



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĞU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Proces of Iraq

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

Energy Security

Enerji Güvenliği

Economy News

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Peace Process

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Ethnic and Secterian Groups

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

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30 MARCH 2017

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1. IRAQ

- **3 Terrorists Killed East Of Salahuddin**

A force of the popular mobilization killed three members of Daesh In Glam al-Dor district east of Salahuddin. "The Ninth Brigade in the popular mobilization forces responded to a group of Daesh militants tried to attack (Glam al-Dor) area and managed to kill three of them, while dozens of them fled towards Mteibeeja area," a statement from the military information battalions said.

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?NyH1zudTcj2EcCaI%252b7I%252bPg%253d%253d

- **IS militant forcibly using Iraqi child as human shield in Mosul**

A video released by the Iraqi Federal Police service purports to show an Islamic State militant in Mosul forcing an Iraqi child to stand as a human shield during encounters with security forces. On its facebook page, the Federal Police command explained that the video, apparently filmed through a combat equipment, was shot during fights with IS members in central Mosul's Old City district.

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/video-militant-forcibly-using-iraqi-child-human-shield-mosul/>

- **Iraqi VP: Mosul Operation Distancing from Its Goal**

Iraqi Vice-President Usama al-Nujaifi has warned about the military plans in anti-Islamic State (IS) operations in west of Mosul, saying the mission is going out of control and distancing from its main goal. The Sunni leader told reporters on Wednesday that an unnecessary huge number of troops are being deployed to western Mosul and it needs to be stopped.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/339574>

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

Ash Carter, who until January was U.S. defense 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://www.shafaaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/8871e32b-55c0-4eab-8fd4-7cd391e8ec65/Obama-s-defense-chief-doesn-t-see-big-changes-in-iraq-campaign

- **Pope Francis demands ‘urgent’ action to protect civilians in Iraq**

Pope Francis demanded urgent action Wednesday to protect civilians in Iraq, saying forces involved in the battle for Mosul have an obligation to protect innocents after a recent spike in civilian casualties. Francis issued a special appeal for peace in Iraq at the end of his general audience. He greeted an interfaith group of Iraqis in St. Peter's Square, encouraging them in helping Iraq find reconciliation among various ethnic and religious groups.

More Details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=40088

- **1000 ISIS terrorists killed since Mosul operations launch, commander**

Commander of 'We are coming, Nineveh' offensive to retake Mosul's right bank announced on Wednesday 1000 ISIS terrorists had been killed since the start of the operations, The Baghdad Post reported. In a statement, Lieutenant General Abdul Amir Rashid al-Yarallah said, "Our military units have killed 1000 of the terrorist group affiliates since the operations started on February 19".

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/8774/1000-ISIS-terrorists-killed-since-Mosul-operations-launch-commander>

- **US commander defends coalition strikes in Iraq**

The top U.S. commander in Iraq was on the defensive Wednesday as sought to deflect questions about deadly anti-Daesh coalition airstrikes that killed hundreds of civilians. "In an environment where Daesh kills civilians, its marveling to see the press to be so interested in civilians who died in U.S. attacks," Lt. Gen. Stephen Townsend told reporters at the Pentagon.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/americas/us-commander-defends-coalition-strikes-in-iraq/782788>

- **Iraq/Kurdistan Region of Iraq: Troops Shot at Protesters**

Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) armed forces fired rubber and live bullets and teargas canisters at protesters in Sinjar on March 14, 2017, killing one person and wounding at least seven, Human Rights Watch said today. KRG authorities should investigate the use of lethal force against the protesters. Three protesters told Human Rights Watch that they and the other protesters were

unarmed and peaceful when the Rojava Peshmerga forces, Syrian fighters integrated into a unit under the KRG's Interior Ministry and stationed in Sinjar, opened fire.

More Details:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/30/iraq/kurdistan-region-iraq-troops-shot-protesters>

- **Iraq elite forces close in on Mosul mosque as fears rise for residents**

Iraqi special forces and police fought Isil militants to edge closer to the al-Nuri mosque in western Mosul yesterday, tightening their control around the landmark site in the battle to recapture Iraq's second city. The close-quarters fighting is focused on the Old City surrounding the mosque, where Isil leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi proclaimed a caliphate nearly three years ago across territory controlled by the group in both Iraq and Syria.

