



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĞU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Proces of Iraq

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

Energy Security

Enerji Güvenliği

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1. IRAQ

- **Very positive meetings between Kurdistan Regional Government and federal government**

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) held a number of meetings with the federal government on Monday in the fields of airports, dams, border crossings, oil and salaries of employees of the ministries of health and education. A well-informed source told PUKmedia on Tuesday that all meetings were very positive and consensus points had been reached on controversial issues.

More Details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=42552

- **Othman: Kurdistan Region Agreed To Hand Over Imports Of Border Ports And Airports To The Federal Govt. Provided The Joint Administration**

Kurdish leader Mahmoud Othman said the Kurdistan region agreed to hand over imports of border ports and airports to the federal government provided the joint administration. He said in a statement to the National Iraqi News Agency (NINA) "the mutual visits of technical delegations between Baghdad and Erbil, which took place during the past two days, contributed significantly to de-ice between them, and future meetings will contribute to find a kind of political dialogue between the parties after the agreement on the technical matters of salaries and management of ports and airports "

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?Gj2HKhQOkCdaFAFNfa2Ptw%253d%253d

- **Fatah alliance says broke up with Abadi for "technical reasons"**

Al-Fatah electoral alliance will run the next Iraqi elections through a separate list, adding that it seceded from a proposed joint list with Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi for "technical reasons". Hadi al-Amiri, a senior commander of the Popular Mobilization Forces, of which groups formed the alliance, said in a statement that separation with Abadi happened in a friendly manner, denying reports that there had been differences over nomination for the post of Prime Minister.

More Details:

<https://www.iraqinews.com/baghdad-politics/breakup-abadi-fatah-alliance-run-elections-alone/>

- **Another Stab to Abadi's Electoral Coalition: Ubeidi Withdraws**

Following several other groups, the Bayariq Khairi list of former Iraqi Defence Minister Khaled al-Ubaidi announced its withdrawal from Iraqi PM Haider al-Abadi's electoral coalition. Mazin Asheqar, a leader from the political group, said in an online statement that the Bayariq Khairi list would not run for the votes together with Abadi's Victory Coalition.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/407771>

- **27 electoral coalitions approved for Iraq polls**

Twenty-seven electoral coalitions have been approved to run in Iraq's parliamentary election this year, the country's electoral commission said. In a statement on Tuesday, commission chief Riyad al-Badran said a total of 143 political parties run under these alliances. "Parties that have not joined electoral coalitions can run for the polls individually," he said.

More Details:

http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/dc61379f-ff34-411c-b869-2af7aec6b680

- **Wide-scale offensive foil ISIS bloody attacks in Diyala**

The security committee in Diyala provincial council confirmed Tuesday that a three-axis operation has foiled bloody attacks prepared by ISIS terrorists between Diyala and Salahuddin. The military operation was launched last week in Hawd al-Mayta area and its surroundings until it reached Mutaibija on the border between Diyala and Salahuddin achieved significant results, Member of the Committee Abdul Khaliq Al-Azzawi said.

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/22480/Wide-scale-offensive-foil-ISIS-bloody-attacks-in-Diyala>

- **Iraq backs off plans to double number of US-trained counterterrorism forces**

Iraq is backing off plans to more than double the number of its US-trained elite counterterrorism forces following heavy losses in the war against the Islamic State (IS). Originally formed as an elite unit shortly after the US invasion of Iraq, the Counter Terrorism Service faced the brunt of the IS onslaught in Mosul, suffering a 40% casualty rate according to Pentagon estimates. That has led Counter Terrorism Service commanders to reassess efforts to recruit 20,000 troops over the next three years, US Marine Brig. Gen. James Glynn, the deputy commander for special operations in the US-led fight against IS in Iraq and Syria, told reporters at the Pentagon today.

More Details:

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/01/iraq-back-off-plans-double-us-trained-counter-terror-forces.html>

- **ISIS hasn't yet morphed into an insurgency in Iraq, US commander says**

U.S. military commanders have warned that once the Islamic State is defeated in Iraq and Syria, the terrorist group is likely to morph into an insurgency. But a senior U.S. commander in Baghdad said that has not happened yet in Iraq. Pockets of ISIS fighters remain in Iraq, but Brig. Gen. James Glynn, the No. 2 U.S. commander in Iraq, says those remaining fighters have been cornered and unable to coordinate attacks.

More Details:

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/isis-hasnt-yet-morphed-into-an-insurgency-in-iraq-us-commander-says/article/2646077>

- **Tillerson Expresses to Abadi US Support for Iraq's Security**

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson telephoned on Tuesday Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi to stress Washington's commitment to the country's security, reported the Saudi Press Agency (SPA). The American official voiced Washington and the international community's backing of Baghdad's efforts to bolster security.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1145126/tillerson-expresses-abadi-us-support-iraq%E2%80%99s-security>

- **Iraq's Kurdistan airports and border crossings will reopen in weeks: Officials**

Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) have initially agreed to reopen the airports and border crossings under the federal authorities' supervision in a few weeks, federal and regional officials told Arab News on Tuesday. Tensions between Baghdad and the KRG have been at a peak since September when the KRG held a controversial referendum on independence.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1227436/middle-east>

