



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Procees of Iraq

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

Energy Security

Enerji Güvenliđi

Economy News

Ekonomi Haberleri

Peace Process

Barıő Süreci

Ethnic and Secterian Groups

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

Non State Actors

Devlet-dıő Aktörler

Relations with the West

Batı'yla İliőkiler

MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

06 MARCH 2018

NO: 2555

1. IRAQ.....	4
• Ms Pramila Patten visits Iraq and stresses need to do more to protect and Support Victims of Daesh’s Sexual Violence Crimes	4
• Gov't informs EU its refusal of forceful expulsion of Iraqi refugees	4
• NATO chief says alliance troops staying in Iraq.....	4
• Iraqi Parliament Speaker: We Seek to Open a New Page with our Arab Environment	5
• KRG “could Suspend” Erbil Domestic Flights.....	5
• MP Calls On The Govt. To Abide By the Parliament's Decision and Set a Timetable for the Withdrawal of Foreign Forces From Iraqi.....	5
• 9 Islamic State members, security personnel killed, injured in suicide attack, north of Babel ...	5
• Iraqi Parliament Votes to Establish New National Oil Company	6
• Iraq: UNAMI reports 91 civilian deaths for February	6
• Iraq Tops Countries Using Iran for Cargo Transit	6
• About 80 Jordanian Trucks Still Awaiting Approval to Enter Iraq	7
2. SYRIA.....	7
• Five French Requests on Syria	7
• Nine civilians killed as Syria regime strikes shake Ghouta	7
• Syria: Kremlin, smear campaign on use of chemical arms	7
• YPG/PKK blocking civilian exit from Afrin: UN.....	8
• Activists want Czech ambassador to be withdrawn from Syria	8
• Turkey, Russia and Iran to hold summit on Syria in April: spokesman	8
• Red Cross: Aid convoy in Syria’s Ghouta retreats due to insecurity, all safe	9
3. IRAN.....	9
• Europe policy of appeasing Trump on Iran 'wrong': Official tells FM Le Drian	9
• French minister in Iran to reaffirm nuclear deal but set out concerns on missiles	9
• Iran attaches strategic significance to North-South corridor.....	10
• Zarif: EU should compel US to abide by JCPOA.....	10
• Iran, Belarus discuss expansion of bilateral cooperation.....	10
• UNICEF hails Iran’s support for children’s rights.....	10
• Syrian territorial integrity preserved due to Iran-Russia coop.....	11
• Iran to Boost Missile Power Regardless of Politics: Top Official	11
4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE.....	11
• Army Injures Many Palestinians in Hebron	11
• Pence: America stands with Israel, always.....	11
• Ashrawi of PLO condemns Guatemala's decision to relocate its embassy to Jerusalem.....	12
• 40% of Israeli Cemeteries on Private Palestinian Lands.....	12
• Trump may attend opening of Jerusalem embassy	12
• Netanyahu says Saudi agrees to open airspace to India-Israel flights	12
• Former close aide to Netanyahu gives his testimony to police	13
5. JORDAN and LEBANON.....	13

