



# MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

## GÜNLÜK ORTADOĞU BÜLTENİ

**Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries**

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

**The Restructuring Proces of Iraq**

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

**Energy Security**

Enerji Güvenliği

**Economy News**

Ekonomi Haberleri

**Peace Process**

Barış Süreci

**Ethnic and Secterian Groups**

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

**Non State Actors**

Devlet-dışı Aktörler

**Relations with the West**

Batı'yla İlişkiler

**MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN**

**19 JANUARY 2018**

**NO: 2528**

<b>1. IRAQ.....</b>	<b>4</b>
• Iraq says needs US\$100 bln for reconstruction, calls for Saudi support.....	4
• 3 Tunnels Found West Of Anbar .....	4
• Basra: Bomb Blasts Political Party's Branch Office .....	4
• Army chief: Future of US troops in Iraq TBD as ISIS crumbles .....	4
• Over 3 million IDPs haven't returned to their cities yet - MP .....	5
• Abadi leading Iraq on the right path .....	5
• Iraq PM seeks allies online to join election list .....	5
• Shia movement rejects demands to postpone Iraq elections.....	6
• ISIL could recapture northern Iraq, officials admit.....	6
• America opposes delaying elections in Iraq: Embassy .....	6
• Iraq Supreme Court: Federal Council to be established.....	6
• Tribal feuds spread fear in Iraq's Basra .....	7
• Iraqi parliament fails to agree on new election date .....	7
• Iraq's Kurdistan Gas Project Gets Boost Amid Geopolitical Tumult.....	7
<b>2. SYRIA.....</b>	<b>8</b>
• UN chief wants to revive Syria gas attack probe .....	8
• UN express concern at besieged Eastern Ghouta, Idlib .....	8
• Democrats draw red line on Trump's new Syria policy.....	8
• 12 psychiatric patients injured in PYD/PKK attacks in Syria .....	8
• Russian airstrikes kill 5 in Syria .....	9
• Over 200,000 People Displaced in Syria's Idlib in 30 Days: UN .....	9
• Iran opposes US presence in Syria.....	9
• Syria: sources, ISIS raises its head in central areas .....	9
• Lavrov, Guterres stress political solution to crisis in Syria .....	10
<b>3. IRAN .....</b>	<b>10</b>
• Iran central bank sees claim for billions from German stock market blocked.....	10
• Iran can generate \$12 billion from 6 South Pars projects.....	10
• Iran Nuclear Problem Must Be Re-Visited.....	11
• Killing Iran nuclear deal to harm US .....	11
• Just Two Congressmen Voted Against a Pro-UN Resolution on Iran .....	11
• French envoy underlines role of JCPOA in world peace.....	11
• Envoy: Iran Not to Negotiate Missile Program.....	12
• US lawmakers table bill meant to 'tighten' terms of Iran nuclear deal .....	12
<b>4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE.....</b>	<b>12</b>
• US envoy arrives in Tel Aviv amid Palestinian boycott.....	12
• Palestine's al-Juneidi vows to continue resistance .....	13
• Israel unveils details of new underground wall along Gaza Strip .....	13
• Palestinian killed in clashes with Israeli forces in West Bank.....	13
• Israeli forces kill 1 Palestinian in search of suspected killer of Israeli settler .....	13

• Geneva Human Rights Centre calls on international community to halt violations in Palestine	14
• Belgium to Donate \$23 Million to UNRWA Following US Aid Cuts .....	14
• Luxembourg Foreign Minister Calls for Palestinian State .....	14
<b>5. JORDAN and LEBANON.....</b>	<b>15</b>
• Jordan says Israel apologises for deaths of two Jordanians at embassy.....	15
• Lebanese intelligence service may be spying using smartphones worldwide .....	15
• Israel apologizes to Jordan over deadly embassy shooting .....	15
• Watchdog says human rights violations still evident .....	15
• Franjeh Slams FPM 'Dictatorial' Approach, Likens Bassil to Ghazi Kanaan .....	16
• PM: Gov't will not allow attacks on investors .....	16
• Aoun tells Beary Israel's construction of wall contradicts with unifi, army efforts to maintain stability .....	16
• Lebanese Security Apparatus Carried out Wide Mission That Foiled ISIL Terrorist Plots .....	17
<b>6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA.....</b>	<b>17</b>
• HRW accuses Saudi Arabia of repression despite reforms .....	17
• WHO delivers 200 tons of health supplies to Yemen.....	17
• Saudis wasting billions by buying outdated weapons from US.....	17
• Saudi Ambassador: Saudi Arabia Is Keen on Supporting Yemeni People .....	18
• Yemen Information Minister, Coalition Spokesman Inspect Port of Aden .....	18
• Qatar backs UN efforts to support peace-building and sustainability .....	18
• HRW blasts Bahrain for rights abuse, praises Qatar .....	19
• Bahrain to host Gulf conference .....	19
• Bahrain feels free to violate human rights.....	19
<b>7. EGYPT.....</b>	<b>19</b>
• Egypt's Sisi sacks intelligence chief .....	19
• Sisi highlights progress made in infrastructure projects, energy production over past four years .....	20
• Nile River is source of development not conflict: Al-Sisi.....	20
• Meet Mona El-Prince, Egypt's only potential female presidential candidate.....	20
• Egypt's new bankruptcy law aims to improve investment environment.....	20
• Sisi: Egypt needs \$900 M to develop infrastructure .....	21
• Albania and Egypt to urge trade, tourism and culture cooperation .....	21
• Another general 'testing the waters' of Egypt's presidential race .....	21
<b>8. NORTH AFRICA.....</b>	<b>22</b>
• The myth of Tunisia's exceptionalism .....	22
• African Civil Society Wants AU to Put End to Ordeal of Sub-Saharans in Algeria .....	22
• Tunisia: Qatar wants to offer more job opportunities to Tunisians.....	22
• Bedoui: State determined to support development in municipalities.....	22
• HoR Defence Committee deplores Italian Parliament's vote to increase forces in Misrata.....	23
• Yassine Ayari officially gets a seat in Parliament.....	23
• After Messahel's Claims, Algeria's PM Ouyahia Verbally Attacks Morocco.....	23
• Eastern Libyan government condemns Italy's "violation of Libya's sovereignty" .....	24
<b>9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN .....</b>	<b>24</b>

