



# 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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**Relations with the West**

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**29 MARCH 2017**

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## 1. IRAQ

- **U.S. sees probable role in Mosul blast, probe under way**

The senior U.S. commander in Iraq acknowledged on Tuesday that the U.S.-led coalition probably had a role in an explosion in Mosul believed to have killed scores of civilians but said Islamic State could also be to blame.

More details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/u-s-sees-probable-role-mosul-blast-probe-way/>

- **There Is Conspiracy to Divide Iraq After IS: Maliki**

Nouri al-Maliki, head of Iraqi Dawa Party and former Iraqi PM, who is regarded as a strong opponent to the Kurds' right to self-determination, stated that there is a conspiracy to divide Iraq after the Islamic State (IS) is eliminated.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/339418>

- **Hashd al-Shaabi kills 36 ISIS terrorists western Mosul**

Hashd al-Shaabi forces had managed to repeal an ISIS terrorists attack in the village Ain-alhisan western Mosul, the forces' media announced in a statement, adding that the forces had killed at least 36 terrorists of the so called Islamic State as well for destroying their vehicles.

More details:

[http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN\\_Direje.aspx?Jimare=40072](http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=40072)

- **Dozens of Daesh Killed, 26 Vehicles Destroyed In the Western Wing Of The Old City of Mosul**

The head of the federal police Lt. Gen, Raed Shaker Jawdat announced that "dozens of Daesh were killed and 26 vehicles and a motorcycle bomb destroyed by a surprise attack in the western wing of the old city on the right side of Mosul. "Federal forces killed dozens of terrorists and destroyed 26 vehicles and motorcycle bomb and seized five supplies outlets during its surprise attack from the western wing," Jawdat said in a statement.

More details

[http://www.ninanews.com/News\\_Details.aspx?Xg9EofQU4bCCKReWVvhf4BHir01DARelrNmC22xfWmc%253d](http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?Xg9EofQU4bCCKReWVvhf4BHir01DARelrNmC22xfWmc%253d)



- **Disputed Iraqi province votes to fly Kurdish flag**

Provincial councillors in disputed, oil-rich Kirkuk province voted Tuesday to fly the Kurdish regional flag over government buildings, a move likely to increase tensions with Baghdad. Kirkuk is at the centre of a long-running dispute over northern territory between Kurdish authorities, who want to incorporate the land into their autonomous region, and the federal government in Baghdad.

More details

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=82298>

- **Iraqi civilians told not to flee Mosul before airstrikes**

The Iraqi government advised residents in Mosul to stay at home instead of fleeing the city ahead of airstrikes that killed 150 civilians, a report released by Amnesty International revealed. The report suggests adequate precautions are not being taken to prevent civilian deaths in the battle to push Daesh out of the city. Survivors and eyewitnesses say they received repeated instructions on the radio and were warned by leaflets dropped by plane to remain in their homes and so did not attempt to flee. Iraqi forces say they asked civilians to stay where they were to prevent large-scale displacement.

More details

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170328-iraqi-civilians-told-not-to-flee-mosul-before-airstrikes/>

- **US Bases Welcomed in Iraq**

Six years after the last US soldier retreated from Iraq, Sunnis have themselves forced to accept the re-entrance of the US troops after they have been one of the parties strongly opposing the occupation. Observers believe that the talk about “US Bases” is common to most political arenas, but many politicians avoid speaking of it publically. Yet, some public and official Sunni Iraqi parties believe that most of the problems encountered by Sunnis after the rise of ISIS in June 2014 is linked some way or another to the incidents at the end of 2011.

More details

<http://english.aawsat.com/theaawsat/news-middle-east/us-bases-welcomed-iraq>

- **Run Dry: Daesh Faces Bankruptcy as Their Ejection from Iraq Continues**

A former Iraqi finance minister has said that Daesh, a group that once sustained itself through extortion and oil smuggling, can now barely pay their fighters after being nearly pushed out of their stronghold in northern Iraq. Hoshyar Zebar said the militants are nearly bankrupt since their former revenue streams are no longer available, telling Sky News, "They were taxing every business — they

were taxing every shop, every pharmacy, every activity — not to mention the money they stole from the Iraqi banks."

More details

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703291052059627-daesh-bankrupt-ejected-from-iraq/>

- **United Nations Urges Iraq and Allies to Rethink Tactics as Airstrikes Kill Civilians**

Airstrikes against Islamic State fighters are killing so many civilians that Iraq and its American-led coalition of allies should reconsider their tactics, the top human rights official at the United Nations said on Tuesday. Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, the United Nations high commissioner for human rights, said he did not underestimate the difficulty of rooting out the Islamic State forces from their remaining strongholds in Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city. But he urged Iraq and the coalition to "undertake an urgent review of tactics to ensure that the impact on civilians is reduced to an absolute minimum."

