



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĞU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Proces of Iraq

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

Energy Security

Enerji Güvenliği

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Peace Process

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Ethnic and Secterian Groups

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

Non State Actors

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27 MARCH 2017

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1. IRAQ

- **US admits killing 200 civilians in Mosul air strike while world focuses on London terror attack**

The US Pentagon has admitted to another air strike in Mosul, which is believed to have killed more than 200 civilians including women and children. It has been described as a “humanitarian disaster” by Iraqi Vice President Osama Nujaifi.

More Details:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-air-strike-mosul-200-civilians-killed-isis-northern-iraq-pentagon-central-command-islamic-state-a7651451.html>

- **School Becomes Field Hospital in Iraq’s Mosul**

ISIS used the school as part of its program of indoctrination until it lost control of the area during a major Iraqi offensive launched last month, and it is now used to treat people wounded in the ongoing battle for the western side of the city.

More Details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/theaawsat/news-middle-east/school-becomes-field-hospital-iraqs-mosul>

- **Conflicting Reports on ‘Mosul Massacre’**

There were conflicting reports on Sunday concerning the party behind the “Mosul massacre” which left scores of civilians dead and injured when a building in the western part of the city was targeted ten days ago.

More Details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/dalshad/news-middle-east/conflicting-reports-mosul-massacre>

- **Big Heart donates \$245,000 for Mosul refugees,**

The Big Heart Foundation (TBHF), a Sharjah-based global humanitarian charity dedicated to helping refugees and people in need worldwide, has donated nearly a quarter of a million dollars to provide assistance to the people of Mosul.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/647751c1-f069-42ba-b75b-0a00fa6293c0.aspx>

- **‘It was like the apocalypse’: Mosul residents caught between coalition strikes and ISIL violence**

Iraqi authorities said on Sunday they were investigating the high rate of civilian casualties in Mosul Al Jadida, with estimates of the dead ranging from dozens to hundreds. In particular, a strike the US-led coalition has confirmed carrying out on March 17 is claimed to have killed as many as 150 civilians when two bombs destroyed several houses packed with families.

More Details:

<http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/it-was-like-the-apocalypse-mosul-residents-caught-between-coalition-strikes-and-isil-violence>

- **Syrian Kurds accuse Iraqi Kurds of preventing media covering Raqqa operation**

Abdulkarim Omer, the head of foreign relations for Cezire Canton in Syria’s Kurdish region-Rojava, told ARA News on Monday that the Kurdish government in northern Iraq is preventing Western journalists and diplomats from visiting Rojava.

More Details:

<http://aranews.net/2017/03/syrian-kurds-accuse-iraqi-kurds-preventing-media-covering-raqqa-operation/>

- **Australian combat planes 'not involved' in Mosul strike being probed for civilian death claims, Defence Minister Marise Payne says**

Australian combat aircraft were not involved in an airstrike against Islamic State militants that allegedly killed at least dozens of civilians in the Iraqi city of Mosul, Defence Minister Marise Payne has said.

More Details:

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/australia-will-fully-support-investigation-into-civilian-death-claims-after-airstrike-in-mosul-20170327-gv7805.html>

- **Washington to Send 200 More Troops to Middle East**

The United States is deploying some 200 additional troops to the Middle East at the request of a top US military in Baghdad, media reported on Monday.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703271051988598-usa-sends-more-troops-iraq-syria/>

- **End Of ISIS? Islamic State Group Will Be Defeated 'Within Weeks,' Iraqi PM Haider Al Abadi Says**

Iraq will be free of the Islamic State group "within weeks," Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al Abadi predicted Sunday, adding that terrorism will continue until the extremist group is defeated in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East.

More Details:

<http://www.ibtimes.com/end-isis-islamic-state-group-will-be-defeated-within-weeks-iraqi-pm-haider-al-abadi-2515352>

- **Will Turkish language be homebound in Kirkuk?**

Recently, Kurdish has been declared the second official language in the region after Arabic. New arrangements were introduced. However, as is the custom in such annexations in the Middle East, the first acts we see are fires that break out in land registry offices and civil registries.

More Details:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/will-turkish-language-be-homebound-in-kirkuk-.aspx?pageID=449&nID=111276&NewsCatID=585>

- **Army chief says 50% of western Mosul under troops control**

The Iraqi army said Monday it controls 50 percent of western Mosul as encounters heighten with Islamic State militants in the region.