• Pakistan rejects allegations of Haqqani network, Afghan Taliban safe havens .....	24
• Ghani briefed on operations during visit to Commando Corps .....	24
• Army chief ratifies death sentence of 10 terror convicts .....	25
• Shehbaz sides with Nisar in rift with Pervaiz Rasheed .....	25
• 5 senior Al-Qaeda leaders killed in Afghan forces raid in Nangarhar .....	25
• Karzai Backs Russia's Military Support To Pakistan .....	25
• Afghanistan Strikes Increase Significantly in 2017 .....	26
• US Rejects Accusations It Gave Rise to IS in Afghanistan .....	26
<b>10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST .....</b>	<b>26</b>
• US border force 'threat to national security' says Turkey spokesman .....	26
• Turkey-backed FSA fighters deployed to Syria's Azaz amid Afrin tensions .....	26
• Turkey will carry out military operation in Syria's Afrin: Defense minister .....	27
• Turkey installs security system on Syria's Afrin border .....	27
• No threats to Turkey will be tolerated: Turkish PM .....	27

## 1. IRAQ

- **Iraq says needs US\$100 bln for reconstruction, calls for Saudi support**

Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi has called on Saudi Arabia to support Iraq in reconstruction liberated regions. In a statement on Thursday, the Iraqi Planning Ministry said, "King Salman bin Abdel Aziz, of Saudi Arabia, received today the Iraqi Minister of Planning Salman al-Jumaili." The minister, according to the statement, "handed a letter from Abadi at which he highlighted the deep brotherly ties between the two countries."

More Details:

<https://www.iraqinews.com/features/iraq-says-needs-us100-bln-reconstruction-calls-saudi-support/>

- **3 Tunnels Found West Of Anbar**

The Popular Mobilization Forces, Western Anbar Axis have found three tunnels in the Karbala district of Qaim district, west of Anbar. "In a joint operation between the command of the PMF, the security and intelligence of the popular mobilization, the Tofoof brigade, the 32nd Brigade, the 8th Brigade and the Upper Euphrates mobilization, the tunnels were broken into and controlled," said the commander of the PMF in the western Anbar axis, Qassim Musleh.

More Details:

[http://www.ninanews.com/News\\_Details.aspx?ZzlAsdy5tINArkx6PvBpOA%253d%253d](http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?ZzlAsdy5tINArkx6PvBpOA%253d%253d)

- **Basra: Bomb Blasts Political Party's Branch Office**

A bomb explosion occurred on Thursday in Iraq's southern province of Basra, targeting a branch office of the Hope for Youth political party. According to Iraqi media outlets, the improvised explosive device (IED) was thrown into the building by a group of unknown armed men who took the flight after the attack.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/408235>

- **Army chief: Future of US troops in Iraq TBD as ISIS crumbles**

The U.S. Army chief of staff, who recently returned from a trip to Iraq, said U.S. troops there will continue to help Iraqi security forces root out Islamic State militants, but what comes after that for the Army in the war-torn country remains to be seen. "I think the situation in Iraq is a lot different than it was three or four years ago when ISIS came rolling out of the desert and screaming down the



Euphrates River Valley,” Gen. Mark Milley told reporters Jan. 17 following an Association of the U.S. Army breakfast in Arlington, Virginia.

More Details:

[http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En\\_NewsReader/92abffe7-cb8f-4f95-b7d8-dbe860692ddc](http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/92abffe7-cb8f-4f95-b7d8-dbe860692ddc)

- **Over 3 million IDPs haven’t returned to their cities yet - MP**

Over 3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) have not returned to their cities, Raad al-Dahlaki, head of the parliamentary migration and displacement committee, revealed Friday. In press statements, al-Dahlaki said the government does not have a political will to help IDPs return to their cities. There are foreign bodies that reject the return of IDPs, he noted.

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/22599/Over-3-million-IDPs-haven-t-returned-to-their-cities-yet-MP>

- **Abadi leading Iraq on the right path**

A cursory look at Iraq’s recent history would strongly suggest that Iraqis are resilient. Over the past four decades, they have survived the oppression of Saddam Hussein’s rule and his aggression against their country’s neighbors, which rendered Iraq an international pariah. As soon as Saddam had concluded a bloody and costly eight-year war with his equally aggressive neighbor Iran, he plunged the entire Middle East into crisis by invading Kuwait.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1228426>

- **Iraq PM seeks allies online to join election list**

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has launched an online appeal for allies to join his list of candidates for elections scheduled for May 12. The initiative is a first for Iraq, ahead of its fourth parliamentary and provincial assembly elections since the ouster of dictator Saddam Hussein in a US-led 2003 invasion.

More Details:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-5283993/Iraq-PM-seeks-allies-online-join-election-list.html>

- **Shia movement rejects demands to postpone Iraq elections**

The Iraqi Wisdom Movement led by the head of the Shia National Alliance, Ammar Al-Hakim, rejected yesterday demands made by Sunni parties and blocs in the Iraqi parliament to postpone the general elections scheduled for 12 May to next year. “We are surprised that members of the House of Representatives in the Alliance of Iraqi National Forces and some other forces have submitted a request contrary to the constitution, demanding to postpone the elections for one year with vague excuses” Fadi Shammari, a member of the Wisdom Movement Political Bureau said in a statement.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180118-shia-movement-rejects-demands-to-postpone-iraq-elections/>

- **ISIL could recapture northern Iraq, officials admit**

Iraqi and American security officials say that territory in the north could easily be recaptured by ISIL despite Baghdad’s insistence that the extremists have been defeated. In an attempt to repel a comeback, major military operations are being conducted near Mosul where towns risk falling back into insurgent hands.

More Details:

<https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/isil-could-recapture-northern-iraq-officials-admit-1.696491>

- **America opposes delaying elections in Iraq: Embassy**

The United States supports holding Iraqi parliamentary elections on May 12 as planned by Iraq’s government, the US Embassy in Baghdad said on Thursday, criticising calls to postpone the vote. “Postponing the elections would set a dangerous precedent, undermining the constitution and damaging Iraq’s long-term democratic development,” the embassy said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/dae898b9-7377-4b1f-b2b7-3de1a9e306f6.aspx>

- **Iraq Supreme Court: Federal Council to be established**

Iraq’s Federal Supreme Court decided [press release, in Arabic] Wednesday to establish the Council of the Union, or the Federal Council, which will oversee provisions passed by parliament. The need for the council is stated in article 48 of the constitution [official text], but has not been established in the 13 years since the new government was implemented.