- **President: Iran wants united Iraq**

President Hassan Rouhani underlined that banking relations will give a motive to the expansion of economic and commercial relations between Iran and Iraq. President Rouhani made the remarks in a

meeting with Iraqi Parliament Speaker Saleem Al-Jubouri in Tehran on Tuesday on the sidelines of the opening of the 13th Session of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIC) Conference.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82798206>

- **After ISIS, how do we build a peaceful future for Iraq and Syria?**

On 9 December 2017 Iraq's prime minister, Haider al-Abadi, formally declared victory in the country's protracted war on ISIS. Just a few months before, in September, Lebanon had cleared its north-eastern border with Syria of extremist elements; a month after that, the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) liberated Raqqa, until then the capital of the self-proclaimed "Caliphate". Across the Levant, the terrorist outfit seems all but defeated, as it desperately holds onto its last sliver of territory in Syria, near the Iraqi border, having once ruled over 40% of Iraq and more than a third of Syria. Though its bloodthirsty methods have alienated the region's population, the demise of ISIS's reign in the Middle East would not herald the end of its efforts, as witnessed by the number of terrorist attacks it perpetrated throughout the world in 2017, even as it continued to lose ground.

More Details:

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/01/after-isis-rebuild-iraq-syria-peace>

- **Iraq: 3 major Sunni provinces form alliance to run in elections**

Representatives of the three main Sunni provinces in Iraq have formed an alliance to run in the country's upcoming general elections scheduled for 12 May. The alliance will represent the provinces of Nineveh, Saladin and Anbar and some areas of the capital, Baghdad. The general supervisor of alliances in the Iraqi Electoral Commission, Muhannad Al-Sabaawi, said yesterday that the Iraqi High Electoral Commission has approved the name and logo of the coalition headed by Vice President Osama Najafi. The coalition will be called "the Iraqi decision coalition".

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180116-iraq-3-major-sunni-provinces-form-alliance-to-run-in-elections/>

- **Iran welcomes commercial relations with Iraq**

President Rouhani met with Iraqi parliament speaker Tuesday (January 16) where he stated that Iran will welcome expansion of relations with Iraq and supports a unified Iraq. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani met with Iraqi Parliament Speaker Salim Abdullah al-Jabouri on Tuesday where he

highlighted the recent expansion of friendly relations between Iran and Iraq and called for increasing bilateral cooperation and ties.

More Details:

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/131325/Iran-welcomes-commercial-relations-with-Iraq>

- **UK envoy in Iraq says 'scene set' for Erbil-Baghdad to resolve disputes peacefully**

The British Ambassador to Iraq, Jon Wilks, on Monday discussed tensions between Erbil and Baghdad with Kurdish Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani and invited him to visit the UK in the near future. During the meeting, which British Consul General to Erbil, Martin Warr, also attended, both sides addressed ongoing meetings between the interior Ministries of the Kurdistan Region and Iraq regarding the lifting of sanctions, such as the international flight ban, according to the Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) press office.

More Details:

<http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/191fecbe-4c22-4b0c-83eb-82078dea9f03>

2. SYRIA

- **NATO says wasn't consulted before announcement of YPG army, understands Turkey's concerns**

NATO's Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said late Tuesday that the organization wasn't consulted before the U.S. announced its plans to form an army, composed mostly of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The SDF is predominantly led by the PKK terrorist organization's Syria affiliate Democratic Union Party's (PYD) armed People's Protection Units (YPG).

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2018/01/16/nato-says-wasnt-consulted-before-announcement-of-ypg-army-understands-turkeys-concerns>

- **Internal solution to Syria would be better: UN chief**

An internal solution to the problems in Syria "would be much better," the head of the UN said Tuesday. "If Syrians could solve their own problems, it would be much better," Antonio Guterres told reporters during a news conference at UN headquarters. Guterres emphasized that the Geneva process must be revived and said a military solution would not be an answer for the crisis in Syria.

More Details:

<http://f.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/internal-solution-to-syria-would-be-better-un-chief/1032991>

- **Civilians in Syria's Eastern Ghouta and Idlib Suffer Under Violence: UN**

The U.N. on Tuesday warned about Syrian civilians suffering due to the upsurge in violence in Damascus' besieged Eastern Ghouta enclave and in Idlib, northwest Syria. "Since the end of last year, airstrikes have destroyed numerous civilian buildings, killing hundreds of people in both places and, in the case of Idlib, displacing some 100,000 people," the U.N.'s World Food Program (WFP) said in a statement.

More Details:

<https://www.albawaba.com/news/civilians-syrias-eastern-ghouta-and-idlib-suffer-under-violence-un-1075270>

- **Israel Attacked 'Hezbollah Arms Depot' in Syria's Damascus**

Syrian opposition sources claimed Israeli warplanes attacked the Almas military airport near Damascus early Wednesday morning. According to reports, a Hezbollah arms depot was the target of the attack. There was no official response from the Syrian government or the Israeli army.

More Details:

<https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/reports-israel-attacked-hezbollah-arms-depot-in-syria-s-damascus-1.5742625>

- **3,000 displaced return to Deir Ezzor, Syria**

Hundreds of families returned to their homes and towns in Deir Ezzor province's eastern countryside which the Syrian Arab Army had liberated from Daesh (ISIS). [Syrian Arab News Agency] SANA's reporter said that three thousand persons returned on Tuesday to their towns and homes in Deir Ezzor countryside as state establishments resumed operations and services were restored after the army removed all landmines and explosive devices planted by Daesh in the towns.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82798475>

- **US says it will not support the YPG in Syria's Afrin**

The US does not support YPG militants in Syria's Afrin and does not see them as part of their fight against Daesh, Pentagon Spokesman Major Adrian Rankine-Galloway told Anadolu Agency on Tuesday. "We don't consider them as part of our Defeat ISIS [Daesh] operations which is what we are doing there and we do not support them," Galloway said.

