



# MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

## GÜNLÜK ORTADOĞU BÜLTENİ

**Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries**

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

**The Restructuring Proces of Iraq**

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

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## 1. IRAQ

- **Erdogan, Barzani Tackle Combating Terrorism, Economic Issues**

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan received on Sunday head of Iraq's Kurdish region Masoud Barzani, who is on a visit to Istanbul. At the entrance of the welcoming lounge at Ataturk International Airport in Istanbul, it was surprising to see the Kurdistan Region flag fly near the Turkish flag when a team from the Turkish Foreign ministry was receiving the Iraqi leader.

More Details

<http://english.aawsat.com/2017/02/article55368234/erdogan-barzani-tackle-combating-terrorism-economic-issues>

- **Diplomat says military presence in Iraq unacceptable without authorities' permission**

Any military presence in Iraq is unacceptable if not agreed on with the country's authorities, Russian Special Presidential Envoy for the Middle East and Africa, Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov said on Monday at the Sixth Conference of the Valdai Discussion Forum's Middle East Dialogue.

More Details

<http://tass.com/politics/932863>

- **ABB bags Iraq contract**

Industrial technology firm ABB has inked a letter of intent with the Iraqi Ministry of Electricity, a statement released by the office of Prime Minister Haider al Abadi on Sunday said.

More Details

<http://www.theoilandgasyear.com/news/abb-bags-iraq-contract/>

- **Iraqi Troops Press Offensive in Western Mosul, Seize 2 Neighborhoods**

Iraqi forces on Sunday pushed deeper into western Mosul, capturing two more city neighborhoods from Islamic State extremists as thousands of locals continued to flee toward government controlled sectors of the embattled city.

More Details

<http://www.voanews.com/a/iraqi-forces-mosul/3740495.html>



- **Iraqi forces retake the strategic al-Tayaran district in West Mosul**

Iraqi government forces recaptured on Monday the strategic Tayaran district in western Mosul from Islamic State militants, the Iraqi Joint Operations Command said. Lt. Gen. Abdul-Amir Yarallah, commander of the Nineveh Operations, said the forces totally recaptured the district and raised the Iraqi flag above its buildings.

More Details

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/islamic-state-set-fire-civilians-homes-western-mosul-district/>

- **Mosul: 'Scared, tired, hungry' civilians flee Iraqi city, caught in Islamic State crossfire**

Thousands of civilians have fled western Mosul as Iraqi forces continue to push back Islamic State militants. The United Nations (UN) is building a camp just south of the city to absorb the increasing flow of people suddenly without homes.

More Details

<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/2017-02-27/mosul-scared-tired-hungry-civilians-flee-iraqi-city-caught-in-islamic-state-crossfire/1654140>

- **Iraqi forces advance deeper into west Mosul as thousands flee to government controlled areas**

Iraqi forces backed by the US-led coalition advanced deeper into western Mosul on Sunday, (26 February) to gain control of a bridge across the Tigris River that links the eastern bank of Mosul to the western side. Colonel Falah al-Wabdan of the Rapid Response, an elite unit of the interior ministry, said: "The bridge is very important. The bridge is about 400 metres away. By the end of the day you will hear that our forces have arrived (there)."

More Details

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/iraqi-forces-advance-deeper-into-west-mosul-thousands-flee-government-controlled-areas-1608694>

- **Iraq forces in west Mosul aim for key bridge**

Iraqi forces battled militants in west Mosul on Sunday, aiming to build a floating bridge across the Tigris to establish an important supply route linked to the recaptured east bank. A week into a major push on the western side of the city, where an estimated 2,000 holdout militants and 750,000 civilians are trapped, government forces made steady progress.

More Details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1060406/middle-east>

- **Largest mass grave with bodies of 4,000 people found in Iraq**

A mass grave believed to contain the bodies of thousands of Iraqi security personnel killed at the hands of the Daesh Takfiri militants has been discovered not far from the strategic northern city of Mosul, where government forces and their allies are engaged in the last phase of an operation to drive the extremists out of their last major stronghold in the country.

More Details

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/02/26/512209/Iraq-mass-grave-Khafsa-sinkhole-Mosul-execution-killing-Daesh-militants>

- **Kurdistan offers land for independence in struggle to reshape Iraq**

Iraq's Kurdistan region,— Iraqi Kurdish leaders are considering offering territory seized by their forces in the offensive to recapture Mosul from Isis as a bargaining chip in a new push for independence from Baghdad.

More Details

<http://ekurd.net/kurdistan-offer-land-iraq-2017-02-26>

- **Iraq says it signs \$500 mln electricity deal with ABB**

Iraq signed a \$500 million agreement with ABB to implement energy projects, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi's office said in a statement on Sunday. "An electricity agreement was signed between the government of Iraq and the Swedish company ABB for the implementation of energy transmission for ... the Ministry of Electricity," Abadi's office said, valuing the contract at \$500 million.