More Details:

<http://www.jurist.org/paperchase/2018/01/iraq-supreme-court-federal-council-to-be-established.php>

- **Tribal feuds spread fear in Iraq's Basra**

Daud Salman and his family stayed put in their Iraqi village despite years of regular clashes between tribes, but when a stray bullet wounded his son, it was time to move. In the north of Basra province, "bullets talk," he said. Feuds between the region's half-dozen tribes often flare into pitched battles with assault rifles and machineguns, killing bystanders and driving a never-ending cycle of revenge attacks.

More Details:

<https://www.afp.com/en/news/23/tribal-feuds-spread-fear-iraqs-basra-doc-wt6ys1>

- **Iraqi parliament fails to agree on new election date**

The Iraqi parliament has failed to set a new date for elections and has also postponed its session until Saturday. The session was attended by 200 out of 269 Members of Parliament (MP). As many as 149 MPs agreed to hold a secret vote to specify the election date. However, members belonging to the Iraqi Alliance rejected the result and demanded to recast the vote and to count the votes again.

More Details:

<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2018/01/19/Iraqi-parliament-fails-to-set-new-election-date.html>

- **Iraq's Kurdistan Gas Project Gets Boost Amid Geopolitical Tumult**

Plans to export natural gas from Iraqi Kurdistan got a boost after reserves were upgraded at two key fields. Yet successful development still hinges on the region's turbulent politics. The Miran and Bina Bawi deposits hold 14.8 billion cubic feet of contingent gas resources, explorer Genel Energy Plc said Friday in a statement after an audit was carried out by RPS Energy Consultants Ltd. That's an increase of more than 40 percent from the previous estimate in 2016.

More Details:

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-01-19/iraq-s-kurdistan-gas-project-gets-boost-amid-geopolitical-tumult>



## 2. SYRIA

- **UN chief wants to revive Syria gas attack probe**

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Thursday urged the Security Council to revive efforts to punish those responsible for chemical weapons use in Syria after Russia killed off a UN probe of the gas attacks. Guterres said the use of chemical weapons in Syria's nearly seven-year war "seriously challenges the global taboo against these weapons of mass destruction."

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86845>

- **UN express concern at besieged Eastern Ghouta, Idlib**

UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and UN Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, expressed concerns Thursday about the situation in Eastern Ghouta and Idlib in Syria, Anadolu reports. Adama Dieng and Ivan Simonovic issued a joint statement expressing their concerns "at the devastating impact of escalating hostilities in Eastern Ghouta and Idlib in Syria on civilians".

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180119-un-express-concern-at-besieged-eastern-ghouta-idlib/>

- **Democrats draw red line on Trump's new Syria policy**

Already frustrated with the Donald Trump administration's refusal to provide concrete details on US military activity in Syria, congressional Democrats today firmly rebuked the president's plan to further expand American troops' mandate beyond fighting the Islamic State (IS). Several congressional Democrats are accusing the administration of exceeding its legal mandate following Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's Wednesday announcement that the 2,000 or so US soldiers in Syria will remain in the country to counter President Bashar al-Assad and his Iranian backers.

More Details:

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/01/congress-democrats-red-line-syria-policy-trump-tillerson.html>

- **12 psychiatric patients injured in PYD/PKK attacks in Syria**

Twelve people were injured Friday in attacks by the PYD/PKK at two hospitals in a district of Syria on Turkey's border. The PYD/PKK, in Syria's Afrin province, opened artillery fire on psychiatric and maternity hospitals in Azez in the province of Aleppo.

More Details:

<https://www.trtworld.com/mea/12-psychiatric-patients-injured-in-pyd-pkk-attacks-in-syria-14398>

- **Russian airstrikes kill 5 in Syria**

At least five people have been killed and 30 others injured in airstrikes conducted by the Russian warplanes in Syria's northern province of Idlib. According to the Anadolu Agency, Syria's White Helmets civil-defense force director Mostafa Haj Youssef said Russian warplanes had targeted a number of residential areas on Thursday.

More Details:

<https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/russian-airstrikes-kill-5-in-syria201801191424410003/>

- **Over 200,000 People Displaced in Syria's Idlib in 30 Days: UN**

Fighting in Syria's northwestern province of Idlib has displaced last month more than 200,000 people — some for the second time during the war — complicating relief efforts for the affected civilians, a UN spokesman has said. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is alarmed by continued reports of fighting in Syria's Idlib Governorate, which has resulted in the displacement of over 200,000 persons in the area since Dec. 15, Stephane Dujarric, the spokesman, told reporters at UN Headquarters in New York on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://www.app.com.pk/200000-people-displaced-syrias-idlib-30-days-un/>

- **Iran opposes US presence in Syria**

On a visit to Syria, Kamal Kharrazi stressed Iran's opposition to the US troops' presence in Syria, praising Syria's reconciliatory efforts. In a meeting with Ali Haidar, Syria's State Minister for National Reconciliation Affairs, Kamal Kharrazi stressed that the presence of the United States on the territory of Syria does not contribute to peace in the country, and the Islamic Republic of Iran considers the presence illegitimate.

More Details:

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/131394/Iran-opposes-US-presence-in-Syria>

- **Syria: sources, ISIS raises its head in central areas**

Groups affiliated to the Islamic State have taken some areas of central Syria after two anti-ISIS coalitions, one led by the US and the other by Russia, announced last week the military defeat of ISIS in Syria and Iraq. According to sources on the ground in regions between Hama and Idlib, ISIS groups

that had fled the area of Salamiya, east of Hama, reorganized and carried out a surprise attack against government forces and Syrian insurgents south-east of the military airport of Abu Duhur, currently a point of contention between loyalists and Syrian rebels.