More Details:

<https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/us-says-it-will-not-support-the-ypg-in-syria-s-afrin-14309>

- **Iran says US army plan in Syria border 'blatant interference'**

Iran's Foreign Ministry denounced the U.S. plan to set up an army force near Syria's border with Turkey and Iraq as a "blatant interference" in Syria's domestic affairs, Press TV reported Tuesday. The U.S. plan is a "clear example" of interference in Syria's internal affairs, which complicates the crisis and leads to instability, Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi said.

More Details:

http://www.china.org.cn/world/2018-01/16/content_50233270.htm

- **US-Backed Border Force in Syria Would Exacerbate Crisis**

Iran criticized the US for its plan to back the formation of a 30,000-strong border force in Syria, saying it would only "fan the flames of war" there. "The announcement of the US officials to create this force in Syria is an act of flagrant interference in the country's internal affairs, which would only complicate the Syrian crisis and would fan the flames of war there," Foreign Ministry Spokesman Bahram Qasemi was quoted by IRNA as saying on Tuesday.

More Details:

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/national/80210/us-backed-border-force-in-syria-would-exacerbate-crisis>

- **Civilians leaving Syria's Afrin amid tensions**

Ahead of a possible Turkish military operation against the terrorist PYD/PKK in Afrin, northern Syria, along Turkey's border, some civilians are leaving the district. According to information Anadolu Agency gathered from reliable sources, families taking a small number of belongings with them were seen leaving the district with their vehicles Tuesday evening.

More Details:

<https://www.yenisafak.com/en/world/civilians-leaving-syrias-afrin-amid-tensions-2982704>

3. IRAN

- **Iran Joins Russia in Opposing U.S. Plan to Guard Syrian Border**

Iranian President Hassan Rohani has joined Russia, Syria, and Turkey in opposing a new 30,000-strong border guard force inside Syria that the United States says is needed to keep Islamic State extremists out of the country. "The new plan that the Americans have in mind for Syria is a violation of international laws and a plot against the sovereignty and security of Syria and the region," Rohani was quoted by Iranian state media as saying on January 16 during a meeting with the visiting Syrian parliament speaker in Tehran.

More Details:

<https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-rohani-joins-russia-turkey-opposing-us-plan-guard-syrian-border-kurd-syrian-democratic-forces-islamic-state/28979935.html>

- **Official: JCPOA lent impetus to oil talks**

A senior Iranian energy official said the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in January 16, 2016 accelerated Iran's oil talks with foreign companies. The JCPOA's internal consistency and strength and its balanced sharing of interests are among the reasons compelling US President Donald Trump to prolong the suspension of nuclear sanctions on Iran, said Amir Hossein Zamani-Nia, the deputy oil minister for international affairs and trade on the second anniversary of the implementation of the landmark nuclear deal between Iran and the P5+1, Shana reported.

More Details:

<http://iran-daily.com/News/208226.html>

- **Rouhani urges Islamic states to reduce dependence on foreigners**

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Tuesday that it is necessary that Islamic countries abandon division and reduce dependence on foreigners through reliance on domestic capacities. "We should abandon differences and reduce dependence on foreigners through synergy and reliance on domestic capacities and human resources and in line with developing the world of Islam," Rouhani said during his speech at the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIC) in Tehran.

More Details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/420403/Rouhani-urges-Islamic-states-to-reduce-dependence-on-foreigners>

- **FT claim on Iran missile program 'sheer lie': Informed source**

An informed source refuted London-based daily ‘Financial Times’ claim concerning Iran agreement for negotiating missile programs. The British paper quoted German Foreign Ministry as saying “The German, French and British foreign ministers, together with Federica Mogherini, the EU’s foreign policy chief, agreed with Iran to hold an “intensive and very serious dialogue” on Tehran’s missile programme and regional influence.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82798745>

- **Iran's minister denies rumors on US missile launch at oil tanker**

An Iranian minister has rejected rumors suggesting that the US had targeted the sunken Iranian oil tanker en route to South Korea. Iran's Minister of Labor, Ali Rabiei, who was appointed by President Rouhani as the head of the committee to follow-up the Sanchi case (Sanchi oil tanker fire), has described the rumors as “sheer lie”, IRNA news agency reported.

More Details:

<https://en.trend.az/iran/politics/2848393.html>

- **Iran committed to friendly ties with Qatar**

Parl. Speaker Larijani, while voicing regret over the ongoing Saudi-led diplomatic and trade boycott against Qatar, stressed Iran’s commitment to its friendly relations with the peninsular Arab country. Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani made the remarks in a meeting with his Qatari counterpart, Ahmad bin Abdullah Al Mahmoud, on the sidelines of the 13th session of Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIC) Conference on Tuesday in Tehran, adding “we do not believe that the use of sanctions regime is a rightful method to deal with countries.”