More Details

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/iraq-electricity-idUKL5N1GB0CT?rpc=401&>

- **Shifa Gardi: Tributes paid to reporter killed in Mosul**

Politicians, journalists and members of the public have joined together in mourning after news of the death of Shifa Gardi, the Iraqi Kurdish TV journalist killed in a roadside bomb blast while covering clashes between Iraqi forces and ISIL in Mosul. Rudaw, Gardi's employer, on Sunday posted images showing the 30-year-old journalist's burial place in Erbil, praising her as someone "who cracked the glass ceiling" with her coverage of the operation against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

More Details

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/02/shifa-gardi-tributes-flow-reporter-killed-mosul-170226074612565.html>

- **Iraq: Commander of ISIL Special Forces Killed near Tel Afar**

A commander of Hashd al-Shaabi, Sami Masoudi, said the elimination of the militant commander has caused a significant damage to the group in the strategic town of Tel Afar, West of Mosul, and his unit is now experiencing a bitter defeat, Basnews reported. However, the official did not reveal the name of the ISIL commander.

More Details

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951208000325>

- **Iraq to Continue Fighting Daesh in Neighboring Countries – Foreign Minister**

On Friday, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Abadi announced he had authorized the Iraqi Air Force to conduct strikes against Daesh in Syria's Deir ez-Zor province.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201702271051072396-iraq-daesh-fm-fight/>

- **Iraqi forces recapture Josaq district, kill IS emir en route to central Mosul**

Iraqi government forces regained control Monday over another district in western Mosul, killing a senior leader as it advances to the center of the city.

More Details

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/iraqi-forces-recapture-josaq-district-kill-emir-en-route-central-mosul/>

- **Sadoun: Discussions between The Political Blocs Continuing To Pass The Federal Court Act**

Chairman of the Parliamentary Legal Committee Muhsin al-Sadoun confirmed the continuation of discussions between the political blocs to pass the Federal Court Act. "

More Details

[http://www.ninanews.com/News\\_Details.aspx?NuJg2cevlVKpA04wvTWCHw%253d%253d](http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?NuJg2cevlVKpA04wvTWCHw%253d%253d)



- **IS Burning Civilian Houses to Block Iraqi Forces' Advancement**

The Islamic State (IS) militants are burning neighborhoods in Mosul upon retreating from them, in an attempt to block the advancement of the Iraqi security forces. A senior officer in the Iraqi army, said the IS militants have spread civilians' cars across west Mosul neighbourhoods and burned dozens of houses belonging to the resident who have escaped to the city center, in an attempt to prevent the advance of the Iraqi ground troops, London-based al-Hayat newspaper reported on Monday.

More Details

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/333105>

- **John Kerry praises 'friendship, bravery' of Kurds in farewell letter**

In a farewell letter to the President of the Kurdistan Region Masoud Barzani, the former US Secretary of State praised the Kurds' peaceful role in the Middle East. John Kerry, the former US Secretary of State, thanked President Barzani for his friendship, in a letter dated Jan. 19, 2017, disclosed by the Kurdistan Region Presidency (KRP) on Sunday. "You have been a strong ally and a stalwart friend through these difficult years," Kerry wrote to the Kurdish leader. Additionally, Kerry mentioned the role of the Kurdish Peshmerga forces in the fight against the Islamic State (IS). "Peshmerga forces have performed bravely, and I honor their sacrifices and those of the people of the Kurdistan Region in the ongoing fight to defeat [IS]," he continued.

More Details

[http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En\\_NewsReader/ffb4cce7-6379-4fdc-9cd7-f4940ba7cb57/John-Kerry-praises-%E2%80%98friendship--bravery%E2%80%99-of-Kurds-in-farewell-letter](http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/ffb4cce7-6379-4fdc-9cd7-f4940ba7cb57/John-Kerry-praises-%E2%80%98friendship--bravery%E2%80%99-of-Kurds-in-farewell-letter)

## 2. SYRIA

- **Syria: Dozens Killed in Attacks Targeting Regime Security Offices in Homs**

In a large-impact offensive, the Syrian rebel group Tahrir al-Sham managed accesses to the regime-held Homs security bastion in an attack that led to the death and injury of many. A top security commander was reportedly killed in the attack.

More Details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/2017/02/article55368184/syria-dozens-killed-attacks-targeting-regime-security-offices-homs>

- **Militants in More Regions Join Peace Agreement with Syrian Army**

The Russian Reconciliation Center for Syria announced in its latest report that militants in more regions laid down arms and joined peace with the Damascus government in the last 24 hours.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951209000735>

- **Putin: Syria talks in Astana help revive Geneva Conference**

Talks on consolidating the Syrian ceasefire, recently held in Kazakhstan, have helped jumpstart the United Nations-led peace negotiations in Geneva, Russian President, Vladimir Putin, said on Monday.

