



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĞU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Proces of Iraq

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

Energy Security

Enerji Güvenliği

Economy News

Ekonomi Haberleri

Peace Process

Barış Süreci

Ethnic and Secterian Groups

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

Non State Actors

Devlet-dışı Aktörler

Relations with the West

Batı'yla İlişkiler

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1. IRAQ,

- **Senior Iranian Official to NINA: We Will Continue To Protect Holy Sites in Iraq in Post-Daesh Stage**

The head of Committee on National Security and Foreign Policy at of the Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran, Alaeddin Boroujerdi announced that his country will continue to protect and support the holy sites in Iraq for the post-Daesh. Boroujerdi said in a statement to the National Iraqi News Agency / NINA / "Tehran believes that fighting Daesh needs to radical combat, and must eliminate the roots of terrorism and extremism in all areas without exception."

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?7oH8eSfD9RFSSedfvIshOA%253d%253d

- **Iraq aircraft destroys IS explosives lab and fuel station in eastern Mosul**

Iraqi Ministry of Defense announced on Wednesday, that Iraqi Air Force destroyed an explosives laboratory and a fuel station belonging to the Islamic State in eastern Mosul. The ministry said in a press statement, "F16 and L159 fighter jets of the Iraqi Air Force conducted several air strikes, based on information obtained from the General Directorate of Intelligence and Security, against the Islamic State in eastern Mosul."

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/iraq-aircraft-destroys-explosives-lab-fuel-station-eastern-mosul/>

- **US Vice President and Iraqi PM discuss Mosul**

Joe Biden, the US Vice-President from the Obama administration phoned the Prime Minister of Iraq Haider al-Abadi on Wednesday, to congratulate him and the Iraqi forces on the recent successes in the operation for liberating the city of Mosul. The Iraqi government released a statement on Wednesday saying PM Abadi has received a phone call on Wednesday from the US Vice-President Joe Biden, who congratulated him and the people of Iraq on the recent advance in Mosul and the recapturing of eastern Mosul.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/325231>

- **As caliphate crumbles, Islamic State lashes out in Iraq**

Two days after Iraqi forces launched a new push against Islamic State in Mosul, bomb blasts ripped through a marketplace in central Baghdad - the start of a spate of attacks that appear to signal a shift in tactics by the Islamist group. The Sunni jihadists have targeted Shi'ite Muslim civilians. Raids on police and army posts in other cities, also claimed by Islamic State, have accompanied the bombings. The attacks show that even if Islamic State loses the Iraqi side of its self-styled caliphate, the threat from the group may not subside.

More Details:

http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/875f1b4e-3fe7-4ed9-a2e3-49af3ab9f946/As-caliphate-crumbles--Islamic-State-lashes-out-in-Iraq

- **Iraqi forces find ISIS documents written in Russian and Tajiki languages**

The Iraqi Directorate of General Military Intelligence with coordinate of Nineveh Liberation Operation's Intelligence had managed to capture many headquarters which belonged to Russian and Tajik terrorists of Islamic State, the headquarters contained a fully occupied call center as well for laptops which contained very important informations and documents regarding the terrorists of ISIS written in Russian and Tajiki languages.

More Details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=39503

- **Iraq closes \$1B bond issue, guaranteed by US**

The U.S. administration provides guarantee for the Iraqi government issuing a \$1 billion bond, the U.S. State Department said in a statement Wednesday. "Today, the Republic of Iraq successfully closed on its offering of a \$1 billion sovereign bond issuance guaranteed by the United States of America," the statement read.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/iraq-closes-1b-bond-issue-guaranteed-us-927304>

- **As Daesh crumbles, it lashes out in Iraq**

Two days after Iraqi forces launched a new push against Daesh in Mosul, bomb blasts ripped through a marketplace in central Baghdad — the start of a spate of attacks that appear to signal a shift in tactics by the militant group. The militants have targeted Shiite civilians. Raids on police and army posts in other cities, also claimed by Daesh, have accompanied the bombings.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1040936/middle-east>

- **Mosul and the Future of Iraq**

The 100,000-man assault on the Iraqi city of Mosul has reportedly made swift gains in recent days. After months of slow going, the assault force of Iraqi Army soldiers and Kurdish and Shiite militiamen appears to be wearing down the heavily outnumbered ISIS defenders. Obama administration officials are touting the recent advances as vindication of their strategy of restricting American participation to advice and support of local forces.

More Details:

<http://www.hoover.org/research/mosul-and-future-iraq>

- **Eastern Mosul has been reclaimed from Daesh, Iraq's counterterrorism head says**

U.S.-backed Iraqi government troops announced on Wednesday they were in “full control” of eastern Mosul after routing Daesh militants from that part of the northern city, three months since the major operation started. The achievement was a “big victory,” said Iraqi army Lt. Gen. Talib Shaghathi, who commands the counterterrorism forces, describing the success of the Iraqi forces as “unprecedented.”

More Details:

<https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2017/01/18/eastern-mosul-has-been-reclaimed-from-daesh-iraqs-counterterrorism-head-says.html>

- **Losing ground in north, IS targets Iraq's Shiite south**

Following the recent terrorist attacks in the predominately Shiite province of Najaf, Governor of Najaf Luay al-Yassiri and the deputy chief of the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, announced Jan. 15 the formation of two regiments of the PMU to control the desert of Najaf and protect the holy city of Najaf from Islamic State (IS) terrorists. Yassiri also said the province is to build a 50-kilometer (31-mile) tunnel on the western side of the city to protect it from terrorists.