More Details:

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/131335/Iran-committed-to-friendly-ties-with-Qatar>

- **Iran Arrests Leaders of Recent Riots in Isfahan**

Four females who endeavored to provoke the recent economic protests into riots and received orders from the anti-revolutionary forces outside the country were arrested by security forces in the Central city of Isfahan. The security and law enforcement police officials said that the four women had played a role in provoking the protestors during the recent riots in Isfahan and were detained.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13961026001234>

- **Iran believes in diplomacy to resolve regional issues**

Iran's president, in a meeting with speaker of Consultative Assembly of Qatar, stressed that the differences between the neighboring countries should be resolved through dialogue, declaring Iran's support for the Qatari government and nation. "We believe that any pressure on the Qatari government and people is unacceptable, and if there are differences between the countries of the region, especially the neighbor countries, they should only be resolved through dialogue," Hassan Rouhani asserted.

More Details:

<http://irannewsdaily.com/iran-believes-diplomacy-resolve-regional-issues/>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **US withholds \$65 million in aid from UN agency for Palestinians**

The Trump administration on Tuesday cut tens of millions of dollars in money for Palestinian refugees, demanding that the U.N. agency responsible for the programs undertake a "fundamental re-examination," a U.S. official said. In a letter, the official said, the State Department notified the U.N. Relief and Works Agency that the U.S. is withholding \$65 million of a planned \$125 million funding installment to the body. The letter also makes clear that additional U.S. donations will be contingent on major changes by UNRWA, which has been heavily criticized by Israel.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/mideast/2018/01/16/us-withholds-65-million-in-aid-from-un-agency-for-palestinians>

- **Israel prevents restoration works at Al-Aqsa**

The Israeli authorities have prevented official workers at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque from undertaking any restoration work inside the mosque compound, a Palestinian official revealed yesterday. "Israeli police forced their way into the office of the Al-Aqsa reconstruction committee and warned engineers against carrying out any mosaic work or restoring the Dome of the Rock's wooden ceiling," the spokesperson of Jerusalem's Religious Endowments (Awqaf) Authority, Firas Al-Dib, said.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180117-israel-prevents-restoration-works-at-al-aqsa/>

- **Palestinian reconciliation brings no change for Gazans**

Life began to look up for Gaza's Palestinians when reconciliation between its Hamas Islamist rulers and the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority in October brought a drop in crippling prices. Three months on, discount stickers still adorn goods from clothes to cars but few of the two million people in the enclave blockaded by Israel are buying.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86797>

- **Israeli forces kill Palestinian student, former prisoner during clashes in Qalqiliya**

Israeli forces shot and killed a 28-year-old Palestinian student and former prisoner during clashes on Monday in the northern occupied West Bank district of Qalqiliya. Locals identified the slain Palestinian as Ahmad Abd al-Jaber Muhammad Salim, a student at al-Quds Open University in Qalqiliya and the secretary of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) student bloc.

More Details:

<http://www.maannnews.com/Content.aspx?id=779753>

- **Israel neglecting severely burned prisoner's needs**

"I feel scared when I look at my face in the mirror, so imagine what others must feel when they look at me." Those are the words of Israa Jaabis, a 33-year-old Palestinian mother from Jerusalem who has been languishing in Hasharon, the only Israeli prison for Palestinian female prisoners.

More Details:

<https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/16/01/2018/Israel-neglecting-severely-burned-prisoner-s-needs>

- **Israeli army infiltrates Gaza borders, raze lands near Khan Younis**

Israeli military units infiltrated on Wednesday the Gaza border to the east of Khan Younis in the south of the Gaza Strip and razed agricultural land, according to WAFA correspondent. He said several military vehicles and a bulldozer infiltrated the border and went about 100 meters inside Gaza where they razed agricultural lands belonging to Palestinian residents of al-Qarara village.

More Details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=YGO42Ea96084224115aYGO42E>

- **Palestine to Apply for Full Membership at UN**

Palestinian Foreign Minister Dr. Riyad al-Maliki said, on Tuesday, that the Palestinian mission to the United Nations will soon submit a request for full membership of the state of Palestine at the United Nations. Maliki announced, in a press statement, today, that the request for full membership will be presented soon to the Security Council.

More Details:

<http://imemc.org/article/palestine-to-apply-for-full-membership-at-un/>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Jordan, Greece and Cyprus say more support needed to states on refugee frontline**

Greece, Jordan and Cyprus called for more effective support to countries on the frontline of the Middle East refugee crisis on Tuesday and pledged to deepen cooperation on a host of issues from water management to protection of artefacts. As millions of people have poured out of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey have taken in hundreds of thousands of refugees, while Greece has been used as a launchpad for many seeking to reach other European countries.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180116-jordan-greece-and-cyprus-say-more-support-needed-to-states-on-refugee-frontline/>

- **Jordan, Cyprus, Greece launch strategic partnership at trilateral summit**

His Majesty King Abdullah on Tuesday participated in a Nicosia-hosted trilateral summit with Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades and Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, which focused on cooperation ties between Jordan and each of Cyprus and Greece, as well as regional developments. The three countries issued at the end of the meeting a joint communiqué that outlined their approach to the tri-party communication and positions on regional crises, vowing to deepen and enrich the partnership to involve the public and private sectors in each of the partner nations.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/jordan-cyprus-greece-launch-strategic-partnership-trilateral-summit>

- **Crown Prince Foundation, Fotowatio Renewable Ventures sign deal**

The Crown Prince Foundation (CPF) signed a collaboration agreement with Fotowatio Renewable Ventures (FRV), a leading global developer of renewable utility-scale projects operating in the field of

renewable energy solutions. Representing CPF in the agreement was Acting Chief Executive Officer Nour Abu Ragheb whereas FRV was represented by Nicolas Fasquelle, Managing Director Middle East, Africa and New Territories.