More Details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302599916>

- **Russian diplomat believes Kurds need to join intra-Syrian talks in Geneva**

Moscow believes it necessary to engage the Kurds in the intra-Syrian talks in Geneva, Russian Special Presidential Envoy for the Middle East and Africa, Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov told reporters on Monday.

More Details:

<http://tass.com/politics/932831>

- **Warplanes bomb rebel-held areas around several Syrian cities**

Air strikes have been carried out on rebel-held areas across Syria. In the Damascus suburb of Douma video was posted on line purporting to show the aftermath of a napalm attack.

More Details:

[http://www.euronews.com/2017/02/26/warplanes-bomb-rebel-held-areas-around-several-syrian-cities?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+euronews%2Fen%2Fnews+%28euronews+-+news+-+en%29](http://www.euronews.com/2017/02/26/warplanes-bomb-rebel-held-areas-around-several-syrian-cities?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+euronews%2Fen%2Fnews+%28euronews+-+news+-+en%29)

- **Iran Supports Diplomatic Efforts to Solve Syrian Crisis**

Iran has reiterated its willingness to continue diplomatic efforts to solve the crisis in Syria and put an end to the armed siege on the towns of Al-Fuah and Kafriya, while it condemned the double terrorist attack in Homs.

More Details:

<http://www.plenglish.com/index.php?o=rn&id=9814&SEO=iran-supports-diplomatic-efforts-to-solve-syrian-crisis>

- **Syrian army captures key town from IS in northern countryside of Aleppo**

Syrian army captured a key town in northern countryside of Aleppo province on Sunday, following battles with Islamic State (IS) group, according to state news agency SANA.

More Details:

<http://english.cctv.com/2017/02/27/ART1bCKltC1H2JDHrLuEP0FB170227.shtml>

- **Russia Delivers Over 6 Tonnes of Aid to Syria**

The Russian military has delivered over six tonnes of humanitarian cargo to nearly 4,000 Syrians over the past 24 hours, the Russian Defense Ministry said Monday.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201702271051064132-russia-mod-delivers-syria-aid/>

- **Working groups on Constitution and elections in Syria proposed to be created at negotiations in Geneva**

Working groups on Constitution and elections in Syria have been proposed to be created at the negotiations in Geneva, report the Russian mass media sources. "Steffan de Mistura, special envoy of UN secretary general has presented a document to the negotiating delegations in Geneva which proposed to create work groups on the Constitution, elections and transiting power in Syria," reads the message with a reference to Yahya al-Aridi, advisor of High committee on negotiations of opposition.

More Details:

<http://www.kaztag.kz/en/news/detail.php?ID=526210>

- **Readdressing the creation of buffer zones in Syria**

Now that the door has opened (al-Bab means door in Arabic), the Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army (FSA) can proceed to Raqqa. U.S. administration officials have received Turkey's proposals and are in close contact with Syria's ally Russia. It appears there will soon be a solution to the Raqqa question. This is of course an urgent goal, but there is now another important thing that the cleansing of al - Bab presents the people of Syria: a safe haven in northern Syria. The Turkish-supported FSA has full control of the area west of the Euphrates. According to Turkish officials, there is enough land secured there by the Turkish forces and the FSA for the establishment of a sizable safe zone.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/columns/hakki-ocal/2017/02/27/readdressing-the-creation-of-buffer-zones-in-syria>

### 3. IRAN

- **Palestinian Official: 'I Pray to Allah that Iran will Produce 1,000 Nuclear Bombs'**

The Times of Israel reports: The Palestine Liberation Organization's envoy to Tehran said he hopes Iran will produce 1,000 nuclear bombs, adding that Israel is "truly terrified" of the Islamic Republic's nuclear program.

More details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/jerusalem/2017/02/27/palestinian-official-pray-allah-iran-will-produce-1000-nuclear-bombs/>

- **Iran's Top Security Official Dismisses Reports on Meeting Saudi FM**

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani rejected media reports claiming that he has met Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir in Baghdad. "I reject any such report," Shamkhani told FNA reporter in Tehran on Monday.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951209000778>

- **Iran successfully launches latest cruise missile**

Iran's latest developed cruise missile 'Nasir' has been successfully test fired during massive naval drills on Mon., Defense Minister Hossein Dehghan announced today.

More details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/123867/iran-successfully-launches-latest-cruise-missile>

- **Iran Transport Projects Attract \$12b in 2 Years**

Ministry of Roads and Urban Development has signed 13 contracts worth \$12 billion since March 2015 with investors from the Iranian private sector and foreign companies for investment in air, road, marine and rail transportations since March 2015.

More details:

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/domestic-economy/60468/iran-transport-projects-attract-12b-in-2-years>

- **Rouhani's Pakistan visit to open new avenues of cooperation in bilateral ties: Pak diplomat**

A senior Pakistani diplomat strongly believes that the visit of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani to Pakistan to attend the 13th ECO Summit in Islamabad is crucially important and would open new avenues of cooperation between the two friendly states.