More Details:

[http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/generalnews/2018/01/19/syria-sources-isis-raises-its-head-in-central-areas\\_0b252810-febb-4fd8-921a-d0064d1d851c.html](http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/generalnews/2018/01/19/syria-sources-isis-raises-its-head-in-central-areas_0b252810-febb-4fd8-921a-d0064d1d851c.html)

- **Lavrov, Guterres stress political solution to crisis in Syria**

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres reaffirmed the necessity of reaching a political solution to the crisis in Syria. During a meeting in New York on Thursday, the two sides discussed the thorniest issues on the international agenda, including the situation in Syria and on the Korean Peninsula, with stress laid on that there is no alternative to peaceful settlement of current crises, the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

More Details:

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=124837>

### 3. IRAN

- **Iran central bank sees claim for billions from German stock market blocked**

German stock market operator Deutsche Boerse said Thursday that Iran's central bank had levelled claims for billions of dollars against its Luxembourg subsidiary Clearstream, which blocked the funds after the US accused Tehran of funding terrorism.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86837>

- **Iran can generate \$12 billion from 6 South Pars projects**

A member of the Iranian parliament said on January 18, 2018, that the country can generate up to \$12 billion annually from 6 projects of the supergiant South Pars gas field in Persian Gulf. Spokesperson of the Parliament's Energy Committee Asadollah Gharekhani endorsed the Iranian Ministry of Petroleum's cause to develop the remaining phase developments of the gas field, adding the country can make 12 billion dollars in revenues from only 6 phases of the project including phases 12, 14, 23 and 24.

More Details:

<https://neftegaz.ru/en/news/view/168441-Iran-can-generate-12-billion-from-6-South-Pars-projects>

- **Iran Nuclear Problem Must Be Re-Visited**

The decision by US President Donald Trump to prolong the lifting of some sanctions against Iran for a further 120 days has reopened the 4-year old “what to do about Iran” debate. While some have condemned Trump for renewing sanctions relief for the mullahs, others have castigated him for his call to re-negotiate the “nuclear deal” connoted by his predecessor Barack Obama.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1148331/amir-taheri/iran-nuclear-problem-must-be-re-visited>

- **Killing Iran nuclear deal to harm US**

Iranian former nuclear diplomacy team in nuclear negotiations has written an article published on Reuters, warning the US government of the consequences of withdrawal from the nuclear deal with Iran.

More Details:

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/131399/Killing-Iran-nuclear-deal-to-harm-US>

- **Just Two Congressmen Voted Against a Pro-UN Resolution on Iran**

Based on how Congress voted, it would be easy to assume there are no longer any problems in America. That is because just two members of Congress, both conservative Republicans, voted to put “America First” and defy the bipartisan establishment by voting against a warmongering resolution targeting Iran. Among other concerns, critics said House Resolution 676, which purports to be about “supporting the rights of the people of Iran to free expression,” legitimizes the United Nations and inches the U.S. government closer to another disastrous Middle East war.

More Details:

<https://www.thenewamerican.com/usnews/foreign-policy/item/28069-just-two-congressmen-voted-against-a-pro-un-resolution-on-iran>

- **French envoy underlines role of JCPOA in world peace**

French Ambassador to the UN Francois Delattre underlined the important role of Iran nuclear deal in the regional and international security. Both the nuclear deal reached between Iran and the G5+1 (US, UK, France, Russia, China plus Germany) in 2015 and the Resolution 2231 constitute a cornerstone for regional and international security and stability, French ambassador to the UN said

while addressing a meeting of the UN Security Council on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82800666>

- **Envoy: Iran Not to Negotiate Missile Program**

Iranian Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina Mahmoud Heidari reiterated his country's opposition to holding talks on its missile and defense programs. Iran will not accept any change in the JCPOA and the country will not allow relating of other issues, particularly the issue of Iran's defensive missile program, to the nuclear issue, Heidari said in an interview with Aljazeera Balkans TV channel in Sarajevo.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13961029000151>

- **US lawmakers table bill meant to 'tighten' terms of Iran nuclear deal**

US lawmakers have put forward a bill at the House of Representatives, seeking to "tighten" the term of a 2015 multinational nuclear deal with Iran, despite international warnings for Washington to stop attempts to undermine the accord. The so-called "Iran Freedom Policy and Sanctions Act" was introduced by Republican representative Peter Roskam and backed by his fellow GOP member Liz Cheney, the daughter of scandal-hit former US Vice President Dick Cheney, on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/01/19/549418/Iran-United-States-nuclear>

## 4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **US envoy arrives in Tel Aviv amid Palestinian boycott**

US Middle East envoy Jason Greenblatt arrived from Washington to Tel Aviv on Wednesday for talks on the Middle East peace process. According to Israeli TV Channel 7, Greenblatt will hold a series of meetings with Israeli political officials, representatives of Russia, the United Nations and the European Union to discuss ways to revive negotiations.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180119-us-envoy-arrives-in-tel-aviv-amid-palestinian-boycott/>

- **Palestine's al-Juneidi vows to continue resistance**

In an exclusive interview with Anadolu Agency, 16-year-old Fawzi al-Juneidi -- jailed last month by the Israeli authorities -- vowed to continue the popular struggle against Israel's decades-long occupation of Palestinian land. "I say to the Israeli occupiers: I will continue taking part in the popular resistance," al-Juneidi said during a visit to Anadolu Agency's Ankara headquarters on Thursday, "while simultaneously pursuing my studies".

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/corporate-news/palestine-s-al-juneidi-vows-to-continue-resistance/1035271>

- **Israel unveils details of new underground wall along Gaza Strip**

The Israeli army on Thursday revealed details of a massive underground barrier being built along the border with the Gaza Strip in a bid to neutralise the threat of Palestinian attack tunnels. Eventually stretching some 65 kilometres (41 miles), the concrete wall will be accompanied by motion sensors designed to detect tunnel digging and is expected to be completed by mid-2019.

More Details:

<https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/18/01/2018/Israel-unveils-details-of-new-underground-wall-along-Gaza-Strip>

- **Palestinian killed in clashes with Israeli forces in West Bank**

A Palestinian was killed during clashes with Israeli forces in the north of the occupied West Bank late Wednesday, the Palestinian health ministry announced. Israeli forces entered the Palestinian city of Jenin late Wednesday, eyewitnesses said, with violent clashes breaking out in which Israeli police said there were a "number of injuries."

More Details:

<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2018/01/18/Palestinian-killed-in-clashes-with-Israeli-forces-in-West-Bank.html>

- **Israeli forces kill 1 Palestinian in search of suspected killer of Israeli settler**

Israeli forces killed one Palestinian overnight between Wednesday and Thursday during a raid on the northern occupied West Bank Jenin refugee camp, that was meant to capture or kill the suspect in last week's shooting of an Israeli settler near Nablus. The Palestinian Ministry of Health identified the slain Palestinian as Ahmad Ismail Jarrar, 31, contrary to Israeli reports that his cousin, Ahmad Nasser Jarrar -- allegedly responsible for the settler's death -- was killed.