More Details:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/01/islamic-state-shiite-southern-iraq.html>

- **Iraq's Oil Exports from South Drop after OPEC Deal Began**

Iraq's oil exports are back in the spotlight with shipments so far in January suggesting that exports from the southern ports have dropped—a sign that Iraq might be fulfilling its production cut obligations after all. According to shipping data tracked by Reuters, Iraq's crude oil exports from its

southern ports have averaged 3.25 million bpd between 1 January and 16 January, compared to the record-high 3.51 million bpd in exports for December 2016.

More Details:

<http://oilprice.com/Latest-Energy-News/World-News/Iraqs-Oil-Exports-From-South-Drop-After-OPEC-Deal-Began.html>

- **Iraq seeks to combine Sunni, Shiite troops**

Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) is stirring up more controversy, this time over an order to integrate the primarily Shiite force with fighters from the Ninevah Guard, a mainly Sunni group. The Ninevah Guard, previously known as the National Mobilization Forces, had been banned from participating in the battle of Mosul, and a former leader, Atheel al-Nujaifi, is a wanted man. Yet Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi gave the order to merge the groups on Dec. 31.

More Details:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/01/nineveh-guard-popular-mobilization-atheel-al-nujaifi.html>

- **Trump Pressed to Review Troop Caps in Iraq, Afghanistan**

A Republican lawmaker is pressing the incoming administration of Donald Trump to change the way that troop caps are formulated, arguing that current caps on service members in Iraq and Afghanistan are too low to achieve U.S. strategic objectives. Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R., Mo.), who chairs the House Armed Services Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, sent a letter to Trump last Friday spotlighting the way that the Obama administration's formulation of troop caps has negatively effected the readiness of the U.S. armed forces.

More Details:

<http://freebeacon.com/national-security/trump-pressed-to-review-troop-caps-iraq-afghanistan/>

- **Daesh attack in Iraq's Tikrit leaves 9 policemen dead**

At least nine Iraqi policemen were killed on Wednesday in an attack by Daesh terrorists on a police station in Iraq's northern Saladin province, according to a military source, APA reports quoting Anadolu Agency. "Daesh gunmen carried out a fierce attack on a police station in the Al-Bouissi area near the Hamrin Mountain range south of Tikrit," Army Major Yasser al-Tamimi said in exclusive remarks to Anadolu Agency.

More Details:

<http://en.apa.az/world-news/asia-news/daesh-attack-in-iraq-s-tikrit-leaves-9-policemen-dead.html>

- **Iraq urges full inquiry into 2003 US-led 'occupation'**

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has called for a full investigation into the 2003 US-led invasion of his country that was assessed as unjust by the UK's Iraq War inquiry last year. Reports on Wednesday quoted Abadi as saying at a press conference on Tuesday that he would like to see a "thorough investigation" of America's decision-making that led to its troops "occupying" Iraq.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/01/18/506760/Iraq-Haider-Abadi-US-invasion-2003-terrorists>

- **Netherlands to train more Peshmerga, support Kurdish agriculture: Dutch PM**

The President of the Kurdistan Region on Wednesday met the Prime Minister of the Netherlands in Davos, Switzerland during the 2017 World Economic Forum (WEF). The Kurdistan Region President Masoud Barzani and the Dutch PM Mark Rutte discussed bilateral relations, diversifying the Region's income, Erbil-Baghdad ties, and the Mosul liberation operation.

More Details:

<http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/ed8f6724-be40-43fc-9953-ebca53946ae7/Netherlands-to-train-more-Peshmerga--support-Kurdish-agriculture--Dutch-PM>

- **Patience wears thin in Fallujah, 6 months after Daesh ouster**

More than six months after Iraqi forces retook Fallujah from the Daesh group, reconstruction is slow and the government risks alienating those residents who have returned to the city. "There are no members of the Daesh terrorist organization left in Fallujah," the police chief, Col. Jamal Al-Jumaili, told AFP. "Fallujah is a safe city," he insisted.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1040926/middle-east>

- **Iraq's Marsh Arabs test the waters as wetlands ruined by Saddam are reborn**

The morning of 20 January 1992 began much like any other for the Mohammed family in the marshlands of southern Iraq. Rising at first light, they roused their herd of buffaloes and drove the beasts snorting and protesting into the surrounding wetlands to graze. After a quick breakfast of bread and yoghurt, washed down with sugary tea, they readied themselves for a long day out on the water.

More Details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/jan/18/iraq-marsh-arabs-test-the-waters-wetlands-ruined-by-saddam-reborn-southern-marshes>

- **Russian military again charges US with relocating ISIS from Iraq to Syria**

With Palmyra still under ISIS control, and with ISIS threatening to capture Deir Ezzor, the Russian military has once again blamed the military crisis in eastern Syria on the US. The Russian military first did so in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Palmyra in December when it complained – rightly – that the reason ISIS was able to send troops to Palmyra from Mosul and Raqqa was because ISIS is under no real pressure there.

More Details:

<https://theduran.com/russia-blames-us-isis-advances-syria/>

- **Post-ISIS Iraq: Defeating Terrorism Through Real Reforms**

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump will likely have little time to celebrate his inauguration. The President will inherit a world with numerous foreign policy challenges. High on the list remains defeating terrorism and realizing a stable post-ISIS Iraq. During the election campaign, then presidential candidate Trump stated emphatically that he will defeat ISIS by "bombing the hell out of them." This traditional security focused strategy will simply not work. On the contrary, it will prove counter-productive, giving ISIS and al Qaeda a new lease of life and providing the perfect context for further radicalization of a disgruntled Sunni community in Iraq and beyond.

