



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

- **Iraqi command to target Tal Afar after Mosul, officials say 750 fighters remain in city**

The Iraqi command leading the war against Islamic State militants in Mosul will aim at the town of Tal Afar as a next stage, while officials say 750 fighters remain in the city.

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/iraqi-command-target-tal-afar-mosul-officials-say-750-fighters-remain-city/>

- **Sunnis seek greater say in post-IS Iraq but face resistance**

Iraq's Sunni minority is pushing for a greater say in power once the Islamic State group is defeated, reflecting growing sentiment that the country's government must be more inclusive to prevent extremism from gaining ground once again.

More Details:

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/ML_IRAQ_AFTER_MOSUL?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-05-18-02-13-28

- **Iraq troops face Isil chemical attacks in final battle for Mosul**

Clutching their rifles, the soldiers raced across the exposed rooftop, then crouched behind a wall that shielded them from the bullets of an invisible enemy hiding in the maze of Mosul's Hay al Aqtisadiyy neighbourhood.

More Details:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/05/18/iraq-troops-face-isil-chemical-attacks-final-battle-mosul/>

- **Civilians Executed in Mosul; 96 Killed in Iraq**

Islamic State militants are booby-trapping entrances to homes in Mosul in order to prevent civilians from escaping their usefulness as human shields. Meanwhile, Jassem al-Jaff, the Migration and Displacement Minister, announced that operations have displaced 670,000 people.

More Details:

<http://original.antiwar.com/updates/2017/05/17/civilians-executed-in-mosul-96-killed-in-iraq/>

- **Peshmerga forces repel IS attack in Khurmatu, southern Kirkuk**

Islamic State (IS) militants on Thursday attacked Peshmerga front lines in Tuz Khurmatu, in southern Kirkuk but were thwarted as Peshmerga forces killed several of the jihadists, according to a Kurdistan24 correspondent.

More Details:

<http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/990e5e5c-2358-4247-b35b-fa5367d0198d>

- **ISIS consolidating chemical weapons, warn U.S. officials**

In an alarming report, a United States intelligence official informed that ISIS maybe bringing together Iraqi and Syrian experts on chemical weapons into a 'chemical weapon cell.'

More Details:

<http://www.aninews.in/newsdetail-NA/MzE0ODgx/isis-consolidating-chemical-weapons-warn-u-s-officials.html>

- **Iraq: Families who fled Mosul forced back**

The Iraqi army and other local security forces have forced over 300 displaced families to return to west Mosul neighborhoods still under risk of attack by the Islamic State (also known as ISIS), Human Rights Watch said today. The families, who had fled to the Hammam al-Alil and Hajj Ali camps for displaced people, are severely short of water, food, electricity, and medical assistance.

More Details:

<http://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/iraq-families-who-fled-mosul-forced-back>

- **Dozens Killed in Spate of Suicide Bombings and Airstrikes in Mosul**

Dozens of people were killed and scores injured in a spate of suicide bombings and a coalition airstrike in Iraq's northern city of Mosul on Wednesday, according to security officials. A bomber detonated his explosives-laden vehicle at a group of anti-terrorism forces in al-Refai, north-west of Mosul, killing three soldiers, federal police officer Uday al-Saeedi told Anadolu Agency.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/dozens-killed-spate-suicide-bombings-and-airstrikes-mosul-975570>

- **The War against ISIS Has Just Begun**

Nearly three years ago, the Islamic State (ISIS) catapulted to the top of the news worldwide after the group seized vast swaths of Syria and Iraq, used Mosul's revered Great Mosque of al-Nuri to announce the creation of an Islamic caliphate, executed tens of thousands of civilians, and committed genocide against Iraq's ethnic Yazidi minority. Today, though the fight against ISIS remains a top priority for the Trump Administration, the organization's days in the limelight appear to be declining as U.S. and coalition forces deal it critical losses on the battlefield. In fact, ISIS may lose its two main strongholds – Mosul in Iraq and Raqqa in Syria – before summer turns to fall.

More Details:

<https://www.thecipherbrief.com/article/middle-east/war-against-isis-has-just-begun-1089>

- **It's Time to Reassess US Arms Transfer Policy**

With the recent decision to deploy additional troops to Iraq and Syria to help in the assault on Mosul and Raqqa, the two largest cities within the Islamic State's self-proclaimed Caliphate, it appears that the Trump administration has begun to take the first steps towards re-engaging the US military in another Middle East intervention.

More Details:

<https://townhall.com/columnists/youngvoicesadvocates/2017/05/18/its-time-to-reassess-us-arms-transfer-policy-n2328441>

- **Isil planting mines around Mosul homes to trap people**

Isil militants are planting bombs near front doors in Mosul to prevent civilians leaving, a federal police commander and witnesses said yesterday, as Iraqi forces make their final push against the jihadists after seven months of fighting.