More details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82446049/>

- **Iran foreign minister welcomes Oscar win for best foreign film**

Iran's top diplomat has congratulated director Asghar Farhadi for winning the Oscar in the best foreign language category with his film The Salesman. Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Monday the prize is a move against President Donald Trump's executive order barring US entry to citizens from seven majority Muslim countries, including Iran.

More details:

<http://www.thenational.ae/arts-life/oscars/iran-foreign-minister-welcomes-oscar-win-for-best-foreign-film>

- **Iran's President Congratulates Kuwait on National Day**

In a message on Monday, President Rouhani congratulated the Emir of Kuwait and the Kuwaiti government and people on the occasion of Kuwait's National Day and Liberation Day.

More details:

<http://ifpnews.com/news/politics/foreign-policies/2017/02/irans-president-congratulates-kuwait-on-national-day/>

- **Iran holds naval war games amid rising tensions with U.S.**

Iran launched naval drills at the mouth of the Gulf and the Indian Ocean on Sunday, a naval commander said, as tensions with the United States escalated after U.S President Donald Trump put Tehran "on notice".

More details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-navy-wargames-idUSKBN165094>



- **Rouhani to run in May presidential election**

A senior official has said that President Hassan Rouhani has decided to run in the May presidential polls.

More details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/411477/Rouhani-to-run-in-May-presidential-election>

- **Iran strongly slams terror attacks in Syria's Homs**

Iran has strongly condemned the terrorist attacks in Syria's Homs on Feb. 25 where Jabhat al-Nusra's Takfiri terrorists killed at least 42 people and injured dozens of others.

More details:

<http://www.iran-daily.com/News/188437.html>

#### 4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Jewish Lobby united with Iranian terrorist group**

Paris-based Iranian terrorist group Mujahideen-e-Khalq (MEK) in cooperation with the Israel Project has succeeded in bribing several prominent pro-Israel political and military personalities to lobby the White House against Iran.

More details:

<http://realiran.org/jewish-lobby-united-with-irans-terrorist-group/>

- **Israel's hateful posts target Palestinian politicians**

When Haneen Zoabi learned that she had been incited against more than anyone else on Israeli social media last year, she was unfazed. "I don't pay any attention. I don't even read these messages. I let my assistants handle it," she told Al Jazeera.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/02/israel-hateful-posts-target-palestinian-politicians-170222111446139.html>

- **Israeli Minister Reveals Technology to 'Assassinate Nasrallah'**

An Israeli minister said that the Israeli army will soon possess a new robot technology that can assassinate Hizbullah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and Hamas leaders, an Israeli news report said.

More details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/226096-report-israeli-minister-reveals-robot-technology-to-assassinate-nasrallah>

- **Ya'alon: Operation Brother's Keeper led to Gaza escalation in 2014**

The former defense minister believes it was the arrest of about 50 released prisoners from the Shalit deal, along with hundreds of other Palestinians in the West Bank, which caused Hamas to quickly accelerate the situation, leading to Operation Protective Edge.

More details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4928072,00.html>

- **Hamas rejects Netanyahu's proposal**

Islamic Hamas movement rejected on Sunday Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's proposal to send international forces to the Gaza Strip, the coastal enclave that Hamas has been ruling since 2007.

More details:

[http://www.china.org.cn/world/2017-02/27/content\\_40365484.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/world/2017-02/27/content_40365484.htm)

- **Netanyahu Returns to Israel amid Legal, Political Turmoil**

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will find a series of legal and political challenges on his return from Australia and Singapore.

More details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Benjamin-Netanyahu/Netanyahu-returns-Israel-and-legal-political-turmoil-482674>

- **Gaza rocket lands in southern Israel, no injuries**

The Israeli army said that a rocket fired from the besieged Gaza Strip landed in an open area in southern Israel on Monday morning, reporting no injuries or damages as a result of the incident.

More details:

<http://www.maannnews.com/Content.aspx?ID=775679>

- **Palestinian Authority President to Address UN Human Rights Council**

Abbas's speech, which is expected to focus on Palestinian statehood, terrorism and instability in the Middle East, marks only the second time he has addressed the UNHRC during its high level portion.

More details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Palestinian-Authority-President-to-address-UN-Human-Rights-Council-482682>

- **Qalandiya refugee camp activists continue protest measures against PA**

Palestinian activists from Qalandiya refugee camp in the central occupied West Bank closed al-Quds Ramallah Street and all entrances of the camp that lead to Jerusalem for the second consecutive day Monday morning, aiming to pressure the Palestinian Authority (PA) to help secure the release of two residents of the camp held in Israeli prison without trial or charge for more than a year.

More details:

<http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?ID=775684>

- **Israeli excavations destroying al-Aqsa Mosque: Palestinian minister**

Palestine's Minister of Religious Affairs Sheikh Yousif Ideis has warned that Israel is attempting to destroy the al-Aqsa Mosque in East Jerusalem al-Quds.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/02/27/512219/israel-palestine-excavations-aqsa-destroy>

## 5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Jordan PM confirms a strong dinar and soundness of economy**

Jordanian Prime Minister Hanu Muli said Sunday the Jordanian dinar is strong and the situation is reassuring, the state-run Petra news agency reported.