More details

[https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/28/world/middleeast/un-iraq-airstrikes.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/28/world/middleeast/un-iraq-airstrikes.html?_r=0)

- **Obama's defence chief doesn't see big changes in Iraq campaign**

Ash Carter, who until January was U.S. defence secretary, said on Tuesday he did not see major changes in the campaign against Islamic State since President Donald Trump took office, amid accusations the U.S. military may be relaxing rules protecting civilians. "I don't see overall major changes and I certainly hope they stay on the path that we set because I think that's the right path," Carter said at a forum at Harvard University, in his first public address since leaving the post.

More details

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-iraq-carter-idUKKBN16Z31X?rpc=401&>

- **Support planes not linked to Iraq strike**

Australian support aircraft are not linked to deadly airstrike operations that killed up to 200 civilians in west Mosul in Iraq 11 days ago. The federal government had already confirmed RAAF Hornets were not connected to the incident.

More details

<http://www.9news.com.au/national/2017/03/28/20/33/support-planes-not-linked-to-iraq-strike>

- **U.S. to Send 200 More Troops to Iraq to Help Mosul Liberation Effort**

A U.S. defense official said on Monday that the military would deploy 200 additional troops to Iraq at the request of an American commander in Baghdad as part of the ongoing struggle to eradicate the Islamic State in Mosul. Fox News reported that two companies from the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division would go to Iraq to "provide additional 'advice and assist' support to our Iraq partners as they liberate Mosul," the official said.

More details

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/03/28/u-s-sending-more-troops-to-iraq-to-help-liberate-mosul-from-isis/>

- **U.S. Denies Loosening Rules for Avoiding Civilian Casualties in Iraq**

U.S. airstrikes probably played a role in the deaths of dozens of civilians in Mosul earlier this month, U.S. and Iraqi military officials acknowledged Tuesday, but they denied the rules for avoiding civilian casualties have been loosened despite a recent spike in civilian casualties.

More details

<http://time.com/4715989/us-mosul-civilian-deaths-rules-loosened-denial/>

- **Iraqi government 'made a mistake' by attacking Mosul before capturing Isis sanctuaries**

The Iraqi government made a mistake that will allow Isis to survive by seeking to capture Mosul before eliminating other Isis safe havens in northern and western Iraq to which its fighters can retreat, according to a senior Iraqi leader.

More details

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/mosul-iraq-isis-patrick-cockburn-kirkuk-governor-fall-of-city-beginning-sunni-arabs-a7654851.html>

- **Iran Ups Non-Oil Exports to Iraq**

"A total of \$1.028 billion of non-oil goods have been exported to Iraq in 2016," Governor of Qasr-e-Shirin City Faramarz Akbari said. Akbari said that the weight of the exported goods during the period hit 3.255 million tons.

More details

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960108000320>



- **Trump: US troops 'fighting like never before' in Iraq**

President Donald Trump offered rare public remarks about Iraq Tuesday, declaring to a group of Senators gathered at the White House that the US is performing "very well" in the country, which remains besieged by violence. "We're doing very well in Iraq," Trump said at a reception for all US senators and their spouses in the White House East Room, adding he'd just ended a long phone call with Defense Secretary James Mattis before appearing at the event. Trump added that "our soldiers are fighting like never before" in Iraq, and praised what he characterized as a positive trajectory in the country.

More details

<http://us.cnn.com/2017/03/28/politics/trump-iraq-troops-comments/index.html>

- **Panic spreads in Iraq, Syria over record number of civilians reported killed in U.S. strikes**

"It is only American planes that are active, and they are targeting everywhere," said one Syrian activist, about fears the U.S. may be acting with an unprecedented disregard for civilian lives. —A sharp rise in the number of civilians reported killed in U.S.-led airstrikes in Iraq and Syria is spreading panic, deepening mistrust and triggering accusations that the United States and its partners may be acting with an unprecedented disregard for lives of non-combatants. The escalation comes as local ground forces backed by air support from a U.S.-led coalition close in on Daesh's two main urban bastions: Raqqa in Syria and Mosul in Iraq.

More details

<https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2017/03/28/panic-spreads-in-iraq-syria-over-record-number-of-civilians-reported-killed-in-us-strikes.html>

- **State Department Cites Janus Global Operations' Work to Rid Iraq of ISIS-Placed Explosives at March 22 Ministers' Meeting of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIS**

Janus Global Operations' (JGO) work to clear and dispose of ISIS-placed landmines, booby traps, improvised explosive devices, and other explosive hazards in Iraq has been cited in a U.S. State Department fact sheet detailing international cooperation to combat ISIS. "The Global Coalition – Working to Defeat ISIS," March 22, 2017, fact sheet, released by the Office of the State Department Spokesperson, explains activities - military, civilian and humanitarian – to liberate people and towns from ISIS's grip and to allow Iraq's refugees and internally displaced to return to their homes and livelihoods.