More Details:

<http://www.independent.ie/world-news/middle-east/isil-planting-mines-around-mosul-homes-to-trap-people-35728044.html>

- **Iraqi forces recapture new neighborhood in W. Mosul**

Iraqi forces battling Islamic State (IS) militants on Wednesday liberated a new neighborhood amid heavy clashes with IS in a push that initiated a new front in the northwestern edge of IS stronghold in the western side of Mosul, the Iraqi military said.

More Details:

http://www.china.org.cn/world/2017-05/18/content_40839623.htm

- **After the war**

The details were horrific. Outside the besieged city of Mosul, 13,000 wounded civilians are today waiting for reconstructive surgery – from just this one seven-month battle. Another 5,000 Iraqi police militiamen are waiting for the same surgery from recent military offensives, in their case to be cared for by the Iraqi ministry of interior..

More Details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/205057-After-the-war>

- **U.S. believes ISIS' bomb-making research includes new generation of explosives**

Amid the bombed-out ruins of Mosul University, U.S. officials say they have uncovered evidence that the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) was developing a new type of bomb that could pass through an airport scanner undetected.

More Details:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/isis-bomb-making-research-new-generation-explosives-concealed-computer/>

- **Iraqi parliament speaker tells those wanting to 'divide' Iraq to seek life in exile**

The speaker of the Iraqi parliament has said that they are standing in full force against any project that seeks to turn Iraq into “small states” telling people who want to do so should seek life elsewhere. “Iraq is one and will not be divided and anyone who seeks life outside this country should start looking for another country,” Salim al-Jabouri said...

More Details:

http://arableague.einnews.com/article_detail/381618250-iraqi-parliament-speaker-tells-those-wanting-to-divide-iraq-to-seek-life-in-exile?vcode=Xlhw

- **Gorran announces it has made a decision on its withdrawal from KRG**

The Change (Gorran) Motion say they’ve plans to withdraw from the Kurdistan Regional Authorities (KRG), however this topic is delayed for now as a result of they don’t need the Kurdistan Democratic Occasion (KDP) “to prevail [in] the coup.” Jamal Mohammed, head of the Gorran Nationwide Council mentioned on the celebration’s foremost workplace in Erbil on Wednesday that “we’ve decided on the query of our withdrawal. The failure of this authorities has been confirmed and that we’ve simply procrastinated the withdrawal.”

More Details:

<http://erbilcompanies.com/gorran-announces-it-has-made-a-decision-on-its-withdrawal-from-kg-2.html>

- **Iraqi official: Kurdish Black Forces at North Oil Company seek ‘political’ gains**

Iraq’s oil ministry has stated that the Black Force units deployed to the Kirkuk’s state-run oil company in early March are seeking “political” gains and are complicating problems in the oil-rich province. Spokesperson Asim Jihad commented on the presence of the armed forces of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) who have been stationed in the North Oil Company in Kirkuk since early March.

More Details:

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/170520172>

2. SYRIA

- **Syrian Arab Republic Delegation Holds Session of Talks with the UN Special Envoy to Syria De Mistura**

The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic headed by Bashar al-Jaafari held on Wednesday a new session of talks with the UN Special Envoy to Syria Staffan de Mistura at the UN HQ in Geneva in the framework of the sixth round of the intra-Syrian dialogue.

More Details:

<http://sana.sy/en/?p=106284>

- **ISIS Forming “Chemical Weapons Cell” in Syria, Media Reports**

ISIS is forming a new "chemical weapons cell" made up of all its experts in this sector from Iraq and Syria, according to a US official cited by CNN. It said the members of the new cell haven't previously worked together and the cell is based in an ISIS-controlled area in Syria in the Euphrates River Valley between the Syrian town of Mayadin and the town of al Qaim just over the border in Iraq.

More Details:

http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/generalnews/2017/05/18/isis-forming-chemical-weapons-cell-in-syria-media-reports_01a9c15d-ef2d-40a5-af61-6217b2e27008.html

- **Syrian Army Kills, Wounds ISIL Militants in Deir ez-Zor**

The Syrian army killed 28 and wounded 30 ISIL terror group militants in Deir ez-Zor city and its surroundings, local media reported citing a military source. The source told the SANA news agency that a tank, two infantry fighting vehicles and two vehicles equipped with heavy machine guns were destroyed during the clashes.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/125431/Syrian-army-kills-wounds-ISIL-militants-in-Deir-ez-Zor>

- **Moscow planning to send 60,000 Muslim troops to Syria, Saudi newspaper says**

Citing unnamed “informed sources,” a Saudi newspaper says that “Russia has prepared approximately 60,000” predominantly Sunni Muslim soldiers from the North Caucasus to dispatch to Syria, a dramatic expansion in the limited Chechen police contingent now stationed in Aleppo and within the TURAN battalion near Palmyra.