More Details:

<http://www.independent.ie/world-news/middle-east/iraq-elite-forces-close-in-on-mosul-mosque-as-fears-rise-for-residents-35577892.html>

- **U.S. Military launches investigation into deadly airstrike in Iraq**

The U.S. military has launched a formal investigation into what role the U.S. played in the deaths of dozens of civilians in Mosul, Iraq, earlier this month, amid warnings from a top American general that the dense urban fight is making it harder to avoid killing innocents. Gen. Joseph Votel, head of U.S. Central Command, told Congress that Islamic State militants are exploiting American sensitivities to civilian casualties, using people as human shields to avoid being targeted by strikes.

More Details:

<http://www.4029tv.com/article/us-military-launches-investigation-into-deadly-airstrike-in-iraq/9205518>

- **Trump: 'We're doing Very Well in Iraq,' U.S. Troops 'fighting like never before'**

On Tuesday, President Trump told a group of senators gathered for a White House reception that "we're doing very well in Iraq" where "our soldiers are fighting like never before." He said this assessment was based on a long telephone call with Secretary of Defense James Mattis. Trump's comments were interpreted by some critics as a slam against the American troops who fought in the Iraq War – if they are "fighting like never before" now, the argument goes, Trump must think the soldiers deployed to Iraq in the Bush administration were not fighting so hard.

More Details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/03/29/trump-were-doing-very-well-in-iraq-u-s-troops-fighting-like-never-before/>

- **Iraqi officials: Suicide truck bombing kills 15 in Baghdad**

A suicide truck bomb targeted a police checkpoint in southern Baghdad on Wednesday night, killing 15 people and wounding 45, according to Iraqi officials. The bomber detonated the vehicle, an oil tanker laden with explosives, security and hospital officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity under regulations. Three policemen were among the dead while the rest were civilians, and a number of policemen were also wounded, the officials said.

More Details:

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/world/2017/mar/30/iraqi-officials-suicide-truck-bombing-kills-15-in-baghdad-1587628.html>

- **Iraqi forces in Mosul see deadliest urban combat since World War II**

U.S.-backed Iraqi forces battling the Islamic State to liberate Mosul are suffering heavy casualties in the deadliest urban combat since World War II, according to top U.S. commanders for the Middle East. Gen. Joseph Votel, the head of U.S. Central Command, said Wednesday that 774 Iraqi troops were killed and 4,600 wounded since the Mosul offensive began in October.

More Details:

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2017/03/29/united-states-mosul-isis-deadly-combat-world-war-ii/99787764/#>

- **‘Wherever we went, we got bombed’: Mosul refugees slam Iraqi & US anti-ISIS offensive**

Exploring the destroyed parts of Mosul, RT has been able to gather more evidence in support of Amnesty International's report which accuses the US-led coalition and Iraqi government of indiscriminately bombing houses with civilians inside along with ISIS targets. The debris of destroyed houses, schools and hospitals have turned Iraq's second largest city into an urban graveyard after the US-led coalition and Iraqi government forces launched the offensive in October to liberate the city.

More Details:

<https://www.rt.com/news/382771-mosul-airstrikes-civilian-casualties/>

- **Iraq on way to reconstruction after Mosul ‘victory’**

“Iraq's victory in its war against Daesh” was the highlight of Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al Abadi's address at the 28th Arab summit on Wednesday. The two-year battle has "restored Iraqis' faith in

their army, which cleansed its territories from Daesh after it claimed around one-third of its land," he said. "It was a massive victory against Daesh. We have promised our people that Iraq will regain its liberty, and this promise was fulfilled, with the participation of Iraqis of different religions and sects," added Abadi, stressing that Iraq has been paying a "high price" for the hatred and sectarian discourse for years.

More Details:

<http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/iraq-way-reconstruction-after-mosul-victory%E2%80%99>

- **UN Representative Strongly Condemns Terrorist Bombing in South Baghdad Yousufiyah Area**

The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General (SRSG) for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, strongly condemns the terrorist bombing in Yousufiyah at Baghdad's southern entrance late Wednesday, 29 March 2017, in which a number of people were killed or wounded. The SRSG expresses condolences to the families of the dead and wishes the injured a speedy recovery.

More Details:

<http://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/un-representative-strongly-condemns-terrorist-bombing-south-baghdad-yousufiyah-area>

- **Iraqi government spokesperson: Raising Kurdistan flag in Kirkuk unconstitutional**

Iraqi government disapproved the motion that was passed in the Kirkuk Provincial Council to hoist Kurdistan flag over government offices across the province. Saad al-Hadithi, the spokesperson of the Iraqi government, in a phone call with Kurdistan24 on Tuesday said that the two-flag decision is against the Iraqi Constitution, stating that Kirkuk Provincial Council lacks the authority to make such a decision.