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/army-chief-says-50-western-mosul-troops-control/>

- **The future of militias in post-ISIL Iraq**

Iraq's future stability will depend on how it manages its various militias.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/03/future-militias-post-isil-iraq-170324090705631.html>

- **U.S. Says Coalition Planes Struck Area Where Civilian Deaths Reported**

U.S. officials acknowledged that coalition forces in Iraq were behind a Mosul air strike on March 17 in which residents says more than 200 civilians may have been killed.

More Details:

<http://www.rferl.org/a/iraq-civilian-deaths-coalition-planes-air-strike-investigation/28392972.html>

- **Iraqi federal police forces take on key role in west Mosul**

As the battle continues for the liberation of the remainder of Mosul from the Islamic State (IS), forces answering to the Interior Ministry have been playing more of a central role than those under the Defense Ministry.

More Details:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/federal-police-mosul-iraq-security-isis.html>

- **Senior Arab IS leaders killed in airstrike in western Mosul**

Iraqi air forces hit Islamic State locations in western Mosul on Sunday, killing a number of leaders, mostly Arabs, as operations continue to clear the region from militants.

More Details:

<http://alwaght.com/en/News/92230>

- **Suicide bomber targets district governor's home in Iraq**

A suicide bomber has blown himself up inside the house of a local official in the city of Fallujah in Iraq's western province of Anbar, according to a police official on Sunday.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/suicide-bomber-targets-district-governors-home-in-iraq/779976>

- **Rights group: Situation in Shingal worsened after Peshmerga, PKK clashes**

The Kurdistan Region's Human Rights Committee on Saturday said the displaced people who returned to Sinjar (Shingal) were affected by the clashes between Peshmerga forces and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) affiliates.

More Details:

<http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/1aa1255b-118f-4e7d-8625-142015f979e6/Rights-group--Situation-in-Shingal-worsened-after-Peshmerga--PKK-clashes>

- **Arab Israeli accused of sending money to IS fighter in Iraq**

Shin Bet says 25-year-old from Nazareth suburb wired NIS 5,000 to another Arab Israeli who joined Islamic State.

More Details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/arab-israeli-accused-of-sending-money-to-is-fighter-in-iraq/>

2. SYRIA

- **Syria US-Backed Fighters Take IS-Held Airport, Says Spokesman**

Fighters from the Syrian Democratic Forces, a US-backed Kurdish-Arab alliance, today seized a military airport from the Islamic State jihadist group in northern Syria, a spokesman said.

More details:

<http://www.outlookindia.com/newswire/story/syria-us-backed-fighters-take-is-held-airport-says-spokesman/967367>

- **Syrian regime threatens to attack Israel with Scud missiles**

The regime of President Bashar al-Assad in Syria has threatened to fire Scud missiles at Israel. Syria sent messages to Israel via Russia that any further strikes by the Israeli military within Syria's borders will be met with Scud missiles attacks on the Jewish state. Assad regime warned that Israeli strikes on the Syrian military bases would result in Scud missiles "capable of carrying half a ton of explosives" being launched at IDF bases.

More details:

<http://aranews.net/2017/03/syrian-regime-threatens-attack-israel-scud-missiles/>

- **UN urges guarantor states to uphold Syria ceasefire**

United Nations envoy to Syria Staffan de Mistura has sent a letter to the three guarantor states of the Syria cease-fire - Russia, Turkey and Iran - urging them to undertake urgent efforts to uphold the cease-fire regime during the ongoing peace talks in Geneva.

More Details:

<http://www.aninews.in/newsdetail-NA/MzA1OTc5/un-urges-guarantor-states-to-uphold-syria-ceasefire.html>

- **Syria opposition 'fed up' with militants, warns they will endure while bombing continues**

Opposition negotiator Basma Kodmani warns that Al-Qaeda linked groups could not be tackled while the government continued airstrikes.

More details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/syria-opposition-fed-militants-warns-they-will-endure-while-bombing-continues-340780073>

- **ISIS orders Raqqa residents to flee, then stay**

Civilians in Raqqa faced uncertainty Monday after ISIS ordered the evacuation of the Syrian city, and then rescinded the command.

More details:

<http://us.cnn.com/2017/03/27/middleeast/raqqa-civilians-euphrates-dam-tabqa-airbase/index.html>

- **Russia conducts six humanitarian operations in Syria in 24 hours**

The Russian military has carried out six humanitarian operations in Syria over the past 24 hours, the Russian Center for the reconciliation of the warring parties in Syria said in its daily bulletin on Monday.

