



# MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

## GÜNLÜK ORTADOĞU BÜLTENİ

**Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries**

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

**The Restructuring Proces of Iraq**

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

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## 1. IRAQ

- **Jubouri to McGurk: Iraq At A Stage Requires Complete Elections Successfully**

The Speaker of the House of Representatives Salim al-Jubouri stressed that Iraq is on an important stage requires the mobilization of efforts to complete the elections successfully and transparently, by providing all the requirements that allow the participation of all Iraqis without exception.

More Details:

[http://www.ninanews.com/News\\_Details.aspx?1kencj8ZhJ9sg8KGtV2RMA%253d%253d](http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?1kencj8ZhJ9sg8KGtV2RMA%253d%253d)

- **Civilian killed, police conscript injured in armed attack, northeastern Diyala**

A civilian was killed, while a police conscript was injured in an armed attack, northeast of Diyala, a security source from the province said on Thursday. "A civilian and a conscript from customs police, who are from Jalawla region, were attacked by unidentified gunmen on the main road of Baqubah-Khanaqeen, northeastern Diyala," the source told Alghad Press.

More Details:

<https://www.iraqinews.com/features/civilian-killed-police-conscript-injured-armed-attack-northeastern-diyala/>

- **PUK to Participate in Iraq's Elections Independently**

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) will take part in Iraq's upcoming elections as an independent electoral list and outside any coalition, said a senior official. "The PUK favours the elections to be held on time, in which it will run alone, said PUK Spokesperson Ahemd Pira.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/kurdistan/408054>

- **Baghdad must seize the chance to work with Iraq's tribes**

With the military campaign against the self-proclaimed Islamic State (or ISIL) in Iraq over, attention has turned to addressing the grievances and factors that gave rise to the extremist group. These include Sunni marginalization from the political process, sectarian policies that ossified community cleavages and spurred extremist ideology, economic deprivation, and ineffective governance and public service delivery. Steps are already being taken to deal with these matters. Yet if the Iraqi government and its partners are to bring about positive long-term changes that mitigate the factors giving rise to extremism, they must get a handle on a phenomenon that has often been a determining variable in the country's peace and stability equation: tribes and tribalism.



More Details:

<https://warontherocks.com/2018/01/baghdad-must-seize-chance-work-iraqs-tribes/?singlepage=1>

- **Kirkuk and Khurmatu security files will be handed over to Federal Police**

The head of the Security Committee in the Council of the province of Kirkuk on Wednesday: The security file for Kirkuk and Khurmatu will be transferred from the Iraqi army forces and the popular crowd to the federal police.

More Details:

[http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN\\_Direje.aspx?Jimare=42562](http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=42562)

- **Iraq: Efforts to Mend Rifts between Abadi, Sadr**

Secret efforts resumed on Tuesday to reopen channels between Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and leader of the Sadrist Movement, Muqtada al-Sadr, were disrupted after the prime minister signed an electoral pact with Hashd al-Shaabi, before the latter withdrew from the Nasr al-Iraq coalition on Monday. An initiative to reconnect the two men is ran by Abdul-Halim al-Zuhairi, leading official at the Dawa party, of which al-Abadi is a member.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1146116/iraq-efforts-mend-rifts-between-abadi-sadr>

- **Sunni coalition calls for postponing Iraq elections**

A major Sunni coalition on Wednesday called for postponing this year's local and parliamentary elections in Iraq. In a statement, the Unity Alliance of Iraq said it had requested the Iraqi parliament to postpone the polls scheduled for May 12. The statement, however, did not cite any reason for seeking to delay the vote.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/sunni-coalition-calls-for-postponing-iraq-elections/1033609>

- **Iraq PM insists elections will be held on time**

Iraq's Prime Minister Haider Al Abadi has said that the collapse of his own political alliance will not derail the country's upcoming general elections. The vote, scheduled for May 12, is the first since security forces routed ISIL, but it has been thrown into doubt because of continued sectarian tensions.

More Details:

<https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/iraq-pm-insists-elections-will-be-held-on-time-1.696116>

- **NATO intends to strengthen military assistance to Iraq**

NATO intends to strengthen assistance to Iraq. This issue will be discussed during the February Defence Ministerial, Chairman of the NATO Military Committee Petr Pavel told reporters. According to Pavel, NATO is ready to provide more assistance, based on the special requirements of the coalition and the Iraqi government to strengthen training and defense capacity, RIA Novosti reported.

More Details:

<https://news.am/eng/news/431581.html>

- **ISIS still benefiting from Iraq's economic problems**

As Islamic State lost one of its last villages in Iraq, Brett McGurk, the U.S. special envoy to the coalition battling the group, took to Twitter for a victory lap. The organization's "phony 'caliphate,' " he wrote, is "coming to an end." It is true that ISIS has lost the vast majority of its territory, which at its peak in 2014 included about one-third of Iraq and half of Syria. Once dubbed "the world's richest terrorist organization" by the United Nations, it has also lost an estimated 80 percent of the funds it acquired by conquering territory and mimicking the functions of a state, collecting taxes and tariffs from the citizens under its control.

More Details:

<https://www.stripes.com/opinion/isis-still-benefiting-from-iraq-s-economic-problems-1.507063>

- **Australia withdraws fighter jets from Iraq anti-IS squad**

Australia has flown its final missions in Iraq after participating in the three-year war against the Islamic State group. Operating within the US-led international coalition, the Australian air force flew more than 2,700 sorties and more than 21,000 flying hours.