More details

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/state-department-cites-janus-global-operations-work-to-rid-iraq-of-isis-placed-explosives-at-march-22-ministers-meeting-of-the-global-coalition-to-counter-isis-300430575.html>

## 2. SYRIA

- **Russian Military Delivers 24.5 Tonnes of Aid to Syrian Civilians Over 24 Hours**

The Russian Center for Syrian reconciliation delivered 24.5 tonnes of humanitarian aid to the Syrian province of Aleppo over the past 24 hours, the Russian Defense ministry said on Wednesday in a news bulletin.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703291052064210-russia-aid-syrians/>

- **Daesh counter-attacks to defend north Syria stronghold**

Clashes raged around a key northern Syrian town on Tuesday after the Daesh terror group launched a counter-attack to fend off a US-backed advance near the extremists' stronghold Raqqa.

More details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/region/daesh-counter-attacks-defend-north-syria-stronghold>

- **Russia Praised by Parties to Geneva Talks on Syria for Role in Resolving Crisis**

Earlier in the day, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Gennady Gatilov held consultations on the sidelines of the intra-Syrian talks in Geneva with UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura, the Syrian government delegation, headed by Bashar Jaafari, and representatives from the Syrian opposition, including the Moscow and Cairo platforms, and the Movement for a Pluralistic Society.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703281052058463-russia-praised-geneva-talks/>

- **A new drift in Syrian-Israeli conflict?**

Israel should reach out to the US to get it involved alongside Israel in a situation which closely concerns President Donald Trump's assumed interest.

More details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/A-new-drift-in-Syrian-Israeli-conflict-485471>

- **UN chief urges Arabs to unite against Syria war**

UN chief Antonio Guterres called on Arab leaders Tuesday to set aside their differences to confront Syria's six-year conflict, as he toured a Syrian refugee camp in Jordan. "Arab unity is a very important element in order to allow this region to be stabilized and for... the Syrian refugees to find again a future that corresponds to their aspirations," Guterres said.

More details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1075406/middle-east>

- **UN chief urges Arabs to unite against Syria war**

ISIS is using 300,000 civilians as human shields as enemy forces bear down on its capital in northern Syria. Men living in Raqqa are being forced to wear the baggy pants and long shirts worn by the terror group, making it difficult to pick them apart from militants. And landmines and checkpoints have been laid out around the city to prevent people from escaping

More details:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4359616/300-000-civilians-trapped-Raqqa-used-human-shields.html>

- **UN chief visits Syrian refugee camp in Jordan**

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres visited a Syrian refugee camp in Jordan on Tuesday as part of his visit to the Arab country. During his visit, Guterres is also expected to attend the one-day Arab summit, which will be held in the Dead Sea on Wednesday.

More details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/un-chief-visits-syrian-refugee-camp-in-jordan/781177>

- **Syrian army establishes control over mountains in Palmyra**

Syrian Army and Armed Forces units established control over a number of mountains in Palmyra area in the eastern countryside of Homs province after eliminating the last ISIL gatherings in the area, according to a military source.

More details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124445/Syrian-army-establishes-control-over-mountains-in-Palmyra>

- **Raqqa Cracks Down on ISIS**

The Raqqa governorate cracked down on ISIS Monday as the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) advanced in the western city of Raqqa after controlling the military airport in Tabqa and currently getting closer to tighten the noose on the main stronghold of the organization in Syria.

More details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/paula-astih-and-michel-abou-najm/news-middle-east/raqqa-cracks-isis>

- **Syria: 45 ISIL Terrorists Killed in Failed Attack on SDF Positions in Southern Hasaka**

The predominantly Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) fended off ISIL's offensive on their positions in Southern Hasaka, killing 45 militants and wounding many more after hours of non-stop clashes, the People's Protection Units (YPG) said in a statement.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960109000162>

### 3. IRAN

- **Iran's President: Ties with Russia Serve Regional Stability**

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani hailed the expansion of ties with Russia in recent years, saying it contributes to regional stability and the battle against terrorism.

More details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/03/29/1366034/iran-s-president-ties-with-russia-serve-regional-stability>

- **Iran UN ambassador calls for destruction of all nuclear weapons**

Iran's ambassador to the UN Gholamali Khoshroo has called for the total eradication of nuclear weapons. Khoshroo reiterated Iran's call during a UN conference aimed at creating a nuclear weapons ban treaty in New York on Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://iran-daily.com/News/189960.html?catid=3&title=Iran-UN-ambassador-calls-for-destruction-of-all-nuclear-weapons>

- **Russia to enhance oil and gas industry cooperation with Iran — Putin**

Russia is planning to expand economic cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran in the oil and gas industry to ensure sustainable economic development, Russian President Vladimir Putin said after meeting his Iranian counterpart.

More details:

<https://www.rt.com/business/382623-russia-iran-cooperation-oil/>

- **Iran Sanctions 15 U.S. Firms for Doing Business with Israel**

Iran on Sunday sanctioned 15 American companies over their alleged ties to the “Zionist regime” and support for terrorism, the Associated Press reported.