More details:

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-02/27/c\\_136086634.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-02/27/c_136086634.htm)

- **Jordan presses forward with administrative reform, economic incentives**

The Jordanian government is carrying on with its administrative reforms and has launched a set of economic incentives to boost the economy's performance, Government Spokesperson Mohammad Momani said on Sunday.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/jordan-economy-budget-deficit-administrative-reform%2C-economic-incentives-942980>

- **Momani: Jordan supports Arab accord, joint Arab action**

State Minister for Media Affairs, Mohammad Momani, said Jordan has taken the lead in advancing joint Arab cooperation. Referring to an Arab Summit Jordan will host next month, Momani said it is an opportunity for Arab leaders to discuss the huge challenges threatening pan-arab security. The minister told a press conference that Jordan has maintained close ties with all Arab countries, and can host such an important event.

More detail:

[http://www.petra.gov.jo/Public\\_News/Nws\\_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site\\_id=1&NewsID=291001&CatID=13](http://www.petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=291001&CatID=13)

- **Jordan revises temporary passport fees for Gazans**

Jordanian Interior Minister Ghaleb Zu'bi on Thursday said the government has decided to lower the renewal fees of the two-year passports for Gazans from JD200 to JD100 and the five-year passports to JD200, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/jordan-revises-temporary-passport-fees-gazans-942422>

- **Moukhaiber for activating Lebanese Diaspora's participation in elections**

MP Ghassan Moukhaiber called, on Sunday, for "activating and facilitating the Lebanese Diaspora's participation in the upcoming parliamentary elections, in order to allow for expatriates' representation within Parliament."

More details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/75823/Moukhaiber-for-activating-Lebanese-Diaspora-39-participation-in-elections>

- **Lebanon's oil and gas tenders proceed despite disputed offshore blocks**

The Lebanese government is set to continue the first round of oil and gas tenders and award the contracts to the winning companies based on transparent standards, said a report, citing a senior minister.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/lebanons-oil-and-gas-tenders-proceed-despite-disputed-offshore-blocks-942600>

- **'Canada committed to providing JD118m in aid to Jordan over 3 years'**

Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Imad Fakhoury holds talks with Canada's Minister for International Cooperation and la Francophonie Marie-Claude Bibeau in Amman on Sunday.

More details:

<https://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/canada-committed-providing-jd118m-aid-jordan-over-3-years%E2%80%99>

- **Jordan keen to step up economic ties with Canada**

Jordan's minister of planning and international cooperation, Imad Fakhoury, on Sunday called on Canadian companies to invest in Jordan's projects.

More details:

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-02/26/c\\_136086454.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-02/26/c_136086454.htm)

- **Ain al-Hilweh calm amid calls on Lebanese Army to settle situation**

Relative calm prevailed in Ain al-Hilweh Monday amid calls on the Lebanese Army to put an end to the security chaos following three days of clashes between Fatah members and Islamists.

More details:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2017/Feb-27/395295-ain-al-hilweh-calm-amid-calls-on-lebanese-army-to-settle-situation.ashx>

- **We Want Accountability to field candidate at elections**

The "We Want Accountability" civil society movement said Sunday it plans to field its own candidate in the parliamentary elections scheduled for later this year.



More details:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2017/Feb-27/395262-we-want-accountability-to-field-candidate-at-elections.ashx>

## 6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Tax evasion can lead to hefty fine, jail term under new Omani law**

Dodging taxes can lead to a jail term of up to three years and a maximum fine of OMR50,000 under tax law amendments published by the Ministry of Finance, as government begins its crack down on evaders.

More Details

<http://timesofoman.com/article/103729/Oman/Tax-evasion-can-lead-to-hefty-fine-jail-term-under-new-Omani-law>

- **UAE paper hails 'We Are All Police' initiative by Abu Dhabi Police**

The huge public response to the We Are All Police initiative by Abu Dhabi Police reflects a sense of responsibility within the community, a UAE local daily has commented. In an editorial on Monday, The National said, "A thousand members of the public have already completed training and will soon start to assist full-time police officers in the streets and at major public events, and another 5,000 applicants will be processed.

More Details

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302599896>

- **Four Bahraini police injured in bomb attack**

Four Bahraini policemen were wounded in a bomb attack on Sunday near the village of Jaw, south of the capital Manama, the interior ministry said. "Terrorist blast in police bus near Jua village. Four policemen injured and they are in a stable condition. Necessary steps are being taken," the ministry said on its Twitter account.

More Details

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/four-bahraini-police-wounded-bomb-attack-amid-unrest-309049013>

- **Indian navy chief Admiral Lanba to visit Oman from Wednesday**

Admiral Sunil Lanba, Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS), Indian Navy is visiting UAE and Oman from February 26 to March 2 to consolidate naval relations and explore new avenues for cooperation, the Government of India said in a press statement.