More Details:

<http://euromaidanpress.com/2017/05/18/moscow-planning-to-send-60000-muslim-troops-to-syria-saudi-newspaper-says-euromaidan-press/#arvlbdata>

- **US should replace envoy McGurk, as he supports YPG/PKK, FM Çavuşoğlu says**

Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said that it would be beneficial if the U.S. replaces the Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter Daesh Brett McGurk as he openly supports PKK terrorist group and its Syrian offshoot People’s Protection Units (YPG).

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2017/05/18/us-should-replace-envoy-mcgurk-as-he-supports-ypgpkk-fm-cavusoglu-says>

- **Kurdish security chief says unity among Syria’s Kurds still possible**

The Chancellor of Kurdistan Region Security Council (KRSC), Masrour Barzani, told an audience at the Heritage Foundation on Tuesday that the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) is ready to host another round of negotiations between the Kurdish parties of Syria and will never refuse ‘another round’ of negotiations. A sign that there is still a possibility for Kurdish unity in Rojava, a demand shared by most Kurds of Syria.

More Details:

<http://aranews.net/2017/05/kurdish-security-chief-says-unity-among-syrias-kurds-still-possible/>

- **House Votes to Impose New Syria Sanctions**

The House passed legislation on Wednesday to impose sanctions on anyone involved with the humanitarian and security crisis in Syria. Approved by a simple voice vote, the measure slaps new sanctions through 2021 on people who have financial relationships with the Syrian government or businesses controlled by the regime.

More Details:

<http://thehill.com/blogs/floor-action/house/333954-house-votes-to-impose-new-syria-sanctions>

- **Syrian rivals weigh UN plan for new constitution**

Rival Syrian delegations on Wednesday weighed a UN proposal on developing a new constitution for the war-ravaged country, as a new round of peace talks entered a second day. The sixth round of UN-backed negotiations in Geneva is the latest drive to bring a political solution to the conflict which has claimed more than 320,000 lives since 2011.

More Details:

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/news/world/syrian-rivals-weigh-un-plan-for-new-constitution/article/492840>

- **Syrian Opposition at Geneva Peace Talks: 'We Will Not Walk Away'**

Syria's opposition pledged not to walk away from a new round of peace talks in Geneva on Tuesday despite rebel defeats in Damascus and U.S. charges of regime atrocities at an infamous prison. The sixth U.N.-backed round of talks got under way after Syria's government secured the evacuation of three rebel-held districts of Damascus through so-called "reconciliation deals."

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/syrian-opposition-geneva-peace-talks-%E2%80%98we-will-not-walk-away%E2%80%99-975548>

- **Syrian migrants injected \$800 million in Egypt, UN report**

More than five million refugees fled Syria and settled in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. In Egypt, figures suggest that 120,000 Syrians are officially registered, even though governmental sources estimate the actual number to be closer to half a million, reminds the site Egypt Independent offering a summary of the report. Regarding Egypt, the influx of people, in addition to the private capital and expertise, has fueled the growth of businesses in the country, with over \$800 million injected into the economy through investment, technical skills and business enterprises. The majority of Syrians residing in Egypt are integrated into urban areas, where they are employed in the informal economy.

More Details:

[http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/economics/2017/05/17/syrian-migrants-injected-\\$800-million-in-egypt-un-report_0afbf35a-cae6-467a-b611-b5fa45085397.html](http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/economics/2017/05/17/syrian-migrants-injected-$800-million-in-egypt-un-report_0afbf35a-cae6-467a-b611-b5fa45085397.html)

3. IRAN

- **Trump sticks to the Iran nuclear deal**

Amidst the turmoil of the Russia intelligence scandal embroiling US President Donald Trump, one would be forgiven for missing that Washington is due to waive sanctions on Iran on Wednesday. And yet Washington's softened tone is consequential.

More Details:

<https://www.neweurope.eu/article/trump-sticks-iran-nuclear-deal/>

- **Foreign policy plays major role in Iran election**

The administration of US President Donald Trump is extending sanctions relief for Iran that was granted under Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. The move comes despite Trump's election campaign vowing to "rip up" the agreement with Tehran if elected. Yet, the US government has imposed new economic penalties over Iranian ballistic activity.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/video/news/2017/05/foreign-policy-plays-major-role-iran-election-170518082848793.html>

- **Iran Criticizes U.S. For Imposing New Sanctions Over Missile Program**

Iran has criticized new U.S. sanctions against individuals and companies with links to the country's missile program, saying they would undermine the 2015 nuclear agreement with world powers.

More Details:

<https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-criticizes-united-states-new-sanctions-missile-program/28495080.html>

- **Iran: Hardliner Raisi Challenges Rouhani**

As Iran's presidential election enters the home stretch, conservative challenger Ebrahim Raisi is presenting stiff competition for moderate President Hassan Rouhani. Most incumbents get reelected in the Islamic Republic.