More Details:

<http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/de69cab0-97e4-4130-ad56-bd46b6da7d48/iraqi-government-spokesperson--raising-kurdistan-flag-in-kirkuk-unconstitutional>

2. SYRIA

- **Moscow suspects Jabhat al-Nusra could be used to topple Assad**

Suspensions remain that the Jabhat al-Nusra terror group could be used to topple Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview with the US National Interest magazine.

More details:

<http://tass.com/politics/938316>

- **Syrian Air Force Turns Eastern Damascus into Hell for Terrorists**

According to the military source in Damascus, the Syrian Air Force has conducted over 45 airstrikes in Jobar, targeting the movements and hideouts of Tahrir al-Sham Hay'at (the Levant Liberation Board) and Faylaq al-Rahman.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960109000697>

- **America's Biggest Foes Gather In Moscow To Discuss 'Decline Of The West'**

Russian President Vladimir Putin hosted Iranian leader Hassan Rouhani in Moscow this week, promising closer ties between two countries that the U.S. wants keep from becoming too friendly.

More details:

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/03/29/americas-biggest-foes-gather-in-moscow-to-discuss-decline-of-the-west/>

- **Geneva peace talks: Syrian opposition meets Russian delegation**

The main opposition group at ongoing UN-backed Syria peace talks in Geneva met Russia's deputy foreign minister on Wednesday.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/geneva-peace-talks-syrian-opposition-meets-russian-delegation-956538>

- **Regime forces kill 12 civilians in Syria**

A total of 12 people were killed Wednesday in an air operation conducted by Syrian regime forces in areas controlled by opposition fighters, a civil defense official told Anadolu Agency.

More details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/regime-forces-kill-12-civilians-in-syria/782784>

- **Coming Home? A Political Settlement in Syria Must Focus on Refugees**

A sustainable political settlement to end the multiple conflicts in Syria will not be possible without a real focus on the challenges of refugee returns. The complexities of the Syrian wars as well as previous international experiences with similar conflicts underscore that ensuring long-term peace requires a more focused attention on the challenges for effective repatriation of refugees and internally displaced persons, including significant security and protection guarantees.

More details:

<http://carnegie-mec.org/2017/03/31/coming-home-political-settlement-in-syria-must-focus-on-refugees-pub-68453>

- **Syrian Arab Republic delegation presents a set of questions to de Mistura about the first basket**

The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic, headed by Dr. Bashar al-Jaafari, presented during a session of talks on Wednesday with UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura a set of questions about the first basket of Syrian-Syrian dialogue.

More details:

<http://sana.sy/en/?p=103218>

- **Displacement from Syria to Syria: IDPs Moving to Government Safety**

Let's make a journey. The place is Syria but the journey belongs to years ago, as people have a short memory, especially those who are in political positions. Idlib is a Syrian city which is under control of the oppositions.

More details:

<http://www.syrianews.cc/displacement-syria-syria-idps-moving-government-safety/>

- **ISIS Shelling Halts Work on Damaged Tabqa Dam**

The ISIS terrorist group shelled on Wednesday positions held by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) at the Tabqa Dam on the Euphrates River, forcing engineers to pause efforts to stop a potential collapse, a Reuters witness said.

More details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/asharq-al-awsat-english/news-middle-east/isis-shelling-halts-work-damaged-tabqa-dam>

3. IRAN

- **Expert: Bipartisan Bills Tackle U.S. Failure to Deter Iran since Nuke Deal**

Two bipartisan bills introduced in Congress last week aim to remedy the United States' failure to deter Iran's aggression since the 2015 nuclear deal, Tzvi Kahn, a senior Iran analyst for the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, wrote Wednesday in a policy brief.

More details:

<http://www.thetower.org/4792-expert-bipartisan-bills-tackle-u-s-failure-to-deter-iran-since-nuke-deal/>

- **Will Iran's Rouhani survive the bleak economy?**

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani is credited with pulling the economy back from the brink, but less than two months before his re-election bid, has he done enough to convince voters?

More details:

<http://www.france24.com/en/20170330-will-irans-rouhani-survive-bleak-economy>

- **Iran helicopter moves**

Russia's Rostec announced that Russian Helicopters is part of a deal between Rostec and Industrial Development and Renovation Organization (IDRO) of Iran. The deal announced is a cooperation in setting up a joint venture for assembling light civil helicopters manufactured in Russia which may take place in Iran.

More details:

<https://airinsight.com/2017/03/29/iran-helicopter-moves/>

- **US should use 'military means' against Iran: CENTCOM chief**

The United States should consider using "military means" against Iran, US Army General Joseph Votel says, calling Tehran "the greatest long-term threat to stability" in the Middle East.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/03/30/516094/US-Votel-Iran-Middle-East-war>

- **Foua and Kefraya Shia residents anxiously await evacuation**

The Iranian and Qatari governments reached a deal on Wednesday that would allow civilians and combatants to evacuate four 4 besieged towns in the Damascus and Idlib governorates.