More Details:



<http://www.maannnews.com/Content.aspx?id=779765>

- **Geneva Human Rights Centre calls on international community to halt violations in Palestine**

The Executive Director of the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue Idriss Jazairy appealed to the international community, and in particular the Arab and Muslim community, "to join forces and act in concert in order to halt the violations of Palestinians human rights." Ambassador Jazairy said during a speech at the two-day Al-Azhar conference in Cairo on the situation in Jerusalem, that the international community has a "moral duty" to protect and to uphold the human rights of the Palestinian people in the wake of the decision of the US to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

More Details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=NjoWuFa96122294235aNjoWuF>

- **Belgium to Donate \$23 Million to UNRWA Following US Aid Cuts**

Belgium announced Wednesday it will donate €19 million (\$23 million) to the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees -- following a U.S. decision to cut aid for the agency. The country will allocate the aid in three years, according to a statement issued by Deputy Prime Minister Alexander De Croo.

More Details:

<https://www.albawaba.com/news/belgium-donate-23-million-unrwa-following-us-aid-cuts-1076372>

- **Luxembourg Foreign Minister Calls for Palestinian State**

In an interview with the German Daily, Süddeutsche Zeitung Luxembourg Foreign Minister, Jean Asselborn advocated for a Palestinian state, saying that with the leadership of France, many other European nations would join the movement. "We Europeans must show that Palestinians also have a right to their own state," he said in the article published on Wednesday. "If France would lead the way by recognizing Palestine, other countries would follow, including Luxembourg."

More Details:

<http://www.palestinechronicle.com/luxembourg-foreign-minister-calls-palestinian-state/>

## 5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Jordan says Israel apologises for deaths of two Jordanians at embassy**

Jordan said on Thursday that Israel had formally apologized for the deaths of two of its citizens killed by an Israeli security guard last July in an incident that soured ties and led to the closure of the Israeli embassy in Amman, state media said. Government spokesman Mohammad al Momani was quoted by state news agency Petra as saying the Israeli foreign ministry had sent a memorandum expressing “deep regrets and apologies” over the incident at the embassy and pledging to take legal action in the case.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180119-israels-jordan-embassy-to-resume-full-operations/>

- **Lebanese intelligence service may be spying using smartphones worldwide**

Lebanon's intelligence service may have turned the smartphones of thousands of targeted individuals into cyber-spying machines, in one of the first known examples of large-scale state hacking of phones rather than computers, researchers said on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86844>

- **Israel apologizes to Jordan over deadly embassy shooting**

Israel has officially apologized for the killing of three Jordanians and offered to compensate their families, Jordan's foreign ministry said Thursday. On July 23 last year, a security guard for the Israeli embassy shot dead a Jordanian worker who had come to an apartment to install furniture and who stabbed him in the back with a screwdriver, according to the Israeli foreign ministry.

More Details:

<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2018/01/19/Israel-apologizes-to-Jordan-over-deadly-embassy-shooting-.html>

- **Watchdog says human rights violations still evident**

Jordan made judiciary reforms and enacted legislation enhancing protection of persons with disabilities but there remained some violations of human rights in 2017, according to a report by Human Rights Watch (HRW) on Thursday. The watchdog's World Report 2018, noted that in February 2017, a Royal committee released sweeping proposals to reform Jordan's judiciary and justice system.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/watchdog-says-human-rights-violations-still-evident>

- **Franjeh Slams FPM 'Dictatorial' Approach, Likens Bassil to Ghazi Kanaan**

Marada Movement chief MP Suleiman Franjeh lashed out Thursday at the Free Patriotic Movement and compared its leader Jebran Bassil to Ghazi Kanaan, the long-time head of Syria's security apparatus in Lebanon. “I reiterate that our project won through President Michel Aoun's election, and in the strategic issues we have triumphed with President Aoun,” Franjeh said in an interview with LBCI television.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/241059-franjeh-slams-fpm-dictatorial-approach-likens-bassil-to-ghazi-kanaan>

- **PM: Gov't will not allow attacks on investors**

Prime Minister Hani Al Mulki said the Jordanian state will not allow outlaws to attack anyone on Jordanian soil and pledges that anyone who breaks the law will not escape punishment. During a meeting at the Prime Ministry on Thursday with 40 investors and representatives of the chambers of industry and investors' associations, Al Mulki said that the government and the concerned agencies will not allow acts of bullying, blackmailing and theft by a group of outlaws, and will apply the law to all indiscriminately and without any hesitation.

More Details:

[http://petra.gov.jo/Public\\_News/Nws\\_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site\\_id=1&NewsID=336689&CatID=13](http://petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=336689&CatID=13)

- **Aoun tells Beary Israel's construction of wall contradicts with unifil, army efforts to maintain stability**

President of the Republic, Michel Aoun, welcomed at Baabda Palace on Friday Head of Mission and Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), Michael Beary, who visited the President with an accompanying delegation. The President relayed to Beary Lebanon's demand to consider the 13 points it holds along the "Blue Line", which Lebanon does not regard as a final border, but rather a temporary measure that had been adopted after liberation took place back in the year 2000 when Israel withdrew from South Lebanon.

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/87382/Aoun-tells-Beary-Israel-39-construction-of-wall-contradicts-with-UNIFIL-Army-efforts-to-maintain-stability>

- **Lebanese Security Apparatus Carried out Wide Mission That Foiled ISIL Terrorist Plots**

Lebanese Interior Minister Nouhad Al-Machnoug revealed on Friday that Internal Security Forces (ISF) has carried out a wide security mission that foiled terrorist plots by Takfiri ISIL group. In a press conference in Beirut on Friday, Machnoug said the ISF's Information Branch used an ISIL commander to gather intelligence on the group's plots in Lebanon.