More details:

<http://www.thetower.org/4785-iran-sanctions-15-u-s-firms-for-doing-business-with-israel/>

- **Algeria appreciates Iran’s efforts against terrorism**

Algerian Senate Speaker, while noting that earlier agreements have deepened bilateral ties, praised Tehran’s efforts in the fight against terrorism in Iraq and Syria.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124450/Algeria-appreciates-Iran-s-efforts-against-terrorism>

- **Why Give Trump The Keys To War With Iran?**

When Trump won the elections, many worried that it could lead to war between the United States and Iran, due to his desire to kill the Iran nuclear deal. Now, thanks to the U.S. Senate, we may be one step closer to this nightmare scenario: The Senate is poised to pass legislation that will place President Trump’s trigger-happy finger on the ignition switch of a deadly conflict with Iran.

More details:

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/why-give-trump-the-keys-to-war-with-iran\\_us\\_58da80bde4b0dbf14d3f92f6?section=us\\_politics](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/why-give-trump-the-keys-to-war-with-iran_us_58da80bde4b0dbf14d3f92f6?section=us_politics)

- **Iran, Russia closely cooperating on fighting terrorism: Rouhani**

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani says the Islamic Republic and Russia have been working closely together to fight terrorism and promote stability in the region.

More details:



<http://iran-daily.com/News/189963.html?catid=3&title=Iran--Russia-closely-cooperating-on-fighting-terrorism--Rouhani>

- **Russia and Iran's growing cooperation hints at a new Middle East**

Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Iranian counterpart, Hassan Rouhani, are meeting for the eighth time in four years from Monday through Wednesday. According to the Tehran Times, both sides were "preparing more than 10 documents for signing" on various economic and political issues. The Conversation.

More details:

[http://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/Voices/2017/03/28/Russia-and-Irans-growing-cooperation-hints-at-a-new-Middle-East/6171490711623/?utm\\_source=sec&utm\\_campaign=sl&utm\\_medium=1](http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Voices/2017/03/28/Russia-and-Irans-growing-cooperation-hints-at-a-new-Middle-East/6171490711623/?utm_source=sec&utm_campaign=sl&utm_medium=1)

- **Netanyahu calls for boosting US, Israel cooperation against Iran**

Netanyahu made the remarks through a video conference addressing The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) on Monday.

More details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82476247/>

- **Putin meets with Iranian leader, touts 'reliable and stable partner'**

Russian President Vladimir Putin met with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani at the Kremlin on Tuesday and lauded the Persian theocracy as a "good neighbor and reliable and stable partner."

More details:

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2017/03/28/putin-meets-iranian-leader-touts-reliable-and-stable-partner/99723886/>

## 4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Israeli minister demands probe into Palestinian theatre**

Israel's culture minister called for an investigation into a major Arabic-language theatre on Tuesday after a director refused to call a Palestinian jailed over an attack a "terrorist".

More details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/society/2017/3/29/israeli-minister-demands-probe-into-palestinian-theatre>

- **Political crisis Deepens, Netanyahu and Kahlon fail to reach agreement**

The Prime Minister and the Finance Minister convened until late on Tuesday night to discuss the IBA saga that has been threatening to send Israel to early elections, but failed to reach an agreement.

More details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Netanyahu-and-Kahlon-fail-to-reach-agreement-IBA-crisis-remains-unsolved-485496>

- **Israeli Lawmakers reach out to US Jews on anti-Semitism**

A group of lawmakers representing a cross-section of Israel's political spectrum is reaching out to American Jews at a time when anxiety over anti-Semitic activity is running high in both countries, and amid uncertainty over the direction of U.S. policy toward the Jewish state under President Donald Trump.

More details:

[http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US\\_ISRAELI\\_LAWMAKERS\\_US\\_ANTI\\_SEMITISM?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-03-29-00-28-16](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US_ISRAELI_LAWMAKERS_US_ANTI_SEMITISM?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-03-29-00-28-16)

- **UK Medical Team Carries Out Special Training in Gaza**

A British surgical team has launched a medical training program for Palestinian doctors working in the hospitals of the Gaza Strip.

More details:

<http://imemc.org/article/uk-medical-team-carries-out-special-training-in-gaza/>

- **Grand Mufti: Arrest of al-Aqsa guards 'unacceptable'**

Israeli police arrest Palestinian guards after they try to stop archaeologist from removing ancient stone from compound.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/grand-mufti-arrest-al-aqsa-guards-unacceptable-170328183425488.html>

- **Turkish deputy FM criticizes Israel over failure in peace attempts**

Israel's attitude is to blame for the failure to reach a peaceful and just solution to the Palestinian issue, Deputy Foreign Minister Ahmet Yıldız has said.