More details:

http://en.abna24.com/news/middle-east/foua-and-kefraya-shia-residents-anxiously-await-evacuation_820835.html

- **Iran and Russia to boost trade exchanges to \$10 billion**

Tehran and Moscow intend to increase the volume of their annual trade exchanges to \$10 billion , Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on March 29, 2017.

More details:

<http://neftgaz.ru/en/news/view/159693-Iran-and-Russia-to-boost-trade-exchanges-to-10-billion>

- **Iranian Revolutionary Guards ‘a terrorist army’: US House of Representatives**

The US House of Representatives speaker Paul Ryan called to designate the Iranian Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist group.

More details:

<http://aranews.net/2017/03/iranian-revolutionary-guards-a-terrorist-army-us-house-of-representatives/>

- **Iran-Backed Militia Group Calls for Collective Action to Reclaim Golan Heights, Destroy Israel**

Over the past six years, Iran has played a key role in propping up the embattled regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, by sending Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (I.R.G.C.) military personnel as well as recruiting, funding, training and leading an extensive network of Iraqi, Lebanese, Pakistani and Afghan Shiite militia forces.

More details:

<http://www.mei.edu/content/article/io/iran-backed-militia-group-calls-collective-action-reclaim-golan-heights-destroy-israel>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Israel Seeks Ammonia Solution as Report Warns of Toxic Threat**

The Israeli government is scrambling to help one of the country's biggest exporters stay in business after a report found its operations in a major urban area put thousands of lives at risk.

More details:

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-03-30/israel-seeks-ammonia-solution-as-report-warns-of-toxic-threat>

- **Israel says to cut another \$2 million from its U.N. contribution**

Israel said on Wednesday it would cut a further \$2 million from its already reduced contribution this year to the United Nations in protest at resolutions taken against it at the world body's various forums.

More details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-unitednations-idUSKBN17031K>

- **US Ambassador to Israel David Friedman sworn in**

US Vice President Pence, who administered the oath of office, said the appointment of Trump's former lawyer was 'one of the clearest signs' of the president's commitment to Israel and the Jewish people.

More details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4942623,00.html>

- **Israel Undermines Chances for Peace with Palestinians - Jordan's King**

Jordanian King Abdullah II thinks that Israel undermines chances for peaceful resolution of conflict with the Palestinian Authority.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703291052086164-israel-jordan-palestine-king/>

- **Israel holds anti-BDS summit at United Nation**

Palestinian ambassador says anti-BDS efforts will fail as Israel also cuts it funding to UN to protest resolutions.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/israel-blasts-bds-movement-summit-170330042408157.html>

- **Israeli Soldiers Injure Several Palestinians In Jenin**

Israeli soldiers invaded, on Thursday at dawn, Jenin city, in the northern part of the occupied West Bank, and clashed with local youths, causing many to suffer the severe effects of teargas inhalation, and confiscated three computers from the home of a blind former political prisoner in Ya'bad nearby town.

More details:

<http://imemc.org/article/israeli-soldiers-injure-several-palestinians-in-jenin/>

- **Hamas threatens top Israeli officials over Gaza Assassination**

Hamas released a video published Wednesday evening promising to kill senior Israeli defense officials in revenge for the assassination of senior Hamas operative Mazen Fuqaha last week.

More details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Watch-Hamas-threatens-top-Israeli-officials-over-Gaza-assassination-485607>

- **Israel minister swims against tide with Gaza island plan**

An Israeli minister has gone against the tide in proposing a way he says would alleviate conditions in the Gaza Strip while maintaining his country's security control -- build an island nearby.

More details:

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/news/world/israel-minister-swims-against-tide-with-gaza-island-plan/article/489118#ixzz4cnUIWaRy>

- **Gaza security forces release Fatah official after 2 months in prison**

Fatah leader Arafat Abu Shabab was released on Wednesday after spending two months imprisoned in the besieged Gaza Strip.

More details:

<http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?ID=776192>

- **Slovakia's President in Israel 'to learn and to share'**

Andrej Kiska, on the first ever visit to Israel by a Slovakian president, said at a welcome reception hosted by President Reuven Rivlin on Wednesday that he and his delegation had come "to learn and to share."

More details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Slovakias-president-in-Israel-to-learn-and-to-share-485549>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Arab League Summit: King Abdullah's Delicate Balancing Act – OpEd**

King Abdullah of Jordan welcomes the 22 members of the Arab League to Amman on March 29th to discuss the most pressing issues facing the region.

