



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

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30 JANUARY 2018

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1. IRAQ

- **Another Faction Leaves Abadi's Electoral Alliance**

An Iraqi Sunni faction announced on Monday that it has withdrawn from Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi's electoral alliance to enter another coalition. MP Abdulrahman Luaizi, head of a Sunni bloc from northern Nineveh Province, said it has now formed an alliance with the electoral list of MP Ahmed al-Jabouri.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/411032>

- **Kurdish blocs withdrew from today's House of Representatives session**

The Kurdish blocs withdrew in the House of Representatives on Monday, from the session of the Council, after the inclusion of the draft budget law while Deputy Prime Minister attended the meetings of the Council for discussion on the budget. MP Abdelqadir Mohammed, a member of PUK bloc stated in a statement to PUKmedia "The Kurdish blocs withdrew from the meeting after the introduction of the draft budget bill for 2018," pointing out that some of the Sunni blocs also withdrew from the session.

More Details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=42644

- **Kurdish PM: we will continue to boycott sessions as long as budget is tabled**

Lawmaker with the Kurdish Alliance Perwan Khailani said the government's answers to the proposals on the budget introduced by the Alliance are unconvincing. She said the Alliance presented nine proposals on the budget bill summing up its viewpoint on the issue.

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/23117/Kurdish-PM-we-will-continue-to-boycott-sessions-as-long-as-budget-is-tabled>

- **Barham Saleh Meets Italian Ambassador**

The Italian ambassador to Iraq, Bruno Pasquino and the Italian consul general in the Kurdistan region, Serena Muroli discussed with President of the Democracy and Justice Alliance, Barham Saleh the latest developments and political and economic changes in Kurdistan, Iraq and the region."

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?tex%252fzFqSv9pL69muL%252fjCFQ%253d%253d

- **Political development in Iraq positive: UN Envoy in Baghdad**

A United Nations official in Baghdad said he is optimistic about political developments in Iraq, adding that the UN tries to help the Iraqi people and government. We hope that, with the timely election and with maximum turnout, the Iraqis enjoy the benefits of the Daesh defeat, said the UN Envoy in Baghdad Yan Kubish, in a meeting with Majlis (Iranian parliament) speaker's advisor for international affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on Sunday.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82812392>

- **Iraqi parliament votes to lift sanctions on Kurdistan region banks - TV**

The Iraqi parliament voted on Monday to lift sanctions imposed on banks in the Kurdistan region over an independence referendum, two main Iraqi TV channels reported. Lawmakers in Baghdad approved that sanctions be lifted after they had “fulfilled their purpose” by enforcing federal controls on the Kurdish banking industry, said a copy of the measure published by Baghdad-based al-Sumariya TV.

More Details:

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-iraq-kurds/iraqi-parliament-votes-to-lift-sanctions-on-kurdistan-region-banks-tv-idUKKBN1F11EJ?rpc=401&>

- **Iraq to Comply With OPEC Cuts despite Lifting Oil Export Capacity**

Despite efforts to ramp up its oil export capacity, OPEC’s second-largest producer, Iraq, will comply with the production cuts pact, Iraq’s Oil Minister Jabbar al-Luiebi said at a conference in London on Monday. In the OPEC/non-OPEC production restriction deal, Iraq agreed to cut 210,000 bpd off its October 2016 level and cap production at 4.351 million bpd.

More Details:

<https://oilprice.com/Energy/Crude-Oil/Iraq-To-Comply-With-OPEC-Cuts-Despite-Lifting-Oil-Export-Capacity.html>

- **Iraq Plans Oil Refinery at Faw**

Iraq plans to build an oil refinery at the Faw Port on the Persian Gulf with the cooperation of two Chinese companies and is seeking investors to build three more, the oil ministry said on its website

on Monday. The refinery in Faw will have a 300,000 barrel-per-day capacity and include a petrochemical plant, it said, Reuters reported.

More Details:

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/energy/81019/iraq-plans-oil-refinery-at-faw>

- **Arab countries' cooperation help in eliminating terror - Iraq PM**

Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar Abadi said Monday close cooperation among Arab countries contributed to decline of terrorism in the region, calling for promotion of economic and social relations among Arab people to achieve security and political stability.