More details:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=111345&NewsCatID=510>

- **World Vision staffer told guilty verdict likely over alleged Hamas funding**

An Israeli judge has told a World Vision employee charged with giving millions of dollars to Hamas that he has "little chance" of being found not guilty.

More details:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-03-29/israeli-judge-tells-world-vision-staffer-guilty-verdict-likely/8398162>

- **Abbas Says Arab Peace Initiative Is the Only Peace Plan on the Table**

Palestinian president says no new diplomatic plan at the Arab League summit opening Wednesday; Abbas to meet Trump in April.

More details:

<http://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians/1.780110>

- **Israeli security behind the Scenes: from google street view to travel warnings**

One day after the largely unheard of Prime Minister's Counter-Terror Bureau (LOTAR) issued a serious travel warning for the Sinai, as well as moderate warnings for Turkey, Jordan and Egypt, many might ask what is LOTAR and what does it do besides issue travel warnings?

More details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Israeli-security-behind-the-scenes-From-Google-Street-View-to-travel-warnings-485504>

## 5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Sudan's Bashir arrives in Jordan for Arab summit**

Sudanese President Omer al-Bashir Tuesday has arrived in Jordan for the annual meeting of the Arab leaders, defying calls by rights groups to arrest the first sitting head of state ever indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

More details:

<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article62037>

- **Aoun, Hariri Meet Arab PMs, Bogdanov on Eve of Jordan's Arab Summit**

President Michel Aoun, Prime Minister Saad Hariri and Foreign Minister Jebran Bassil arrived Tuesday in Jordan along with a Lebanese delegation to take part in the 28th Arab Summit that will kick off on Wednesday.

More details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/227684-aoun-hariri-meet-arab-pms-bogdanov-on-eve-of-jordan-s-arab-summit>

- **Trade ties with Jordan exemplary, says Saudi commerce minister**

Saudi Arabia and Jordan have set an example to other countries in terms of joint investment, cooperation and coordination, Saudi Minister of Commerce and Investment Majed Al-Qasabi said on Tuesday at the Saudi-Jordanian Economic Forum in Amman.

More details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1075831/saudi-arabia>

- **UN Chief Visits Jordan's Zaatarı Refugee Camp**

United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres met on Tuesday with Jordan's King Abdullah II for talks on regional developments ahead of the Arab Summit, which will kick off Wednesday in the Dead Sea.

More details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/mohamed-al-daameh/news-middle-east/un-chief-visits-jordans-zaatari-refugee-camp>

- **Lebanon appeals to UN as maritime energy dispute bubbles to surface**

Lebanon has appealed to the United Nations to intervene following moves by Israel to formalize a maritime border between the two countries that gives the Jewish state rights to a potentially lucrative patch of sea.

More details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/lebanon-appeals-to-un-as-maritime-energy-dispute-bubbles-to-surface/>

- **Syrian Army repels Al-Nusra attacks near Lebanese border**

The Syrian Armed Forces along with the fighters of the Hezbollah movement have repelled several attacks of Jabhat Fatah al Sham, a terrorist group formerly known as the Nusra Front near the country's border with Lebanon, a source close to Hezbollah told Sputnik on Wednesday.

More details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124471/Syrian-Army-repels-Al-Nusra-attacks-near-Lebanese-border>

- **Lebanon's first budget in 12 Years approved**

The Lebanese cabinet on Monday approved the 2017 state budget, the country's first budget in 12 years. The budget will be referred to the parliament for final ratification.

More details:

<http://yalibnan.com/2017/03/28/lebanons-first-budget-in-12-years-approved/>

- **King, Saudi monarch attend military parade**

His Majesty King Abdullah, the Supreme Commander of the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF), and Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz on Tuesday attended a military parade at Al Rayah parade ground at the Royal Court.

More details:

<https://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/king-saudi-monarch-attend-military-parade>

- **Korea to send replacement peacekeeping troops to Lebanon**

Hundreds of South Korean troops will be dispatched to Lebanon next month to join the UN-led peacekeeping operations, the Army said Wednesday.

More details:

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20170329000813>

## 6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **First smart city summit Oman Begins**

The first Smart City Summit Oman was inaugurated by Sheikh al Fadhl bin Mohammed al Harthy, secretary general of the Council of Ministers at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre on Tuesday. The inauguration was held in the presence of dignitaries, senior officials and diplomats.



More Details

<http://www.muscatdaily.com/Archive/Oman/First-Smart-City-Summit-Oman-begins-4ziy#ixzz4chlYSpf>

- **Bahrain condemns missile attacks on Saudi cities**

Bahrain condemned in the strongest terms the ongoing ballistic missile attacks on Saudi cities by putschists in Yemen. “Today’s attack provides clear evidence of the arms smuggling that continues to take place in Yemen, notably through the port of Hodeida in order to undermine all exerted efforts to reach a settlement to Yemen’s crisis and destabilize the region”, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday.