More Details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2018/1/17/australia-withdraws-fighter-jets-from-iraq-anti-is-squad>

- **US Not Coordinating With Iraq Issue of Syrian Border Force Creation – Iraqi MoD**

The US-led coalition, fighting the Daesh terror group, has not yet addressed Iraq's Defense Ministry to coordinate the issue of establishing a new border security force in Syria near to the Turkish and Iraqi borders, Iraqi Defense Ministry's spokesman Tayar Khafaji told Sputnik on Wednesday. "As of

now, there has been no coordination on this issue with the Defense Ministry. If there is [coordination], if this issue is on the negotiating table, the, of course, the ministry will engage," Khafaji said.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201801171060835404-us-border-force-iraq/>

- **Deputy Foreign Minister heads Iraq's rebuilding conference committee –**

Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah yesterday headed the meeting of the Foreign Ministry's committee tasked with preparing for Iraq's reconstruction conference due in Kuwait on February 12-14. Officials of Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and International Islamic Charity Organization were present at the meeting.

More Details:

<http://news.kuwaittimes.net/website/deputy-foreign-minister-heads-iraqs-rebuilding-conference-committee/>

- **Iraq's displaced aren't being forced home: Official**

Iraq's minister of migration and displaced persons has denied allegations that internally displaced persons (IDPs) were being forced to return to their homes in unsafe parts of Iraq so that local and parliamentary polls slated for May might be held on schedule. "We have not seen any evidence of displaced people being forced to return to their homes involuntarily," Migration Minister Jassim Mohammed al-Jaaf said at a press conference convened in Baghdad on Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/iraqs-displaced-arent-being-forced-home-official/1033787>

- **US vital in stabilizing Northern Iraq says Archbishop of Erbil**

One of the top religious leaders in the ISIS-scarred region of northern Iraq says assistance from the U.S. in stabilizing the area is vital to ensuring the safe return of Christians and Yazids. "It's important for the Americans to step in," Archbishop of Erbil Bashar Matti Warda said in a recent interview with Fox News at its New York offices. "With the dollars, with the political influence, all the experience they have had over the last 100 years supporting the genocide cases, they can be of great help."

More Details:

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/01/17/us-vital-in-stabilizing-northern-iraq-says-archbishop-erbil.html>



- **Sharp drop in Iraq and Syria terror deaths: study**

Iraq and Syria saw a sharp drop in the number of people killed in terror attacks last year, a report published Thursday by Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre has found. Despite ongoing violence in both countries, there was a fall in the number of deaths in attacks by non-state actors such as the Islamic State group.

More Details:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-5281879/Sharp-drop-Iraq-Syria-terror-deaths-study.html>

- **IS poses threat to Iraq one month after 'liberation'**

Barely a month after Baghdad declared victory over the Islamic State group, the jihadists could still recapture areas of Iraq, especially near the border with Syria, experts and officials say. Ali al-Bayati, a commander of the Hashed al-Shaabi paramilitary units which fought alongside Iraqi security forces in a gruelling battle against the group, said the Nimrud region of northern Iraq could "fall at any time because security there is fragile".

More Details:

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/news/world/is-poses-threat-to-iraq-one-month-after-liberation/article/512413>

- **Iraq, BP to sign agreement to boost Kirkuk oil production**

Iraq plans to sign an agreement with BP on Thursday to boost production from the northern Kirkuk oilfields, an Iraqi oil official said. The agreement will be signed at the offices of Iraqi state-run North Oil Company which operates the fields, he told Reuters.

More Details:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/iraq-oil-kirkuk/iraq-bp-to-sign-agreement-to-boost-kirkuk-oil-production-idUSL8N1PD1DZ?rpc=401&>

## 2. SYRIA

- **Syrian opposition joins condemnation of US 'border force'**

Syria's main opposition group on Wednesday condemned the US-led coalition's plan to create a 30,000-strong border force on the war-torn country's northern frontier with Turkey.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86823>

- **Syrian government - U.S. military presence in Syria is act of aggression**

The Syrian government said on Thursday that a U.S. military presence in Syria represented an “aggression” against Syrian sovereignty, and vowed to free the country from any “illegitimate” foreign presence. The Syrian Foreign Ministry statement was a response to a speech by U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on Wednesday in which he signalled that U.S. forces would stay in parts of Syria indefinitely.

More Details:

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-usa/syrian-government-u-s-military-presence-in-syria-is-act-of-aggression-idUKKBN1F70YH?rpc=401&>

- **Syrian Kurds react to US border force plan in Syria**

Syria’s Kurdish National Council on Wednesday said the U.S. plan to form a PYD/PKK-led border security force in Syria could trigger dispute between Kurds and Arabs. On Sunday, U.S.-led coalition spokesman Ryan Dillon announced plans to establish a 30,000-strong border security force in Syria with the SDF/PKK -- a U.S.-backed group drawn up largely of PYD/PKK terrorist elements.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/syrian-kurds-react-to-us-border-force-plan-in-syria/1033707>

- **Tillerson denies US plans to form Syria border force**

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has said that Washington owed Turkey an explanation over reports that it was creating a 30,000-strong border force in northern Syria, adding that the issue has been “misportrayed”. “That entire situation has been misportrayed, misdescribed, some people misspoke. We are not creating a border security force at all,” Tillerson told reporters on his way back from giving a speech at Stanford University in California on Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/tillerson-denies-plans-form-syria-border-force-180118070914231.html>

- **Tillerson: The United States Remains in Syria to Help Overthrow Bashar Assad**

The US Army will remain in Syria until the jihadist group Islamic State is finally defeated, as well as to resist Iranian influence and ultimately help with the overthrow of Bashar Assad, said US Secretary of

State Rex Tillerson. In fact, he made it clear that the US military would remain in Syria not only to fight the jihadists but also against the power of Bashar al-Assad and his ally Iran.