More Details:

<http://tass.com/society/937650>

- **Syrian children 'easy prey' for terror recruiters**

The 2.8 million Syrian children deprived of an education are highly vulnerable to terrorist recruiters, the Arab League secretary-general warned on Sunday.

More details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1074731/middle-east>

- **Syrian Army Drives Terrorists out of More Territories in Hama**

The army soldiers advanced against terrorists from Qomhana Cemetery to the small hilltop town of Tal (hill) al-Sammam, where they were confronted by the militants that retreated from the Western flank of Qomhana after brief clashes.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960107000183>

- **Syrian man found hanged at Piraeus passenger ferry terminal**

Police and Coast Guard officers in the port of Piraeus were on Monday investigating the circumstances surrounding the death of an undocumented migrant found hanged from a kiosk near a passenger ferry terminal.

More details:

<http://www.ekathimerini.com/217169/article/ekathimerini/news/syrian-man-found-hanged-at-piraeus-passenger-ferry-terminal>

- **More Syrian rebels, Families leave city of Homs under deal**

Syrian state TV says another group of rebels with their families are leaving the last opposition-held neighborhood in the central city of Homs under a Russia-brokered deal with the Damascus government.

More details:

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/ML_SYRIA?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-03-27-02-59-00

- **U.S.-Backed Kurdish Forces Have Captured a Key Syrian Airbase from ISIS**

U.S.-backed Syrian Kurdish forces captured a strategically important air base from Islamic State militants in north Syria on Sunday in the first major victory for the group since the U.S. airlifted the forces behind enemy lines four days ago.

More details:

<http://time.com/4713496/kurdish-rebels-isis-tabqa-syria/>

3. IRAN

- **Iran Urges Immediate End to War in Yemen**

Iranian Foreign Ministry on Sunday called for an immediate halt to aggression, fighting and bloodshed in Yemen and urged efforts to start a political process for formation of a national unity government in the Arab country.

More details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/03/27/1364813/iran-urges-immediate-end-to-war-in-yemen>

- **Iran imposes reciprocal sanctions on 15 US companies**

According to a report [release] issued by IRNA [state news agency], Iran has imposed sanctions on 15 US companies for human rights violations and supporting Israeli "terrorism" against Palestinians.

More details:

<http://www.jurist.org/paperchase/2017/03/iran-imposes-sanctions-on-15-us-companies.php>

- **Iranian President Rohani Visiting Moscow to Meet With Putin**

Iranian President Hassan Rohani is beginning a two-day visit to Russia on March 27 and will meet with President Vladimir Putin the following day.

More details:

<http://www.rferl.org/a/iranian-president-rouhani-moscow-visit-putin-syria/28392166.html>

- **Egypt Stresses Iran's Important Role in Region**

We are well-aware of Iran's significance and influence in the region," the Arabic-language media quoted Abu Zeid as saying. The Egyptian foreign ministry spokesman reiterated that as a big and vast regional nation, Iran remains to be an influential country.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960106000357>

- **Iran urges 'war crime' hearing into US killings in Mosul**

Iran's top security official says US airstrikes in the Iraqi city of Mosul which reportedly killed large numbers of civilians in recent days should be urgently addressed in a court of justice.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2017/03/26/515669/Iran-Shamkhani-Mosul-airstrikes-US-crimes-->

- **Arab Summit to Discuss Iranian Interferences, Regional Crises**

The preparatory meeting for next Wednesday's upcoming Arab League Summit in Jordan kicked off on Saturday when the permanent delegates of the Arab League met to discuss the proposed agenda

and a number of political and security issues related to terrorism and national security, in addition to Arab relations at the regional and international levels.

More details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/sawsan/news-middle-east/arab-summit-discuss-iranian-interferences-regional-crises>

- **Iran President: Citizens' rights same for all Iranian ethnicities, religions**

President Rouhani met with the youth and distinguished figures of Kordestan province on Saturday and described the province as the impenetrable fortress guarding Iran, adding: "The government guarantees supplying industrial investors of Kordestan with water and power".

More details:

http://en.abna24.com/news/iran/iran-president-citizens'-rights-same-for-all-iranian-ethnicities-religions_820011.html

- **Iran imposes sanctions on 15 US firms allegedly for supporting Israel's occupation of Palestine**

In a retaliatory move against the United States, Iran on Sunday issued sanctions against 15 American companies, accusing them of supporting militancy and Israel's occupation of Palestine.