• War on Lebanon?	13
• ARF Lebanon Condemns Attack on Doudaklian, Says Blaming the ARF is Irresponsible and Unacceptable.....	13
• Shorter after meeting Geagea: elections represent important opportunity to boost inclusion and representation of women	14
• Sarraf denounces ‘attack’ on court over Itani case.....	14
• Khalil, FPM Ministers in New War of Words over Electricity	14
• Hamas refutes news on having rocket arsenal in South Lebanon	14
• King: Tourism has huge role in economy and impacts many downstream industries.....	15
• Jordanian trucks still awaiting green light to enter Iraq.....	15
6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA.....	15
• Saudi Arabia and Egypt pledge \$10bn to kickstart construction of high-tech mega-city	15
• Coalition refutes baseless claims on Yemen operation.....	15
• Saudi crown prince to face protests during UK visit over Yemen war atrocities	16
• British PM May to raise concerns over Yemen to Saudi during visit.....	16
• Cabinet lauds anti-terror operations.....	16
• HM King hails Bahrain’s sports achievements.....	16
• Kuwait re-instates ban on Bangladeshi workers	17
• MBC stops all Turkish TV drama	17
• Emails show UAE-linked effort against Tillerson.....	17
7. EGYPT.....	17
• Afreximbank ready to assist Egyptian business women expand into rest of Africa.....	17
• Egyptian Minister visits GPIC.....	18
• Japanese ambassador to Egypt, JICA delegation inspect new terminal project at Borg El-Arab airport.....	18
• Saudi Crown Prince Meets Pope Tawadros II at Coptic Orthodox Church in Cairo	18
• Crown Prince meets Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar and Pope Tawadros II	18
• Cultural Attaché at kingdom's embassy in Cairo highlights significance of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince's visit to Egypt.....	19
• Egyptian Army Announces Death of 10 ‘Takfiris’, Four Soldiers in Sinai.....	19
8. NORTH AFRICA.....	19
• Sharara oilfield resumes production, stoppage cost \$30 million: NOC	19
• UN: Evacuation of migrants’ deal from Libya at risk	19
• "I will demonstrate to IMF security challenges facing Tunisia," says Claudia Roth	20
• Tunisia’s foreign exchange reserves are at ‘critical’ levels.....	20
• Morocco, Azerbaïdjan Join Voices Against Separatism in Sahara & Nagorno Karabakh	20
• Algeria and Saudi's differing shale development	21
9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN	21
• With gas and diplomacy, Russia embraces Cold War foe Pakistan.....	21
• Darul Aman repair: Kabul to have 4 wastewater filters	21
• Two Pakistanis Arrested In Nangarhar for ‘Supplying Suicide Vests.....	21
• Parties call for probe into Senate vote ‘purchase’	22
• Pakistan committed to objectives of SAARC charter	22
• President Ghani offered Taliban peace talks, not surrender	22



ORTADOĞU STRATEJİK ARAŞTIRMALAR MERKEZİ
CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STRATEGIC STUDIES
مركز الشرق الأوسط للدراسات الاستراتيجية

- NPC Approves 12 Contracts worth 7.3 Billion Afghanis 22
- At Least 31 Suspected Militants Killed In Afghanistan, Army Says..... 22
- 10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST.....23**
- Iran Turkey Steadfast in Combating Terrorism: Speaker Larijani..... 23
- Turkish FM to discuss Muslum extradition with Germany..... 23

1. IRAQ

- **Ms Pramila Patten visits Iraq and stresses need to do more to protect and Support Victims of Daesh's Sexual Violence Crimes**

Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict Ms. Pramila Patten Concludes Visit to Iraq and Stresses Need to Do More to Protect and Support Victims of Daesh's Sexual Violence Crimes. The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Pramila Patten, concluded an eight-day visit to Iraq during which she heard first-hand the heart wrenching accounts of survivors of Daesh's sexual violence. She stressed the need to ensure that survivors of conflict-related sexual violence are fully protected and that perpetrators of these horrendous crimes are brought to justice.

More Details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=42883

- **Gov't informs EU its refusal of forceful expulsion of Iraqi refugees**

The Minister of the Migration and Displaced Jasim Moohamed al-Jaf called on the European Union countries to treat the Iraq refugees humanely, asserting the government's refusal of the forceful expulsion of these Iraqis. In a meeting with the Swiss Ambassador to Iraq Hans Peter Lenz, Jaf said that some countries use arbitrary measures to forcefully return Iraqis to the country.

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/24492/Gov-t-informs-EU-its-refusal-of-forceful-expulsion-of-Iraqi-refugees>

- **NATO chief says alliance troops staying in Iraq**

NATO forces are staying in Iraq at the country's request, alliance chief Jens Stoltenberg said during a rare visit Monday to Baghdad after parliament called for a foreign troop pullout. "We are here because Iraq wants us to be here, we are not here without the consent and without an invitation from Iraq," Stoltenberg told AFP.