More Details

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppld=31734&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=2>

- **SBI Life to enter Bahrain**

SBI Life is set to enter Bahrain in the next financial year and is awaiting regulatory permission to open a branch here. The life insurance venture has already received approvals from Irdai (Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority) and is awaiting Central Bank of Bahrain’s final approval.

More Details

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppld=31747&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=50>

- **UK, Qatar set up joint panel to pave way for trade deal**

Britain is establishing a joint economic and trade committee to pave the way for a post-Brexit trade agreement with Qatar and the rest of the Gulf, Prime Minister Theresa May said yesterday.

More Details

<http://www.gulf-times.com/story/542342/UK-Qatar-set-up-joint-panel-to-pave-way-for-trade->

- **U.S. may deepen effort against Iran-allied rebels in Yemen**

The United States is considering deepening its role in Yemen’s conflict by more directly aiding its Persian Gulf allies battling Iran-aligned Houthi rebels, officials say, potentially relaxing a U.S. policy that limited American support.

More Details

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/03/29/world/u-s-may-deepen-effort-iran-allied-rebels-yemen/#.WNtZyvnyhac>

- **Yemen: U.S. Ramps up Support for Saudi Coalition as Iran Boosts Backing for Houthis**

President Donald Trump's administration has substantially increased military support for the Saudi-led Sunni coalition fighting the Iranian-backed Shiite Houthis in Yemen, countering the growing investment Iran has made in its allies in the war-torn country.

More Details

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/03/28/yemen-us-ramps-up-support-for-saudi-coalition-as-iran-boosts-backing-for-shiite-houthis/>

- **Dubai to have tower dangling in the air from space?**

A New York-based firm is proposing that Dubai be the site of a futuristic, asteroid-suspended skyscraper that orbits around the world. The speculative Analemma Tower - which is being proposed by the Clouds Architecture Office - is designed to be suspended downward on an asteroid orbiting 50,000km from earth. It would orbit in a figure-eight pattern across the northern and southern hemispheres in a 24-hour cycle each day.

More Details

<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/news/general/dubai-to-have-tower-dangling-in-the-air>

- **PCFC to participate in Dubai Government Achievements Exhibition**

Ports, Customs and Free Zone Corporation (PCFC) has completed its preparations to take part in the 5th Edition of the Dubai Government Achievements Exhibition (DGAE). It will be held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai from 2nd to 4th April 2017 at Dubai International Convention & Exhibition Centre under the theme: "National Governments, Global Achievements".

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/pr/pcfc-participate-dubai-government-achievements-exhibition-956102>

- **Saudi Prince willing to invest in Afghanistan**

President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Mohammad Ashraf Ghani met with a Saudi businessman from the royal family of Saudi Arabia, Walid bin Talal the other day, his office said in a statement.

More Details

<http://thekabultimes.gov.af/index.php/newsnational/13468-saudi-prince-willing-to-invest-in-afghanistan.html>

- **The Big 5 Saudi draws top global construction firms**

With more than 500 brands on display, The Big 5 Saudi is attracting thousands of visitors to source products from local and international construction manufacturers, said the organisers. Market leaders from Saudi Arabia including Zamil Industrial, Sabic, Al Omran Group, Al Yamamah Company for Reinforcing Steel Bars, Saudi Industries for PVC Windows (Wintek) & Saudi Industries for Pipes Company are exhibiting along with international manufacturers of construction products.

More Details

[http://www.tradearabia.com/news/CONS\\_322589.html](http://www.tradearabia.com/news/CONS_322589.html)

## 7. EGYPT

- **111 Islamists in Egypt sentenced to 25 years in jail**

A military court in Upper Egypt sentenced on Tuesday 111 fugitive loyalists of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood group to 25 years in jail over committing acts of violence and riot following the overthrow of former Islamist President Mohamed Morsi in mid-2013, official MENA agency reported.

More Details

[http://www.china.org.cn/world/2017-03/29/content\\_40518026.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/world/2017-03/29/content_40518026.htm)

- **Israelis told 'avoid Egypt resorts' amid terror fear**

Israel has warned its citizens to immediately leave Sharm el-Sheikh and Egypt's other Red Sea resorts, saying there is an imminent threat of an Isil attack against tourists. Several hundred Israelis are currently in the region but thousands more are expected to head to Egypt's beaches during next month's Passover holiday, the Israeli government said.

More Details

<http://www.independent.ie/world-news/middle-east/israelis-told-avoid-egypt-resorts-amid-terror-fear-35574555.html>

- **Egypt's Sisi to meet Trump on April 3**

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi will make an "official visit" to Washington on 3 April, the White House announced on Tuesday. "President Trump and President al-Sisi will use the visit to build on the positive momentum they have built for the United States-Egypt relationship," it said in a statement.