More Details:

<https://www.eastwest.ngo/idea/post-isis-iraq-defeating-terrorism-through-real-reforms>

- **U.S., Coalition Continue Strikes against ISIL in Syria, Iraq**

U.S. and coalition military forces continued to attack Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant terrorists in Syria and Iraq yesterday, Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve officials reported today. Officials reported details of yesterday's strikes, noting that assessments of results are based on initial reports.

More Details:

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1052415/us-coalition-continue-strikes-against-isil-in-syria-iraq>

2. SYRIA

- **Syrian crisis a consequence of Obama policy**

The outgoing Obama presidency's failed Syrian policy left behind a region in total chaos where thousands of people have lost their families and homes

More Details

<http://www.dailysabah.com/columns/melih-altinok/2017/01/19/syrian-crisis-a-consequence-of-obama-policy>

- **Tulsi Gabbard leaves questions marks over Bashar Assad meeting during secret Syria trip**

Democrat Tulsi Gabbard visited Damascus in a move her office described as a "fact-finding trip...to promote and work for peace," amid claims she met with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Hawaii congresswoman Gabbard, who has been outspoken in her criticism of the Obama administration's handling of the Syrian crisis, will not release details of her trip until she returns, her office said.

More Details

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/tulsi-gabbard-leaves-questions-marks-over-bashar-assad-meeting-during-secret-syria-trip-1601867>

- **Over 40% of Syrian Child Refugees Missing Out on School**

Over 40 percent of school-age Syrian children are not receiving proper education, Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Justin Forsyth has announced.

More Details

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201701191049749679-forty-percent-syrian-kids-miss-school/>

- **Canada Supports War Crimes: Endorses Terrorism and Destabilization in Syria**

In its publicly announced regime change war against Syria, Canada is a strong supporter of externally supported and orchestrated terrorism and destabilization on the non-belligerent, pluralist country led by President al Assad's secular, democratically elected government.

More Details

http://www.opednews.com/articles/Canada-Supports-War-Crimes-by-Mark-Talano-Assad_Misogyny_Secular_Syria-170119-407.html

- **US lawmaker makes secret trip to Syria**

The US congresswoman who has argued for Assad to be kept in power has now taken a trip to Syria, in what her office is calling a "fact-finding" mission.

More Details

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/1/19/us-lawmaker-makes-secret-trip-to-syria>

- **Russia, Turkey conduct first joint air strike on IS in Syria**

Russia and Turkey have started their first joint air operation against militants of the Islamic State (IS) in Syria's northern province of Aleppo, a senior Russian military officer said here on Wednesday.

More Details

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-01/19/c_135994562.htm

- **Nikki Haley, at Confirmation Hearing, Says Russia Is Guilty of War Crimes**

Gov. Nikki R. Haley of South Carolina on Wednesday became the latest cabinet nominee to show daylight with President-elect Donald J. Trump, declaring that Russia was guilty of war crimes in Syria and that it should also be subject to additional sanctions for its incursions into Ukraine.

More Details

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/18/us/politics/nikki-haley-un-ambassador-russia-war-crime.html>

- **Syria against Saudi Arabia, Qatar taking part at Astana talks**

The participation of Saudi Arabia and Qatar in Syria talks will be discussed once they stop backing militancy, Syria's deputy foreign minister was quoted as saying on Wednesday, appearing to reject their attendance at forthcoming peace talks.

More Details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1041131/middle-east>

- **From IS to Government Control, Syrians Left with few Choices**

Carrying her four-year-old son, Elham Saleh walked all night behind a smuggler, navigating land mines through Islamic State group- and rebel-held territory in northern Syria.

More Details

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/ML_SYRIA_FLEEING_IS?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-01-19-01-43-07

3. IRAN

- **UN declares Iran nuclear deal working**

The U.N. report says Iran has not received any unauthorized transfers of nuclear-related items since an international nuclear agreement was implemented a year ago, said Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman to the Security Council.

More Details

<http://www.kaztag.kz/en/news/detail.php?ID=518206>

- **Iran and Saudi Arabia Can Cooperate to End Mideast Crises: FM Zarif**

Iran and Saudi Arabia can work together to help end regional conflicts, but Riyadh needs to see the realities on the ground before relations between the two countries could go back to normal, the Iranian foreign minister says.

More Details

<http://ifpnews.com/news/politics/foreign-policies/2017/01/iran-and-saudi-arabia-can-cooperate-to-end-mideast-crises-fm-zarif/>

- **Russia to build major power plant in Iran**

Iran and Russia have signed an agreement worth billions of dollars for Russian companies to build a power plant in Iran and enhance the power generation capacity of another plant, said a senior official.

More Details

http://www.tradearabia.com/news/IND_319464.html

- **Iran not to tolerate victimizing of Muslims: Senior diplomat**

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Abbas Araqchi says Tehran will not tolerate killing of Muslims wherever it happens.

More Details

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82393112/>

- **Iran, China eye major refining deal**

Iranian and Chinese officials are expected to sign a deal worth USD 3 billion for upgrades to Iran's refining capacity next month.

More Details

<http://www.theoilandgasyear.com/news/iran-china-eye-major-refining-deal/>

- **Iranian envoy urges Myanmar to end crimes against Rohingyas**

An Iranian top diplomat has called on Myanmar's government to put an end to the ongoing atrocities against Rohingya Muslims in the country. "We will not tolerate victimization of Muslims in anywhere and we call on Myanmar's government to control the situation and prevent the crimes against Muslims," Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Abbas Araqchi said on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/01/19/506827/Iran-Myanmar-Rohingya-OIC>

- **U.S., Citing Iran's Arming Of Hizballah, Urges UN to Enforce Arms Embargo**

U.S. Ambassador Samantha Power on January 18 expressed concern that Iran is supplying weapons to Lebanon's Hizballah in violation of an arms embargo imposed by the United Nations Security Council.