More Details:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-5464913/NATO-chief-says-alliance-troops-staying-Iraq.html>

- **Iraqi Parliament Speaker: We Seek to Open a New Page with our Arab Environment**

Iraqi Parliament Speaker Salim Al-Jubouri said his country was looking forward to opening a new page of relations with its Arab surroundings. Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim received his Iraqi counterpart on Sunday in Kuwait to discuss regional challenges and latest developments.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1194866/iraqi-parliament-speaker-we-seek-open-new-page-our-arab-environment>

- **KRG “could Suspend” Erbil Domestic Flights**

A Kurdistan 24 press quoted Talar Faiq, the Director-General of Erbil International Airport (EIA) as saying that the KRG could suspend domestic flights between the Kurdistan Region’s airports and the rest of Iraq due to financial issues and Baghdad’s international flight ban. “Since the Iraqi government’s ban went into effect late September 2017, Iraqi Airways has not paid for its landings at the EIA [for flights originating from Baghdad and other Iraqi airports],” Faiq said. “Baghdad owes the EIA an amount of 37 million USD for landing at the airport,” the Director-General added.

More Details:

<http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/2018/03/06/krq-could-suspend-erbil-domestic-flights/>

- **MP Calls On The Govt. To Abide By the Parliament's Decision and Set a Timetable for the Withdrawal of Foreign Forces From Iraqi**

The MP of the state of law coalition, Zeinab Khazraji demanded the government to implement the recommendations of the House of Representatives to set a timetable for the departure of foreign troops from Iraqi territory and not to keep any foreign troops on its territory. "Putting a timetable for the withdrawal of foreign forces is very important and there is no reason for their presence on our territory, as they have already come out in accordance with the agreement between the Iraqi government and the US side."

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?axPWKkEJYHr9TyiPomfl5w%253d%253d

- **9 Islamic State members, security personnel killed, injured in suicide attack, north of Babel**

Nine Islamic State members and security personnel were killed and injured during an attack launched by the militants in north of Babel, a security source said. “Five IS members and a security personnel of al-Hashd al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilization Forces) were killed during an attack by the militants

against the troops in al-Owaisat village in Jurf al-Nasr, north of Babel,” the source told Baghdad Today website on Monday.

More Details:

<https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/paramilitary-troops-repulsed-islamic-state-suicide-attack-north-babel/>

- **Iraqi Parliament Votes to Establish New National Oil Company**

The Iraqi parliament voted on Monday in favour of establishing a new national oil company that would be responsible for the entire energy sector of the country, an Iraqi lawmaker said. “It’s a significant law to push forward the development process of Iraq’s energy sector,” MP Husham al-Suhail told Reuters.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/420206>

- **Iraq: UNAMI reports 91 civilian deaths for February**

A total of 91 Iraqi civilians were killed and another 208 injured in acts of terrorism, violence and armed conflict in Iraq in February 2018, according to casualty figures recorded by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The figures include ordinary civilians and others who can be considered civilian at the time of death or injury - police in non-combat function, civil defence, Personal Security Details, facilities protection police, and fire department personnel, a UNIC-Tehran press release reported on Tuesday.

More Details:

http://en.abna24.com/news/middle-east/iraq-unami-reports-91-civilian-deaths-for-february_884606.html

- **Iraq Tops Countries Using Iran for Cargo Transit**

More than 9.5 million tons of commodities were transited through Iran from the beginning of the current Iranian year on March 21, 2017, to March 1, 2018. The neighboring Iraq, with 2.5 million tons, tops the list of countries that used Iran to transit their goods over the period, ISNA reported.

More Details:

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/economy-business-and-markets/83026/iraq-tops-countries-using-iran-for-cargo-transit>

- **About 80 Jordanian Trucks Still Awaiting Approval to Enter Iraq**

Around 80 Jordanian trucks laden with various types of commodities unload their freight at the Jordanian-Iraqi border every day, with the number expected to rise sharply soon, the Jordan Truck Owners Association said on Monday. "Currently, there is back-to-back unloading at the borders, as Jordanian trucks are yet to be given the green light to reach their final destinations in Iraq. Jordanian trucks [now] unload their cargo, which are then loaded in Iraqi trucks," Mohammad Dawood, president of the association, said on Monday.