More Details:

<http://english.almanar.com.lb/428646>

## 6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **HRW accuses Saudi Arabia of repression despite reforms**

Human Rights Watch accused Saudi Arabia on Thursday of violating international humanitarian law in Yemen and stepping up arrests and prosecutions of activists seeking reform or voicing peaceful dissent, Reuters reports. In its World Report 2018, which reviews human rights practices in more than 90 countries, the rights group reported it had documented 87 unlawful attacks by the Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen, leading to nearly 1,000 civilian deaths.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180118-hrw-accuses-saudi-arabia-of-repression-despite-reforms/>

- **WHO delivers 200 tons of health supplies to Yemen**

World Health Organization (WHO) delivered 200 tons of medicine and medical aid to Yemen, according to a written statement by the organization. Four UN planes carrying the aid landed in Sana'a Airport during the week, the statement said. "The shipments include essential medicine, insulin vials, antibiotics, rabies vaccines, intravenous (IV) fluids, and other medical supplies and equipment," it added.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/europe/who-delivers-200-tons-of-health-supplies-to-yemen/1035184>

- **Saudis wasting billions by buying outdated weapons from US**

The United States is selling useless, outdated weapons to Saudi Arabia which is thus wasting billions of dollars on these purchases, according to E. Michael Jones, an American political analyst in Indiana. Jones, a writer, former professor, media commentator and the current editor of the Culture Wars magazine, made the remarks in a phone interview with Press TV on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/01/19/549407/Saudis-wasting-billions-by-buying-outdated-weapons-from-US>

- **Saudi Ambassador: Saudi Arabia Is Keen on Supporting Yemeni People**

Saudi Ambassador to Yemen Mohammed Saeed Al Jaber said here today that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is keen on supporting Yemen's national economy as well as Yemeni people to stand against the Iranian project. This came in a statement delivered by Ambassador Al Jaber in a meeting that comprised Yemeni Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Ahmed Al-Maysar and a number of Yemeni officials.

More Details:

<http://www.spa.gov.sa/viewfullstory.php?lang=en&newsid=1711284>

- **Yemen Information Minister, Coalition Spokesman Inspect Port of Aden**

Yemeni Information Minister Muammar al-Eryani and Saudi-led Coalition Spokesman Col. Turki al-Maliki inspected Aden Container Terminal on Wednesday and were briefed on the port's conditions and its capabilities to receive containers and various goods. During his visit, Eryani was briefed by Chairman of Aden Ports Development Company (APDC) Mohammed Emzarah on the progress of the port and its absorptive capacity, stressing that the port operates normally and at a high rate.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1147456/yemen-information-minister-coalition-spokesman-inspect-port-aden>

- **Qatar backs UN efforts to support peace-building and sustainability**

Doha Regional Dialogue on Sustaining Peace launched yesterday with the participation of a number of Arab and Muslim countries, civil society organisations, and non-governmental organisations. The event seeks to reach a mutual understanding and political consensus between U.N. member states, regional organizations, civil organisations and the private sector on the relationship between sustainable development, conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping and human rights.

More Details:

<https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/19/01/2018/Qatar-backs-UN-efforts-to-support-peace-building-and-sustainability>

- **HRW blasts Bahrain for rights abuse, praises Qatar**

Campaigners have torn into Bahrain and praised Qatar in a review of the human rights records of more than 90 countries during 2017. The huge 643-page report by Human Rights Watch (HRW) came seven months after Bahrain joined a Saudi-led blockade of Qatar which continues to divide the Gulf region.

More Details:

<http://www.gulf-times.com/story/578656/HRW-blasts-Bahrain-for-rights-abuse-praises-Qatar>

- **Bahrain to host Gulf conference**

The first Gulf Conference for Education and Human Development will open on 22 January in Bahrain. The Arabian Gulf University (AGU) is hosting the two-day event under the theme “Educational Horizons, Innovative Vision”.

More Details:

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppld=41286&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=>

- **Bahrain feels free to violate human rights**

The all-out support that the Bahraini regime receives from its Western allies allows Manama to press ahead with arrest of religious scholars and destruction of mosques, says a commentator. “Because it (the government in Manama) is getting financial support from Saudi Arabia, ... [and] the United Arab Emirates [as well as] security and military support from the US and UK, this ruling family (Al-Khalifah dynasty) feels free to do whatever it wants to do,” Saeed Shehabi told Press TV on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/01/18/549351/Bahrain-Human-Rights-US-UK>

## 7. EGYPT

- **Egypt's Sisi sacks intelligence chief**

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has fired his powerful intelligence chief, state media said Thursday, in the latest shake-up of the country's security services. Sisi appointed his chief-of-staff and close ally General Abbas Kamel as interim replacement for outgoing intelligence head General Khaled Fawzy, according to state media.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86843>



- **Sisi highlights progress made in infrastructure projects, energy production over past four years**

During the second day of the 'Story of a Nation' event in Cairo, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi continued with presenting a balance sheet of the achievements made by his administration over the past four years, stressing the progress in improving infrastructure and energy production. The Story of a Nation event, which started on Wednesday evening and is set to last for three days, is being held at Cairo Masa Hotel under the auspices of the president.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/288388/Egypt/Politics-/Sisi-highlights-progress-made-in-infrastructure-pr.aspx>

- **Nile River is source of development not conflict: Al-Sisi**

President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi and Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn signed Thursday several bilateral agreements in context of Desalegn's first visit to Egypt. The signing included an agreement for cooperation in the industrial field to establish an Egyptian economic zone in Ethiopia. Desalegn's visit to Cairo comes amid controversy in Egypt over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), which is believed to affect Egypt's share of water.

More Details:

<https://dailynewsegypt.com/2018/01/18/nile-river-source-development-not-conflict-al-sisi/>

- **Meet Mona El-Prince, Egypt's only potential female presidential candidate**

Out of 23 potential candidates competing in Egypt's upcoming presidential election only one of them is a woman. Mona Al-Prince, a controversial professor of English literature at Suez Canal University, recently decided to run in the presidential elections, and currently stands as the sole potential female candidate, after generating support from citizens.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/meet-mona-el-prince-egypts-only-potential-female-presidential-candidate/>

- **Egypt's new bankruptcy law aims to improve investment environment**

Parliament approved Egypt's first-ever bankruptcy law in a move to encourage more local and foreign investment last week, ending the automatic prosecution of debtors and allowing them to file for bankruptcy and for businesses to stay open while negotiating debt repayments. Before the new law was passed, bankruptcy cases were treated by the courts on a case-by-case basis and in the absence of a specific law on insolvency. Debtors can now file for bankruptcy instead of facing

prosecution under the new law, which also allows company debts to be repaid through restructuring rather than liquidation.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptdailynews.com/detail/egypts-new-bankruptcy-law-aims-to-improve-investment-environment>

- **Sisi: Egypt needs \$900 M to develop infrastructure**

Egypt's mega projects of natural gas, network transportation, and agriculture have topped President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi's discussion during the second day of Tale of a Homeland conference, which reviews the achievements made during his four-year tenure. In the first session titled "Infrastructure and National Mega projects session", Sisi asserted that the Egyptian government has steadily worked towards developing infrastructure in the last few years, underscoring the fact that diversifying energy resources is a key for sustainable development.