More Details:

http://petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=336310&CatID=13

- **Aoun-Berri Row Flares Anew after Ruling by Justice Ministry Committee**

A new war of words erupted Tuesday between the Change and Reform bloc and AMAL Movement, after the Committee of Legislation and Consultations of the Justice Ministry issued a recommendation on the controversial officers seniority decree. "The Committee of Legislation and Consultations has given its opinion regarding the seniority decree and everyone must comply," Change and Reform said in a statement recited by Justice Minister Salim Jreissati.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/240937-aoun-berri-row-flares-anew-after-ruling-by-justice-ministry-committee>

- **Tenenti to NNA: to reach solutions to prevent tension along blue line**

UNIFIL spokesperson Andrea Tenenti on Tuesday told the National News Agency that the command was communicating with the Lebanese and Israeli sides in an attempt to reach a joint solution to the issue of Israel's plan to initiate the construction of a wall in a disputed territory along the Lebanese border with occupied Palestine. "Considering the sensitivity of this area, we consider that it is mandatory to reach solutions in agreement with the two sides in order to reduce the odds of tension and to narrow down the scope of any likely misunderstanding between the concerned sides," Tenenti said.

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/87290/Tenenti-to-NNA-To-reach-solutions-to-prevent-tension-along-Blue-Line>

- **Aoun: Lebanon Foiled Terrorist Scheme, Maintained Stability**

President Michel Aoun stressed that Lebanon has managed to thwart different schemes aimed against it, and maintained maintaining home stability on the political and security levels amid a boiling region. As he received the diplomatic corps accredited in Lebanon at Baabda palace on Tuesday, President Aoun said the government has contributed to restore stability in the country, noting that the political diversity has enriched the democratic life in Lebanon.

More Details:

<http://english.almanar.com.lb/426853>

- **Jordan tones down rhetoric in response to US move against UNRWA**

It took more than a week for a senior Jordanian official to react to US threats to cut funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the international body responsible for the welfare of almost 5 million registered Palestinian refugees. Some 2 million of the refugees reside in Jordan, making the kingdom the biggest host country. On Jan. 2, US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley threatened that the United States would cut funding to UNRWA, estimated at \$319 million annually, in retaliation for the decision by the Palestinian leadership to go to the Security Council and the General Assembly to extract a resolution condemning President Donald Trump's Dec. 6 proclamation recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

More Details:

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/01/jordan-us-israel-cut-funding-unrwa-palestinians.html>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **22 million Yemenis now in need of aid, UN says**

More than three-quarters of Yemenis are now in need of humanitarian aid as the war between rebels and the Saudi-backed government nears its fourth year, the United Nations said yesterday. Some 8.4 million people are at risk of famine, up from 6.8 million in 2017, the U.N. humanitarian affairs office (OCHA) said. A total of 22.2 million people, or 76 percent of Yemen's population of 29 million, are dependent on some form of assistance, an increase of 1.5 million people over the past six months, as reported by AFP. In addition, already battered by three years of war, Yemen is in danger of tipping into famine in 2018 if fighting continues to disrupt imports of food aid, aid agencies warned.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/mideast/2018/01/17/22-million-yemenis-now-in-need-of-aid-un-says>

- **Gargash: Response to Qatar intercepting UAE planes will be 'balanced and legal'**

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs said on Wednesday that the UAE's response to Qatar's jets intercepting two Emirati civilian aircraft will be "balanced and legal", adding that Doha's recent behaviour indicates its increased concern and confusion. "There are two explanations to the developments in the Qatar crisis and the exposure of the civilian planes. First, it is Qatar's increased

concern and confusion, and second, it was a desperate attempt in fear of marginalisation,” Dr Anwar Gargash tweeted.

More Details:

<https://www.thenational.ae/world/gcc/gargash-response-to-qatar-intercepting-uae-planes-will-be-balanced-and-legal-1.696087>

- **France, UAE support 'counter-revolution': Intellectual**

Prominent Tunisian intellectual Abu Yarub al-Marzouki on Tuesday accused the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and France of attempting to undermine security and stability in his country. "They are both supporting counter-revolutionary forces," al-Marzouki told Anadolu Agency from Istanbul. He did not, however, provide any evidence to back up his assertions. Nor did he identify by name the forces he classified as “counter-revolutionary”.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/europe/france-uae-support-counter-revolution-intellectual/1032777>

- **Man wanted for ‘terrorist crimes’ killed in eastern Saudi Arabia**

Saudi security forces shot and killed a man suspected of involvement in “terrorist crimes” in an exchange of fire in the eastern part of the kingdom, state news agency SPA reported late on Tuesday, Reuters reports. The agency, citing the recently formed Presidency of State Security, identified the man as Abdullah bin Mirza Ali al-Qallaf and said he was killed during a security operation on Monday night at a farm between the restive Shi’ite Muslim communities of Awamiya and Qudaih.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180117-man-wanted-for-terrorist-crimes-killed-in-eastern-saudi-arabia/>