More Details

<http://www.rferl.org/a/us-citing-iran-arming-hizballah-urges-un-enforce-arms-embargo-/28242717.html>

- **Nikki Haley: 'More Beneficial' Not to Unilaterally Abandon Obama's Iran Deal**

Gov. Nikki Haley, the prospective United Nations ambassador under the incoming Donald Trump administration, declined to support the United States unilaterally backing out of the Iran nuclear deal.

More Details

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/01/18/trumps-un-amb-doesnt-support-backing-iran-nuclear-deal/>

- **17 Major Shipping Lines Back to Iranian Ports**

Seventeen major global shipping lines have resumed their services to Iran since the removal of nuclear sanctions, says CEO of Ports and Maritime Organization Mohammad Saeednejad.

More Details

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/economy-domestic-economy/57753/17-major-shipping-lines-back-to-iranian-ports>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Obama says Israeli-palestinian status quo 'unsustainable' in last press Conference**

'I continue to be worried about the Israeli-Palestinian issue,' says outgoing US President Barack Obama in his final press conference as commander-in-chief. 'Because the status quo is unsustainable'; Explaining the US's abstention in the UN Security Council last December, Obama says, 'We cannot force the parties to arrive at peace, but we can encourage and facilitate it.'...

More Details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4909541,00.html>

- **Palestinian, Israeli leadership react to deadly police raid of Bedouin village**

Secretary-General of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Saeb Erekat condemned Israeli authorities for the “crime” committed Wednesday during a demolition campaign in the Bedouin village of Umm al-Hiran, during which a Palestinian citizen of Israel was shot dead by Israeli police and an Israeli policeman was killed, and numerous Palestinians were injured.

More Details:

<http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=774995>

- **Abbas: 2017 might be last chance for two-state solution**

President Mahmoud Abbas Wednesday reiterated his commitment to peace saying this year might be the last chance to achieve the two-state solution. In a joint press conference with his Polish counterpart Andrzej Duda in Bethlehem, Abbas called on world countries that are yet to recognize the State of Palestine, to take the same path as the 138 countries which already did, the last of which was the Vatican.

More Details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=SunKs5a52137981093aSunKs5>

- **A Delicate Policy on Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

Although there are no signs that it's on the agenda, we still expect that Andrew Holness will make a fulsome statement on his recent visit to Israel, given the seeming absence of a specifically declared diplomatic context of the visit and the omission of the foreign minister, Kamina Johnson Smith, from the prime minister's delegation.

More Details:

<http://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/commentary/20170119/editorial-delicate-policy-israeli-palestinian-conflict>

- **Obama suggests US embassy move to Jerusalem could be 'explosive'**

President Barack Obama suggested on Wednesday that moving the US embassy to Jerusalem could have "explosive" results and said he was worried that the prospects for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were waning. US President-elect Donald Trump has promised to re-locate the embassy to Jerusalem, breaking with longstanding US policy. Israel and Palestinians both claim Jerusalem as their capital, and such a change would draw international condemnation.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170119-obama-suggests-us-embassy-move-to-jerusalem-could-be-explosive/>

- **Trump's UN Pick Nikki Haley Tells Senate: Israeli Settlements 'Can Hinder Peace'**

During first confirmation hearing, Haley says she supports the two-state solution, but doesn't believe UN is forum to discuss Israeli-Palestinian conflict. WASHINGTON, D.C. - Governor Nikki Haley, Donald Trump's pick for UN ambassador, said on Wednesday she is committed to the bipartisan consensus in the U.S. against Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

More Details:

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.765916>

- **Australian mayor declines synagogue invitation, cites Israel's 'gross and illegal occupation'**

The mayor of a Sydney suburb who said he is half-Jewish declined to attend a ceremonial service at the city's Great Synagogue, citing his opposition to Israel's actions in the West Bank. Mayor Peter Abelson of the Mosman municipality thanked Rabbi Benjamin Elton for the invitation to the annual Law Service but said he would not be attending.

More Details:

<http://www.jta.org/2017/01/18/news-opinion/world/australian-mayor-declines-synagogue-invitation-cites-israels-gross-and-illegal-occupation>

- **Israeli Lawmakers To Launch Annexation Push Just Two Days After Trump Inauguration**

Right wing Israeli lawmakers will waste no time advancing a bill to annex part of the West Bank after Donald Trump's inauguration as U.S. president, believing that the incoming administration will be sympathetic toward settlement building in the occupied territory.

More Details:

<http://forward.com/fast-forward/360349/israeli-lawmakers-to-launch-annexation-push-just-two-days-after-trump-inaug/>

- **Bill backing coexistence projects for Israelis and Palestinians submitted by LFI chair**

La our Friends of Israel chair Joan Ryan MP has introduced a bill to promote civil society projects benefiting both Israelis and Palestinians, after the UK government cut its "pitiful" £150,000 coexistence fund entirely.

More Details:

<http://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/bill-backing-coexistence-projects-for-israelis-and-palestinians-submitted-by-lfi/>

- **Fatah and Hamas agree to form unity Palestinian government to end election gridlock**

West Bank's Palestinian Authority and Gaza-based Hamas agree on united front in order to hold delayed elections after reconciliation talks in Moscow. The governing bodies of the West Bank and Gaza Strip have agreed to bury their differences to form a unity government in order to finally hold delayed elections.