More Details

<http://www.muscatdaily.com/Archive/Oman/Indian-navy-chief-Admiral-Lanba-to-visit-Oman-from-Wednesday-4ykj>

- **Father of Commando Killed in Yemen Refused to Meet Trump**

The father of the commando killed in a Special Operations raid in Yemen last month said in an interview published this weekend that he had refused to meet with President Trump on the day his son's body was returned home, and criticized the White House over the mission, saying, "Don't hide behind my son's death to prevent an investigation."

More Details

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/26/us/politics/father-of-commando-killed-in-yemen-refused-to-meet-trump.html>

- **Sudan praises Qatar's role in peace-making**

Sudan's Minister of Tourism, Antiquities and Wildlife Dr Mohammed Abu Zaid Mustafa praised the invaluable role played by the State of Qatar in global peace and its international endeavours aimed at ending conflicts, advocating non-violence and resolving conflicts through peaceful means.

More Details

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/27/02/2017/Sudan-praises-Qatar-s-role-in-peace-making>

- **As Saudis prepare to sell shares in oil giant, some have misgivings**

Jamil Farsi, a prominent Saudi Arabian jewellery tycoon, made an impassioned plea to the investment minister at a meeting of the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce this month. "I don't know anything about economics but I beg you, and I beg the officials in the country, not to sell Aramco – not five per cent, not one per cent," he said.

More Details

<http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20170227/business-news/As-Saudis-prepare-to-sell-shares-in-oil-giant-some-have-misgivings.640928>

- **Saudi Arabia debuts Nomu, the alternative equity market**

The Saudi Stock Exchange (Tadawul) launched on Sunday the “Nomu-Parallel Market”, listing nine Saudi companies out 77 applied to be listed on the index designed to buttress and further increase growth and business development of the financial market.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/saudi-arabia-stock-exchange-tadawul-debuts-nomu-alternative-equity-market--942942>

- **Trump Might Support Probe into Yemen Raid: White House**

President Donald Trump might support an investigation into last month's US raid in Yemen that killed several al Qaeda militants but also left a Navy SEAL and several civilians dead, the White House said on Sunday. "I haven't had the chance to speak with him directly about that, but I would imagine that he would be supportive of that," White House deputy press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said on ABC's "This Week" television program.

More Details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/02/27/1340396/trump-might-support-probe-into-yemen-raid-white-house>

- **War in Yemen leaves children vulnerable to exploitation and harassment**

Huda Tareq was used to being spoiled by her parents, both educated professionals, and her five older brothers. Growing up in Taz Hadad, a town about 60km from Taz city, the 13-year-old schoolgirl always had more pocket money than her classmates to buy snacks, soft drinks and sweets.

More Details:

<http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/war-in-yemen-leaves-children-vulnerable-to-exploitation-and-harassment>

## 7. EGYPT

- **Egypt condemns terror attacks in Bahrain**

Egypt has condemned the recent terror attacks which occurred in the Kingdom of Bahrain, including the most recent terror blast which targeted a police patrol in Shakhora, north of Manama, a statement issued by the Egyptian Foreign Ministry said.

More Details

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302599898>

- **Darwish is to present SCZone development plans during “Builders of Egypt” forum**

The head of the Suez Canal Special Economic Zone (SCZone), Ahmed Darwish, is set to present during the third round of the “Builders of Egypt” forum—launching 14 March—the development plan for the zone in the coming years and the ability to attract investors, along with the opportunities available for local investment and the role of Egyptian construction companies in developing the zone.

More Details

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/02/26/616365/>

- **Egyptian lawmaker attempting to lift restrictions on presidential re-elections**

An Egyptian lawmaker started collecting signatures on Sunday for a motion to extend presidential terms and lift restrictions on re-election - a year before general-turned-president Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's first term is due to expire.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/egyptian-lawmaker-attempting-lift-restrictions-presidential-re-elections-942816>

- **US to resume military drills with Egypt: CENTCOM chief**

The administration of US President Donald Trump intends to resume major military drills with Egypt, according to the head of the Central Command, amid concerns that the Middle Eastern country is tilting towards Russia.

More Details

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/02/27/512245/US-Egypt-Votel-Trump-Sisi-CENTCOM>

- **Rift widens between Egyptian president, Al-Azhar**

When Field Marshal Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, then defense minister, gave a televised speech on July 3, 2013, announcing that President Mohammed Morsi had just been overthrown, he was flanked by Egypt's top religious leaders, Pope Tawadros, the head of Egypt's Coptic Orthodox Church, and Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb, the grand imam of Al-Azhar. Tayeb, who had earlier called on Morsi — the country's first democratically elected president — to step down to end the bloodshed, threw his weight behind the military man who helped rid Egypt of the Muslim Brotherhood, since designated by the country as a “terrorist group.”