More Details:

<http://www.dw.com/en/iran-hardliner-raisi-challenges-rouhani/av-38882429>

- **Forget Watergate. Think Iran-Contra.**

The reported effort by President Trump to pressure the F.B.I. director to drop the investigation into Russian influence over his former national security adviser, Michael Flynn, has provoked cries of “obstruction of justice.” Trump critics are demanding an independent prosecutor, à la Watergate, or at least the appointment of a nonpartisan, neutral F.B.I. director to continue the investigation.

More Details:

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/18/opinion/trump-watergate-iran-contra.html?_r=0

- **Iran's Labor Ministry under Pressure to Deny Workers' Problems**

We only enjoy the senior officials’ approval if we refuse to express the labor community’s problems, said the head of the so-called High Council of Iran Laborers. “Senior officials refuse to hear the problems of the workers community,” said Mohammad Yarahmadi in a press conference on Wednesday, May 17, according to the semi-official Tasnim news agency.

More Details:

<http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/society/22823-iran-s-labor-ministry-under-pressure-to-deny-workers-problems>

- **International Ground Troops Cutting off Regime Ambitions on Securing a ‘Tehran-Damascus’ Trail**

Beirut- International coalition ground troops were deployed on Wednesday from Tanf military outpost in eastern Syria to stage special operations against ISIS targets, Syrian rebel sources told Asharq Al-Awsat. Led by the United States, dispatched coalition troops included a tripartite of US-British-Norwegian forces.

More Details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/paula-astih-and-nazeer-rida/news-middle-east/international-ground-troops-cutting-off-regime-ambitions-securing-tehran-damascus-trail>

- **Iran Condemns New US Missile Sanctions**

The Iranian government has slammed new US sanction on its missile program, saying they undermine an existing nuclear deal.

More Details:

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2017/05/18/iran-condemns-new-us-missile-sanctions>

- **Iran not to implement all goals of UNESCO 2030 Agenda**

FM Spokesman addressed certain domestic concerns over the UNESCO 2030 Agenda, saying Iran's principled and immutable position is non-compliance with any goals that go against the country's religious and cultural values.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/125435/iran-not-to-implement-all-goals-of-UNESCO-2030-Agenda>

- **Khamenei urges massive voting to bolster Iran**

Iran's top two presidential candidates launched a final day of election campaigning on Wednesday as the supreme leader called for a massive turnout to bolster the regime against its "enemies." Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei suggested Iran's foes would be deterred from pursuing regime change if they saw voters flock to the ballot boxes in Friday's poll.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/6c80f332-a69c-467b-8961-635f51985a45.aspx>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **If Trump Leaked Israel Secrets, Why Doesn't Israel Seem To Care?**

The latest allegations is that US President Donald Trump leaked, or passed, information to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov during a meeting last Wednesday. But if a spy working for Israel and privy to the latest ISIS plots is now at risk, where is the anger from Jerusalem? Instead there is a wall of silence in Israel that could convey real concern, but could also indicate that this US scandal is not rocking the intelligence services the way it is being portrayed.

More details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/If-Trump-leaked-Israel-secrets-why-doesnt-Israel-seem-to-care-492057>

- **The Costliest Mistake in Israel's History**

Five years after the state-owned power monopoly Israel Electric Corporation signed a contract with the gas cartel, the state comptroller has finally put a price tag on how much the deeply faulty agreement will cost the Israeli public in needlessly high prices.

More details:

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/business/1.789984>

- **Palestine hunger strikers moved to jails with field hospitals: Rights body**

A prisoners' rights group says all hunger-striking Palestinian inmates in Israeli jails have been transferred to three detention facilities with field hospitals as the protesters' health conditions are deteriorating.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/05/18/522310/Issa-Qarage-hungerstriking-Palestinians-Israeli-prisons>

- **State archives makes material from Six Day War available**

Ahead of the 50th anniversary of the Six Day War, the Israel State Archives, a unit within the Prime Minister's Office, is today (Thursday, 18 May 2017), making available material from the Six Day War.

More details:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/229813>

- **If Palestinians and Israel Were a Couple, What Could Help?**

For too long conflict between Israel and the Palestinians has sometimes simmered and often flared up in terrorism and violence. For far too long, for sure. President Trump—like Presidents Obama, Bush, Clinton and more before them—is declaring that the time for peace has come.

More details:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/resolution-not-conflict/201705/if-palestinians-and-israel-were-couple-what-could-help>

- **Soldiers Abduct A Palestinian Child In Qalqilia**

Israeli soldiers invaded, on Thursday at dawn, Kufur Qaddoum town, east of the northern West Bank city of Qalqilia, searched homes and abducted one child.