More Details:

<https://scroll.in/latest/832909/iran-imposes-sanctions-on-15-us-firms-allegedly-for-supporting-israels-occupation-of-palestine>

- **Rouhani to visit Putin in Moscow as Iran and Russia move closer**

As U.S. influence wanes across the Middle East, Iran and Russia have joined forces to expand their power in the region, strengthening political and diplomatic ties and stepping up joint military operations in Syria.

More Details:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/rouhani-to-visit-putin-in-moscow-as-iran-and-russia-move-closer/2017/03/25/629713a8-101f-11e7-aa57-2ca1b05c41b8_story.html?utm_term=.d046abdbccf1

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Israeli settler leader: Settlement expansion 'irreversible'**

A prominent Israeli settler leader has said the the number of Israelis living in the occupied West Bank has soared to about half a million people in the past five years.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/03/27/515733/Israel-West-Bank>

- **Jews Protest AIPAC Conference, Slam Support for Israel**

Protesters gathered under the banner, “Jews won’t be free until Palestinians are, reject AIPAC, reject occupation.”

More details:

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Jews-Protest-AIPAC-Conference-Slam-Support-for-Israel-20170326-0028.html>

- **Red tape delays Ethiopian migration to Israel**

Jewish Agency says they're 'ready to receive' Ethiopian immigrants but haven't received names of candidates from government.

More details:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/227326>

- **Israel and Turkey important to Silk Road’s Mideast segment**

Last week China welcomed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the heels of Saudi King Salman’s visit. Both visits highlighted closer economic cooperation, but Beijing also weighed in on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

More details:

<http://www.atimes.com/israel-turkey-chinas-mideast-segment-silk-road/>

- **Hamas Faces Dilemma after Accusing Israel of Killing Top Militant in Gaza**

The assassination of Hamas military leader Mazen Fuqaha in the Gaza Strip on Friday poses a dilemma to the organization with regard to the nature and magnitude of its response. Hamas’

military wing, Iz al-Din al-Qassam, as well as political leaders of the group, have pledged to respond and pointed an accusing finger at Israel.

read more: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.779443>

More details:

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.779443>

- **Army Abducts Two Guards of Al-Aqsa Mosque In Jerusalem, One Palestinian Near Jenin**

Israeli soldiers invaded, On Monday morning, the courtyards of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, in occupied East Jerusalem, and abducted two local guards after they prevented the soldiers from confiscating some of its ancient stones to send them to an Israeli archeologist. The soldiers also abducted one Palestinian, near Jenin, in the northern part of the occupied West Bank.

More details:

<http://imemc.org/article/army-abducts-two-guards-of-al-aqsa-mosque-in-jerusalem-one-palestinian-near-jenin/>

- **Iran imposes sanctions on 15 US firms allegedly for supporting Israel's occupation of Palestine**

The order bans these companies from signing any deals with Iranian firms and bars former and current directors from getting visas.

More details:

<https://scroll.in/latest/832909/iran-imposes-sanctions-on-15-us-firms-allegedly-for-supporting-israels-occupation-of-palestine>

- **Abbas to meet Putin in Moscow in May**

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas is set to fly to Moscow in May to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, after his expected meeting with US President Donald Trump in Washington in April.

More details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/abbas-to-meet-putin-in-moscow-in-may/>

- **Gaza security forces ease restrictions at Erez crossing amid manhunt**

After the Hamas-run Ministry of Interior closed off all of the Gaza Strip's land and sea borders Sunday and imposed a fierce security crackdown across the besieged coastal enclave, the ministry has

announced that certain cases would be permitted to exit through the Palestinian side of the Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing, the only land crossing for people between Gaza and Israel.

More details:

<http://www.maannnews.com/Content.aspx?ID=776132>

- **Syrian regime threatens to attack Israel with Scud missiles**

The regime of President Bashar al-Assad in Syria has threatened to fire Scud missiles at Israel. Syria sent messages to Israel via Russia that any further strikes by the Israeli military within Syria's borders will be met with Scud missiles attacks on the Jewish state.