More Details:

<https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2687220&Language=en>

- **Iraq denies Peshmerga troop advance on Kirkuk**

The Iraqi army on Monday denied reports about a Kurdish Peshmerga advance on the oil-rich Kirkuk province. In a statement, the Joint Operations Command described reports about mobilization of the Peshmerga forces near Kirkuk as “fabricated”. “There is no change in the position of the Peshmerga and the federal forces,” the Command said, describing the reports as aiming to “mislead the public opinion”.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/iraq-denies-peshmerga-troop-advance-on-kirkuk/1045769>

- **Iraq Reopens 600 Main Streets, Lifts 281 Security Checkpoints in Baghdad**

Remarkable improvement in life conditions has been recorded in Baghdad as a result of local authorities renovating and reopening streets. At least 600 main streets and exits in Baghdad and its surrounding neighborhoods have been reopened, Director of Baghdad Operations Command Media Office Brigadier General Qasim Atiya told Asharq Al-Awsat.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1158316/iraq-reopens-600-main-streets-lifts-281-security-checkpoints-baghdad>

- **United States suspends Abrams tank maintenance in Iraq over Popular Mobilization Forces**

The United States has suspended a maintenance program for Abrams tanks in Iraq because one of the military vehicles has allegedly been provided to the popular Hashd al-Sha'abi force, the Iraqi press has reported. The US firm General Dynamics, which produces the Abrams tanks, has stopped its maintenance program in Iraq since December 2017, Baghdad-based Alghad Press reported on Sunday.

More Details:

http://en.abna24.com/news/middle-east/united-states-suspends-abrams-tank-maintenance-in-iraq-over-popular-mobilization-forces_879745.html

- **Six security personnel killed, wounded in armed attack, house explosion in Kirkuk**

Six security personnel were killed and injured in a house explosion and armed attack that targeted a checkpoint in Kirkuk, security sources said. "An armed attack launched by unidentified gunmen against a checkpoint of Tribal Mobilization Forces in al-Rashad town, south of Kirkuk, leaving one personnel killed and three others wounded," the source told Baghdad Today website on Monday.

More Details:

<https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/four-paramilitary-personnel-killed-wounded-armed-attack-south-kirkuk/>

- **ISIS Attacks Vex Security Forces NE of Baghdad; 15 Killed in Iraq**

Although a ban on international flights remains imposed on Kurdistan, the Iraqi parliament voted to remove sanctions on Kurdistan's banks. Journalists continue to face violent attacks from politician's bodyguards.

More Details:

<https://original.antiwar.com/updates/2018/01/29/isis-attacks-vex-security-forces-ne-baghdad-15-killed-iraq/>

2. SYRIA

- **Not aware of civilian casualties in Afrin: Pentagon**

The Pentagon said Monday it has no information about civilian casualties in Syria's Afrin region. "I am not aware of any incidents regarding what you just specified, Pentagon spokesman Colonel Rob

Manning told reporters who were asking about allegations by PYD/PKK terrorists that Turkey's military operation there had caused civilian deaths.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/americas/not-aware-of-civilian-casualties-in-afirin-pentagon/1046097>

- **Day 10 of Turkey's military operation in Syria**

On Monday, Turkish army announced the capture of another strategic peak as efforts to clear YPG/PKK from the Syria-Turkey border continue. Turkey's Operation Olive Branch in Syria's Afrin is being carried out to get rid of YPG/PKK from areas along the Turkish border to bring security to the region. Turkey sees YPG as an extension of PKK, a designated terror group.

More Details:

<https://www.trtworld.com/middle-east/day-10-of-turkey-s-military-operation-in-syria-14709>

- **Kremlin says absence of Syrian opposition will not hinder Sochi congress**

The absence of some representatives of the Syrian opposition will not be a serious setback for a conference on the Middle East crisis taking place at the Russian Black Sea resort of Sochi this week, Moscow said on Monday. "The fact that some representatives of the processes currently ongoing in Syria are not participating is unlikely to stop this congress from going ahead and cannot seriously sabotage it," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters on a conference call.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180129-kremlin-says-absence-of-syrian-opposition-will-not-hinder-sochi-congress/>

- **Renewed hopes for peace in Syria as delegates attend talks in Sochi**

More than 1,500 delegates have been taking part in the Syrian National Dialogue Congress in Sochi, with most coming from the war-torn country itself. The opposition umbrella group, the High Negotiations Committee, said they would not attend.

More Details:

http://www.euronews.com/2018/01/30/renewed-hopes-for-peace-in-syria-as-delegates-attend-talks-in-sochi?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+euronews%2Fen%2Fnews+%28euronews+-+news+-+en%29

- **Sochi or Vienna: Which peace plan offers best solution for Syria?**

In the space of a week, contrasting visions of a post-war Syria have been offered at two UN-backed summits – one in Sochi, hosted by Russia, the other in Vienna, the continuation of the Geneva talks. Whose diplomacy will triumph? Sochi, January 29-30, 2018 Main aims To assemble as wide a cross-section of those directly involved in the war as possible – 1,600 invitations were sent out. To present a roadmap for peace. To stay within the lines of UNSC Resolution 2254 from 2015 that calls for a “Syria-led” transition, and to reinvigorate the stalled Geneva talks.

More Details:

<https://www.rt.com/news/417321-syria-sochi-vienna-talks/>

- **France Stays Away From Syria Talks in Sochi**

As a new Russia-brokered negotiation to resolve the crisis in Syria kicked off in the Black Sea resort of Sochi Monday, France said it would not attend, stressing that the UN-led talks in Geneva are "the only legitimate framework for the settlement of the Syrian crisis", China's Xinhua news agency reported. "All other initiatives, like the Sochi meeting organised by Russia, must support the UN process and be in that framework," Alexandre Giorgini, the foreign ministry's deputy spokesperson, said in a daily briefing.