More details:

<http://imemc.org/article/soldiers-abduct-a-palestinian-child-in-qalqilia/>

- **Gaza residents left in the dark amid Palestinian power struggle**

By night, much of the Gaza Strip is plunged into darkness with streets lit only by the headlights of passing cars. Inside their apartment, south of Gaza City, the children of the Abu Shaban family are studying for their end-of-year exams by candlelight.

More details:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39939611>

- **IDF cracks down on families of terrorists who killed 3 Israeli teens**

In an overnight wide scale sweep in Hebron, IDF confiscates thousands of shekels from families of terrorists who kidnapped and murdered Gil-Ad Shaer, Naftali Frenkel and Eyal Yifrah in 2014; 'From the moment that the kidnapping attack was carried out, the families of the attackers have enjoyed significant sums of money received from the Hamas movement'; 22 Palestinians also arrested across the West Bank on suspicion of terror activities.

More details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4963864,00.html>

- **Hamas' Strategic Rebranding**

On May 1, 30 years after releasing its founding charter, Hamas unveiled a revised version of the document that appears to soften the group's stance toward Israel. The major takeaway is that Hamas is open, at least in principle, to accepting the 1967 borders of a Palestinian state—a major sticking point in previous failed negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Its previous position had always been to call for the destruction of the state of Israel.

More details:

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2017-05-17/hamas-strategic-rebranding>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **RJ named 'Official Carrier' for World Economic Forum**

The World Economic Forum has selected Royal Jordanian (RJ) to be the official carrier of the forum participants for the ninth time since its first meeting in Jordan, held in 1995.

More details:

http://www.tradearabia.com/news/TTN_325118.html

- **Washington's UN envoy to travel to Jordan, Turkey**

US Ambassador Nikki Haley will make her first trip overseas this week as Washington's envoy to the United Nations, traveling to Jordan and Turkey to focus on the plight of Syrian refugees.

More details:

<http://www.france24.com/en/20170518-washingtons-un-envoy-travel-jordan-turkey>

- **King of Jordan, Egyptian president hold talks in Cairo**

His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, held talks in Cairo on Wednesday, on means to forge closer ties between the two countries as well as current regional issues, Jordan News Agency (Petra) reported.

More details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302614476>

- **Berri Believes Accord on Vote Law 'Likely' Before Deadline**

Although deadlines are looming to agree on a new electoral law for Lebanon's parliamentary polls, Speaker Nabih Berri ruled out the possibility of failure to reach a voting system before June 21 when the term of the parliament ends, al-Joumhouria daily reported on Thursday.

More details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/230164-report-berri-believes-accord-on-vote-law-likely-before-deadline>

- **Maintaining fiscal stability in Lebanon a 'dance with wolves', says central bank governor**

As U.S. President Donald Trump prepares to make his first trip to the Middle East, some lawmakers back in Washington are seeking amendments to a law that could see further sanctions against Hezbollah and its political allies.

More details:

<http://www.cnn.com/2017/05/18/maintaining-fiscal-stability-in-lebanon-a-dance-with-wolves-says-central-bank-governor.html>

- **Italian FM in Beirut for Talks with Senior Officials**

Italian Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano arrived in Beirut Wednesday evening for talks with senior Lebanese officials, and to inspect the UNIFIL peacekeepers Italian Contingent working in south Lebanon, the National News Agency reported on Thursday.

More details:

<http://en.addiyar.com/article/1371849-italian-fm-in-beirut-for-talks-with-senior-officials>

- **Electoral disputes in Lebanon**

Disputes over a proposed new electoral law in Lebanon threaten to upset the delicate balance between the country's different religious sects and communities.

More details:

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/20501.aspx>

- **After its main involvement in the siege of Syrian areas in Rif Dimashq... the Lebanese Hezbollah re-deploys its forces on the border with Lebanon**

The Syrian Human Rights Observatory obtained information from several reliable sources who confirmed to the Syrian Human Rights Observatory that the withdrawal of the Lebanese Hezbollah from the border areas between the Western Qalamoun and Lebanese territory is not true.

More details:

<http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=66573>

- **Trump builds alliance with Jordanian King ahead of Middle East visit**

President Trump spoke Tuesday night with King Abdullah II of Jordan, as he works to strengthen relationships with leaders of Muslim countries ahead of his visit this week to the Middle East.

More details:

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/may/17/donald-trump-builds-alliance-king-abdullah-ii-jord/>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Donald Trump JR., Dubai business partner discuss 'new ideas'**

Donald Trump Jr. traveled to Dubai and met a billionaire business partner in the city-state, discussing "new ideas" as the Emirati's real estate firm still lists possible plans for future joint projects while Trump's father is in the White House.

More Details;

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/ML_TRUMP_DUBAI?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-05-18-02-08-07

- **Qatari Emir and Palestinian President discuss relations**

H.H. the Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, yesterday held a telephone conversation with Mahmoud Abbas, President of Palestine, and discussed bilateral relations.