More Details

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/3/29/egypts-sisi-to-meet-trump-on-april-3>

- **Egypt snubs Nile sharing agreement, asks for more time**

Egyptian authorities on Monday, yet again, requested for more time to "consult widely" on the terms and implications of the contentious clauses in the new cooperative framework that seeks to refine sharing of the River Nile. The request was resultantly granted by the Nile Council of Ministers (Nile-COM) meeting chaired by Water and Environment minister Sam Cheptoris at Protea Hotel, following hours of protracted haggling that went on into the night.

More Details

<http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Egypt-snubs-Nile-sharing-agreement--asks-for-more-time/688334-3868680-gopngqz/index.html>

- **Egypt's first female plumber is flushing out the competition**

Vincent Van Gogh once said, "As we advance in life it becomes more and more difficult, but in fighting the difficulties the inmost strength of the heart is developed." This quote summarizes the story of Seham el-Moghazi, a former bank employee who became one of the first female plumbers in Egypt.

More Details

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/egypt-first-female-plumber-shock-struggle.html#ixzz4chVftmfK>

- **Daily News Egypt interviewed leaders of Oracle in Egypt and the Middle East**

Leaders of Oracle Company—one of the largest and most important information technology (IT) companies in general, and databases in particular—described the Egyptian market as one of the most promising markets. In light of the visit of President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi to the United States of America, Daily News Egypt interviewed one of the most important US companies operating in the Egyptian market.

More Details

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/03/29/620153/>

- **Russia and Egypt continue to develop their cooperation in nuclear education**

Representatives of Rosatom and Russian universities visited major universities of the Arab Republic of Egypt. The visit aimed at developing cooperation between Russian and Egyptian educational institutions. During its four-day trip, the Russian delegation visited Alexandria University, the Arab Academy of Science, Technology and Marine Transport, Cairo University, Ain Shams University, and Egyptian Russian University.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/pr/russia-and-egypt-continue-develop-their-cooperation-nuclear-education-956118>

- **Islamic State Beheads Two For 'Sorcery' In Egypt's Sinai**

Islamic State's branch in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula posted a video on Tuesday depicting the beheading of two men the militant Islamist group said it had found guilty of practicing witchcraft and sorcery.

More Details

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/islamic-state-beheads-two\\_us\\_58dabf2ae4b0cb23e65c02c7?a1rk5uxfmc5zh0k9&section=us\\_world](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/islamic-state-beheads-two_us_58dabf2ae4b0cb23e65c02c7?a1rk5uxfmc5zh0k9&section=us_world)

## 8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Algeria appreciates Iran's efforts against terrorism**

Algerian Senate Speaker, while noting that earlier agreements have deepened bilateral ties, praised Tehran's efforts in the fight against terrorism in Iraq and Syria.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124450/Algeria-appreciates-Iran-s-efforts-against-terrorism>

- **Algeria, Congo agree on boosting bilateral cooperation in all fields**

Algeria and Congo have decided to give a fresh impetus to bilateral cooperation in all areas, Congolese President Denis Sassou N'Guesso said Tuesday in Algiers, dubbing his visit to Algeria a "total success."

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/17506-algeria,-congo-agree-on-boosting-bilateral-cooperation-in-all-fields>



- **Ex-Libya exporters seek new market in Algeria**

Maltese manufacturers are looking at Algeria to replace lost business in Libya as the country remains plagued with instability.

More Details:

<http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20170328/local/ex-libya-exporters-seek-new-market-in-algeria.643761>

- **Morocco, China to reinforce co-op in regulating commerce**

Morocco's Competition Council and China's State Administration for Industry and Commerce (SAIC) have agreed to reinforce cooperation in regulating commerce, the Moroccan council said in a statement on Tuesday.

More Details:

[http://www.china.org.cn/world/2017-03/28/content\\_40517732.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/world/2017-03/28/content_40517732.htm)

- **Moroccans Largest Non-EU Community Contributing to Social Security in Spain**

216,040 Moroccans were affiliated to social security in Spain at the end of February, up slightly from January (215,366), according to data published yesterday by the Spanish Ministry of Employment and Social Security.

More Details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/03/212315/moroccans-largest-non-eu-community-contributing-to-social-security-in-spain/>

- **Libya's Haftar refuses invite to Tunisia**

The head of the Libyan army, Khalifa Haftar, has reportedly refused an invitation to meet with Tunisia's president accusing Tunis of aligning itself with Tripoli-based government and the Muslim Brotherhood.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170328-libyas-haftar-rejects-invite-to-tunisia/>

- **Auditors criticise 'lax' EU aid to Tunisia**

European Union aid for Tunisia was overambitious and too lax, according to the European Court of Auditors.

More Details:

<http://www.publicfinanceinternational.org/news/2017/03/auditors-criticise-lax-eu-aid-tunisia>

- **Oil Prices Rise over Libyan Output Disruption**

Crude oil prices rose yesterday following a severe disruption in the Libyan oil production and comments by officials of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) that the cartel could extend their production cuts to the end of the year.