More Details:

<http://www.novinite.com/articles/187122/Tillerson%3A+The+United+States+Remains+in+Syria+to+Help+Overthrow+Bashar+Assad>

- **China's humanitarian contribution to Syria adds to its int'l profile**

China's contribution to the international humanitarian aid architecture, which has recently taken on a more extroverted dimension as part of the "outgoing China" approach, has found a new venue in Syria. Events in the Arab country have drawn increasing attention from China since the outset of the crisis in 2011, allowing the rising superpower to further carve out its place in the political and diplomatic landscape in the Middle East region.

More Details:

[http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2018-01/18/content\\_50239714.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2018-01/18/content_50239714.htm)

- **Hosting Syria talks in Sochi presents challenges for Russia**

As Moscow prepares for its Syrian National Dialogue Congress this month, the guest list might still be in flux. Russia hopes to broker peace between the Syrian regime and its opposition while appeasing major stakeholders — who at the moment aren't playing nicely. On Jan. 11, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss the Syrian situation. This was two days after Turkey had summoned the Russian and Iranian ambassadors over cease-fire violations in the Idlib de-escalation zone. Under the preliminary peace agreements reached in Astana, Kazakhstan, the three guarantor countries for the four Syrian de-escalation zones are Turkey, Russia and Iran.

More Details:

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/01/russia-challenge-national-dialogue-syria-iran-turkey.html>

- **Russia Ready to Increase Cooperation With US on Syria - Ambassador to Washington**

Moscow is prepared to expand cooperation with the United States on settling the ongoing conflict in Syria on a firm international legal basis, Russian Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Antonov told Sputnik. "Russia is ready to continue and increase cooperation with the United States on a solid international legal basis to reach a peaceful settlement of the Syrian conflict," Antonov said.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/world/201801181060846001-russia-us-syria-ambassador-antonov/>

- **UN Syria Envoy: Next Round of Peace Talks to Focus on Constitutional Issues**

The Syrian opposition and regime have been invited to attend the next round of United Nations-sponsored peace talks, announced UN special envoy Staffan de Mistura on Wednesday. The talks are set to be held in Vienna next week. De Mistura said that the January 25-26 meeting would focus on constitutional issues in Syria.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1146511/un-syria-envoy-next-round-peace-talks-focus-constitutional-issues>

### 3. IRAN

- **Iran says Trump jeopardising Airbus deals**

Iran warned Wednesday that its multi-billion dollar deals for Airbus planes had been thrown into doubt by US President Donald Trump's attacks on the nuclear deal. "Considering Mr Trump's stance on pulling out of the JCPOA (nuclear deal) we must make sure that the licences will remain valid... regardless of any decision taken by US," deputy transport minister Asghar Fakhrieh Kashan told the reformist ILNA news agency.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86825>

- **Uphold Prejudices When Addressing Iran Nuclear Deal: UN**

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called for the implementation of Iran's nuclear deal based on its "mechanisms," stressing that it must be preserved. "The (nuclear deal) constitutes a major achievement of nuclear non-proliferation and diplomacy, and has contributed to regional and international peace and security," said Guterres' spokesman, Stephane Dujarric, on Wednesday.

More Details:

<https://www.albawaba.com/news/uphold-prejudices-when-addressing-iran-nuclear-deal-un-1076028>

- **Iran dismisses claims of negotiation on its missile program**

The Iranian Foreign Ministry on Wednesday dismissed claims that Tehran has agreed to hold talks on its missile program. "All are aware that Iran's missile program is not negotiable at all," ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said. In an article published by the Financial Times on Tuesday, it was

claimed that 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 program during a meeting in Brussels.

More Details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/420425/Iran-dismisses-claims-of-negotiation-on-its-missile-program>

- **Old scars never heal: How US and Iran turned from friends to foes**

Relations between states are, to some extent, reminiscent of the relationship between people. In the end, states consist of people who take decisions regardless of which president or leader is now in power. The root cause of the implacable US hatred toward the Islamic Republic is a sense of revenge, which turns out to be peculiar not only to individuals but to whole states.

More Details:

<https://en.trend.az/other/commentary/2848814.html>

- **The Iran deal is bigger than Iran**

There are reasons to dislike the Iran nuclear deal, which has suspended but in no way resolved the challenges posed by Iran’s nuclear program. But since the agreement is widely embraced and Iran has complied with it, one-sided efforts to negotiate away its flaws are likely to come to naught. When next called to certify the deal in May, President Trump will either act unilaterally to blow it up, creating a crisis that isolates the United States and deflects attention from Iran’s repression of its citizens, or again fail to make good on his threat, at the expense of his credibility. The high stakes transcend Iran, weakening our negotiating position with North Korea in the first case or our power of coercion in the second.

More Details:

<https://www.axios.com/iran-deal-bigger-than-iran-1516133885-1a4c2005-22fb-4668-9ca0-c50aa4ac4863.html>

- **UN Chief Warns Against Endangering Iran Nuclear Deal**

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called on nations not to damage Iran’s 2015 nuclear agreement with world powers because of concerns they may have with the Islamic Republic’s non-nuclear military activities in the Middle East. “The (nuclear deal) constitutes a major achievement of nuclear non-proliferation and diplomacy, and has contributed to regional and international peace and security,” the Secretary-General’s Spokesman, Stephane Dujarric, said .