More Details:

<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/wn/newsworld.php?id=1431873>

- **Air Strikes Reportedly Kill More Than 30 in Syria's Idlib Province**

Air strikes in Syria's rebel-held Idlib province have killed at least 33 people since Sunday, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and rescue workers in Idlib said on Monday. Most of the dead were in Saraqib, a town on the main highway linking to the government-held city of Aleppo and 20 km (12 miles) northwest of the Abu al-Duhur air base, which government forces and allied militias have captured from insurgents.

More Details:

<https://www.algemeiner.com/2018/01/29/air-strikes-reportedly-kill-more-than-30-in-syrias-idlib-province/>

- **US general says not planning Manbij troop withdrawal**

The United States has no plans to withdraw troops stationed near the town of Manbij in northern Syria despite warnings from Turkey to remove its forces immediately; CNN quoted the US Central Command chief General Joseph Votel as saying. Pulling US forces from Manbij is “not something we

are looking into”, the channel’s website reported Votel as saying on Sunday during a trip to the Middle East.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180129-us-general-says-not-planning-manbij-troop-withdrawal/>

3. IRAN

- **Footage shows renewed protests in several Iranian cities overnight**

Protests renewed in Iran overnight according to videos and footage which showed people protesting in Bandar Abbas in the south, Najafabad in Isfahan in center Iran, Kerman in the southeast and in Shiraz, the center of the Fars Province. During their protest in Bandar Abbas, protestors were calling on more people to join them.

More Details:

<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2018/01/30/Footage-showes-renewed-protests-in-several-Iranian-cities-overnight-.html>

- **N-talks sought Iran’s right to nuclear energy, not sanctions relief**

The head of Iran's JCPOA follow-up committee said Mon. that the country’s main objective in nuclear negotiations with 5+1 was to establish its right to nuclear energy, not to merely call for sanctions relief. Iranian deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs, Abbas Araghchi, who also heads the follow-up committee on JCPOA, made the remarks in a televised interview Monday night, adding “the sanctions relief was not our main concern, but one of our key demands during the negotiations. Our main concern for agreeing to sit down at the negotiating table was to establish Iran’s right to peaceful nuclear energy.”

More Details:

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/131738/N-talks-sought-Iran-s-right-to-nuclear-energy-not-sanctions>

- **“Iran-Europe Talks Fruitful If Focused on Regional Issues, Not Missiles”**

A political analyst says negotiations between Iran and Europe on regional issues can be fruitful and trust-building only if the EU does not raise the issue of Tehran’s missile program. US President Donald Trump has given Europe four months to reform the nuclear agreement between Iran and six world powers known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or to strike a peripheral deal with Iran over the country’s missile activities.

More Details:

<http://ifpnews.com/exclusive/iran-europe-talks-fruitful-focused-regional-issues-not-missiles/>

- **More restrictions on opposition leaders will be lifted: MP**

A lawmaker said on Monday that loosening house arrest against the Iranian opposition leaders is a prelude to less restriction before the start of the new Persian year, which starts on March 21, 2018. Mir Hossein Mousavi and his wife Zahra Rahnavard along with Mehdi Karroubi were placed under house arrest early 2011 after they insisted on their claims of vote rigging in the 2009 presidential election and called for protests.

More Details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/420828/More-restrictions-on-opposition-leaders-will-be-lifted-MP>

- **Real aims of US, Europe in insisting on missile talks with Iran**

Former Iranian diplomat and Princeton University Professor Hossein Mousavian in an article reviewed the real aims of the US and Europe in insisting on negotiations with Iran over its missile program.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82812966>

- **Speaker's Advisor Dismisses Claims about Iran's Missile Delivery to Yemen as "Baseless"**

Advisor to the Iranian Parliament Speaker Hossein Amir Abdollahian deplored the allegations raised by Saudi Arabia and its western allies about Iran's missile delivery to Yemen as outrageous and baseless. "The charges against Iran over Yemen are completely baseless," Amir Abdollahian said in a meeting with UN special representative for Iraq Ján Kubiš in Tehran on Sunday.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13961109000566>

- **Iran FM: Trump fake evidence, bid to promote Iranophobia at UNSC**

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says US President Donald Trump is resorting to "fake evidence" to spread Iranophobia. "In the fake news department, Trump & Co. attempt to create an Iranophobic narrative at the UN Security Council -- through wining and dining and fake evidence provided by a warring neighbor," Zarif said in a post on his official Twitter account on Monday.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/01/29/550627/Zarif-trump-Twitter-Haley>

- **China reopens Iranian bank accounts: Trade official**

Head of Iran-China Chamber of Commerce Asadollah Asgaroladi said on Monday that Chinese banks reopened banking accounts of Iranian nationals residing in the country which had been closed lacking 'tax identification code'. Most of the closed bank accounts belonged to university students and Iranian tourists who were active in sales and purchases of products, he was quoted as saying by IRNA.