More Details:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/fatah-and-hamas-agree-to-form-unity-palestinian-government-to-end-election-gridlock-moscow-russia-a7533696.html>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Clashes in Jordanian Parliament after MP claims Morsi placed in power by US**

Jordanians have been busy debating online, after one MP suggested that former Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi was financially supported by the US.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/loop/clashes-jordanian-parliament-after-mp-claims-morsi-placed-power-us-927046>

- **Jordan cracks down on activists over social media posts**

Eight activists, including retired army generals and teachers, charged over anti-government statements. A Jordanian military court has charged eight activists with "insulting the King" and "incitement to spread chaos to undermine the political regime of Jordan using social media", lawyers said.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/01/jordan-cracks-activists-social-media-posts-170117190455596.html>

- **Jordan Tourism Stable despite Militant Attacks**

Jordan's tourism sector has proved resilient with revenues stable at \$4 billion in 2016 against the previous year despite several militant attacks, the tourism minister said. Jordan last year hosted 3.8 million foreign visitors who spent at least one night in the country, which marks a rise of 2.6% from the previous year, Lina Annab told reporters.

More Details:

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/people-travel/57643/jordan-tourism-stable-despite-militant-attacks>

- **U.S., Citing Iran's Arming Of Hizballah, Urges UN to Enforce Arms Embargo**

U.S. Ambassador Samantha Power on January 18 expressed concern that Iran is supplying weapons to Lebanon's Hizballah in violation of an arms embargo imposed by the United Nations Security Council. Power said Iran's arming of Hizballah "continues to destabilize the Middle East" and urged the council to enforce the embargo.

More Details:

<http://www.rferl.org/a/us-citing-iran-arming-hizballah-urges-un-enforce-arms-embargo-/28242717.html>

- **Ministry rejects compensation claim from Czechs kidnapped in Lebanon**

The Czech Interior Ministry has rejected a compensation claim by four out of five Czechs kidnapped in Lebanon, Interior Minister Milan Chovanec tweeted on Wednesday, adding that responsibility should be shouldered by the trip organisers, not the Czech state.

More Details:

<http://www.praguemonitor.com/2017/01/19/ministry-rejects-money-claim-czechs-kidnapped-lebanon>

- **Lebanon gets a new government, now it needs a new economy**

After years of political deadlock, Lebanon finally has a new government. Now it needs a new economy. Battered by war in neighboring Syria, neglected by wrangling politicians and caught in rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, the pillars of the economy - remittances from overseas workers, tourism and real estate - are not what they were.

More Details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-economy-idUSKBN1530KW>

- **After tens of air and missile strikes Hezbollah and the regime forces manage to achieve advancement in Wadi Barada**

Violent clashes continued between the regime forces the Lebanese Hezbollah and the gunmen loyal to them against the rebel and Islamic Factions in areas of Wadi Barada, where the regime forces and Hezbollah managed to achieve advancement at Efreh area and other villages and towns in Wadi Barada located in the northwest of Rif Dimashq, the clashes since this morning were accompanied by heavy violent bombardment by the regime forces, and tens of airstrikes carried out by warplanes and helicopters targeted areas controlled by the factions in Wadi Barada, and confirmed information about more casualties in the ranks of both parties.

More Details:

<http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=59333>

- **Riachy brands LF, FPM Agreement steady and lasting**

Information Minister, Melhem Riachy, deemed the Lebanese Forces and Free Patriotic Movement Agreement as steady and lasting, saying both parties have not reached a joint election law yet they see eye to eye over a common fundamental strategic criteria notably rectifying Christian representation through the re-formation of power and a Parliament which represents all segments of the nation.

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/74073/Riachy-brands-LF-FPM-Agreement-steady-and-lasting>

- **Bou Assi: Int'l Community Has No Intention to Naturalize Syrian Refugees in Lebanon**

Social Affairs Minister Pierre Bou Assi stressed Wednesday that “the international community has no intention at all to naturalize Syrian refugees in Lebanon.” “But what's more important is the stance of the Lebanese and the Lebanese government, which categorically rejects any form of naturalization,” Bou Assi added in an interview with Russia's Sputnik news agency.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/224014-bou-assi-int-l-community-has-no-intention-to-naturalize-syrian-refugees-in-lebanon>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Terrorists attack National Bank of Bahrain**

The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) in Sitra has been targeted by a terrorist attack on Wednesday night, DT News has learnt. Despite no official comments on the incident, sources informed that a cooking gas cylinder was used in the attack.

More details:

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppId=29576&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=3>

- **EU will cooperate with Kingdom on Vision 2030 — new envoy**

The EU will cooperate with the Kingdom in implementing Saudi Vision 2030, Ambassador Michele Cervone d'Urso, the new head of the EU delegation headquartered in Riyadh, told Arab News after presenting his credentials to Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir.

More details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1041021/saudi-arabia#>

- **Education minister meets president of Unesco session**

HE Dr Mohammed bin Abdul Wahed Al Hammadi, Minister of Education and Higher Education and President of Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, met yesterday with Stanley Mutumba Simataa, president of the 38th General Conference of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco).