More Details:



<http://www.app.com.pk/un-chief-warns-endangering-iran-nuclear-deal/>

- **PUIC statement calls for suspension of relations with Zionists**

The final statement of the 13th PUIC Conference says that Islamic countries must suspend their relations with the Zionists regime and US until Trump changes his stance. The closing ceremony for the 13th PUIC Conference was held on Wednesday (January 17) with Iranian MP Alaeddin Boroujerdi reading the final statement of the conference.

More Details:

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/131374/PUIC-statement-calls-for-suspension-of-relations-with-Zionists>

- **Iranian tanker wreck in East China Sea kills dozens amid ecological disaster**

Oil from an Iranian tanker that sank in the East China Sea has diffused into four separate slicks, covering a combined area of just over 100sqkm, Chinese authorities said late on Wednesday. Earlier satellite imaging showed two large slicks, with the larger one also thicker and more concentrated, but the latest data found four slicks ranging in size from 48sqkm to 5.5sqkm, the State Oceanic Administration (SOA) said.

More Details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/iranian-oil-tanker-crash-east-china-sea-kills-dozens-causes-ecological-disaster-1714685007>

#### 4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Trump dashes Netanyahu's hope to move US embassy to Jerusalem**

President Donald Trump denied on Wednesday that the planned relocation of the US embassy in Israel to Jerusalem would take place within a year, after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he expected the controversial move to happen by then. Reversing decades of US policy, Trump in early December recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and set in motion the process of moving the embassy from Tel Aviv, imperiling Middle East peace efforts and upsetting the Arab world and Western allies alike.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86828>

- **Hamas blasts US aid suspension to UN refugee agency**

A U.S. decision to suspend financial aid earmarked for the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which is responsible for helping some 5.3 million Palestinian refugees, is aimed at "ending the Palestinian cause", according to Hamas. In a Wednesday statement, the Gaza-based resistance group condemned the move, calling on the UNRWA to resist "U.S. pressure" aimed at eroding Palestinian rights.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/hamas-blasts-us-aid-suspension-to-un-refugee-agency/1033615>

- **Palestinian killed in fire exchange with Israeli army**

A young Palestinian man has been killed in an exchange of fire with the Israeli army near the occupied West Bank town of Jenin. One other Palestinian and two Israeli soldiers were also injured in Thursday's incident, which took place before dawn.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/palestinian-killed-fire-exchange-israeli-army-180118052207883.html>

- **Abbas: US Can No Longer Assume Mediation Role, Trump's Decision is a Sin**

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas called on Muslims and Christians to visit Jerusalem in support of its people and its Arab and Islamic identity. His remarks came during an international conference organized by Al-Azhar University in Cairo on Wednesday, in response to US President Donald Trump's decision to declare Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1147216/abbas-us-can-no-longer-assume-mediation-role-trump%E2%80%99s-decision-sin>

- **Israel judge orders Palestinian teen Ahed Tamimi held until trial**

An Israeli military judge on Wednesday ordered a Palestinian teenager arrested after a viral video showed her hitting two Israeli soldiers held in custody until trial. "I found no alternative other than to order her detention in custody until the end of proceedings," the judge ruled. "The gravity of the offences of which she is accused do not allow an alternative to custody."

More Details:

<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2018/01/17/Israel-judge-orders-Palestinian-teen-Ahed-Tamimi-held-until-trial.html>

- **Senior Hamas figure writes to Ayatollah Khamenei to hail Iran's stance on Quds**

A leader of the Palestinian Hamas resistance movement, Ismail Haniyeh, has sent a letter to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, praising Iran's stance on Jerusalem al-Quds. According to an IRNA report on Thursday, Haniyeh, who is the chief of Hamas' political bureau, said in his letter that the Palestinian nation praised Iran's "unflinching and valuable" positions on the issue of Jerusalem al-Quds.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/01/18/549344/Hamas-Ismail-Haniyeh-Iran-Leader-Ayatollah-Khamenei-stance-on-Jerusalem-alQuds>

- **Israeli military issued more than 1,000 administrative detention orders in 2017**

Israeli occupation authorities issued 1,086 administrative detention orders – detention without charge or trial – against Palestinian prisoners in 2017, reported Wattan, citing a report by the Palestinian Prisoners' Centre for Studies. According to the report, 647 of those orders were renewal orders for prisoners already in administrative detention, ranging from 2-6 months each.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180117-israeli-military-issued-more-than-1000-administrative-detention-orders-in-2017/>

- **Pence Visit To Middle East Highlights Friction Between Trump And Palestine**

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence's upcoming visit to the Middle East comes at a time of intensely publicized friction between his administration and the Palestinian leadership, posing a dilemma for his Arab hosts — Egypt's president and Jordan's king — on how to safeguard their vital ties with Washington without appearing to ignore Palestinian misgivings. Both countries are heavily dependent on U.S. military and economic aid, and talks with a senior Trump administration official like Pence offer them an opportunity to strengthen those ties.

More Details:

<https://talkingpointsmemo.com/news/pence-visit-middle-east-highlights-tension>

## 5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Royal Jordanian implements additional security measures on US-bound flights**

The Royal Jordanian will start implementing additional security measures required in October 2017 by the United States authorities for US-bound flights as of Thursday, January 18, 2018, according to Petra, Jordanian News Agency. The airline currently operates 11 weekly flights to the US: five to Chicago, four to New York and two to Detroit, with a connection in Montreal.