More Details:

<http://www.iran-daily.com/News/209049.html>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Jordan's king urges world to support Palestinians**

Jordan's King Abdullah II on Monday urged the international community to "fulfil its responsibilities" towards Palestinians in Jerusalem and support the UN agency for Palestinian refugees. His comments, following a meeting with Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas, came after US President Donald Trump sparked Arab and Muslim outrage by recognising Jerusalem as Israel's capital and suspended funds to UNRWA.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86993>

- **Palestinians to take Trump's 'Deal of Century' to ICJ**

The Palestinians will take a U.S.-proposed "Deal of the Century" -- ostensibly aimed at resolving the decades-long Israel-Palestine conflict -- to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), a senior official of the umbrella Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) said Monday. "We seek to get an ICJ endorsement that this plan runs counter to international legitimacy resolutions that East Jerusalem is an occupied territory," Saeb Erekat, a member of PLO Executive Committee, told Anadolu Agency.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/palestinians-to-take-trump-s-deal-of-century-to-icj/1045717>

- **UN Employees in Gaza Demonstrate Against US Aid Cut**

Schools, clinics and food distribution centers in the Gaza Strip were closed most of Monday by a demonstration by thousands of employees of the United Nations agency that serves Palestinian refugees. Palestinians have been angered by a U.S. decision to cut aid to the United Nations Relief and Welfare Agency (UNRWA), saying it will cause worse hardship in Gaza. More than half the enclave's two million residents depend on support from UNRWA and other humanitarian agencies.

More Details:

<https://www.voanews.com/a/un-emplyees-in-gaza-demonstrate-against-us-aid-cut-/4230224.html>

- **Palestinians see opportunity in American division over Israel**

Palestinians have taken an interest in a new study that shows Americans are more divided on Israel than "any point" in recent history, believing its findings present an opportunity to present their case to the US public. A poll released by the Pew Research Center, a leading US polling and research institute, found that the partisan split over the US' closest ally is at its largest in the past 40 years. The centre has been assessing American public support for Israel for decades.

More Details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/palestinians-see-opportunity-american-division-over-israel-2102862718>

- **Premier to attend donors meeting in Brussels**

The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) of donor countries will begin on Wednesday an extraordinary meeting at the headquarters of the European Commission in Brussels with the participation of Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah and Foreign Affairs Minister Riyad Malki. Hamdallah and Malki headed to Brussels on Tuesday, where they will also meet officials from various European countries and international organizations that provide aid to Palestine.

More Details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=nbmUcsa96251732643anbmUcs>

- **Gaza Hospital Suspends Services Due to Fuel Shortages**

Beit Hanoun Hospital in Gaza has been forced to suspend its services this morning after the health facility ran out of fuel, according to the Palestinian Information Centre. Ashraf Al-Qedra, a spokesman for the Palestinian Ministry of Health, confirmed that the hospital had halted all treatments and that patients were being transferred to other facilities in the Strip. Yesterday he warned that Al-Durra Children's Hospital was at risk of closing, due to acute fuel shortages.

More Details:

<http://www.palestinechronicle.com/gaza-hospital-suspends-services-due-fuel-shortages/>

- **Netanyahu vows to turn illegal outpost into official settlement by next week**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday vowed that his government would authorise the illegal outpost of Havat Gilad at its 4 February meeting. According to the Jerusalem Post, this will “mark the fourth time since Netanyahu took office in 2009 that his government transformed an existing outpost into a new settlement”.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180129-netanyahu-vows-to-turn-illegal-outpost-into-official-settlement-by-next-week/>

- **Israeli President Rivlin visits Greece amid criticism**

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin met Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and President Prokopis Pavlopoulos of Greece in the capital, Athens, on Monday, amid criticism from left-wing groups and others. Rivlin arrived in Athens on Sunday for a three-day visit, during which he will also meet members of the local Jewish community and travel with Tsipras to the northern coastal city of Thessaloniki.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/israeli-president-rivlin-visits-greece-criticism-180129131554866.html>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Jordan’s Security Court chief stresses effectiveness of anti-terrorist measures**

Jordan is among the countries that have suffered from terrorist attacks by members of extremist groups such as the Islamic State (ISIS) and al-Nusra Front. In an interview with The Arab Weekly, Jordan’s State Security Court President Colonel Mohammad Afif highlighted the country’s critical role in fighting terrorism.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86986>

- **King opens Royal Tank Museum**

His Majesty King Abdullah, the Supreme Commander of the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF), on Monday inaugurated The Royal Tank Museum, which exhibits around 110 Jordanian and international tanks and armoured vehicles, of which some were used in the battles of JAF, according to a Royal Court statement. The museum is considered as one of the important tank museums in the world and the “first of its kind” in the region. The museum located in King Abdullah Gardens Al Muqabalain Street showcases a number of out of service old military vehicles of JAF, as well as machines given to Jordan as gifts or through military exchange programme.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/king-opens-royal-tank-museum>

- **King meets military U.S. official**

His Majesty King Abdullah on Monday received at Al Husseinia Palace the Chief of the U.S. Central Command Gen. Joseph L. Votel for talks to review friendly ties between the two countries. The discussions, attended by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Lt. Gen. Mahmoud Freihat, also touched on the Mideast current developments and regional and global efforts to fight terrorism within a holistic strategy.