More details:

<http://aranews.net/2017/03/syrian-regime-threatens-attack-israel-scud-missiles/>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Sudan's Bashir 'to attend Arab League summit in Jordan' despite arrest warrant**

President Omar al-Bashir will attend an Arab League summit in Amman this week, Sudan's foreign minister said Sunday, despite a top rights group urging Jordan to deny him entry.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/03/27/515749/Sudan-Omar-alBashir-ICC-Arab-League>

- **Aoun Travels to Amman Tuesday for Arab Summit**

President Michel Aoun will head a delegation to Jordan on Tuesday to partake in the 28th Arab League summit which will be held in Amman, and to hold talks with several Arab leaders, media reports said on Monday.

More details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/227570-aoun-travels-to-amman-tuesday-for-arab-summit>

- **Russia looks forward to Arab summit settling Syria crisis**

The Russian leaders pin hopes on the Arab summit, to be hosted by Jordan on March 29, to reach a political settlement to the conflict in Syria, political observers believe. A senior delegation, led by the Special Representative of the Russian President for the Middle East and Africa and Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov, will attend the summit.

More details:

<http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2598314&Language=en>

- **King Abdallah to depart for US days after Arab Summit**

Topics leading the agenda in King Abdallah's meeting with Trump will include the Palestinian issue and Arab counterterrorism efforts, Jordan's Minister for Media Affairs and Communications Mohammed Momani said Sunday.

More details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1074656/middle-east>

- **Ministry of Energy organises reading session for students at UAE-Jordanian Mrajeeb Al Fhood Refugee Camp**

The Ministry of Energy, in co-operation with the Red Crescent, has organised a reading session for students from the UAE-Jordanian Mrajeeb Al Fhood Camp for Syrian refugees, as part of its efforts to contribute to strengthening the Arabic language and establishing a universal love for reading.

More details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302605281>

- **Report: Lebanon's Electricity File on Front Burner**

The cabinet will convene on Monday to address Lebanon's 2017 draft budget plan, amid reports that it will also dwell on the electricity file following a new project presented by Energy Minister Cesar Abi Khalil, the pan-Arab al-Hayat daily reported.

More details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/227571-report-lebanon-s-electricity-file-on-front-burner>

- **Hezbollah: Israel behind Assassination of Palestinian Commander**

The Lebanese Hezbollah Resistance Movement condemned the assassination of Hamas military commander Mazen Fuqaha in the southern part of Gaza City, saying the Israeli regime has clearly had a hand in the "sinful crime".

More details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/03/26/1364352/hezbollah-israel-behind-assassination-of-palestinian-commander>

- **Brazilian meat scandal: Lebanon says it is free of rotten meat**

The Agriculture Ministry said Friday that Lebanon hadn't received any contaminated Brazilian meat and has banned imports from the institutions involved in the meat scandal.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/brazilian-meat-scandal-lebanon-says-it-free-rotten-meat-954946>

- **Minister Hamadeh : PSP won't accept to be marginalized**

The Progressive Socialist Party on Sunday declared that it is "open" to all electoral law formats while stressing that it will not accept to be "marginalized."

More details:

<http://yalibnan.com/2017/03/27/minister-hamadeh-psp-wont-accept-to-be-marginalized/>

- **Israel maritime demarcation war declaration: Lebanon**

Parliament speaker says planned bill by Israel on disputed coastal waters is new attack on Lebanon's sovereignty.

More details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israel-maritime-demarcation-war-declaration-lebanon/778438>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Symtech Solar MENA to assist in harvesting clean energy in Oman**

A newly established company Symtech Solar MENA has been appointed as the exclusive distributor and installer for Symtech Solar Group in Oman and the MENA region. Symtech Solar MENA will support and install the complete range of Symtech Solar PV systems from their Ghalah industrial estate base, according to a press release.

More Details

<http://www.muscatdaily.com/Archive/Business/Symtech-Solar-MENA-to-assist-in-harvesting-clean-energy-in-Oman-4zgg#ixzz4cVICwbOs>

- **Dubai Industrial Park emphasizes sustainable Industrial Development as key tool for Enhanced competitiveness at GMIS 2017**

Dubai Industrial Park, the dedicated industrial hub within Dubai Wholesale City and member of TECOM Group, is set to mark its participation in the Global Manufacturing and Industrialisation Summit(GMIS), during which senior representatives will shed light on the fundamental challenges in the region's manufacturing sector.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/pr/dubai-industrial-park-emphasizes-sustainable-industrial-development-key-tool-enhanced-co>

- **Cuba invites more tourists from Qatar**

Tourism is a key area Cuba is seeking to promote in Qatar and attract more visitors soon, says Eumelio Caballero Rodriguez, Cuban ambassador. Cuba seeks to welcome more visitors from here as the Cuban tourism sector is growing fast and it has fascinating attractions to offer for tourists.