More Details:

<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2018/01/17/Royal-Jordanian-implements-additional-security-measures-on-US-bound-flights.html>

- **Hariri Seeks Formula to Overcome Aoun-Berri Decree Feud**

Member of the Future parliamentary bloc MP Samir al-Jisr said that Prime Minister Saad Hariri had a “strong will” to resolve the dispute between President Michel Aoun and Speaker Nabih Berri over the “seniority” decree, noting that the premier was discussing his initiative with the two sides. “The prime minister has delayed putting forward his initiative for a solution in order to discuss his ideas with the concerned parties,” Jisr told Asharq Al-Awsat.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1147261/hariri-seeks-formula-overcome-aoun-berri-decree-feud>

- **Israel seeking to create division in Lebanon to protect its own interests: Rouhani**

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani says the Israeli regime seeks to create division in Lebanon to advance its own interests but the Lebanese nation and government have managed to foil enemies’ “divisive plots.” “Undoubtedly, Zionists benefit from creating division in Lebanon,” Rouhani said in a meeting with Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri in Tehran on Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/01/17/549244/Iran-Israel-Lebanon-Rouhani-Berri>

- **King sets deadline to have ‘tangible results’ in human resources reform**

His Majesty King Abdullah on Wednesday chaired a meeting, attended by Her Majesty Queen Rania, to follow up on the implementation of the 2016-2025 National Strategy for Human Resources Development. His Majesty checked on progress in the implementation of the strategy, which was launched in September 2016 in a bid to develop human resources capabilities and regulate the work

of all sectors related to education since early childhood until joining the labour market, according to a Royal Court statement.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/king-sets-deadline-have-tangible-results%E2%80%99-human-resources-reform>

- **King urges swift public sector reform**

His Majesty King Abdullah II on Wednesday emphasized the need to speed up public sector reform without any delay, and said the administrative body of the state should come under continuous accountability and measurement of performance. Chairing a meeting dedicated to follow up on the implementation of government's measures and plans to develop the public sector and complete the e-government program, His Majesty stressed that the government should have clear objectives and measureable outcome and underlined the importance of an all-encompassing and coordinated effort to achieve the set goals.

More Details:

[http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=37005#.WmCOIK5I\\_cs](http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=37005#.WmCOIK5I_cs)

- **Aoun Says Won't Allow Encroachment on His Powers**

President Michel Aoun stressed Wednesday that he will not tolerate any attempt to encroach on his presidential powers, amid a growing row between him and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri. "We have reached the extent of encroachment on our powers and this is unacceptable," Aoun said. "We respect all authorities in line with the constitution and the laws and we don't want to antagonize anyone. To the contrary, we want the country to remain stable and secure," the president added.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/240988-aoun-says-won-t-allow-encroachment-on-his-powers>

- **Al Masri takes oath before King as minister of municipal affairs, transport**

Waleed Al Masri on Wednesday was sworn in before His Majesty King Abdullah II as Minister of Municipal Affairs and Transport Minister . The ceremony, held at the Al Husseinia Palace, was attended by Prime Minister Hani Mulki and Royal Court Chief Fayez Tarawneh.

More Details:

[http://petra.gov.jo/Public\\_News/Nws\\_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site\\_id=1&NewsID=336472&CatID=13](http://petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=336472&CatID=13)



- **Aoun to state council delegation: judgements of the judicial institutions must be respected**

The judgements and decisions made by the judicial institutions and the supervisory bodies must be respected, President Michel Aoun maintained during his meeting with a delegation of the State Council chaired by Judge Henri Khoury, at Baabda palace on Thursday. "These institutions were founded to bring justice," he stressed, highlighting the necessity to keep politics away from the work of the judiciary.

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/87343/UPDATE-Aoun-to-State-Council-delegation-Judgements-of-the-judicial-institutions-must-be-respected>

- **Lebanon speaker urges Arab, Muslim countries to boycott the Trump admin**

Speaker Nabih Berri who is in Iran to attend a conference on the Parliamentary Union of the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) Member States renewed on Tuesday his call for the transfer of Islamic embassies from Washington and for boycotting US President Donald Trump's administration until he reverses a controversial recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

More Details:

<http://yalibnan.com/2018/01/17/lebanon-speaker-urges-arab-and-muslim-countries-to-boycott-the-trump-admin/>

## 6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Saudi to give Yemen government \$2bn bailout**

Saudi Arabia announced on Wednesday it would transfer \$2 billion to Yemen's central bank, following desperate calls for funding from the war-torn country's president and prime minister. "To address the deteriorating economic situation faced by the Yemeni people as a result of the actions of the Iranian-backed Huthi militias, King Salman bin Abdulaziz has issued a directive to transfer a \$2 billion deposit to the central bank of Yemen, in continuation of the kingdom's support of the Yemeni people," the interior ministry said.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86816>

- **Yemen President Hadi: Houthis are Bloody Group Leading Proxy Warfare**

Yemeni President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi accused on Tuesday the Houthi militia of being incapable of “understanding the concept of peace,” describing it as “bloodthirsty” group leading a proxy war, in reference to its dependence on Iran. He made his remarks while meeting with UN Envoy to Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed in Riyadh.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1146356/yemen-president-hadi-houthis-are-bloody-group-leading-proxy-warfare>