More Details:

http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=37082#.WnBGBa5l_cs

- **Protests erupt after Lebanon's foreign minister calls parliament speaker 'thug'**

Supporters of Lebanon’s Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri blocked several roads with burning tires across Beirut on Monday to protest leaked comments by Foreign Minister Gibran Bassil wherein he called their leader a “thug”. Berri’s Amal movement demanded an apology from the foreign minister, who is the son-in-law of President Michel Aoun and the head of the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM). Both FPM and Amal are close allies of Hezbollah, the country’s most powerful group.

More Details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/protests-hezbollah-after-lebanons-foreign-minister-calls-parliament-speaker-thug-1702246412>

- **AMAL, FPM Trade Gunfire Accusations amid Angry Sin el-Fil Demo**

Supporters of AMAL Movement and the Free Patriotic Movement on Monday accused each other of firing arms in Sin el-Fil's Mirna Chalouhi area, as an FPM official said guards fired in the air to defend FPM's headquarters after it was attacked by AMAL protesters. A statement issued by the FPM said

guards opened fire and called in the army after AMAL supporters “attacked the FPM's general headquarters in Mirna Chalouhi and pelted the HQ with stones.”

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/241497-amal-fpm-trade-gunfire-accusations-amid-angry-sin-el-fil-demo>

- **FPM calls supporters to restrain from reactions**

The Free Patriotic Movement called its supporters, in a statement on Monday, to refrain from reacting to the recent events in front of FPM's Sin-el-Fil office, and to leave it to the security forces to address the issue. "Members of Amal Movement attacked the FPM's headquarters in Mirna Chalouhi, whereby they hurled stones at the building, burned tires, and fired gunshots, prompting the office's security to defend themselves and call the army," the statement read.

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/87705/FPM-calls-supporters-to-restrain-from-reactions>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Rival Yemenis battle for control of Aden**

At least 10 people were killed and about 100 others were wounded as southern Yemeni separatists fought government troops in the southern city of Aden on Sunday, local medics said, deepening a rift between forces that had been on the same side. The worst clashes yet between southern separatists, who are allied to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and forces loyal to the Saudi-based government risk crippling their once united war against the Iran-aligned Houthi movement in Yemen's north.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86976>

- **Yemeni rights group apply to British DPP for arrest warrant to prosecute Ibn Salman**

The Director of Human Rights for Yemen, Ms Kim Sharif, on Monday submitted an application to the Westminster Magistrates Court and the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP), Ms Alison Saunders, to issue a warrant for the arrest of Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammed Ibn Salman, for war crimes committed in Yemen in anticipation of his imminent visit to the UK. The applicant submitted to the Court documents containing evidence of war crimes, witness' statements exhibiting instances of war crimes and reports from reputable NGOs confirming the commission of these crimes.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180129-yemeni-rights-group-apply-to-british-dpp-for-arrest-warrant-to-prosecute-ibn-salman/>

- **Saudi-led coalition calls for immediate ceasefire in Aden**

The Saudi-led Arab coalition on Tuesday called for an immediate ceasefire in Yemen's interim capital of Aden where heavy fighting has erupted between government troops and the southern separatists. "The coalition renews its call to all parties to ceasefire immediately and end all forms of armed conflict," the coalition said in a statement cited by the Saudi SPA agency.

More Details:

<https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/30/01/2018/Saudi-led-coalition-calls-for-immediate-ceasefire-in-Aden>

- **Saudi Arabia, UNHCR sign agreement to aid Syrian refugees in Lebanon**

The Saudi Development Fund and the UN's refugee agency signed an agreement to cooperate to assist Syrian refugees in Lebanon, the Saudi Press Agency reported on Monday. In the agreement with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Saudi fund will contribute \$3.5m to implement the second phase of the housing rehabilitation project for the refugees.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1235776/saudi-arabia>

- **Qatar to expand US airbase as defence chief visits DC**

Visiting Washington, DC, Qatar's Defence Minister Khalid bin Mohammad al-Attiyah said his country will expand the American airbase that currently houses about 10,000 US military personnel. The expansion at the Al Udeid base - home of the US Air Force Central Command - will allow for 200 more housing units for officers and their families, al-Attiyah said.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/qatar-expand-airbase-defence-chief-visits-dc-180129192013144.html>