More Details

<http://thepeninsulagatar.com/article/27/03/2017/Cuba-invites-more-tourists-from-Qatar>

- **Oxfam adviser tells RT famine is 'the real enemy' in Yemen**

Millions of people in Yemen are being "willfully starved" by both the warring parties on the ground and the foreign backers blocking supplies and aid, an Oxfam adviser told RT, calling on international community to urgently address the dire humanitarian crisis. There are currently 7 million people "on the brink of famine" in Yemen, with the alarming situation being the result "of the fighting and of the bombing," the international humanitarian organization Oxfam's adviser in the Middle East, Richard Stanforth, said in an interview with RT this week.

More Details

<https://www.rt.com/news/382388-yemen-starving-oxfam-famine/>

- **Yemeni forces launch Somoud ballistic missile at Saudi post in Najran**

A military source confirmed that the missile force of the army and the popular committees fired a homemade ballistic missile, named 'Somoud', on the Rajla Saudi camp in Najran, stressing that the missile hit its target with high accuracy.

More Details

http://en.abna24.com/news/middle-east/yemeni-forces-launch-somoud-ballistic-missile-at-saudi-post-in-najran_820208.html

- **Saudis Thinking Beyond Oil in Asia Courtship**

King Salman bin Abdulaziz's trip to Asia has been characterized as either a routine visit to bolster the already strong trading ties between Saudi Arabia and Asia, an effort to diversify ties away from the U.S. or as a way to attract investments into Saudi Arabia and promote its own. The reality is that it's a combination of all the above. Yes, oil is an important part of the story, but not the only part.

More Details

<https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2017-03-27/saudis-thinking-beyond-oil-in-asia-courtship>

- **Saudi and Sudanese air armies stage joint military drills**

Sudanese and Saudi air forces will conduct joint military exercises this week in northern Sudan, Khartoum announced on Sunday. The Sudanese army which has Russian and Chinese military aircrafts is part of the Saudi-led coalition. The latter is equipped with American and British fighters.

More Details

<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article62017>

- **Bahrain breaks Iran-linked “terrorist” cell behind bus attack**

Bahrain said on Sunday it had broken an Iranian-linked “terrorist cell” suspected of involvement in a bomb attack on a police bus in February and plotting to assassinate senior officials, state news agency BNA reported.

More Details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1074756/middle-east>

- **Hefty fines await people who litter in Oman**

Litterbugs can expect an OMR1,000 (\$2,600) fine for throwing trash in the street, the local authority has announced. Oman has also warned that the fine will be doubled for repeat offenders - and that the new rule applies to everyone. Currently, the fine is OMR200 for the first or second violation, and OMR500 for repeat offenders.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/hefty-fines-await-people-who-litter-oman-955118>

7. EGYPT

- **Mubarak's release draws mixed reactions in Egypt**

On March 24, former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was freed from detention after he was cleared earlier this month of the charge of ordering the killing of hundreds of protesters during the 2011 mass uprising that toppled him. He discreetly left the military hospital in southern Cairo where he had been under house arrest for the last six years to return to his home in the upscale Cairo district of Heliopolis.

More Details

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/egypt-mubarak-release-mixed-reactions-ahmed-douma.html#ixzz4cVMn2F1n>

- **Mubarak cleared of murder**

Hosni Mubarak, overthrown as president of Egypt in 2011 and the first leader to go on trial in the wake of the Arab Spring, will walk free this week for the first time in six years. The 88-year-old was cleared of murder charges this month in his final court appearance, having stood trial on charges ranging from corruption to ordering the killing of some of the protesters who ended his 30-year rule.

More Details

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=394384>

- **Sisi meets WJC leader**

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi on Sunday met the head of the World Jewish Congress, Ronald Lauder, in Cairo. Presidential spokesman Alaa Youssef said, according to the Al-Ahram newspaper, that the meeting reflects Egypt's keenness on communicating with all parts of American society on boosting bilateral understanding of the current challenges faced by the region.