More Details:

<https://www.albawaba.com/news/about-80-jordanian-trucks-still-awaiting-approval-enter-iraq-1098166v>

2. SYRIA

- **Five French Requests on Syria**

French President Emmanuel Macron had five principle demands concerning the situation in Syria during three separate telephone conversations in the past two days with his Russian, Iranian and Turkish counterparts. Sources at the Elysee presidential palace told Asharq Al-Awsat on Monday that Paris continues to exert diplomatic pressure on parties which have influence over the Syrian regime, particularly Russia and Iran, to achieve five main goals in the war torn country.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1195861/five-french-requests-syria>

- **Nine civilians killed as Syria regime strikes shake Ghouta**

At least nine civilians were killed Tuesday in Syria's Eastern Ghouta as fresh regime air strikes and clashes shook the rebel enclave outside Damascus, a monitor and AFP correspondents said. Regime air strikes killed nine civilians in the town of Jisreen early Tuesday, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor said.

More Details:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-5467383/Nine-civilians-killed-Syria-regime-strikes-shake-Ghouta.html>

- **Syria: Kremlin, smear campaign on use of chemical arms**

Kremlin spokesman Dmitri Peskov on Tuesday said Russia believes that only international experts can draw conclusions on the use of chemical weapons in Syria and therefore, "given the lack of evidence,

such statements are nothing other than smear". "We believe that the only thing on which any allegation should be based is an international commission, the conclusion of an international working group", Peskov also said. "You can call it the way you want, but the result of an impartial investigation would be required".

More Details:

http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/politics/2018/03/06/syria-kremlin-smear-campaign-on-use-of-chemical-arms_481546c3-80cb-4700-a7d3-dc030ac44e02.html

- **YPG/PKK blocking civilian exit from Afrin: UN**

"Local authorities" continue to block the exodus of civilians from Syria's Afrin region, the UN spokesman said Monday, referring to YPG/PKK terrorists. The UN has no direct contact with them and it is critical that people be able to move freely, said Stephane Dujarric in response to a question from an Anadolu Agency correspondent. Dujarric added that nearly 5,000 civilians have managed to leave the region of northern Syria.

More Details:

<https://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/ypg-pkk-blocking-civilian-exit-from-afrin-un/1080716>

- **Activists want Czech ambassador to be withdrawn from Syria**

The Group in Support of Syria (IPS) demands that Czech ambassador to Damascus be withdrawn, activist Michal Majzner told journalists on Monday, adding that the Czech Republic is the only EU country to support President Bashar al-Assad, accused of war crimes. So far, the Czech diplomacy has been rejecting such an interpretation of the Czech position.

More Details:

<http://www.praguemonitor.com/2018/03/06/activists-want-czech-ambassador-be-withdrawn-syria>

- **Turkey, Russia and Iran to hold summit on Syria in April: spokesman**

Turkey, Russia and Iran will hold a summit in April to discuss Syria and potential steps in the region, the spokesman for the Turkish foreign ministry said on Tuesday. Foreign Ministry Spokesman Hami Aksoy also told a news conference Ankara would tell U.S. authorities during meetings on March 8-9 that it expected Washington to take concrete steps on retrieving weapons provided to the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia.

More Details:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey/turkey-russia-and-iran-to-hold-summit-on-syria-in-april-spokesman->

[idUSKCN1GI0RR?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Reuters%2FworldNews+%28Reuters+World+News%29&&rpc=401](https://www.uskcn1gi0rr?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Reuters%2FworldNews+%28Reuters+World+News%29&&rpc=401)

- **Red Cross: Aid convoy in Syria's Ghouta retreats due to insecurity, all safe**

A humanitarian aid convoy turned back from Douma in the besieged Syrian enclave of eastern Ghouta on Monday after shelling in the town, coinciding with mortars fired on the capital Damascus, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said. "The team is safe, but given the security situation, a decision was taken to go back for now. They off-loaded as much as possible given the current situation on the ground," ICRC spokeswoman Iolanda Jaquemet said in Geneva.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180306-red-cross-aid-convoy-in-syrias-ghouta-retreats-due-to-insecurity-all-safe/>

3. IRAN

- **Europe policy of appeasing Trump on Iran 'wrong': Official tells FM Le Drian**