- **Bahrain court upholds jail term for top Shiite cleric**

Bahrain's Supreme Court on Monday upheld a one-year jail term for Shiite spiritual leader Sheikh Isa Qassim and confirmed a decision to revoke the cleric's citizenship, a legal source said. Qassim, 76, who last month underwent surgery, was convicted by a criminal court in May of illegal fundraising and money laundering.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86989>

- **US, UAE conclude 'Iron Union 6' joint military drills**

The U.S. and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Monday wrapped up a two-week joint military exercise, according to local media reports. The UAE's official WAM news agency reported that the "Iron Union 6" wargames, which began on Jan. 14, were aimed at improving both sides' combat readiness and strengthening relations between the two participant countries.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/us-uae-conclude-iron-union-6-joint-military-drills/1045802>

- **Oman jobs protest spreads to other cities as arrests reported**

Protests over unemployment spread from Oman's capital to provincial cities Salalah and Sur on Monday with a number of arrests reported. Facing growing unrest over high unemployment among young Omanis, the government moved on Sunday to pledge job creation plans and to restrict employment of expat labour in a country where the vast majority of private sector jobs go to foreign workers.

More Details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/oman-jobs-protest-spread-other-cities-arrests-reported-1142644175>

7. EGYPT

- **Candidate registration for Egypt's presidential election is now closed: NEA**

Egypt's National Elections Authority announced shortly after 2pm on Monday that the deadline to receive requests to run in Egypt's 2018 presidential elections had passed. The spokesperson for the NEA, Mahmoud El-Sharif, said that the authority had received two requests for candidacy; from President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi, who will run for a second term in the March election, and from the head of the Ghad party, Moussa Mostafa Moussa.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptdailynews.com/detail/candidate-registration-for-egypts-presidential-election-is-now-closed-nea>

- **Egypt leader set for new presidential term**

Egypt's Abdel Fattah al-Sisi looks set to romp to victory in a March presidential election fast becoming a referendum on his first four-year term, despite a last-minute candidate entering the fray on Monday. The former army chief who toppled his Islamist predecessor in 2013 won 96.9 percent of the vote in an election the following year, and is setting the stage for a similar performance.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86987>

- **Egyptian presidential hopeful Moussa Mostafa Moussa says he's running to win**

Presidential hopeful and Ghad Party chairman Moussa Mostafa Moussa has said he is not running in the upcoming March elections “as a favour for anyone,” nor is he seeking fame, but that his campaign has a specific electoral platform and is aiming to win the race. Speaking at a televised press conference in Cairo, Moussa, who is the only candidate apart from current President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi to submit the necessary paperwork to qualify to run prior to the deadline, said that he had decided to run after a series of withdrawals by other potential candidates.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/1187/289022/Egypt/-Presidential-Elections--/Egyptian-presidential-hopeful-Moussa-Mostafa-Mouss.aspx>

- **Over 170,000 citizen endorsements submitted to National Electoral Commission: Al-Sisi campaign**

Mohamed Bahaa El-Din Abu Shoka, legal adviser and spokesperson for President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi’s re-election campaign, said 173,000 endorsement forms from citizens were submitted to the National Electoral Commission, although more than 900,000 forms were received by the campaign. The campaign made the announcement during a Monday press conference.

More Details:

<https://dailynewsegypt.com/2018/01/29/170000-citizen-endorsements-submitted-national-electoral-commission-al-sisi-campaign/>

- **Judicial supervision on Pharmacists Syndicate canceled**

The Cairo Court of Appeals canceled on Monday the judicial supervision imposed on the Pharmacists Syndicate since 2014, when four members filed a lawsuit accusing the board of intervening in politics and requesting the appointment of a judicial supervisor. In August, the court accepted the appeal by the syndicate’s board on the verdict in case no. 2738/2014 filed by four members against the Pharmacists Syndicate’s former chairperson Mohamed Abdel Gawad.

More Details:

<https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/2/41410/Judicial-supervision-on-Pharmacists-Syndicate-canceled>

- **Senior Egyptian officials arrive in Baghdad for high-level meetings**

Presidential Assistant for National and Strategic Projects Ibrahim Mahlab arrived in Baghdad on a multiple-day visit as head of a high-level delegation to discuss with Iraqi officials bi-lateral cooperation between the two countries in different fields. The Egyptian delegation includes Communications Minister Yasser al-Qady, Health Minister Ahmed Emad Eddin, Manpower Minister Mohamed Saafan, senior officials from a number of ministries, heads of Egyptian national companies and businessmen.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/senior-egyptian-officials-arrive-in-baghdad-for-high-level-meetings/>