More Details;

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302614519>

- **Qatar committed to human rights**

Acting Director of Department of Human Rights at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs HE Ambassador Faisal bin Abdullah Al-Henzab said that the State of Qatar was committed to enhancing human rights in the country.

More Details;

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/17/05/2017/Qatar-committed-to-human-rights>

- **KRCS allocates budget for cholera in Yemen**

Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) stressed keenness to support and improve healthy conditions in Yemen, noting that it has allocated a budget to provide.

More Details;

<http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2612505&Language=en>

- **Yemeni Rebels Say Saudi-Led Airstrike Killed 23 Civilians**

An airstrike by the Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen killed 23 civilians, including three children, on Wednesday, according to the news agency controlled by Shiite Houthi rebels.

More Details;

<https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2017-05-17/yemeni-rebels-say-saudi-led-airstrike-killed-23-civilians>

- **IMF Staff Completes 2017 Article IV Visit to Oman**

End-of-Mission press releases include statements of IMF staff teams that convey preliminary findings after a visit to a country. The views expressed in this statement are those of the IMF staff and do not necessarily represent the views of the IMF's Executive Board. Based on the preliminary findings of this mission, staff will prepare a report that, subject to management approval, will be presented to the IMF's Executive Board for discussion and decision.

More Details;

<http://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2017/05/18/PR17180-Oman-IMF-Staff-Completes-2017-Article-IV-Visit>

- **Oman oil production drops to 29m barrels in April**

Oman's production of oil and condensates declined 3.22% reaching 29.02 million barrels in April, according to data released by Oman's Ministry of Oil and Gas.

More Details;

<https://english.mubasher.info/news/3111607/Oman-oil-production-drops-to-29m-barrels-in-April>

- **Oman keen to boost economic ties with Egypt**

Bilateral meetings aimed at boosting economic relations between the Omani and Egyptian companies began in Cairo on Wednesday.

More Details;

<http://timesofoman.com/article/109296/Oman/Government/Oman-keen-to-boost-economic-ties-with-Egypt>

- **Saudis Expect Big Economic Boost from Trump Visit**

Saudi-U.S. ties have never been better. Saudi Arabia will be President Donald Trump's first stop in his first overseas tour. The Saudis have laid out a massive red carpet for Trump and his business delegation with multiple events. It's emblematic of the importance the Saudis have bestowed on Trump and the rebirth of its relationship with the U.S. It's not unusual for a U.S. president to visit Saudi Arabia -- President Barack Obama, who was viewed cautiously by Riyadh, came more times

than any of his predecessors. It is, however, a first for a U.S. president to be visiting the kingdom on his maiden trip. Business comes first.

More Details;

<https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2017-05-18/saudis-expect-big-economic-boost-from-trump-visit>

7. EGYPT

- **Investments in power strategy amount to \$75bn until 2022**

The government completed preparing the energy strategy and is set to implement it starting next year, in coordination with both the Ministry of Petroleum and the Ministry of Electricity.

More Details

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/05/18/investments-power-strategy-amount-75bn-2022/>

- **President of Egypt talks peace in the Middle East, says Trump is an opportunity**

President of Egypt Abdel Fattah el-Sisi responded to the question "is there hope for a solution to the Palestinian issue under Trump?" saying "there is the opportunity, and if it would be taken we could reach a solution and the conflict will become history."

More Details;

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4963834,00.html>

- **Egypt sees opportunities flowing from Initiative**

The Belt and Road Initiative will "open up huge opportunities" for cooperation between Egypt and China in terms of mutual trade and investment, said a top Egyptian researcher.

More Details;

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2017-05/18/content_29395166.htm

- **IMF gives the thumbs up**

The government breathed a sigh of relief this week as a delegation from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced that the country had cleared the first review of the extended fund facility (EFF) loan made to Egypt by the fund.

More Details:

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/20512.aspx>

- **Syrian migrants injected \$800 million in Egypt, UN report**

More than five million refugees fled Syria and settled in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. In Egypt, figures suggest that 120,000 Syrians are officially registered, even though governmental sources estimate the actual number to be closer to half a million, reminds the site Egypt Independent offering a summary of the report. Regarding Egypt, the influx of people, in addition to the private capital and expertise, has fueled the growth of businesses in the country, with over \$800 million injected into the economy through investment, technical skills and business enterprises. The majority of Syrians residing in Egypt are integrated into urban areas, where they are employed in the informal economy.

More Details:

[http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/economics/2017/05/17/syrian-migrants-injected-\\$800-million-in-egypt-un-report_0afbf35a-cae6-467a-b611-b5fa45085397.html](http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/economics/2017/05/17/syrian-migrants-injected-$800-million-in-egypt-un-report_0afbf35a-cae6-467a-b611-b5fa45085397.html)

- **Egypt's president assures steps to ease strain on poor**

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi sought to ease the concerns of Egyptians grappling with rising prices ahead of the holy month of Ramadan by pledging a raft of economic measures including tax breaks.