More Details

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/02/egypt-sisi-azhar-rift-religious-leaders-tawadros-morsi.html>

- **Johnson Urged To Condemn Egypt Death Sentences**

Boris Johnson must demand that Egypt stops issuing death sentences for political activists en masse, human rights charity Reprieve said yesterday. The Foreign Secretary made his first official visit to Egypt at the weekend, during which he had talks with President Abdul Fattah el-Sissi and Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry.

More Details

<http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/a-276f-Johnson-urged-to-condemn-Egypt-death-sentences#.WLPj4fnyhac>

- **Egyptian leftist parties, rights groups call on govt to protect Sinai Christians**

A number of political and civil society groups have expressed their solidarity with Christians from North Sinai who have fled their homes in recent days after a spate of militant attacks. One statement signed by many well-known leftist political parties accuses the government of not protecting Christian citizens in Arish, the capital of North Sinai.

More Details

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/258930/-.aspx>

- **Egypt parliament rejects abolition of death penalty**

The human rights committee of Egypt's parliament said it will never recommend that the death penalty be abolished, responding to repeated calls from foreign rights groups to end capital punishment.

More Details

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/258922/-.aspx>

- **Despite Egypt reforms, investors seen wary of returning**

Egypt is pursuing a raft of reforms to try to revive an economy weakened by years of turmoil, but analysts say that wooing foreign investors will take time. Since the 2011 uprising, the Arab world's most populous nation has suffered a slump in key tourism revenues, slowing economic growth and investment, double-digit inflation and falling foreign currency reserves.



More Details

<http://www.france24.com/en/20170226-despite-egypt-reforms-investors-seen-wary-returning>

## 8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Sudanese ambassador hails Algeria's role in lifting American sanctions on his country**

Sudanese ambassador to Algeria Issam Aouadh Metouali hailed Sunday, in Algiers, the significant role of Algeria and of its former ambassador to UN Idriss Jazairy in the lifting of the American sanctions on his country.

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/16991-sudanese-ambassador-hails-algeria%E2%80%99s-role-in-lifting-american-sanctions-on-his-country>

- **Officers injured in suicide blast at Algeria police station – report**

Several police officers have suffered injuries after a man wearing a suicide belt detonated himself at the entrance to the police station in a densely populated district in the northeastern Algerian city of Constantine, local media reported.

More Details:

<https://www.rt.com/news/378693-explosion-algeria-suicide-bomber/>

- **Algeria's Sonatrach in talks to begin offshore drilling – source**

Algeria's Sonatrach wants to start offshore oil drilling and has begun discussions with U.S. operators Exxon Mobil Corp (XOM.N) and Anadarko (APC.N) as well as Italy's Eni (ENI.MI), a source at the state energy company told Reuters on Sunday.

More Details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-algeria-energy-idUSKBN1650S9?rpc=401&>

- **Morocco shifts its policy focus from Arab ties to 'pan-africanism'**

Morocco has informed Liberia, the current chair of the Economic Community of West African States, of its desire to join the economic alliance as a full member.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/morocco-shifts-its-policy-focus-arab-ties-%E2%80%98africanism%E2%80%99-942788>

- **Morocco says forces to withdraw in Western Sahara's Guerguerat standoff**

Morocco on Sunday announced the withdrawal of its forces from a U.N. buffer zone in the disputed Western Sahara territory, where for months they had been in a standoff with troops from the Polisario independence movement.

More Details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-westernsahara-morocco-idUSKBN1650PV?rpc=401&>

- **Morocco looking to new markets to boost tourism**

Morocco's key tourism sector barely grew last year amid security challenges, but operators are hoping Chinese and Russian visitors will boost their fortunes in the coming years.

More Details:

<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/biz/archives/2017/02/27/2003665765>

- **Tunisian Foreign Ministry Urges Libyans to Protect Integrity of Their County.**

The Tunisian Government has urged all Libyans to exercise the highest degree of self-restraint, to resort to reason and wisdom to preserve the unity and integrity of their country and prevent bloodshed. This came in statement issued by the Tunisian Foreign Ministry following the clashes in Abu Salim neighborhood of Tripoli which left several casualties

More Details:

[http://www.lana-news.ly/eng/news/view/111622/Tunisian\\_Foreign\\_Ministry\\_Urges\\_Libyans\\_to\\_Protect\\_Integrity\\_of\\_Their\\_County](http://www.lana-news.ly/eng/news/view/111622/Tunisian_Foreign_Ministry_Urges_Libyans_to_Protect_Integrity_of_Their_County)

- **'Tunisia to accelerate reforms as IMF freezes loan'**

TUNIS: Tunisia is likely to sell stakes in three state-owned banks this year and cut up to 10,000 public sector jobs as part of reforms demanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which has postponed the payment of the second tranche of a loan, the finance minister said.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1060341/business-economy>

- **Libya in Amnesty International's annual report**

London In its annual report, Amnesty International said that the forces of the rival governments in Libya and the other armed groups and militias are responsible for “the serious violations of international law and abuses of human rights with impunity.”