- **'Renaissance Dam' Crisis: A New Deadline to Resolve Disputes**

Presidents of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan agreed on Monday to give a new deadline to resolve disputes over the Renaissance Dam and to complete the relevant technical studies within a period of one month. Negotiations have been stalled for months over a study on the environmental impact of the dam, which Ethiopia is building on one of the main reaches of the Nile, amid fears by Cairo that the project will lead to a reduction in its share of the river waters.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1159346/renaissance-dam%C2%A0crisis-new-deadline-resolve-disputes>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Trade and security to dominate Macron visit to Tunisia**

Emmanuel Macron will be in Tunisia this week where the French president is expected to address parliament, attend an economic summit, and hold discussions on trade and security cooperation between the two countries. But analysts say Macron's visit is unlikely to have a meaningful impact on the challenges facing the Tunisian economy, a situation that pushed thousands of Tunisians onto the streets this month to call for an end to austerity measures.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/trade-security-dominate-macron-visit-tunisia-180123194317773.html>

- **Al-Ahmad: We need to Tunisia to bring Europe in on Palestine**

Azzam al-Ahmad, a member of Central Committee of Fatah, revealed that he had delivered a message from Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to his Tunisian counterpart Beji Caid Essebsi, in which he asked him to support the Palestinian cause and play a role in convincing the European countries to do the same. "Tunisia represents a significant source of influence in Europe, so we have asked Tunisia to play an important role with its European friends, and France in particular, in order to end the Israeli occupation of Palestine and realize the dream of a the Palestinian State."

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180130-al-ahmad-we-need-to-tunisia-to-bring-europe-in-on-palestine/>

- **Algerian army arrests 32 illegal immigrants**

The Algerian army arrested 32 illegal immigrants, today, who were planning to enter the country illegally through the southern states of Adrar and Biskra, south-east of Algiers. The Algerian Ministry of Defense said in a statement that the Gendarmerie National arrested migrants carrying various African nationalities as they tried to cross the country's southwestern border and the southeastern border.

More Details:

<https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/29/01/2018/Algerian-army-arrests-32-illegal-immigrants>

- **King Mohammed VI Unveils Draft African Agenda on Migration to AU Summit**

Morocco's King Mohammed VI addressed a message to the 30th African Union (AU) Summit, introducing a draft of the African Agenda on Migration. The King's statement was read aloud by Moroccan head of government Saad Eddine El Othmani. In his message, the King expressed his warm gratitude over being appointed as the Leader of the African Union on the Question of Migration during the 28th AU Summit last year, which also marked the return of Morocco to the AU for the first time in over 30 years.

More Details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2018/01/239515/king-mohammed-vi-unveils-draft-african-agenda-migration-au-summit/>

- **IMF urges Arab states to tackle economic 'frustration' ahead of Morocco conference**

The International Monetary Fund [IMF] has urged Arab states to tackle growing 'frustration' among their populations ahead of a two-day regional conference from Monday in Morocco with a message of reform. Unemployment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region ranks among the highest in the world, with a jobless figure of more than 50 percent, largely due to the low participation of women in the workforce in conservative Arab countries.

More Details:

<http://marocgazette.com/story-z2923362>

- **Shukri confirmed as CBL Governor by HoR vote**

Mohamed Shukri has been sworn in as the new Governor of the Central Bank (CBL) by the Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR). He pledged to end the on-going liquidity crisis and to unite the divided CBL. In a speech at the HoR, Shukri criticised the financial black-market and said it was a system that preyed on the weak and was entrenched in corruption.

More Details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2018/01/30/shukri-confirmed-as-cbl-governor-by-hor-vote/>

- **Libyan Platform urges UN Security Council to support ICC to probe IHL violations in Libya**

The Libya Platform (LP), composed of 16 CSOs, has issued an urgent appeal to member states of the UN Security Council, urging them to take a swift, decisive stand on the mounting grave and systematic violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in Libya by all sides in the armed conflict. The LP added in a statement on Monday that some of the violations may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

More Details:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/libyan-platform-urges-un-security-council-to-support-icc-to-probe-ihl-violations-in-libya/>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Women, child among eight killed in Kurram blast**

A roadside bomb on Tuesday killed eight people including three women and a child in Pakistan's northwestern tribal belt near the Afghan border, in the latest attack apparently targeting Shias. The

improvised explosive device exploded in the Shia-dominated Maqbal area of Kurram tribal district as a van carrying nine people drove by.

More Details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/274946-women-child-among-eight-killed-in-kurram-blast>

- **Lawmakers disqualified under Article 62 should appear in court, become part of the case: CJP**

The Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday conducted a hearing regarding the interpretation of Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution with a view to ascertaining the period of disqualification of a member of parliament. A five-judge SC bench consisting of Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar, Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed, Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijaz-ul-Ahsan and Justice Sajjad Ali Shah has taken up a set of 17 appeals against the disqualification of lawmakers.

More Details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1386187/lawmakers-disqualified-under-article-62-should-appear-in-court-become-part-of-the-case-cjp>

- **Zardari hopes elections will be held on time**

Co-Chairman Pakistan Peoples' Party Asif Ali Zardari said on Tuesday that he hopes the general elections scheduled in the ongoing year are held on time. Speaking to the press here, the former president said that how can the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader claim to be a victim while enjoying official security protocol.