- **US-purchased cranes arrive at Yemen rebel-held port**

Four mobile cranes purchased by the United States arrived Monday at a rebel-held port in Yemen, the United Nations said, after months of delays imposed by the Saudi-led coalition. The cranes will boost the capacity of the Huthi-controlled Hodeida port to receive food, fuel and medical supplies as Yemen remains on the brink of famine after nearly three years of war.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86788>

- **Bahrain ruling on Nabeel Rajab jail term condemned**

Human rights groups have roundly condemned a ruling by a Bahraini court to affirm a two-year jail sentence for activist Nabeel Rajab, saying the verdict "illustrates the corruption" of the kingdom's justice system. Rajab had been found guilty in July of "spreading rumours and untruthful information" against the government in TV interviews.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/bahrain-ruling-nabeel-rajab-jail-term-condemned-180116070042864.html>

- **Saudi Arabia shoots down Houthi missile fired at Jazan**

Saudi air defence forces shot down a ballistic missile on Tuesday night fired by the Houthi rebels in Yemen towards the southwest city of Jazan. Col Turki Al Malki, spokesman of the Arab coalition fighting the rebels on behalf of the internationally recognised Yemeni government, said the missile was targeting a heavily populated civilian area.

More Details:

<https://www.thenational.ae/world/gcc/saudi-arabia-shoots-down-houthi-missile-fired-at-jazan-1.696075>

- **5,000 children killed in conflict in Yemen**

More than 5,000 children in Yemen have been killed by the conflict since it started in March 2015, according to the United Nations task force in Yemen. UNICEF representative to Yemen, Mertixell Relano, said the UN task force has reported 5,000 confirmed child deaths in Yemen since the conflict escalated in March 2015.

More Details:

<https://www.rte.ie/news/world/2018/0117/933903-yemen/>

7. EGYPT

- **Sudan is there for Egypt and Sisi for Israel**

Following the open foulness and chauvinism expressed by Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi's state media against Sudan's government and people, one is struck by an astonishing historical irony. Perhaps the only street in an Arab capital city that bears the name of two countries together is the Egypt and Sudan Street, extending along the Hadaiq al-Qubbah neighbourhood in Cairo. It is also interesting to note how official relations between Cairo and Khartoum are warmer and more respectable in times when

Egypt knows its friends from its foes, only to decline when Egypt becomes closer to its enemies and hostile to its friends. This makes Israel a determining factor of the form of relations.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180117-sudan-is-there-for-egypt-and-sisi-for-israel/>

- **Egypt's elections authority sets cap of EGP 20 million for campaign financing in presidential elections**

Egypt's National Elections Authority has set a cap of EGP 20 million (1.3 million) on campaign financing for each candidate running in the country's upcoming presidential elections, which are set for 26-28 March. The ceiling for campaign financing during the run-off period – if one were to take place – is set at EGP 5 million (\$282,000), the authority said on Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/288268/Egypt/Politics-/Egypts-elections-authority-sets-cap-of-EGP--millio.aspx>

- **Egypt appoints first female tourism minister**

Rania Al-Mashat has become one of six women to currently occupy ministerial roles – the nation's highest proportion in history. Replacing Yahya Rashid, who took over the post from Hisham Zaazou in March 2016, the changeover is a result of a cabinet reshuffle, in which four ministerial posts have been filled with new people.

More Details:

<https://www.ttgmedia.com/news/egypt-appoints-first-female-tourism-minister-12911>

- **3 suspected extremists arrested in central Sinai**

The Egyptian Armed Forces said on Tuesday that its forces arrested three alleged extremists amid the ongoing military operations fighting terrorism in the region, military spokesperson Tamer Al-Refaei said in a statement. According to the statement, military forces of the Third Field Army attacked a den of extremists, destroying two vehicles and eight motor bikes.

More Details:

<https://dailynewsegypt.com/2018/01/16/3-suspected-extremists-arrested-central-sinai/>

- **Mubarak and son bid for presidency in Egypt 2018 elections**

23 potential candidates intend to run for the coming Egyptian presidential elections including former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and his son Gamal Mubarak, according to Egyptian newspaper Al-Masry Al-Youm. President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, former Prime Minister Ahmed Shafik, Hamdeen Sabahi, the lawyer Khalid Ali who was found guilty of violation public decency, Muhammad Anwar Al-Sadat – who announced he had dropped out earlier this month – as well as former President Muhammad Hosni Mubarak and his son Gamal Mubarak are on the list.

More Details:

<https://www.dzbreaking.com/2018/01/17/mubarak-son-bid-presidency-egypt-2018-elections/>

- **10 suggestions for the upcoming president of Egypt**

Sometimes I am a dreamer. I reject reality because life is bigger than it, and I think we live a fleeting moment in the age of time, and there will come another moment with a different reality and a new life, and we will have a president walks on the approach of Taha Hussein, who famously said: “I see through the others.” A president does not find it objectionable to seek the help of the people with knowledge and experience, instead of the people he trusts and cronies.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/10-suggestions-for-the-upcoming-president-of-egypt/>

- **Russian carrier Aeroflot plans to resume flights to Cairo on 3 February: Cairo Airport**

Russian flagship carrier Aeroflot said it will resume flights from Moscow to Cairo on 3 February, marking the first direct flight to the Egyptian capital since the deadly crash of a Russian passenger plane in Sinai in late 2015, Magdy Ishaq, the chairman of Cairo Airport Company, told Ahram Online. Two flights will be operated to the Egyptian capitalevery week --on Saturdays and Wednesday, according to a letter sent by the airliner to the Egyptian company.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptdailynews.com/detail/russian-carrier-aeroflot-plans-to-resume-flights-to-cairo-on--february-cairo-airport>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **123 undocumented migrants rescued off Libyan coast**