More Details

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/227325>

- **Egypt to allocate 1pct of GDP for social protection programmes in 2017/18: Minister**

Egypt's finance ministry plans to allocate a part of the savings made from the government's ongoing economic reform plan to support social protection programmes, Minister of Finance Amr El-Garhy announced Sunday.

More Details

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/12/261679/-.aspx>

- **Egypt Stresses Iran's Important Role in Region**

"We are well-aware of Iran's significance and influence in the region," the Arabic-language media quoted Abu Zeid as saying. The Egyptian foreign ministry spokesman reiterated that as a big and vast regional nation, Iran remains to be an influential country.

More Details

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960106000357>

- **Head of Egyptian lawyers syndicate attempts to defuse standoff with judiciary**

The head of Egypt's lawyers syndicate Sameh Ashour has denied the existence of a crisis between the union's lawyers and the judicial authority, saying that the one-day strike from criminal courts held last week was a decision made during the general meeting of the main union and its branches.

More Details

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/261656/-.aspx>

- **Chinese company to establish fibre-optic plant at technological park: Al-Qadi**

A Chinese company has submitted a proposal to establish a fibre optic manufacturing factory at one of the technological parks, Minister of Communication and Information Technology Yasser Al-Qadi told Daily News Egypt.

More Details

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/03/26/chinese-company-establish-fibre-optic-plant-technological-park-al-qadi/>

- **Foreign direct investment in Egypt adds up to \$6.8 bln for last fiscal year: Sahar Nasr**

Egypt's Investment and International Cooperation minister Sahar Nasr said that net foreign direct investment in Egypt during the fiscal year 2015-2016 amounted to \$6.8 billion, compared to \$6.4 billion in the fiscal year 2014-2015, due to the increase in the net inflow of incoming investments to establish companies and increase in company capital, which amounted to \$4.5 billion dollars.

More Details

<http://www.egyptindependent.com//news/foreign-direct-investment-egypt-adds-68-bln-last-fiscal-year-sahar-nasr>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Algerian forces kill terror group chief in eastern province**

Chief of the terrorist group Daesh in Algeria was killed on Saturday overnight by Algerian counterterrorism forces in the eastern province of Constantine, local media reported on Sunday.

More Details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/26/c_136159292.htm

- **Algerian-Congolese High Joint Commission, an intergovernmental instrument to be preserved**

The Algerian-Congolese High Joint Commission is an "intergovernmental instrument that should be preserved" in order to build strong partnership between the two countries, said Sunday in Algiers Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Ramtane Lamamra.

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/17461-algerian-congolese-high-joint-commission,-an-intergovernmental-instrument-to-be-preserved>

- **Algeria joins call to roll over oil cuts beyond June**

Algeria's energy minister supports extending global oil production cuts beyond June as he thinks the strategy is succeeding in reducing global inventories. Russia is moving ahead with its own reductions to curb a global glut.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.com/business/sectors/energy/algeria-joins-call-to-roll-over-oil-cuts-beyond-june-1.2000435>

- **Morocco PM agrees to join five parties**

Morocco's Prime Minister Saad Eddine El Othmani said on Saturday he had agreed to form a coalition government with five other parties, breaking nearly six months of post-election deadlock.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/31824f41-195a-4b14-af97-b479cbf747e6.aspx>

- **PM Saad Eddine el-Othmani forms six-party government**

Morocco's new Prime Minister Saad Eddine el-Othmani has succeeded in building a governing coalition, ending a five-month political deadlock after only eight days in office.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/pm-saad-eddine-el-othmani-forms-party-government-170326072501082.html>

- **A regional time bomb**

More than six years ago, the Arab spring began in a provincial town in Tunisia and quickly spread to the entire Arab world. Millions of people took to the streets to protest against injustice, despotism and corruption. Europe applauded and hopes were high for a democratic transformation. Today, however, Tunisia is the only Arab country that managed to not only overthrow a dictatorship, but replaced it with an operational democracy.

More Details:

<https://en.qantara.de/content/the-maghreb-a-regional-time-bomb>

- **Presidency Council strips oil ministry of powers**

The oil ministry in Tripoli has been rendered largely redundant by a Presidency Council (PC) decree that shares out the majority of its powers between the itself and the National Oil Corporation (NOC).

More details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/03/26/presidency-council-strips-oil-ministry-of-powers/>

- **Libyan tribes and women delegation urges UN to take disinterested approach to Libya's crisis**

A delegation of Libyan tribal leaders and women leaders has called on the UN to take a balanced approach to the Libyan peace process, Inter Press Service reported.