- **El Salvador eyes Qatar jobs for migrants leaving US**

El Salvador is seeking to reach an agreement with Qatar to allow Salvadoran migrants who are forced to leave the United States to work temporarily in the Gulf country, a spokesperson for the Salvadoran presidency said on Tuesday. Last week, US President Donald Trump's administration said that as of September 2019, it would eliminate the temporary protected status, or TPS, that allows about 200,000 Salvadorans to live in the United States without fear of deportation.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/qatar-recruit-salvadorans-deported-180117083136308.html>

- **Trump no longer following Saudi-UAE script on Qatar, says former envoy**

Former US Special Envoy for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations Martin Indyk has taken to Twitter to announce that US President Donald Trump is no longer following the Saudi/UAE script on Qatar. Indyk explained that this may be because Qatar is now cooperating regarding the fight against terrorism and is willing to discuss the conflict between Doha and the countries that imposed the blockade on it.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180118-trump-no-longer-following-saudi-uae-script-on-qatar-says-former-envoy/>

- **Tens of thousands of Yemenis held by all sides of war without trial or charge**

They were small disputes – an argument between old friends over money, another over who worked in particular jobs at local schools. But that was enough to land shopkeeper Atif Saeed Abdu and Gaber al-Sofi, a teacher, in prison – one in a Houthi-held facility in Sanaa and another in a pro-government centre near Taiz City.

More Details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/yemeni-prisoners-war-1354465886>

- **UAE and UN Security Council meet to discuss Qatar**

The UAE hosted on Wednesday a meeting with ambassadors from UN Security Council member countries and other members of the quartet boycotting Doha to discuss Qatar's interception of two Emirati passenger planes. According to UAE state news agency Wam, representatives from the Emirates' Armed Forces and the Civil Aviation Authority met with the diplomat from UN Security Council member countries as well as ambassadors from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt to discuss the recent escalation of tension between the UAE and Qatar. The meeting took place two days after Qatari fighter jets intercepted two Emirati commercial flights.

More Details:

<https://www.thenational.ae/world/gcc/uae-and-un-security-council-meet-to-discuss-qatar-1.696087>

- **US Approves \$500 Million Missile Sale to Saudi Arabia amid Yemen War**

The U.S. State Department has approved a possible \$500 million sale of missile system support services to Saudi Arabia. The Defense Security Cooperation Agency made the announcement in a statement on Wednesday, saying Congress had been notified of the decision. The Congress has 30 days to review the proposed sale, but it is not required to take any action.

More Details:

<https://www.albawaba.com/news/us-approves-500-million-missile-sale-saudi-arabia-amid-yemen-war-1076092>

## 7. EGYPT

- **Egypt slaps Muslim scholar Qaradawi with life sentence**

An Egyptian military court on Wednesday sentenced eight people to death, including four in absentia, for alleged involvement in acts of violence in 2015, according to a local judicial source. Another 17 people were sentenced to life behind bars, including prominent Muslim scholar Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who, along with six others, was tried in absentia.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/egypt-slaps-muslim-scholar-qaradawi-with-life-sentence/1033884>

- **Egypt 2018 elections: Sisi expected to announce bid**

Egypt is preparing for its next presidential poll in two months. But the outcome already appears to be a foregone conclusion. President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi looks likely to be re-elected.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/egypt-2018-elections-sisi-expected-announce-bid-180118081811490.html>

- **Egyptian parliamentarians campaign in Europe diaspora for Al-Sisi**

A number of Egyptian parliamentarians will visit several European capitals to speak about the “achievements” made by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, who is expected to run in the upcoming presidential election, according to MP Amal Rizkallah. Rizkallah and a number of other parliament members will visit Italy to campaign for Al-Sisi among the Egyptian community there.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180118-egyptian-parliamentarians-campaign-in-europe-diaspora-for-al-sisi/>

- **Egypt's Sisi and Ethiopia's PM Desalegn stress need to overcome obstacles in GERD negotiations**

Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi and Ethiopia's Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn stressed during a meeting in Cairo on Thursday the necessity of overcoming any current obstacles in ongoing negotiations over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). The two leaders held a press conference after their meeting as part of the Ethiopian Prime Minister's first official visit to the country.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/288361/Egypt/Politics-/Egypts-Sisi-and-Ethiopias-PM-Desalegn-stress-need-.aspx>

- **I cannot overcome challenges without support of Egyptians: Al-Sisi**

President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi inaugurated on Wednesday a three-day conference during which the Egyptian state will present its achievements over the past four years. The president presented a list of the achievements to the audience. “The Egyptian people have achieved a lot and have spent a lot throughout the last period,” he said, adding, “history will not forget the sacrifices of the police and the army.”

More Details:

<https://dailynewsegypt.com/2018/01/17/cannot-overcome-challenges-without-support-egyptians-al-sisi/>

- **Cambridge University defends actions of tutor in Regeni case**

Britain's Cambridge University rejected on Wednesday any suggestion that one of its tutors might have been implicated in the death of graduate student Giulio Regeni, who was killed in Egypt in 2016. Italian magistrates questioned tutor Maha Abdelrahman in Cambridge last week and seized her computer and cell phone as part of their investigation into the murder of Regeni, who was tortured and killed while carrying out research in Cairo.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/cambridge-university-defends-actions-tutor-regeni-case/>

- **Egypt's Economy to Record Region's Strongest Growth by 2019: Report**

Egypt is expected to record the highest growth in the Levant and North Africa region, accelerating from 4.2% in 2017 to around 5.0% by 2019 and 5.5% by 2021, according to a report published by Moody's Investors Service. Moreover, the report indicates that the forecasted growth is due to the fact that the structural reforms support more broad-based activity compared to the mostly consumption-driven pre-reform growth model.