More details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/19/01/2017/Education-minister-meets-president-of-Unesco-session>

- **Man Suspected of Links to Daesh Arrested in Yemen**

According to The National media outlet, Ali Sael was detained on Tuesday after several days of surveillance by local police and the Arab coalition forces. Abdurrahman Naqeeb, an Aden police spokesman, said that the detainee was "one of the leading figures" in Daesh, as quoted by the media outlet.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201701191049753803-daesh-yemen-arrest/>

- **6 Civilians Killed in Rebel Strike in Yemen's Taiz**

Yemeni security officials say a rocket fired by Shiite rebels has killed six civilians in the war-torn city of Taiz. They say the Wednesday strike hit a residential area inside Taiz. It comes one day after six civilians were also killed outside the city, which is known as the cultural center of Yemen.

More details:

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/ML_YEMEN?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-01-18-15-55-30

- **State Secretary of Foreign Ministry attends Asia Cooperation Dialogue meeting**

State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs D.Davaasuren took part in the 15th Ministerial Meeting of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue, held in Abu Dhabi on January 16 and 17. The meeting was crowned with title "Abu Dhabi, the Capital of Sustainable Energy".

More details:

<http://en.montsame.mn/politics/8387>

- **Saudi Leadership Condoles President of Kyrgyzstan on Turkish Plane Victims**

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz has sent a cable of condolences to President of Kyrgyzstan Almazbek Atambayev on the crash of a Turkish plane near Bishkek airport.

More details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/2017/01/article55365829/saudi-leadership-condoles-president-kyrgyzstan-turkish-plane-victims>

- **Saudi Arabia 'optimistic' about Trump presidency**

Saudi Arabia is 'optimistic' about Donald Trump's impending presidency, Foreign Minister Adel Al Jubeir said on Monday, hailing Trump's stern line on Iran and promise to defeat Daesh.

More details:

<http://www.gdnonline.com/Details/154823/Saudi-Arabia-optimistic-about-Trump-presidency>

- **Chairman of Oman's Ithraa takes part in 47th World Economic Forum at Davos**

Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, Dr. Salim bin Nasser Al Ismaili, Chairman of the Public Authority for Investment Promotion and Export Development (Ithraa) is taking part in deliberations of the annual meeting of the 47th World Economic Forum (WEF) at Davos, Switzerland.

More details:

<http://timesofoman.com/article/100902/Oman/Government/Chairman-of-Oman's-Ithraa-takes-part-in-47th-World-Economic-Forum-at-Davos>

- **UN condemns execution of three political activists in Bahrain**

"We are appalled at the execution by firing squad of three men in Bahrain on Sunday," UN human rights commissioner spokesman Rupert Colville said in a statement on Tuesday.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/un-condemns-execution-three-political-activists-bahrain-927228>

7. EGYPT

- **Kuwait's legislative speaker arrives in Cairo for talks with Egyptian officials**

Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouk Ali Al-Ghanem arrived in Cairo on Thursday to meet with a number of Egyptian officials, state news agency MENA reported.

More details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/256382/-.aspx>

- **Egypt to end capital controls, reform oil sector under IMF deal**

Egypt will scrap its remaining caps on transfers and deposits of foreign currency by the end of June and overhaul its oil sector as part of ambitious efforts to reform the economy under an IMF agreement, the details of which were released on Wednesday.

More details:

<http://en.aswatmasriya.com/news/details/18335>

- **300 members of Hasm militant group referred to military prosecution: Egypt State Security Prosecution**

Egypt's High State Security prosecution referred on Wednesday 304 people to military prosecution for membership in the Islamist militant group Hasm, which has claimed responsibility for a number of deadly attacks on security forces and assassinations of public figures over the past six months. According to a statement by the High State Security prosecution, 144 people have been arrested and are currently detained pending investigations, including leading Muslim Brotherhood member Mohamed Ali Beshr.

More details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/256369/Egypt/Politics/-members-of-Hasm-militant-group-referred-to-milita.aspx>

- **Egypt's Suez Canal revenues fall to \$5 billion in 2016 from \$5.175 billion in 2015**

Egypt's Suez Canal revenues fell to \$5.005 billion in 2016 from \$5.175 billion the previous year, Reuters calculations showed on Thursday.

More details:

<http://in.reuters.com/article/egypt-suez-canal-outlook-idINKBN1530QP?rpc=401&>

- **Criticism of prime minister 'not fair': Al-Sisi**

Al-Sisi said that he expects that Egypt will be on good terms with the new US administration because they share the same vision in combating terrorism

More details:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/01/18/611057/>

- **IMF says Egypt on track for next aid tranche**

Egypt has made a "good start" on reforms under a loan deal with the International Monetary Fund and soaring inflation is expected to drop around mid-2017, an IMF official said Wednesday.

More details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=80947>

- **Egypt Puts 1,500 People on Terror List, Including Football Star**

Egypt's Judiciary has added one of the country's football legends, Mohammed Aboutrika, to a terrorism list for allegedly funding the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood to conduct terrorist activities and harm Egypt's economy.

More details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/2017/01/article55365825/egypt-puts-1500-people-terror-list-including-football-star>

- **Egypt's president reopens museum damaged in blast**

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi reopened the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo on Wednesday, three years after a car bombing partially destroyed the building.

More details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/fd324092-89fa-432b-a115-404a61862521.aspx>

- **Egypt is moving in a new economic direction, reforms are hard but necessary: Chris Jarvis**

Foreign exchange and inflation rates exceeded the IMF's preliminary predictions; IMF may have miscalculated the foundations of the Egyptian economy

More details:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/01/18/egypt-moving-new-economic-direction-reforms-hard-necessary-chris-jarvis/>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Abdelkader Messahel, Jean-Marc Ayrault hold talks in Paris**

Minister of Maghreb Affairs, African Union and Arab League Abdelkader Messahel held discussions Wednesday, in Paris, with French minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development Jean-Marc Ayrault. The spokesman of the French ministry of Foreign Affairs, Romain Nadal, had said the discussions "will mainly be an opportunity to tackle regional crises, especially in Libya and the Sahel."