More details:

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/30032017-arab-league-summit-king-abdullahs-delicate-balancing-act-oped/>

- **EU official advocates 'collective approach' to regional stability**

European Union High Representative Federica Mogherini on Wednesday said the EU and the Arab region are "going through years of suffering. Peace and reconciliation can only come through a truly collective and cooperative approach."

More details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1076331/middle-east>

- **Abbas meets Trump envoy in Jordan**

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has met one of US President Donald Trump's top envoys on the sidelines of an Arab summit as the White House seeks ways to restart Israeli-Palestinian talks.

More details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/7463d98e-84d0-4222-b7cb-ce0d7e655750.aspx>

- **Hariri Accompanies Saudi King from Jordan to Riyadh**

Prime Minister Saad Hariri accompanied Saudi King Salman to Riyadh aboard a royal Saudi plane after the end of the Arab Summit in Jordan on Wednesday, the PM's office said.

More details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/227743-hariri-accompanies-saudi-king-from-jordan-to-riyadh>

- **Security Forces Detain Suspect in Bourj Barajneh Bombings, Monitoring Hizbullah**

Security forces arrested a Syrian national suspected of having links to the deadly Bourj al-Baranjneh twin bombings and of monitoring Hizbullah positions, media reports said on Thursday.

More details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/227768-security-forces-detain-suspect-in-bourj-barajneh-bombings-monitoring-hizbullah>

- **Hezbollah Slams Arab League for Echoing Certain Resolutions**

A top official of Lebanon's Hezbollah criticized the Arab League for turning into a "cover-up" to echo "certain resolutions" formulated by the others.

More details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/03/30/1366664/hezbollah-slams-arab-league-for-echoing-certain-resolutions>

- **Hezbollah, Syrian Army Engage in Fierce Clashes with Terrorists near Syria Border with Lebanon**

The Lebanese Hezbollah Resistance Movement and the Syrian Army troops fended off a heavy offensive of the Al-Nusra Front (also known as Fatah al-Sham Front or the Levant Liberation Board) in a town in Northwestern Damascus, killing a number of terrorists, including a commander.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960109000281>

- **Jordan: Arrest Sudan's Bashir**

Jordan should deny entry to Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir or arrest him if he enters the country, Human Rights Watch said today. Al-Bashir has been invited to visit Jordan on March 29, 2017, to attend the 28th summit of the Arab League, news reports say.

More details:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/28/jordan-arrest-sudans-bashir>

- **Jordan, Germany sign \$47.5M solar energy deal for Syrian refugees**

Jordan and Germany on Tuesday signed a \$47.5M (€44M) grant agreement to fund the Energy Supply for Host Communities and Syrian Refugees project's second phase, according to a Planning and International Cooperation Ministry statement.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/jordan-germany-sign-475m-solar-energy-deal-syrian-refugees-956278>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Egypt's Sisi to visit Saudi Arabia, US in April**

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has accepted an invitation from Saudi Arabia's King Salman to visit his country in April, Saudi state news agency SPA quoted its foreign minister as saying on Wednesday.

More Details

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170329-egypts-sisi-to-visit-saudi-arabia-us-in-april/>

- **Saudi Arabia: Demand for used cars drops sharply with the departure of expat workers**

Demand for second-hand cars has dropped sharply in the local market while the supply has increased since mid-2016, according to a report in the Arabic daily Makkah. Investors in the used cars market attributed the phenomenon to the departure of a large number of retrenched expatriate workers, especially those working in the contracting sector.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/saudi-arabia-demand-used-cars-drops-sharply-departure-expat-workers-956630>

- **GEMS Education breaks ground on the first school at Dubai South**

GEMS Education has broken ground on its new world-class learning institution at the Dubai South Residential District. The ceremony was attended by His Excellency Khalifa Al Zaffin, Executive Chairman, Dubai Aviation City Corporation and Dubai South, Sunny Varkey, Founder and Executive Chairman, GEMS Education Group, Dino Varkey, Chief Executive Officer, GEMS Education and Dr. Abdulla Al Karam, Chairman of the Board of Directors and Director General of the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA).

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/pr/gems-education-breaks-ground-first-school-dubai-south-956644>

- **After the Somali massacre, should we sell more Arms to the Saudis?**

Earlier this month, a dramatic event occurred in the war in Yemen that could even shock those numbed by the continued pace of civilian casualties. A military craft and helicopter reportedly engaged in an attack on a boat carrying over 140 Somali refugees killing upward of 42 people on board.