More Details:

<https://www.albawaba.com/business/egypt-economy-to-record-region-strongest-growth-by-2019-moodys-1075630>

## 8. NORTH AFRICA

- **HRW chief says 'Nobody should be forcibly returned to Libya'**

European authorities should not be sending migrants trying to reach the continent back to Libya until the security situation there has stabilised, the chief of Human Rights Watch said. "The way migrants are treated in Libya is horrendous, where we hear over and over stories of forced labour, forced sexual abuse, torture," Kenneth Roth said in an interview as the group released its annual report on risks around the globe.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86832>



- **Italian Ambassador Condemns Tripoli Clashes, Haftar Forces Keep Close Watch**

Libya's health ministry, run by the internationally-recognized government of national accord in Tripoli, confirmed that 20 were killed and around 69 injured in recent clashes. Italian ambassador to Tripoli Giuseppe Perrone said in a tweet that he felt hurt with violence prevailing, especially after he had believed that the Mitiga International Airport reflected the hopes and spirit of openness of Libyans looking for a fear-free life.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1146256/italian-ambassador-condemns-tripoli-clashes-haftar-forces-keep-close-watch>

- **How can Tunisia rebuild its economy?**

Tunisians have taken to the streets across the country this month to demand the government overturn strict austerity measures that have jacked up prices and taxes. Protesters chanted "work, freedom and national dignity" and "people want the fall of the budget" in the capital, Tunis, this week, during a commemoration marking the seventh anniversary of the Tunisian revolution.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/tunisia-rebuild-economy-180117145145475.html>

- **Algerian imams prepare for returning Daesh militants**

Algerian imams are reportedly preparing for a possible return of Algerian fighters who have joined Daesh abroad, according to the Minister of Religious Affairs, Mohamed Aissa. "I assure you, as head of Religious Affairs, that our imams have prepared themselves well" Aissa said at a press conference.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180117-algerian-imams-prepare-for-returning-daesh-militants/>

- **Algeria: HRW Denounces Lack of Freedom of Speech, Assembly & Association**

Human Rights Watch has denounced the systematic violations of freedom of speech, assembly & association despite constitutional amendments guaranteeing these rights. Algerian authorities continued to resort in 2017 to criminal prosecutions for peaceful speech. They have also continued to ban demonstrations in Algiers, says HRW in its report 2018.

More Details:

<http://northafricapost.com/21780-algeria-hrw-denounces-lack-freedom-speech-assembly-association.html>

- **Algeria "ready to assist ALECSO in defending Arab identity"**

Foreign Minister Abdelkader Messahel said Wednesday that Algeria is ready to assist the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) in its new steps to defend Arab identity as the region is shaken with different crises.

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/22328-algeria-ready-to-assist-alecso-in-defending-arab-identity>

- **France to Remind UNSG Envoy of Relevance Morocco's Autonomy Plan**

Jean- Yves Le Drian, French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs said that he will remind Horst Kohler, United Nations Secretary-General Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, that the Moroccan Autonomy plan is the most viable consensual solution for four-decade-long conflict over Western Sahara. During a meeting held on Wednesday in Paris, Le Drian said that the will emphasize to Kohler that Morocco's Autonomy Plan represents a serious and credible basis for the Western Sahara conflict.

More Details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2018/01/238561/france-remind-unsg-envoy-relevance-moroccos-autonomy-plan-western-sahara/>

- **Machrou Tounes movement withdraws from Carthage Document**

The Machou Tounes movement announced on Thursday its withdrawal from the Carthage Document. The movement also announced that it "will no longer support the National Unity Government" and claims "the change of the government." "The current government can no longer ensure stability," the movement said in a statement a copy of which was received by TAP.

More Details:

<https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/9767594-machrou-tounes>

## 9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Pakistan urges all parties to honor obligations under Iran deal**

Pakistan urged all parties to honor their obligations under Iran nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mohammad Faisal while

responding to a question at his weekly news briefing in Islamabad on Thursday said that Pakistan believes that it is important for all sides to remain committed to JCPOA. He added this agreement should be sustained.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82800109>

- **Federal govt decides to put Tahirul Qadri name on ECL**

Islamabad: The government of Pakistan has decided to put Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) chief Tahirul Qadri name on the Exit Control List (ECL). This was decided in a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi here on Monday.

More Details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/270002-federal-govt-decides-to-put-tahirul-qadris-name-on-ecl>

- **8 police killed in Taliban attack on Helmand checkpoint**

Eight policemen manning a check-post have been killed and two others wounded in a Taliban attack in southern Helmand province, an official said on Thursday. Deputy police chief Gul Khan told Pajhwok Afghan News the militants attacked the check-post in Mukhtar Kala area between Greshk and Lashkargah late on Wednesday.

More Details:

<https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2018/01/18/8-police-killed-taliban-attack-helmand-checkpoint>

- **People like Nawaz Sharif, Khawaja Asif are responsible for destroying the parliament: Imran**

"Parliament is the name of a building. It is the parliamentarians who take the parliament forward or destroy it," said Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan on Thursday, hitting back at criticism over his anti-parliament comments which he made during a protest in Lahore a day before. He also criticised Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif for his stance in the National Assembly today, saying it was people like him and Nawaz who had destroyed the parliament.