More Details:

<https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/3/40477/Sisi-Egypt-needs-900-M-to-develop-infrastructure>

- **Albania and Egypt to urge trade, tourism and culture cooperation**

Albania and Egypt will encourage cooperation in the areas of trade, tourism, culture and archives confirmed the chairwoman of Foreign Policy parliamentary Committee Mimi Kodheli during a reception held with Ambassador of Egypt to Albania Mohamed Khalil, on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://en.ata.gov.al/index.php/2018/01/19/albania-and-egypt-to-urge-trade-tourism-and-culture-cooperation/>

- **Another general 'testing the waters' of Egypt's presidential race**

Sami Balah, the secretary-general of the Arabism Egypt Party headed by Sami Anan, a former general, announced Jan. 11 that Anan will run for president. The announcement sparked controversy in political circles due to Anan's military background, which is similar to that of former Prime Minister Ahmed Shafiq. Shafiq, who served under former President Hosni Mubarak, withdrew his candidacy after being deported from the United Arab Emirates to Egypt. Also sharing this military background is President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. Shafiq was a lieutenant general and Sisi served as field marshal.

More Details:

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/01/egypt-president-elections-military-candidacy-chances-sisi.html>

## 8. NORTH AFRICA

- **The myth of Tunisia's exceptionalism**

Tunisia celebrated the seventh anniversary of the downfall of its former dictatorship with protests. For two weeks now, people have been demonstrating in impoverished towns like Tebourba and Ettadhamon, near the capital, Tunis, and towns like Kasserine in the mid-west, Sakiet Sidi Youssef in the north-west, and Sidi Bouzid in the south, where the revolution started in 2010.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/myth-tunisia-exceptionalism-180117123750140.html>

- **African Civil Society Wants AU to Put End to Ordeal of Sub-Saharan in Algeria**

Civil society associations in Guinea, Gabon and Niger have urged the African Union to put the issue of the human rights violations by Algerian authorities against Sub-Saharan migrants on the agenda as Algiers continues arbitrary expulsions of would-be migrants who are often abandoned in the desert on the borders with Niger. At a time the African union puts the issue of migration on top of its concerns, Algeria, which often portrays itself as an actor in the continent has flouted the basic principle of solidarity between African states.

More Details:

<http://northafricapost.com/21793-african-civil-society-wants-au-put-end-ordeal-sub-saharans-algeria.html>

- **Tunisia: Qatar wants to offer more job opportunities to Tunisians**

The State of Qatar is working to provide more job opportunities for Tunisians, its ambassador in Tunis, Saad bin Nasser Al Humaidi, on Monday, told Secretary of State for Migration and Expatriates, Adel Jarboui. He added that his country is seeking to recruit more Tunisian skills and manpower to meet the needs of its market and help reduce unemployment in Tunisia, paying tribute to the “excellent reputation of the Tunisian community in Qatar and their skills.

More Details:

<http://tdailynews.net/story-z9713120>

- **Bedoui: State determined to support development in municipalities**

Minister of the Interior, Local Authorities and National Planning, Nouredine Bedoui said Thursday in Algiers that the State is "determined" to support the development in all municipalities, in all circumstances.

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/22348-bedoui-state-determined-to-support-development-in-municipalities>

- **HoR Defence Committee deplores Italian Parliament's vote to increase forces in Misrata**

The House of Representatives' (HoR) Defence Committee has deplored the Italian Parliament's vote to increase its country's forces in Misrata. In the statement released by the HoR yesterday, it stated that it considered this action as a violation of the sovereignty of Libya. The HoR said that the Italian Parliament's increase in the number of its forces in Libya is an acknowledgement of the presence of Italian troops – a fact that Italy had previously denied.

More Details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2018/01/19/hor-defence-committee-deplores-italian-parliaments-vote-to-increase-forces-in-misrata/>

- **Yassine Ayari officially gets a seat in Parliament**

Yassine Ayari has officially won a seat at the House of People's Representatives (HPR) following the publication on Thursday of the final results of the legislative by-elections for Tunisians resident in Germany. Yassine Ayari won those elections with 284 votes, after a poll that took place from December 15 to 17, 2017.

More Details:

<https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/9769458-yassine-ayari>

- **After Messahel's Claims, Algeria's PM Ouyahia Verbally Attacks Morocco**

Only few months after Algeria's Foreign Minister Abdelkader Messahel accused Morocco of "laundering drug money via its banks in the continent," the head of the Algerian government went once again into a similar rant against Morocco. Speaking at the ordinary session of the National Democratic Rally (RND) on Thursday, Algeria's Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia accused Morocco, without naming it, of "drowning Algeria with hashish and cocaine."

More Details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2018/01/238709/messahels-claims-algerias-pm-ouyahia-verbally-attacks-morocco/>

- **Eastern Libyan government condemns Italy’s “violation of Libya’s sovereignty”**

The Italian parliament on Wednesday approved the increase of Italian troops in Libya, Niger and other countries. Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni said earlier that Italy will transfer part of its military units from Iraq and Afghanistan to North Africa to combat illegal immigration and counter terrorism threats. In September 2016, the Italian government sent a non-combat military mission, which includes about 100 special forces personnel, at the request of the Libyan UN-backed government to Misurata, some 200 km east of the capital Tripoli, to provide protection for the Italian field hospital inside Misurata air base.

More Details:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/eastern-libyan-government-condemns-italys-violation-of-libyas-sovereignty/>

## 9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Pakistan rejects allegations of Haqqani network, Afghan Taliban safe havens**

Pakistan’s Ambassador to United States Aizaz Chaudhry, in an interview with BBC Urdu, has said that Pakistan wants to send Haqqani network and Taliban back to Afghanistan so they can participate in national politics there. Aizaz Chaudhry, responding to a question regarding allegations Pakistan providing safe haven to Afghan Taliban and Haqqani network, dismissed such accusations, saying if the United States has any doubt and have any information they must share with Islamabad because Pakistan itself wanted to eliminate them.

More Details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/270489-pakistan-rejects-allegations-of-haqqani-network-afghan-taliban-safe-havens>

- **Ghani briefed on operations during visit to Commando Corps**

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has visited the Commando Corps in capital Kabul and evaluated the conduct of special operations, a statement from Presidential Palace said on Friday. The president hailed the bravery of security forces and directed serious attention to the families of security officials who rendered sacrifices for the motherland.