A total of 123 migrants including 22 children were rescued off Libya’s northwestern coast Tuesday evening, according to the country’s coast guard. The migrants, from African countries, were caught

off Castelverde, 75 kilometers east of Tripoli, the Libyan Coast Guard announced on its Facebook page.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/africa/123-undocumented-migrants-rescued-off-libyan-coast/1033085>

- **'Employ us or kill us': Tunisian youth on the margins**

Montasser Khedher turned 24 on Monday. But he didn't have much to celebrate. Instead, he spent a large part of his birthday on a plastic chair on the curb, across from a cafe in this suburb of the capital, an empty cup of coffee on the table between himself and about half a dozen friends.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/kill-tunisian-youth-margins-180116180238426.html>

- **Morocco sentences man to death over MP killing**

A Moroccan court sentenced to death a man over the murder of a member of parliament and jailed his widow, in a case involving sex and money, the government said Tuesday. Abdellatif Merdas, who was a member of the liberal Constitutional Union party, was gunned down near his house in Casablanca in March last year.

More Details:

<https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/16/01/2018/Morocco-sentences-man-to-death-over-MP-killing>

- **Messahel, Guinean counterpart review outcomes of 3rd Joint Commission**

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdelkader Messahel on Tuesday reviewed with his Guinean counterpart Mamadou Touré the outcomes of the third Algerian-Guinean Joint Commission, held last December in Algiers, said the ministry in a communiqué.

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/22314-messahel-guinean-counterpart-review-outcomes-of-3rd-joint-commission>

- **Sudanese militia attacks and kills six LNA members near Jaghboub**

Sudanese rebels killed six Libyan National Army (LNA) soldiers and captured another yesterday near to the Jaghboub Oasis, close to the Egyptian border. Initially it was thought the so-called Islamic State

was the attacker, but now it is understood the Sudanese Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) were culpable.

More Details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2018/01/17/sudanese-militia-attacks-and-kills-six-lna-members-near-jaghboub/>

- **Morocco Set to Join AU's Peace & Security Council**

Morocco is set to be a major player within the African Union by integrating its supreme decision making body on peace and security issues: the Peace and Security Council (PSC). Morocco's ambition to be member of the most important body within the African Union was expressed by Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita during talks recently in Rabat with South African peer Maite Nkoana-Mashabane.

More Details:

<http://northafricapost.com/21754-morocco-set-join-aus-peace-security-council.html>

- **Council of Ministers to Be Headed by King Mohammed VI Postponed to Wednesday**

Previously scheduled for Tuesday, the Ministerial Council chaired by King Mohammed VI has been postponed to Wednesday, January 17. The Council of Ministers, which will take place in Casablanca's Royal Palace, is expected to discuss and adopt several key pieces of legislation, including the draft law on the reform of the national education plan.

More Details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2018/01/238463/headed-king-mohammed-vi-council-ministers-postponed-wednesday-jan-17/>

- **Algerian Sonatrach and Libyan NOC to jointly operate oilfields on mutual borders**

Algerian Sonatrach signed Monday an agreement with the Libyan National Oil Corporation (NOC) to run a number of oilfields located on the borders between the two countries, according to a statement on the NOC website. According to the agreement was a further step on the ground after a study that was carried out on 2006 concerning Al-Rar and Al-Wafaa oilfields that are located on the borders between Algeria and Libya. Al-Rar gas field is located on the Algerian side of the border, while Al-Wafa oilfield is located on the Libyan side of the border.

More Details:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/algerian-sonatrach-and-libyan-noc-to-jointly-operate-oilfields-on-mutual-borders/>

- **Mehdi Ben Gharbia meets representatives of civil society**

A meeting was held Tuesday evening between government officials and civil society actors. The meeting is part of the "process of consultation between government and civil society," said a statement from the Ministry of Relations with constitutional Bodies, Civil Society and Human Rights.

More Details:

<https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/9761821-mehdi-ben-gharbia>

- **Al-Sisi: Egypt keen on enhancing OIC to overcome challenges**

Egypt's President AbdelFatah Al-Sisi on Tuesday stressed his country's eagerness to support the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and enhance its role to overcome ongoing challenges facing the Islamic world. This came during a meeting between Al-Sisi and OIC Secretary General Dr. Yousef Al-Othaimeen earlier today, said presidential spokesman ambassador Bassam Radhi.

More Details:

<https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2684336&Language=en>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Man injured in drone strike in Kurram Agency**

A man was injured in a US drone strike in Kurram Agency on Wednesday, Geo TV reported citing unnamed sources. According to the TV channel, the missile attack was carried out in Badshah Kot area of Lower Kurram tribal region. Panic gripped the area following the attack. Identity of the injured was not immediacy known.

More Details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/269560-man-injured-in-drone-strike-in-kurram-agency>

- **Pence backs Ghani's move to engage with ousted Balkh governor**

US Vice-President Mike Pence Tuesday called President Ashraf Ghani and supported his effort to engage with Balkh Governor Atta Mohammad Noor and conduct a negotiated transition of leadership. "Vice-President Pence and President Ghani discussed political leadership in Balkh. The VP emphasised his support for the Afghan government to engage with Noor and conduct a peacefully negotiated transition of leadership," the White House.