More Details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1383742/people-like-nawaz-sharif-khawaja-asif-are-responsible-for-destroying-the-parliament-imran>

- **One dead, five injured in grenade attack in Karachi's Kharadar**

At least one person was reported dead while five others were injured in a hand grenade attack in the city's Kharadar area on Thursday, police said. The attack took place near a cloth shop in Kharadar – one of the several neighbourhoods of Saddar.

More Details:

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/177469-one-dead-multiple-injured-in-hand-grenade-attack-in-karachi-kharadar>

- **Suicide bomber killed by own explosives before reaching to his target**

A suicide bomber was killed in an explosion triggered by his own explosives and before reaching to his target in eastern Nangrhar province of Afghanistan. The provincial government in a statement said the incident took place late on Wednesday evening in the vicinity of Jalalabad city, the provincial capital of Nangarhar.

More Details:

<https://www.khaama.com/suicide-bomber-killed-by-own-explosives-before-reaching-to-his-target-04293>

- **Hashimi Takes Oath As New IEC Member**

Sayed Hafizullah Hashimi was sworn in yesterday as a new Independent Election Commission (IEC) member by resident Mohammad Ashraf Ghani. In a ceremony held on this occasion with participation of Vice President Sarwar Danesh Chief Executive Dr. Abdullah, Attorney General Mohammad Farid Hamidi, Supreme Court member Mohammad Zaman Sangari, and member of IEC, President Ghani in his speech withed the new IEC commissioner success in his job and while stressing on executing of law said: "Your commitment is to the nation and this should be implemented."

More Details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/politics/item/31681-hashimi-takes-oath-as-new-iec-member.html>

- **New US Envoy Calls For Parties To End Balkh Dispute**

Ambassador John R Bass has called for an end to the Balkh governor impasse, saying the transfer of authority needs to be resolved peacefully. The US Ambassador to Kabul John R. Bass has called for an urgent solution to be found to end the ongoing dispute between government and ousted Balkh governor Atta Mohammad Noor, who was fired last month by President Ashraf Ghani.

More Details:

<http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/new%C2%A0us%C2%A0envoy-calls-parties-end-balkh-dispute>

## 10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkey to take urgent action against threats from Syria**

Turkey's top civil and military leadership said Wednesday it will take 'immediate' and 'resolute' steps to protect the nation from threats coming from western Syria. "Necessary steps would be taken immediately and resolutely to defeat any threat against Turkey from western Syria in the first stage," said a statement issued following the National Security Council meeting in the capital Ankara.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkey-to-take-urgent-action-against-threats-from-syria/1033951>

- **Turkish Army orders 'highest level security' to troops on Syria border**

The Turkish Army (TSK) on Jan. 18 ordered its troops on the Syrian border in southern Turkey to increase security measures to the "highest level" ahead of a possible military operation into Afrin. Following the National Security Council (MGK) convention led by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and held in the Turkish capital on Jan. 17, the official statement said Turkey would take serious precautions against the contentious U.S.-backed Kurdish militia on its borders.

More Details:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-army-orders-highest-level-security-to-troops-on-syria-border-125922>

- **Turkish chief of staff, intelligence chief in Russia for Syria talks**

Turkish Chief of General Staff Gen. Hulusi Akar and National Intelligence Organization (MİT) Undersecretary Hakan Fidan are in Russia for Syria talks, APA reported. Akar is expected to meet with his Russian counterpart Valery Gerasimov.

More Details:

<http://en.apa.az/world-news/cis-countries-news/turkish-chief-of-staff-intelligence-chief-in-russia-for-syria-talks.html>

- **Turkey says will coordinate with Russia on operation in Syria's Afrin**

Turkey said on Thursday Russia should not oppose its operation in Syria's Afrin and will coordinate with Moscow on the situation of Russian observers there. Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu also



told broadcaster CNN Turk that Turkey will coordinate with Russia and Iran on an air operation in Afrin.

More Details:

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey-russia/turkey-says-will-coordinate-with-russia-on-operation-in-syrias-afrin-idUKKBN1F714X?rpc=401&>

- **US statements on YPG, Syria contradict each other: Turkish PM Yıldırım**

The U.S.'s policies on Syria are "against its alliance" with Turkey and statements coming from Washington are contradictory, Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım has said, after the U.S.-led coalition in Syria announced that a new "border force" will be set up in northern Syria. "Over the last three days U.S. officials have made statements that refute one another. One day it was said that a new border force had been set up, another day they said they are setting up a unit with local forces in order to maintain security in the region after eliminating DAESH in the region.

More Details:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/us-statements-on-ypg-syria-contradict-each-other-turkish-pm-yildirim-125928>

- **Turkish aid agency to expand tent camp in Syria's Idlib**

Turkish Red Crescent, locally known as Kızılay, will build a tent city with a capacity of holding 4000 people in Syria's northern province of Idlib. Turkish Red Crescent's Syria coordinator Fatih Kokcan told Anadolu Agency on Thursday that the agency has already established 515 tents in Idlib's Kelbit village with the support of the state Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (AFAD).

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkish-aid-agency-to-expand-tent-camp-in-syrias-idlib/1034156>

- **US' recent statements not satisfactory for Turkey, FM Çavuşoğlu says**

All the recent statements from the United States regarding plans of a "border army" dominated by the PKK's Syrian offshoot the People's Protection Units (YPG) are not satisfactory for Turkey, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said Thursday. Çavuşoğlu's comments come after U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said on Wednesday that he had met with Çavuşoğlu to clarify the issue and said it had been "misportrayed, misdescribed."

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2018/01/18/us-recent-statements-not-satisfactory-for-turkey-fm-cavusoglu-says>

*\*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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