More details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/16246-abdelkader-messahel,-jean-marc-ayrault-hold-talks-in-paris>

- **Algeria urges Malians to stick on peace process after suicide attack**

Algeria on Wednesday urged Malian warrant parties to stick on peace process as it condemned the suicide bombing attack that targeted the northern city of Gao. "Algeria strongly condemns the murderous terrorist attack that took place today in Gao, in the north of Mali," Foreign Ministry spokesman Abdelaziz Benali Cherif was quoted as saying by the official APS news agency.

More details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-01/19/c_135994572.htm

- **Foreign Minister receives delegation from Canada-Africa Parliamentary Friendship Group**

Minister of Foreign Affairs Khemaies Jhinaoui received on Wednesday a delegation of the Canada-Tunisia parliamentary friendship group in the Canadian parliament led by Robert Olivant on a visit to Tunisia on January 16-20 with attendance of Canadian ambassador to Tunisia Carol McQueen. The meeting focused on the Tunisian-Canadian relations and means to strengthen them, as well as regional and international issues, including the situation in Libya.

More details:

<http://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/8629684-foreign-minister>

- **Tunisia Terror Attack Inquest Hears Holiday Chiefs Did Not Want Tourists To Be 'Uncomfortable' With Increased Police Presence**

A month before 38 people were killed in a terrorist attack in Tunisia there were discussions to increase security, but tour operators did not want tourists to feel "uncomfortable", an inquest has heard. The hearing into the deaths of 30 Britons in the Sousse resort in June 2015 was told that there were concerns holidaymakers could be "scared by seeing an army of police".

More details:

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/tunisia-terror-attack-inquest-hears-holiday-chiefs-tourists-uncomfortable-police_uk_587fa180e4b03c70028bafec

- **LNA denies Hafter has signed any arms deal with Russia**

The Libyan National Army has denied that armed forces commander-in-chief Khalifa Hafter has signed any arms deal with the Russians. It has been widely reported that Hafter inked an agreement for the supply of \$2 billion of Russian arms while he was visiting the aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov a week ago. The source of the story was said to be a member of the House of Representatives named as Ismail Ghouli speaking to the London-based Al-Arab newspaper.

More details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/01/18/Ina-denies-hafter-has-signed-any-arms-deal-with-russia/>

- **UN delegate to Libya hindered from landing in Tobruk**

The UN delegate to Libya and the Head of the UNSMIL, Martin Kobler was denied access to land his UN plane in Tobruk airport on Wednesday morning. On Twitter Wednesday, Kobler said he felt sorry that his UN plane was not allowed to land in Tobruk for his meeting with the Tobruk-based House of Representatives.

More details:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/un-delegate-to-libya-hindered-from-landing-in-tobruk/>

- **Head of Presidency Council Discusses Power Problem in the South.**

The Head of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord Fayez Al Saraj on Tuesday discussed with the Deputy Heads of the Council Abdul Salam Kajman and Ahmed Hamza the power problem in the southern region and the suffering it causes to its inhabitants. A package of measures and alternative methods to alleviate the suffering of local population especially with regard to constant power outages in the southern cities, have been agreed at the meeting.

More details: http://www.lana-news.ly/eng/news/view/109361/Head_of_Presidency_Council_Discusses_Power_Problem_in_the_South

- **King of Morocco to visit South Sudan tomorrow**

The King of Morocco, His Majesty King Mohammed VI, is expected to arrive in South Sudan on Friday for a three-day official visit aimed at broadening cordial relations between the two countries, a spokesman for the government said. Speaking after a news conference on Wednesday, Michael Makuei Lueth, Minister of Information and Government Spokesman, announced that the King of Morocco will arrive in the capital Juba on Friday, saying the visit aims at deepening the existing bilateral relations between South Sudan and Morocco.

More details:

<https://radiotamazuj.org/en/article/king-morocco-visit-south-sudan-tomorrow>

- **Algerian PM: Morocco Has Secured Enough Votes to Return to AU**

The Algerian Prime Minister, Abdelmalek Sellal, acknowledged that Morocco has won the necessary votes to secure its return to the African Union (AU). The Algerian Prime Minister has admitted that

Morocco's return to the AU has become inevitable, as it has secured the necessary votes from the majority of African countries.

More details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/01/206052/algerian-pm-morocco-secured-enough-votes-return-au/>

- **Western Sahara: Fragile peace is “on the brink of collapse,” warned New York Times**

The peace process in Western Sahara is now on the brink of collapse, weakened by the obstacles set up by Morocco for the holding of a referendum on self-determination of the Sahrawi people, wrote recently the American newspaper New York Times. “The fragile architecture of peace in Western Sahara is now on the brink of collapse. The 1991 cease-fire promised the people of Western Sahara a referendum on self-determination. More than 25 years later, it has not taken place,” said the author of the article entitled “the next war of North Africa,” published on Monday

More details:

<http://en.aps.dz/world/16236-western-sahara-fragile-peace-is-%E2%80%99Con-the-brink-of-collapse,%E2%80%9D-warned-new-york-times>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Aid groups need \$550 mln to confront worsening Afghan crisis: UN**

International aid groups need more than half a billion dollars this year to help millions of Afghans struggling with increased violence and a bleak economy as humanitarian crisis worsens, a senior UN official said. According to New York Times, the United Nations estimates at least 9.3 million Afghans, or nearly a third of the population, will need humanitarian assistance in 2017, a 13 percent increase from last year.