More Details:

<http://www.gulf-times.com/story/549285/Egypt-s-president-assures-steps-to-ease-strain-on>

- **Italy and Russia energy companies firm up partnerships**

Italian energy company Eni said on May 17, 2017, that it signed an agreement with a Russian energy company to explore opportunities, including in Egyptian gas.

More Details:

<http://neftegaz.ru/en/news/view/161166-Italy-and-Russia-energy-companies-firm-up-partnerships>

- **Egyptian and Italian prosecution determined on continued cooperation to find Regeni's killer: Joint statement**

The office of Egypt's prosecutor-general announced said it has handed over the files and records - requested in March by Italian prosecutors - of the investigation into the murder of Italian student Giulio Regeni in Cairo in 2016 to Rome's assistant public prosecutor.

More Details;

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/268997/-.aspx>

- **Haftar welcomes Egyptian Chief of Staff to Benghazi**

Egypt's Chief of Staff and head of its Libya file, Lieutenant-General Mahmoud Hijazi, arrived in Benghazi today for talks with Khalifa Haftar and military leaders.

More Details;

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/05/17/hafter-welcomes-egyptian-chief-of-staff-to-benghazi/>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **What Do The Russians Have Planned Off Libya's Coast Next Week?**

Russia's increased interest in Libya is nothing new—we have reported on it in detail before—but the possibility of Moscow intervening in that bloody and chaotic civil war with cruise missile strikes is. That is one very plausible reason behind Russia's issuing of a notice to airman (NOTAM) warning of an impending "rocket test" off the eastern coast of the country next week.

More Details

<http://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/10375/what-do-the-russians-have-planned-off-libyas-coast-next-week>

- **Libya: The battle for dignity**

On the third anniversary of the launching of Operation Dignity Galal Nassar speaks with Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, general commander of the Libyan National Army

More Details

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/20514.aspx>

- **Nigeria, Morocco seal pact on gas project, fertilizer initiative**

The Federal Government and Morocco have sealed pacts to drive the implementation of the gas regional pipeline and fertilizer initiative. According to the Foreign Minister of Morocco, Nasser Bourita who presented the broad guidelines of the projects at the signing of the agreements in Morocco, the shared vision of the two leaders, President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari and King Mohammed VI, the King of Morocco is in favour of a sustainable, active and solidarity based joint development for Africa.

More Details

<http://guardian.ng/business-services/nigeria-morocco-seal-pact-on-gas-project-fertilizer-initiative/>

- **Rebels with a cause**

Regarded since the Arab Spring as the one country that successfully transitioned from dictatorship to democracy, Tunisia is now feeling the consequences of a failure to invest in its people and its economy. The fact that the system is still riddled with corruption simply adds more grist to the people's mill. By Houda Mzioudet

More Details

<http://en.qantara.de/content/from-el-kamour-to-carthage-we-will-not-recoil-rebels-with-a-cause>

- **Tunisia launches Ramadan price-control campaign**

The Tunisian authorities have launched a new campaign aiming to control food prices during the upcoming Muslim holy month of Ramadan, according to Minister for Commerce and Trade Ziad Laadhari.

More Details

http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/economics/2017/05/17/tunisia-launches-ramadan-price-control-campaign_4eaf1639-52d0-4485-b345-1ac674a10fca.html

- **Algeria's boutarfa in Spain for talks**

Algerian energy minister Nouredine Boutarfa was in Madrid on May 15-16 for talks with key Spanish officials and companies. Boutarfa's office said he met senior executives from Repsol, Cepsa, Enagas, contractor Tecnicas Reunidas, construction group Villar Mir and solar energy developer Terra Sola for talks ranging from E&P through petrochemicals to renewable energy.

More Details

<https://www.naturalgasworld.com/algerias-boutarfa-in-spain-for-talks-37645>

- **Another Oil Exporter Plans to Curb Subsidies as Budget Suffers**

Algeria is working on proposals to further curb energy subsidies and introduce cash transfers for those most in need, according to its finance minister, the latest push by the OPEC member to cut spending while avoiding unrest

More Details

<https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2017-05-18/another-oil-exporter-plans-to-curb-subsidies-as-budget-suffers>

- **Hafter welcomes Egyptian Chief of Staff to Benghazi**

Egypt's Chief of Staff and head of its Libya file, Lieutenant-General Mahmoud Hijazi, arrived in Benghazi today for talks with Khalifa Hafter and military leaders.

More Details

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/05/17/hafter-welcomes-egyptian-chief-of-staff-to-benghazi/>

- **Tunisia to invest 400 MD to produce over 210 MW of renewable energy**

Operators willing to invest in solar photovoltaic and wind energy must submit their bids, no later than November 15, 2017, Minister of Energy, Mining and Renewable Energies, Hela Cheikhrouhou, said during a press conference on Wednesday .