More Details:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/libyan-tribes-and-women-delegation-urges-un-to-take-disinterested-approach-to-libyas-crisis/>

- **Experts call for greater Arab efforts in Libyan matter**

Experts and in the Libyan matter have called on the Arab League to exert greater efforts to end the conflict and political tension in Libya.

More Details:

<http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2598152&Language=en>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Pakistan says starts fencing Afghanistan border in "high-threat zones"**

Pakistan has begun building a fence on its disputed 2,500 km (1,500 mile) border with Afghanistan to prevent incursions by militants, Pakistan's army chief said, in a move likely to further strain relations between the two countries.

More Details:

<http://www.nasdaq.com/article/pakistan-says-starts-fencing-afghanistan-border-in-high-threat-zones-20170327-00075>

- **Top Afghan security officials summoned by parliament over security deterioration**

Top Afghan security officials have been summoned by the lawmakers in the Lower House of the Parliament, Wolesi Jirga, over deteriorating security situation of the country.

More Details:

<http://www.khaama.com/top-afghan-security-officials-summoned-by-parliament-over-security-deterioration-02445>

- **Afghan police defuse car bomb in eastern province**

The Afghan National Police personnel defused a car bomb in the country's eastern province of Wardak, the Interior Ministry said on Monday.

More Details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/27/c_136161100.htm

- **Ghani, British Foreign Minister Discuss Regional Security**

President Ashraf Ghani in a telephonic conversation with Britain's Foreign Minister Boris Johnson on Sunday discussed terrorism, security and other mutual interest issues, the Presidential Palace said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/ghani-british-foreign-minister-discuss-regional-security>

- **India all set to host maritime meet with Pakistan**

India is ready to host a meeting of the Indian Coast Guard officials and Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) in April, theTimes of India (TOI) reported on Monday.

More Details:

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1366622/india-set-host-maritime-meet-pakistan/>

- **Finance minister wants new sector for overseas Pakistanis**

Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar has directed the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to open new sectors, particularly one exclusively for overseas Pakistanis.

More Details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1323075/finance-minister-wants-new-sector-for-overseas-pakistanis>

- **Building a China-Pakistan 'cultural corridor'**

Much debate has swirled around the pros and cons of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) being launched in Pakistan. Its economic potential is discussed at length and it is considered a "game changer." The net result of regional connectivity is invoked that would ultimately benefit the entire region.

More Details:

http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2017-03/27/content_40503967.htm

- **Pakistan-Afghanistan dialogue to start in Islamabad Monday**

Pakistani and Afghan lawmakers, former officials, members of civil society and media will hold a three-day dialogue here from Monday to explore ways to bring ties closer, organizers said on Sunday.

More Details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/26/c_136159285.htm

- **Taliban Suffered Casualties in Laghman Conflicts**

Mehtarlam (BNA) Heavy losses suffered to Taliban in special clearing operations in Laghman province. The operations carried out on strongholds of Taliban in Alishing and Alinegar districts and surrounding of Mehtarlam city.

More Details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/security/item/28020-taliban-suffered-casualties-in-laghman-conflicts.html>

- **Pakistan to participate in Moscow conference on Afghanistan**

Pakistan will participate in a conference to be held over Afghanistan in Moscow, the country's Foreign Office confirmed to media.

More Details:

<http://thekabultimes.gov.af/index.php/newsnational/13414-pakistan-to-participate-in-moscow-conference-on-afghanistan.html>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **41 PKK terrorists killed in Turkey, northern Iraq**

A total of 41 PKK terrorists were killed in separate operations in Turkey and northern Iraq, according to official sources on Sunday. At least 14 terrorists were killed in an air-backed operation by gendarmerie forces in Turkey's eastern Tunceli province early Sunday, the governor's office said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/turkey/41-pkk-terrorists-killed-in-turkey-northern-iraq/780089>

- **Turkey and Pakistan's speakers discuss 15 July, stress 'close bonds'**

Turkish Parliament Speaker, Ismail Kahraman, met with his Pakistani counterpart, Serdar Ayaz, in Ankara Monday and both men stressed the "close bonds" between the two "friendly countries." Kahraman stressed that "both the states and the nations" of Pakistan and Turkey were friends.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2017/03/27/turkey-and-pakistans-speakers-discuss-15-july-stress-close-bonds>

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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