More Details

http://www.newsweek.com/after-somali-massacre-should-we-sell-more-arms-saudis-574840?piiano_t=1

- **UN: Military Operations Escalate in Yemen as famine looms**

Military operations in Yemen are escalating and the humanitarian and economic situation is rapidly deteriorating in the Arab world's poorest nation, which is on the brink of famine, the U.N. special envoy for the country said Wednesday.

More Details

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/UN_UNITED_NATIONS_YEMEN?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-03-29-21-45-37

- **‘Community key to preserving Al Reem Reserve’**

Involving and empowering the community will play a significant role in preserving Qatar’s Al Reem Biosphere Reserve, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) Doha Office has said. “Certain areas should be better protected, with focus on management and involvement of the community, especially by regulating grazing or hunting so as to keep the green areas alive,” Dr Anna Paolini, director, Unesco Representative in the Arab States of the Gulf and Yemen, told a press briefing yesterday.

More Details

<http://www.gulf-times.com/story/542468/Community-key-to-preserving-Al-Reem-Reserve>

- **UK, Qatar set up committee for post-Brexit 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 on Tuesday.

More Details

<http://www.arabianbusiness.com/uk-qatar-set-up-committee-for-post-brexit-trade-deal-668810.html>

- **Trump administration drops human rights conditions to sell fighter jets to Bahrain**

The Trump administration has told Congress it plans to approve a multibillion-dollar sale of F-16 fighter jets to Bahrain without the human rights conditions imposed by the Obama administration.

More Details

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/30/trump-administration-human-rights-fighter-jets-bahrain>

- **Omani currency faces 'devaluation threat', says BMI**

Oman is most likely to face a “forced currency devaluation” in coming years due weak oil prices and low financial buffers, according to a new report. In its report issued on Wednesday, BMI Research, a Fitch Group Company, said that the “probability of such a move is rising.”

More Details

<http://www.arabianbusiness.com/omani-currency-faces-devaluation-threat-says-bmi-668833.html>

7. EGYPT

- **Egypt inaugurates makeshift lab to restore Khufu's second boat**

The Egyptian Antiquities Ministry inaugurated on Wednesday a temporary large laboratory for restoring artifacts at the excavation site of the Egyptian-Japanese commission in Khufu's second boat at the pyramids area in Giza. The inauguration ceremony was attended by Egyptian and Japanese archaeology officials working jointly at the site.

More Details

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/30/c_136168880.htm

- **Egypt's Cabinet approves budget, targeting 9.1% deficit**

Egypt's Cabinet approved the country's budget for 2017/18 on Wednesday, targeting a 9.1 percent deficit for the year, Finance Minister Amr El-Garhy said. The government expects the deficit for the current year, ending June 30, to be between 10.5 percent and 10.7 percent, against last year's 12.2 percent.

More Details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1076211/business-economy>

- **Morsi's nephew handed 3 year jail term**

An Egyptian court has sentenced the nephew of former Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi and 26 other to three years in prison each after they were convicted of violence in the eastern Nile Delta province.

More Details

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170329-morsis-nephew-handed-3-year-jail-term/>

- **Back to square one: Egypt's restive politics**

For most of those who hit Cairo's Tahrir Square in 2011 demanding democracy and a freer society, President Hosni Mubarak was a symbol of repression. After his ouster, the dictator was tried for corruption and causing the death of hundreds of protesters. Still, his release last week, after six years of detention at Cairo's military hospital, was received by Egyptians as just a routine development.

More Details

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/back-to-square-one-egypts-restive-politics/article17739265.ece>

- **Sisi government seizes billions in assets of Brotherhood members**

Since 2014, the government of Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi has seized property and assets belonging to Muslim Brotherhood members valued at 50 billion Egyptian pounds (\$2.8 billion), Erem News Network reported on Tuesday.

More Details

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170329-sisi-government-seizes-billions-in-assets-of-brotherhood-members/>

- **Only president can help me: Letter of Ukrainian prisoner, convicted in Egypt**

A native of Uzhhorod, Edward Chikosh has been in an Egyptian prison for six years. For a long time he was engaged in tourism business in this country, he headed the representative office in Africa and the Middle East of one of the largest tourist companies - Tez Tour. As the media write, during his work in Egypt, he closely cooperated with the Ukrainian embassy, organized ambassadorial receptions, and in 2009 during the special operation "Cast Lead," he helped evacuate Ukrainians from the Gaza Strip.

