.

More Details

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/algeria-to-resume-flights-to-libya-reopen-embassy-in-tripoli-soon/>

- **Nigeria, Morocco sign two bilateral agreements**

Nigeria and Morocco on Monday strengthened their business relationship by signing two bilateral agreements in Rabat, the Moroccan capital.

More Details

<http://punchng.com/nigeria-morocco-sign-two-bilateral-agreements/>

- **New US\$350 Million Program Unleashes Opportunities for Financial sector growth in Morocco**

The World Bank announced today a \$350 million program to support wide-ranging reforms of financial intermediation in Morocco. The operation supports new sources of financing for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) while improving the regulatory oversight of the banking sector.

More Details

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/05/16/new-us-350-million-program-unleashes-opportunities-for-financial-sector-growth-in-morocco>

- **Tunisia extends state of emergency for one month**

Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi decided to extend the nationwide state of emergency for an additional month from Tuesday, announced the Tunisian presidency.

More Details

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-05/17/c_136290873.htm

- **Malta, Tunisia should do more to tackle migration, Italian parliamentary commission says**

An Italian parliamentary commission said today that that Malta and Tunisia should do more to help Italy tackle the huge numbers of migrants who are using Libya as a springboard in search of a better life in Europe.

More Details

<http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20170516/local/malta-tunisia-should-do-more-to-tackle-migration-italian-parliamentary.648199>

- **German oil firm accused of withholding \$900m from Libya**

A German oil producer has been accused by the head of Libya's National Oil Corporation of withholding more than \$900m (£697m) from the Libyan state and colluding with unlawful efforts by Libya's UN-backed government to take over the sale of the country's vastly profitable oil contracts.

More Details

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/17/german-oil-firm-accused-of-withholding-900m-from-libya>

- **Can Libyan Government National Accord overcome 40 years of conflict over oil?**

The ongoing conflict between militant groups in Libya has caused the death of thousands, contributed to the refugee crisis and continues to threaten international peace and security, writes Dr Ibrahim Natil.

More Details

<https://independentaustralia.net/article-display/can-libyan-government-national-accord-overcome-40-years-of-conflict-over-oil,10308>

- **Cautious progress in Libya's oil output**

Rising Libyan oil production is primarily the result of the military success of General Khalifa Haftar, whose so-called Libyan National Army forces are wresting unitary control of the oil supply chain from a patchwork of local militias

More Details

<http://blogs.platts.com/2017/05/16/cautious-progress-libya-oil-output/>

- **Libya's Marshall Haftar may use politics in addition to force**

Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar commander in chief of the Libyan National Army associated with the House of Representatives(HoR) government appears to have given in to pressure to join in a political process to form a unified government.

More Details

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/news/world/op-ed-libya-s-marshall-haftar-may-use-politics-in-addition-to-force/article/492780>

- **Sound Energy prepares for Morocco bid**

Soudn Energy is one step closer to capitalizing on the “exciting hydrocarbon province” of Morocco.

More Details

<https://www.energyvoice.com/oilandgas/139555/sound-energy-prepares-morocco-bid/>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Nawaz meets Putin as Xi also joins in**

A rare meeting was held between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Russian President Vladimir Putin in the presence of Chinese President Xi Jinping here in the suburb of the capital of China Monday late afternoon upon conclusion of second roundtable conference.

More Details

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/204929-Nawaz-meets-Putin-as-Xi-also-joins-in>

- **Strong political will needed to eradicate terrorism**

Afghan parliamentary affairs ministry has said that the notion of mutual interest could guide the reconciliation and ultimate peace and stability in the region provided a strong political for it.

More Details

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2017/05/17/strong-political-will-needed-eradicate-terrorism>

- **MoD: 71 Rebels Killed, 53 Injured, 10 Suspicious Detained**

At least 71 armed oppositions including their two local commanders were killed and 53 others were wounded following clearing operations led by Afghan security forces within the last 24 hours across the country.

More Details

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/security/item/28615-mod-71-rebels-killed-53-injured-10-suspicious-detained.html>

- **Taliban suffer heavy casualties in Laghman operations: Local officials**

The Taliban insurgents suffered heavy casualties during the ongoing counter-terrorism operations in eastern Laghman province of Afghanistan.

More Details

<http://www.khaama.com/taliban-suffer-heavy-casualties-in-laghman-operations-local-officials-02773>

- **Armed Attackers Storm RTA TV Station In Jalalabad**

Eyewitnesses report that gunfire can be heard coming from the TV station compound, which is close to the governor's compound.

More Details

<http://www.toloneews.com/afghanistan/armed-attackers-storm-rta-tv-station-jalalabad>

- **Iranians in Pakistan counting hours for upcoming polls**

Overall five polling stations would be established in different cities in Pakistan for the 12th Iran presidential election which is to be held on May 19, at the Iranian embassy in Islamabad and four consulates in cities of Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar and Quetta.

More Details

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82533196/>

- **Pakistan keen to expand co-op with Azerbaijan**

President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Mamnoon Hussain has congratulated President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on the occasion of the Republic Day of Azerbaijan.

More Details

<http://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/2755294.html>

- **UK agencies claim heroin found on Pakistan International Airlines flight**

LONDON: Civil aviation and security authorities in London have claimed that Border Force (BF) officers had found a "quantity of heroin" on board a Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight that landed at Heathrow Airport on Monday.

More Details

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/uk/uk-agencies-claim-heroin-found-on-pakistan-international-airlines-flight/articleshow/58712287.cms>

- **Kulbhushan Jadhav death sentence: Pakistan's military courts represent a deeper politico-military agenda**

There are now enough legal and generalist luminaries on both sides of the India-Pakistan border, who have pondered on the legal aspects of the Kulbhushan Jadhav case in the International Court of Justice.

More Details

<http://www.firstpost.com/india/kulbhushan-jadhav-death-sentence-pakistans-military-courts-represent-a-deeper-politico-military-agenda-3450986.html>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkey welcomes Egyptians who fled coup: Ex-minister**

Egyptians forced to leave their country in the wake of a bloody military coup in 2013 have been received by Turkey with open arms, a former Egyptian government minister said Wednesday. Amr Darrag, who served as minister of planning and international cooperation under former Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi (who was ousted and imprisoned in the 2013 coup), made the assertion while speaking to Anadolu Agency in Turkey's eastern Van province.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkey-welcomes-egyptians-who-fled-coup-ex-minister/820282>

- **US to increase cooperation on Turkey's fight against PKK, Mattis tells Işık**

US Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis told his Turkish counterpart Fikri Işık that the U.S. is planning to increase cooperation on Turkey's fight against PKK. According to a statement released by the Pentagon, the leaders firmly agreed on concerns regarding the PKK as Mattis reaffirmed support for Turkey in its fight during their meeting at the White House on Tuesday.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2017/05/17/us-to-increase-cooperation-on-turkeys-fight-against-pkk-mattis-tells-isik>

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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