More details:

<http://www.app.com.pk/aid-groups-need-550-mln-to-confront-worsening-afghan-crisis-un/>

- **COAS condoles killing of UAE nationals in Afghanistan**

Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa has expressed condolences over the killing of United Arab Emirates nationals in bombings in Afghanistan's Kandahar city. According to an Inter- Services Public Relations press release, the COAS met the ambassador of the UAE to Pakistan, Essa Abdulla Al Basha Al Noaimi, at the General Headquarters.

More details:

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1309394/coas-condoles-killing-of-uae-nationals-in-afghanistan>

- **2016 the bloodiest year ever for Afghan journalists and media**

The 6-months report from the Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AJSC) was publicised highlighting that 2016 was the bloodiest year ever for journalists and media in Afghanistan. 13 journalists were killed, a figure that is unprecedented. Threats are posed by a variety of groups, including government officials, but the changed Taliban policy towards journalists and media is the main driver behind the increase in the violence against journalists. The deliberate targeting of media reflected in the figures show that Taliban are responsible for 10 of the 13 killed journalists.

More details:

<http://afghanistantimes.af/2016-the-bloodiest-year-ever-for-afghan-journalists-and-media/>

- **Karzai Speaks Out About Worsening Ties between Nations**

Former President Hamid Karzai raised his concerns over what he says was worsening relations between countries active in the region, which was not the case when he was in power, he said. Karzai made the remarks during the second edition of the Raisina Dialogue 2017 in India's capital New Delhi on Tuesday.

More details:

<http://www.toloneews.com/afghanistan/karzai-speaks-out-about-worsening-ties-between-nations>

- **Obama talks with President Ghani and CEO Abdullah**

President Barack Obama has spoken with President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah. The White House said President Obama called President Ghani to speak with the two leaders regarding the bilateral relations of the two nations.

More details:

<http://www.khaama.com/obama-talks-with-president-ghani-and-ceo-abdullah-02702>

- **Top Lashkar commander killed in encounter in north Kashmir's Bandipore**

A top Lashkar-e-Taiba commander and a policeman were today killed in an encounter in north Kashmir's Bandipore, an official said. The slain militant has been identified as Abu Musaib, a top Lashkar commander in north Kashmir.

More details:

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/lashkar-commander-killed-north-kashmir-bandipore-encounter/1/861010.html>

- **States must not move embassies to Jerusalem'**

Pakistan has told the United Nations Security Council that the shifting of any state's embassy in Israel to Jerusalem would manifestly violate its resolutions. Recently, US President-elect Donald Trump has signalled his willingness to move the US embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv.

More details:

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1309391/states-must-not-move-embassies-to-jerusalem>

- **WEF sideline: Spy agencies must help forge trust, says Gen Raheel**

Intelligence agencies of Pakistan and Afghanistan will have to play a key role in overcoming the air of mistrust between the two countries, said the former chief of army staff General (ret'd), Raheel Sharif. Gen Raheel said that during his tenure he had made progress in relations with Afghanistan and expressed the hope that his successor, General Qamar Bajwa, would make progress in this regard.

More details:

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/01/19/wef-sideline-spy-agencies-must-help-forge-trust-says-gen-raheel/>

- **Charges of terrorism: Sindh govt to seek removal of LG members**

Instead of giving more powers to mayors and other representatives of the local governments (LGs), Sindh government has decided to amend the Sindh Local Government Act 2013 to insert provision of removing the LG representatives on certain 'charges' including that of inciting terrorism and graft. In this connection, Sindh cabinet meeting will be convened today (Thursday). This will be the second cabinet meeting in a week.

More details:

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1300024/charges-terrorism-sindh-govt-seek-removal-lg-members/>

- **Rangers' powers extended for another 90 days in Karachi**

The Sindh government has made the decision to extend the special policing powers of Rangers in Karachi for another 90 days. Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah signed a summary for the extension of powers of the paramilitary force on Thursday.

More details:

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/19-Jan-17/rangers-powers-extended-for-another-90-days-in-karachi>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Some 180,000 Syrians born in Turkey since war began**

Nearly 180,000 Syrians have entered the world in Turkey over the last five years. According to Turkey's Health Ministry, a total of 177,568 Syrians mothers – refugees of the country's bloody civil war – gave birth in Turkey between April 2011 and September 2016. The country already has some 3 million Syrian refugees who fled the war, more than any other country in the world, and has spent \$25 billion helping and sheltering them.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/183395/some-180000-syrians-born-in-turkey-since-war-began>

- **18 Daesh terrorists 'neutralized' in north Syria**

Eighteen Daesh terrorists were 'neutralized' in northern Syria over the last 24 hours as part of Operation Euphrates Shield, the Turkish military said early Thursday. Turkish authorities use the word "neutralized" in their statements to imply the terrorists in question were either killed, captured or surrounded.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/18-daesh-terrorists-neutralized-in-north-syria/730388>

- **Contrary to Turkey and Russia, Iran rules out US participation in Astana talks**

Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif reportedly said Wednesday that Iran is vehemently opposed to the United States joining the Syrian peace talks in Kazakhstan next week. Iran's statement goes against the position of Russia and Turkey, the other two organizers of the talks, who both said earlier this week that Donald Trump's new U.S. administration should be represented at the negotiations. "We are hostile to their presence and we have not invited them," Foreign Minister Zarif said late Tuesday, according to the Tasnim news agency.

More Details:

<http://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2017/01/19/contrary-to-turkey-and-russia-iran-rules-out-us-participation-in-astana-talks>

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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