More Details:

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/179452-zardari-hopes-elections-will-be-held-on-time>

- **ISI trained one of Kabul hotel attackers, alleges Saikal**

Afghanistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Mahmoud Saikal on Monday accused Pakistan's premier intelligence network of training one of the Kabul attackers. "Abdul Qahar, father of one of the terrorists involved in last week's attack on Kabul Intercontinental Hotel, concedes his son was trained in Balochistan province by the ISI," Saikal tweeted.

More Details:

<https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2018/01/30/isi-trained-one-kabul-hotel-attackers-alleges-saikal>

- **Afghan Ulemas reacts at Pakistani Ulemas Fatwa and recent Taliban attacks**

The Ulema Council of Afghanistan on Tuesday reacted at the recent Fatwa issued by the Pakistani Ulemas (Religious Scholars) regarding the terrorist attacks and the recent deadly attacks of the Taliban group in Kabul and other parts of the country. The Afghan Ulemas appeared in a press conference today days after a series of deadly attacks unleashed by the Taliban claimed the lives of scores of people while leaving hundreds more wounded.

More Details:

<https://www.khaama.com/afghan-ulemas-reacts-at-pakistani-ulemas-fatwa-and-recent-taliban-attacks-04385>

- **President Ghani Meets Norway's Defense Minister**

Mohammad Ashraf Ghani President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan met Frank Bakke-Jensen Defense Minister of the Kingdom of Norway yesterday evening. According to information of Presidential Palace's press office to BNA, the meeting was held in Arg and both sides discussed on mutual interest such as bolstering of Afghan-Norwegian relations, fight against terrorism and extremism and other regional issues.

More Details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/politics/item/31841-president-ghani-meets-norway%E2%80%99s-defense-minister.html>

- **'No Talks with Taliban', Trump Says After Kabul Attacks**

The US president said on the back of recent "atrocities" in Afghanistan the United States would no longer engage in talks with the insurgent group. US President Donald Trump told visiting members of the UN Security Council on Monday the United States would no longer talk with the Taliban following the spate of recent attacks in Afghanistan, the New York Times reported.

More Details:

<http://www.tolonews.com/index.php/afghanistan/no-talks-taliban-trump-says-after-kabul-attacks>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkish jets hit 8 targets in northern Iraq: Anadolu**

The Turkish military struck eight targets in northern Iraq, destroying shelters, hideouts and arsenals that belonged to militants, the state-run Anadolu agency said on late Monday. The militants were believed to preparing to attack border posts, it said.

More Details:

<https://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCAKBN1FJOHB-OCATP?rpc=401&feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews&rpc=401>

- **649 militants ‘neutralized’ in Turkey’s ongoing operation in Syria’s Afrin: Turkish military**

Some 649 militants have been “neutralized” since the beginning of Turkey’s “Operation Olive Branch” in Syria’s northwestern district of Afrin, the Turkish Armed Forces announced on Jan. 30. “Neutralized” is a term used by the Turkish military and officials to indicate militants were either killed, wounded or captured.

More Details:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/649-militants-neutralized-in-turkeys-ongoing-operation-in-syrias-afrin-turkish-military-126485>

- **Turkish commander visits peak captured from terrorists**

The commander of Turkey’s Operation Olive Branch on Monday visited a strategic peak in northwestern Syria one day after its capture from the PYD/PKK terrorist organization. Turkish army and Free Syrian Army (FSA) forces captured Mt. Bursaya on Sunday after advancing on it from the nearby Syrian city of Azaz.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/198314/turkish-commander-visits-peak-captured-from-terrorists>

- **Turkish soldiers, Free Syrian Army capture 2 villages**

Turkish Armed Forces and Free Syrian Army (FSA) units cleared two villages in western Afrin of PYD/PKK terrorists following an operation launched in Raju district on Tuesday morning. According to Anadolu Agency correspondent at scene, Khalil and Sati Ushaghi villages in west Afrin have been cleared.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkish-soldiers-free-syrian-army-capture-2-villages/1047459>

- **PYD/PKK rockets land in civilian areas in south Turkey**

A rocket fired by PYD/PKK terrorists from Syria’s Afrin struck an office building in a civilian area in Turkey’s southern border province of Hatay on Monday. The rocket hit a wall of the building in

Reyhanli district, according to Anadolu Agency reporter in the region. A car was also damaged in the attack.

More Details:

<http://www.aneews.com.tr/turkey/2018/01/29/pydpkk-rockets-land-in-civilian-areas-in-south-turkey>

This media summary is prepared by **ORSAM Middle East Research Assistant Firuze Yağmur Gökler. It covers news and commentaries as reported by the national media sources publishing in the Middle Eastern countries. The views expressed are not those of ORSAM and their inclusion does not imply factual accuracy.*

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