More Details:

<https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/03/29/oil-prices-rise-over-libyan-output-disruption/>

- **Italy wants US to do more to foster stability in Libya**

Italy will push for greater US involvement in fostering stability in Libya when President Donald Trump and other world leaders meet in May, Italy's deputy foreign minister said.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1075171/middle-east>

- **Libya intercepts 60 migrants**

Tripoli: Libya's coastguard has intercepted 60 Bangladeshi migrants as they tried to cross the Mediterranean to Europe, a navy spokesman said on Monday.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/f82e9ed7-6168-4b67-88ae-253b687baa65.aspx>

## 9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **'EU concerned by Russia's role in Afghanistan'**

The European Union is concerned by Russia's growing role in Afghanistan and also wants China to act as a responsible rising power, EU envoy Jean-François Cautain said on Tuesday.

More Details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1323536/eu-concerned-by-russias-role-in-afghanistan>

- **Afghan Forces Destroy Narcotics In Restive Province**

Afghan troops waged an anti-drug operation and destroyed a large amount of narcotics together with a heroin factory in southern Helmand province earlier this month, the command of Afghan Special Forces said on Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/security/item/28081-afghan-forces-destroy-narcotics-in-restive-province.html>

- **Afghan, US security officials discuss bilateral cooperation**

The Afghan national security adviser, Hanif Atmar address his US counterpart, H.R. McMaster through video conference, discussing expansion of bilateral cooperation, the national security council said on Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://afghanistantimes.af/afghan-us-security-officials-discuss-bilateral-cooperation/>

- **Defence Force has location of raid completely wrong, says lawyer for Afghan villagers**

A lawyer for Afghan villagers caught up in Operation Burnham say the New Zealand Defence Force has the location of the raid completely wrong.

More Details:

<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/world/defence-force-has-location-raid-completely-wrong-says-lawyer-afghan-villagers>

- **EU, Afghan Officials Discuss Migrant Issues at Brussels Meeting**

Representatives of the European Union (EU), its members and Afghan officials held a second meeting in Brussels on Monday and established the Joint Working Group to facilitate the implementation of the joint war forward on migration issues, the EU said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/eu-afghan-officials-discuss-migrant-issues-brussels-meeting>

- **Pakistan Allows ‘Last Jew in Pakistan’ to Legally Practice Faith**

Pakistan, where many religious minority groups face persecution at the hands of the Muslim majority, has allowed a 29-year-old dubbed the “last Jew” in the country to convert from Islam to Judaism.

More Details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/03/28/unusual-pakistan-allows-man-to-change-religion-from-muslim-to-judaism/>

- **Pakistan Resumes Missile Attack on Nangarhar: Official**

Pakistan has once again resumed cross border shelling on Nangarhar province, local officials said on Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/pakistan-resumes-missile-attack-nangarhar-official>

- **Lasting US commitment a strong signal to Pakistan, regional countries**

The U.S president, after his inauguration has said that launching joint-military operations against Daesh and other terrorist groups was his priority and recently he vowed to remain committed to Afghanistan in elimination of the IS militant groups. Donald Trump has said that in addition to supporting old coalitions, he will create new anti-extremism coalitions and will eliminate insurgency in the world.

More Details:

<http://thekabultimes.gov.af/index.php/editorial/13476-lasting-us-commitment-a-strong-signal-to-pakistan-regional-countries.html>

- **SBP for greater cross-border cooperation**

State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Deputy Governor Riaz Riazuddin said on Tuesday that risks to stability of the financial sector should be managed for maintaining uninterrupted availability of services, raising investors' confidence and enhancing outreach.

More Details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1323423/sbp-for-greater-cross-border-cooperation>

- **Pak, Turkey firm to intensify cooperation in diverse fields**

The parliamentary delegation of Pakistan led by Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, currently on a visit to Turkey called on the Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim. According to a message received here Tuesday, the two sides exchanged views on further deepening the brotherly Pakistan-Turkey ties, particularly the enhancement of bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

More Details:

<http://pakobserver.net/pak-turkey-firm-to-intensify-cooperation-in-diverse-fields/>

## 10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Thousands of Syrians returning, Turkish governor says**

Up to 6,000 Syrians are returning to their homes every month from Sanliurfa province, the governor said Wednesday. Gungor Azim Tuna said 30 to 40 families applied every day to return to Syria. “Monthly, 5,000 to 6,000 people return to their country,” he told journalists during a visit to the provincial migration management office.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/thousands-of-syrians-returning-turkish-governor-says/782375>

- **Turkey criticizes move to raise Kurdish flag in Iraq**

Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has criticized the decision of an Iraqi provincial assembly to raise a Kurdish flag alongside the Iraqi national flag at public buildings. On Tuesday, 26 Kurdish members of Kirkuk’s provincial assembly voted in favor of raising the Kurdish flag alongside Iraq’s national flag outside the city’s public buildings and institutions.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/187032/turkey-criticizes-move-to-raise-kurdish-flag-in-iraq>

*\*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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