More Details

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302614488>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **ICJ announces verdict in Yadav spy case today**

The UN's top court will rule on Thursday on an urgent bid by India to stop Pakistan from carrying out death sentence to one of its nationals convicted of spying.

More Details

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/205120-ICJ-announces-verdict-in-Yadav-spy-case-today>

- **Attack on state-run broadcaster ended with all assailants killed**

Ten people, including four attackers, were killed and 17 others wounded in militants attack on the National Radio Television building in eastern Nangarhar province on Wednesday morning, an official said.

More Details

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2017/05/17/attack-state-run-broadcaster-ended-all-assailants-killed>

- **Pakistani embassy staff held by Afghan spies for three hours**

Two Pakistani staffers at the Pakistan Embassy in Kabul were detained for hours by the National Directorate of Security (NDS), the premier intelligence agency of Afghanistan, under unclear circumstances.

More Details

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1333771/pakistani-embassy-staff-held-by-afghan-spies-for-three-hours>

- **Afghan intelligence foil Taliban attack plans in Kabul city**

The Afghan intelligence operatives have foiled plans by the Taliban group to carry out a series of attacks in capital Kabul.

More Details

<http://www.khaama.com/afghan-intelligence-foil-taliban-attack-plans-in-kabul-city-02768>

- **NATO in Afghanistan: Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford says alliance should move quickly to deploy forces**

The top U.S. military officer says NATO should be prepared to move fast to deploy additional forces if President Trump and other heads of states agree to bolster the alliance's mission in Afghanistan, where government forces are locked in a stalemate with the Taliban.

More Details

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2017/05/18/nato-afghanistan-marine-gen-joseph-dunford-says-alliance-should-move-quickly-deploy-forces/101820070/>

- **Modi govt 'blessing in disguise' for ISIS: Indian jihadi in Afghanistan**

Rashid Abdullah claimed Modi govt was planning to change the Constitution, and only then, Muslims would 'start searching for a solution'.

More Details

<http://www.asianage.com/india/all-india/180517/modi-govt-blessing-in-disguise-for-isis-indian-jihadi-in-afghanistan.html>

- **Saudi visit: Trump to discuss extremism in Afghanistan, Pakistan with Muslim leaders**

US President Donald Trump to discuss about ISIS and extremism in Afghanistan and Pakistan on his visit to Saudi Arabia this week.

More Details

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/saudi-visit-trump-to-discuss-extremism-in-afghan-pak-with/1/956595.html>

- **Afghan Islamic State Claims Attack on TV Station: Up to Six Dead, 14 Wounded**

Nangarhar's capital Jalalabad, where the suicide attack took place, is also home to the local ISIS wing's Voice of the Caliphate, a pirate radio station aimed at recruiting jihadists and airing anti-government Islamic rulings.

More Details

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/05/17/afghanistan-islamic-state-claims-attack-on-tv-station-up-to-six-dead-14-wounded/>

- **23 militants killed, 4 of their hideouts destroyed in US airstrikes in Helmand**

At least twenty three militants were killed in airstrikes conducted by the US forces in southern Helmand province of Afghanistan.

More Details

<http://www.khaama.com/23-militants-killed-4-of-their-hideouts-destroyed-in-us-airstrikes-in-helmand-02767>

- **DUP's Simpson slated over false Afghan troops trip claim**

The DUP blamed a "printing error" for a claim on a leaflet that former Upper Bann MP David Simpson "has visited British troops on the front line in Afghanistan". While Mr Simpson had planned a visit to Afghanistan with Ulster Unionist peer Lord Maginnis in 2010, the MoD stopped the two political heavyweights from going - because neither could fit in a flak jacket.

More Details

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/dups-simpson-slated-over-false-afghan-troops-trip-claim-35727944.html>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Conference devoted to Turkey-Arab ties begins in Kuwait**

A conference devoted to Turkish-Arab relations kicked off in Kuwait on Wednesday attended by a host of Arab and Turkish officials. The two-day meeting is intended to discuss means of enhancing relations between Turkey and Arab states and promote strategic partnerships between the two sides.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/economy/conference-devoted-to-turkey-arab-ties-begins-in-kuwait/820460>

- **Turkey-Russia-Iran meet in Ankara for ‘de-escalation zones’ in Syria**

Delegations from Turkey, Russia and Iran met in Ankara on May 18 for discussions to declare “de-escalation zones” in rebel-held areas of Syria, another round of talks will be held in Iran on May 21, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu has stated. “There are recommendations about which soldiers should be deployed in de-escalation zones. The countries can give troops under the supervision of the U.N. We want it to be under the supervision of an institution. But there are no concrete steps yet and no decision has been taken yet. Nobody will hesitate if it is under the U.N. roof,” Çavuşoğlu said during a televised interview on May 18.

More Details:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=113262&NewsCatID=352>

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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