More Details:

<http://libyaprospect.com/index.php/2017/02/26/libya-in-amnesty-internationals-annual-report/>

- **Libyan govt secures truce after Tripoli clashes**

A cease-fire went into force early Saturday in the Libyan capital after two days of fighting between rival gunmen injured nine people and forced residents to cower indoors, the government said.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1059946/middle-east>

## 9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **6 Taliban fighters killed in N. Afghanistan**

Up to six Taliban militants have been killed and 12 others injured over the past 24 hours as military crackdown against militants continues in the northern Kunduz province, a security official Abdul Khalil said Monday.

More Details:

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-02/27/c\\_136088664.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-02/27/c_136088664.htm)

- **Iran-Afghanistan rail project on fast track**

Work on the Iran-Afghanistan railway project is progressing at a steady pace with the network, linking the two neighbours, due for completion early next year, said a report, citing a senior official.

More Details:

[http://www.tradearabia.com/news/IND\\_321261.html](http://www.tradearabia.com/news/IND_321261.html)

- **Border closed to stop infiltration, Pakistan tells Afghan FO**

—Ambassador says Pakistan wants peace in Afghanistan. Afghanistan Foreign Office on Sunday summoned Pakistan's ambassador to Kabul and complained that people are facing difficulties due to the closing of the border crossing.

More Details:

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/02/27/border-closed-to-stop-infiltration-pakistan-tells-afghan-fo/>

- **Sartaj Aziz Stresses on Joint Mechanism to Address Terror Concerns**

Pakistan and Afghanistan started negotiating a mechanism for addressing each other's concerns over terrorism, Pakistani adviser on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz said at a media briefing on the upcoming Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) summit.

More Details:

<http://ariananews.af/sartaj-aziz-stresses-on-joint-mechanism-to-address-terror-concerns/>

- **Iran's Zarif to arrive in Pakistan today for ECO meeting**

Foreign Minister of Iran Mohammad Javad Zarif will arrive in Pakistan on Monday evening to attend the 22nd meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization 'Council of Ministers' (COM) which will be held on February 28.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82445881/>

- **Terror attack which killed UAE officials in Kandahar planned in Pakistan: Afghan officials**

A senior Afghan Interior Ministry official has alleged that a terror attack last month in Kandahar that killed five Emirati diplomats was planned in Pakistan.

More Details:

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/02/27/terror-attack-which-killed-uae-officials-in-kandahar-planned-in-pakistan-afghan-officials/>

- **Terror finance watchdog puts Pakistan on notice**

: International terror finance watchdog, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), has virtually put Pakistan on a threemonth notice to demonstrate that it has blocked financial routes of Jamaat-ud-Dawa, Jaish-e-Mohammed and their affiliates.

More Details:

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/terror-finance-watchdog-puts-pakistan-on-notice/articleshow/57368736.cms>

- **Pakistan suggests logistics infrastructure within ECO**

Foreign Affairs Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry on Sunday highlighted the need to create a world-class logistics infrastructure within the Economic Coordination Organisation (ECO) region for speedy movement of goods and people at a reduced cost that would stimulate investment and growth.

More Details:

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/02/27/pakistan-suggests-logistics-infrastructure-within-eco/>

- **Afghanistan is not threat to any country: president**

Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani said Monday that his country is independent and won't be used against any nation.

More Details:

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-02/27/c\\_136088879.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-02/27/c_136088879.htm)

- **Indian efforts to isolate Pakistan have met with failure: Aziz**

Adviser to Prime Minister (PM) on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz on Saturday said the Indian efforts to isolate Pakistan bore no fruit as the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) summit will be held in Islamabad on March 1.

More Details:

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/26-Feb-17/indian-efforts-to-isolate-pakistan-have-met-with-failure-aziz>

## 10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Erdogan meets Iraqi Kurdish region's leader Barzani**

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met the leader of Iraq's Kurdish region Sunday in Istanbul. The one-hour closed meeting between Erdogan and Masoud Barzani, president of the Kurdish Regional Government, took place in Mabeyn Palace on the European side. Economic ties and saving Mosul from Daesh terror group were the main topics, according to Barzani's office.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/todays-headlines/erdogan-meets-iraqi-kurdish-regions-leader-barzani/759798>



- **Half of Turkey-Syria border wall completed**

More than half of construction of a concrete wall along the Turkish-Syrian border was completed, said the head of Turkey's housing agency. Ergun Turan, the president of Turkey's state-owned housing agency TOKI, said half of the 511 km Syrian border wall has been completed. Turan said so far the construction of 290 km of the wall along Turkey's border provinces of Sanliurfa, Gaziantep, Kilis, Hatay, Mardin and Sirnak had been finished.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/185434/half-of-turkey-syria-border-wall-completed>

*\*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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