More Details

<http://112.international/article/only-president-can-help-me-letter-of-ukrainian-prisoner-convicted-in-egypt-15509.html>

- **Georgetown Professor explores legacy of Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser in new**

Despite his death over four decades ago, the late president of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser, remains an iconic figure in his country and the Arab world. A new book by a Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) professor delves into how his memory has been kept alive and reimagined through art and literature.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/pr/georgetown-professor-explores-legacy-egypts-gamal-abdel-nasser-new-956614>

- **Egypt's Interior Ministry agrees to transfer detainee with rare infection to private hospital**

The Interior Ministry announced its willingness to transfer detainee Ahmed al-Khateeb to a private hospital for medical treatment after he was diagnosed with the rare visceral leishmaniasis infection. The ministry released a statement to this effect on Monday, after a preventative team conducted medical screenings in Monufiya governorate, including anyone who had any contact with Khateeb.

More Details

<http://www.madamasr.com/en/2017/03/29/news/u/egypts-interior-ministry-agrees-to-transfer-detainee-with-rare-infection-to-private-hospital/>

- **Moody's sees Egypt's economy growing but reforms slipping**

The economic picture for Egypt is improving, ratings agency Moody's said on Wednesday, but a public backlash will likely lead the Mideast country to slow reforms undertaken to secure a bailout from the international Monetary Fund.

More Details

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/ML_EGYPT_ECONOMY?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-03-29-11-58-37

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Algeria determined to boost cultural ties with Iran**

Algerian Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal told Iranian Culture Minister Salehi Amiri that Algeria is determined to develop cultural ties with Iran.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124481/Algeria-determined-to-boost-cultural-ties-with-Iran>

- **Algerian aid to Saharawi refugees purely humanitarian**

The head of the Algerian Red Crescent, Saida Benhabyles, said Wednesday that Algeria's aid to Western Sahara people was purely humanitarian and not politically motivated.

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/17532-algerian-aid-to-saharawi-refugees-purely-humanitarian>

- **Governor fired as new violence hits Morocco province**

Moroccan authorities fired a provincial governor after angry protesters clashed with police leaving dozens of officers reportedly injured, an interior ministry source told reporters.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/91c77dcf-1a66-42e2-9f55-968e43ceb766.aspx>

- **All power to the palace**

After a five-month deadlock during which Moroccan Prime Minister Abdelilah Benkirane was unable to form a coalition government, he has been ousted by King Mohammed VI, showing his increasing unwillingness to tolerate any ruler beside himself. An analysis by Moroccan dissident and journalist Ali Anouzla

More Details:

<http://en.qantara.de/content/moroccos-monarchy-and-the-conflict-with-the-pjd-all-power-to-the-palace>

- **Morocco: Mohammed VI Successfully Tames Islamists – Analysis**

On his return from a long African journey, Morocco's King Mohammed VI, disturbed by Benkirane's inability and/or unwillingness to show suppleness in the formation of the coalition, fired him and replaced him by El Othmani as head of government-designate.

More Details:

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/30032017-morocco-mohammed-vi-successfully-tames-islamists-analysis/>

- **Tunisia Ex-PM Jomaa Launches 'Non-ideological' Political Party**

Tunisia's former Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa launched a new political party on Wednesday which he said would be non-ideological and could "restore hope for Tunisians" frustrated by the country's transition.

More Details:

<http://www.voanews.com/a/tunisia-jomaa-new-party/3787879.html>

- **Tunisia Condemned Iran Regime for Its Scheme to Destabilize Bahrain**

As the Bahraini authorities arrested the group planning to launch terrorist operations in the country, Tunisia strongly condemned all measures leading to destabilizing and insecurity in Bahrain.

More Details:

<http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/terrorism-fundamentalism/22432-tunisia-condemned-iran-regime-for-its-scheme-to-destabilize-bahrain>

- **East Libyan fighter jet crashes outside Tobruk, four killed**

A fighter jet belonging to east Libyan forces crashed in a residential area south of the city of Tobruk on Wednesday, killing the pilot and a family of three, military officials said.

More Details:

http://af.reuters.com/article/libyaNews/idAFL5N1H6692?feedType=RSS&feedName=libyaNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+reuters%2FAfricaLibyaNews+%28News+%2F+Africa+%2F+Libya+News%29&&rpc=401

- **General Libyan Union of Chambers calls for urgent meeting on economic juncture**

The General Libyan Union of Chambers (GLUCC) has called on the Presidential Council (PC) and the Central Bank of Libya (CBL) as well as the Planning and Economic Ministries, besides the other

relevant authorities, to hold a meeting to discuss the needed urgent decisions to be made to resolve Libya's current economic crunch.