More Details:

<https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2018/01/19/ghani-briefed-operations-during-visit-commando-corps>

- **Army chief ratifies death sentence of 10 terror convicts**

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa has confirmed death sentences awarded to 10 militants by military courts for their involvement in various acts of terrorism. According to an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) statement issued on Friday, the "hardcore terrorists" were convicted of killing innocent civilians and soldiers and attacking law-enforcement agencies, armed forces personnel and education institutions of the country.

More Details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1383962/army-chief-ratifies-death-sentence-of-10-terror-convicts>

- **Shehbaz sides with Nisar in rift with Pervaiz Rasheed**

Chief Minister Punjab Shehbaz Sharif threw his weight behind senior Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, after the ex-interior minister's tussle with fellow party leader Pervaiz Rasheed continued to deepen, it emerged on Friday. Chief Minister Shehbaz, while speaking to a senior journalist, broke his silence on the issue making headlines for quite some time.

More Details:

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/177670-shehbaz-sides-with-senior-pml-n-leader-nisar>

- **5 senior Al-Qaeda leaders killed in Afghan forces raid in Nangarhar**

At least five senior leaders of the Al-Qaeda terrorist network were killed in an operation of the Afghan security forces in eastern Nangarhar province of Afghanistan. The provincial government media office said Friday that the senior leaders of the Al-Qaeda network were killed in an operation conducted by the Special Forces of the Afghan intelligence directorate.

More Details:

<https://www.khaama.com/5-senior-al-qaeda-leaders-killed-in-afghan-forces-raid-in-nangarhar-04295>

- **Karzai Backs Russia's Military Support To Pakistan**

Karzai says there are ninety times more US weapons in Pakistan than Russian weapons in that country. Former president Hamid Karzai has supported the military assistance of Russia to Pakistan, saying that Moscow can give weapons to Islamabad same as the United States is providing arms to Afghanistan's neighboring country.

More Details:

<http://www.toloneews.com/afghanistan/karzai-backs-russia%E2%80%99s-military-support-pakistan>



- **Afghanistan Strikes Increase Significantly in 2017**

US aircraft finished 2017 flying combat missions in Afghanistan at the fastest rate in years—dropping more bombs last year than any other year since 2011 as the war on ISIS in Iraq and Syria hit its lowest total since it began. US aircraft in the final two months of 2017 kicked off a new campaign against the Taliban, called Jagged Knife, targeting Taliban drug facilities inside Afghanistan. After an initial salvo involving F-22s, aircraft including F-18s, B-52s, F-16s, and MQ-9s hit 11 more narcotics facilities in Helmand Province.

More Details:

<http://www.airforcemag.com/Features/Pages/2018/January%202018/Afghanistan-Strikes-Increase-Significantly-in-2017.aspx>

- **US Rejects Accusations It Gave Rise to IS in Afghanistan**

The United States reiterated its resolve Thursday to help local forces eliminate Islamic State from Afghanistan and strongly refuted accusations Washington was behind the emergence of the terrorist group in the war-shattered country. The remarks by the U.S. ambassador to Kabul, John Bass, are the first formal reaction to the repeated accusations in recent months by some Afghans, including former President Hamid Karzai, along with Russia, that U.S. troops are aiding IS militants in Afghanistan.

More Details:

<https://www.voanews.com/a/us-rejects-accusations-it-gave-rise-is-afghansitan/4213769.html>

## 10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **US border force ‘threat to national security’ says Turkey spokesman**

Turkish presidential spokesperson, İbrahim Kalın, has said that “the steps that Turkey will take in Afrin, Manbij and Tripoli, or elsewhere, to protect its national security are absolutely not part of any plan directed against the Kurds of Syria”. His comments came in a press statement after attending a symposium entitled “100 years after the First World War” in Istanbul yesterday.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180119-us-border-force-threat-to-national-security-says-turkey-spokesman/>

- **Turkey-backed FSA fighters deployed to Syria’s Azaz amid Afrin tensions**

The Turkey-backed Free Syrian Army (FSA) fighters were deployed Thursday night to the Azaz region in northern Syria near the Turkish border with the goal of encircling Afrin held by the PKK-affiliated

People's Protection Units (YPG). Sources from the ground said FSA fighters with heavy weapons were deployed along the border with Afrin against attacks from the YPG terror group and built check points on the Afrin highway to prevent possible bomb attacks.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2018/01/19/turkey-backed-fsa-fighters-deployed-to-syrias-azaz-amid-afrin-tensions>

- **Turkey will carry out military operation in Syria's Afrin: Defense minister**

Turkey will carry out a military operation into Afrin in northern Syria, Defense Minister Nurettin Canikli vowed in an interview with broadcaster A Haber on the morning of Jan. 19. "The threat level against Turkey is increasing day by day. This operation will be carried out and we will combat terrorism," Canikli said, referring to a long-anticipated operation against the People's Protection Units (YPG) in Afrin, seen by Ankara as organically linked to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

More Details:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-will-carry-out-military-operation-in-syrias-afrin-defense-minister-125975>

- **Turkey installs security system on Syria's Afrin border**

Turkey has installed an electronic security system in its southernmost Hatay province on the border with Afrin, a Syrian town presently under the control of the terrorist PYD/PKK, military sources said. Having successfully passed the initial tests by the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK), the first phase of the "Kayi Border Security System" project has now been activated, the source said on condition of anonymity due to restrictions on speaking to the media.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/todays-headlines/turkey-installs-security-system-on-syria-s-afrin-border/1035420>

- **No threats to Turkey will be tolerated: Turkish PM**

Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said on Friday Turkey would not tolerate any threats to its national security. "Any formation that threatens the national security of Turkey will never be tolerated. This is our natural right. It is a right as part of international law and Turkish law as well," Yildirim said during a speech at a vehicle delivery ceremony at the Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (AFAD) in capital Ankara.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/197997/natos-deputy-head-to-visit-turkey>

*\*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.*

*\*Bu bülten **ORSAM Ortadoğu Uzman Yardımcısı Firuze Yağmur Gökler** tarafından hazırlanmaktadır. Bülten Ortadoğu ülkelerinin yerel haber kaynaklarından derlenmektedir. Belirtilen görüşler bölge ülkelerinin haber kaynaklarına ve ismi geçen yazarlara ait olup ORSAM'ın görüşünü yansıtmamaktadır.*