More Details:

<https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2018/01/17/pence-backs-ghani%E2%80%99s-move-engage-ousted-balkh-governor>

- **Qadri's protest and democracy**

A NEW chapter is set to open in the politics of protests and sit-ins today and it may be the most confusing yet. Tahirul Qadri's quixotic quest for justice in the Model Town massacre of 2014 will bring him and his supporters onto the streets of Lahore today — barring a last-minute intervention by the superior judiciary in the name of protecting the citizenry from the massive disruptions that the Qadri-led protest are likely to create.

More Details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1383360/qadris-protest-and-democracy>

- **Pakistan can't ignore situation at Line of Control: FO spokesperson**

Pakistan cannot ignore the situation at the Line of Control, Foreign Office Spokesperson Dr Mohammad Faisal said giving the example of loss of lives during the past few days. The FO spokesperson was speaking to Hamid Mir in Geo News programme Capital Talk, where he responded to a question pertaining to back door diplomacy keeping in view the tense relations between the neighbouring countries.

More Details:

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/177189-lo>

- **Ghani warns Pakistan of consequences for supporting illegal armed groups**

The Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani on Wednesday warned Pakistan of the consequences for supporting the illegal armed groups. Speaking during a consultative conference on peace in Kabul, President Ghani said supporting the illegal armed groups is like growing up snakes up in own sleeves.

More Details:

<https://www.khaama.com/ghani-warns-pakistan-of-consequences-for-supporting-illegal-armed-groups-04284>

- **VP Reviews Extension of Telecommunication Companies' Licenses With ATRA**

Based on decision of high economic council, a session was held under the chairmanship of Second Vice-President Sarwar Danesh to review extension condition of telecommunication companies' licenses with ATRA. In the session attended by ministers of justice, telecommunications, economy,

deputy minister of finance, head of Afghanistan Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (ATRA) and legal and technical experts, reasons of telecommunication companies in connection with unpaying fees for extension of their licenses were reviewed.

More Details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/politics.html>

- **Afghan Refugees Stay Will Not Be Extended: Pakistan**

Last year 400,000 refugees returned home but Afghan elders say at least 100,000 of those have since gone back to Pakistan. Pakistani officials said that Islamabad would not give another extension to the registered Afghan refugees for their stay in Pakistan, Dawn News reported on Wednesday. "There will be no extension after January 31 and they (refugees) will have to go to their country," said a senior official from the State and Frontier Region ministry.

More Details:

<http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/afghan-refugees-stay-will-not-be-extended-pakistan>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Efforts to build transit road to Qatar via Iraq, Iran to be expedited**

Customs and Trade Minister Bülent Tüfenkci has said that Turkey will accelerate efforts to facilitate transit through Iraq and Iran, especially to increase trade with Qatar. "We want to create a mechanism that will facilitate transit between the two countries and provide transit through Iraq," he added. Tüfenkci attended the Turkey-Qatar Business Forum organized by the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) and Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the Sheraton Grand Doha Resort and Convention Hotel.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/2018/01/17/efforts-to-build-transit-road-to-qatar-via-iraq-iran-to-be-expedited>

- **Terrorists cannot protect NATO borders, says Turkish PM**

Turkey's prime minister said Tuesday that terrorist groups cannot protect NATO's borders, implicitly slamming a recent U.S. decision to form a border protection army in Syria with the terrorist PYD/PKK. "Is the duty of protecting NATO borders left to terror groups? We can protect our own borders," Binali Yıldırım told an awards ceremony in the capital Ankara, explaining that NATO's borders are Turkey's southern borders.

More Details:

<http://f.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/terrorists-cannot-protect-nato-borders-says-turkish-pm/1032799>

- **Turkey will never accept force in Syria led by SDF, Erdoğan says**

Turkey will never accept a force in Syria led by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a group dominated by the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan told the chief of NATO on Jan. 16. The phone conversation followed a recent decision by the United States to form a border protection army in Syria with the YPG.

More Details:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-will-never-accept-force-in-syria-led-by-sdf-erdogan-says-125851>

- **FM Çavuşoğlu says Syria operation can be expanded to Manbij, east of Euphrates River**

Turkey may expand its operations in northern Syria to Manbij city and east of the Euphrates River after Afrin has been cleared, Turkey's foreign minister said late Tuesday. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu spoke to reporters after meeting with his U.S. counterpart Rex Tillerson in Vancouver, Canada, where he was attending the Vancouver Foreign Ministers' Meeting on Security and Stability on the Korean Peninsula.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2018/01/17/fm-cavusoglu-says-syria-operation-can-be-expanded-to-manbij-east-of-euphrates-river>

- **Turkey calls on militias in Libya to exercise restraint**

Turkey on Tuesday called on all armed groups in Libya to refrain from "any steps that would lead to a new cycle of violence" after clashes erupted in and around Mitiga International Airport near Tripoli. In a written statement, Turkey's Foreign Ministry expressed sadness "about reports of casualties and damage to buildings as well as to commercial airplanes" during the clashes.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/197918/turkey-sends-fresh-aid-trucks-to-idlib-syria>

This media summary is prepared by **ORSAM Middle East Research Assistant Fırze Yağmur Gökler. It covers news and commentaries as reported by the national media sources publishing in the Middle*

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