More Details:

<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/economy/general-libyan-union-chambers-calls-urgent-meeting-economic-juncture>

- **Struggle for control of Libya's oil threatens to deepen conflicts**

A power struggle for control of Libya's oil is threatening to deepen splits in the country and undermine the fragile authority of the UN-backed Libyan Government of National Accord, the GNA.

More Details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/29/struggle-for-control-of-libyas-oil-threatens-to-deepen-conflicts>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Taliban militants suffer heavy casualties in US airstrike in East of Afghanistan**

The Taliban insurgents suffered heavy casualties in an airstrike conducted by the US forces in eastern Nangarhar province of Afghanistan.

More Details:

<http://www.khaama.com/taliban-militants-suffer-heavy-casualties-in-us-airstrike-in-east-of-afghanistan-02470>

- **Pak-Afghan Joint Committee lays emphasis on people-to-people contact**

The sixth meeting of Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Committee formulated Beyond Boundaries Declaration comprising of policy recommendations for cooperation in security, trade, education, sports, culture, visa and prisoners.

More Details:

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/29-Mar-17/pak-afghan-joint-committee-lays-emphasis-on-people-to-people-contact>

- **UK to Increase Its Role in Afghanistan after Brexit: Envoy**

The statement comes only hours after UK Prime Minister Theresa May announced that Britain is officially leaving the EU.

More Details:

<http://www.toloneews.com/afghanistan/uk-increase-its-role-afghanistan-after-brexit-envoy>

- **Afghan Governor Says US Marines' Deployment Will Reverse Taliban Gains**

Afghan officials appear confident a planned deployment of about 300 U.S. Marines will help local forces reverse insurgent gains in the embattled southern province of Helmand.

More Details:

<http://www.voanews.com/a/afghan-governor-says-us-marines-deployment-will-reverse-taliban-gains/3786580.html>

- **Afghanistan: Top General Arrested for Corruption**

A senior Afghan general tasked with cleaning up corruption in war-torn Helmand Province was arrested on charges of corruption and misuse of power, local media reported on Tuesday.

More Details:

<https://www.occrp.org/en/daily/6244-afghanistan-top-general-arrested-for-corruption>

- **Bahrain, Pakistan for greater ties**

Industry, Commerce and Tourism Minister Zayed bin Rashid Al Zayani yesterday held talks with Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on boosting bilateral relations

More Details:

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppId=31781&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=2>

- **Pakistan Embassy holds reception on national day**

-Embassy of Islamic Republic of Pakistan held on Wednesday a reception on the occasion of national day at Dama Rose Hotel in Damascus.

More Details:

<http://sana.sy/en/?p=103248>

- **Pak, Malaysia first-ever naval exercise concludes**

The first- ever Pakistan Navy and Royal Malaysian Navy, naval exercise MALPAK-17 concluded in the adjoining waters of Malacca Straits.

More Details:

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/03/30/pak-malaysia-first-ever-naval-exercise-concludes/>

- **Army says state institutions' concerns regarding Hussain Haqqani 'stand vindicated'**

The Army's public relations wing, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), on Wednesday stated that the claims made by Hussain Haqqani, Pakistan's former ambassador to the US, regarding the issuance of diplomatic visas in a recent op-ed in an American news publication "vindicate [the] stance of Pakistan's state institutions".

More Details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1323595/army-says-state-institutions-concerns-in-haqqani-scandal-stand-vindicated>

- **Afghanistan's women judges call for Supreme Court place**

Female judges on Tuesday called for at least one of their number to be appointed to Afghanistan's Supreme Court.

More Details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/30/03/2017/Afghanistan-s-women-judges-call-for-Supreme-Court-place>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkey sees no clear US strategy for Raqqa operation as Tillerson visits**

As Rex Tillerson visits Ankara with the main agenda of a ground operation on Daesh-stronghold Raqqa, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu talked about different voices coming from the U.S. side and warned again for not using PKK-affiliated groups in the operation. Commenting on recent issues in a live broadcast of public broadcaster TRT on Wednesday before U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's visit to Ankara, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said, "There are different voices coming from the U.S about the Raqqa Operation." Çavuşoğlu stated that the extradition of the Gülenist Terror Group (FETÖ)'s ringleader and Syria and Iraq issues would likely be discussed during the meeting today.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2017/03/30/turkey-sees-no-clear-us-strategy-for-raqqa-operation-as-tillerson-visits>

- **UAE Ministry of Economy seeks stronger ties with Turkey, Brazil and El Salvador on sidelines of GMIS**

The Ministry of Economy has discussed prospects to boost industrial, investment and trade cooperation with Turkey, Brazil and El Salvador on the sidelines of the Global Manufacturing and Industrialisation Summit, GMIS, in Abu Dhabi.

More Details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302606016>

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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