Iran's top security official has criticized Europe for trying to appease US President Donald Trump who has threatened to scuttle a 2015 nuclear deal with Tehran if radical changes are not made to it. The criticism by Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani on Monday came as French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian began his visit to Tehran with a threat of sanctions over the country's missile capabilities.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/03/05/554423/Iran-France-United-States-Le-Drian-Shamkhani-nuclear-missiles-Yemen-Syria>

- **French minister in Iran to reaffirm nuclear deal but set out concerns on missiles**

France's foreign minister visited Iran on Monday on a delicate mission to reaffirm Europe's support for a nuclear deal that opened Iran's economy, while echoing U.S. concern about Tehran's missile program and role in regional conflicts.

More details:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-france/french-minister-in-iran-to-reaffirm-nuclear-deal-but-set-out-concerns-on-missiles-idUSKBN1GH05E>

- **Iran attaches strategic significance to North-South corridor**

Iran enjoys the longest inland route within the International North-South Transport Corridor, therefore, it will earn more benefits compared to the other countries participating in the corridor, Nourollah Beiranvand, the deputy for planning and investment at the Railways of the Islamic Republic of Iran (RAI) told Trend. Beiranvand said that in addition to its economic benefits, Iran enjoys strategic advantages concerning the corridor.

More details:

<https://en.trend.az/iran/business/2869027.html>

- **Zarif: EU should compel US to abide by JCPOA**

Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote in his latest tweet “in meeting today, told [French] FM: EU should compel US to abide by JCPOA rather than trying to appease it by repeating its extraneous demands. To defend the nuclear agreement, mere words are not sufficient. Especially since the US is an obstacle to EU’s own adherence to JCPOA.”

More details:

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/132632/Zarif-EU-should-compel-US-to-abide-by-JCPOA>

- **Iran, Belarus discuss expansion of bilateral cooperation**

Iranian Ambassador to Belarus Mostafa Oveisi and Governor of Minsk Region Anatoly Isachenko on Monday explored ways of promoting bilateral cooperation. The two sides also reiterated the need for strengthening cooperation between Minsk Region and Tehran Province and promoting relations between the people of both countries.

More details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82852857>

- **UNICEF hails Iran’s support for children’s rights**

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian held a meeting with UNICEF representative in Iran Will Parks in Tehran on Monday, during which the Iranian official referred to the necessity of protecting children’s rights and praised the supporting role that UNICEF is playing in crisis stricken countries like Yemen, Libya, Afghanistan and Myanmar.

More details:

<http://www.iran-daily.com/News/211152.html?catid=3&title=UNICEF-hails-Iran-s-support-for-children-s-rights>

- **Syrian territorial integrity preserved due to Iran-Russia coop**

Alaeddin Boroujerdi the Chairman of Iran’s Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, hailed the scope of bilateral relations between Iran and Russia.

More details:

<http://irannewsdaily.com/syrian-territorial-integrity-preserved-due-iran-russia-coop/>

- **Iran to Boost Missile Power Regardless of Politics: Top Official**

The secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council made it clear to France’s foreign minister that Tehran will enhance its missile capabilities as part of a defense strategy which would not be affected by political factors. In a meeting with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian in Tehran on Monday, Ali Shamkhani described Iran’s defense power, particularly its missile program, as “an inevitable necessity” in line with the country’s deterrent policies.

More Details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2018/03/05/1672855/iran-to-boost-missile-power-regardless-of-politics-top-official>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Army Injures Many Palestinians in Hebron**

Israeli soldiers injured, Tuesday, dozens of Palestinians, mainly schoolchildren, after firing gas bombs at them near the Ibrahimi Mosque, in Hebron city, in the southern part of the occupied West Bank. The Wafa Palestinian News Agency said the soldiers attacked dozens of Palestinians who were protesting in Jroun Jarad area, and Abu ar-Reesh military roadblock at the southern entrance of the Old City and the Ibrahimi Mosque. It added that dozens of Palestinians, especially schoolchildren suffered the effects of teargas inhalation, and received the needed treatment.

More details:

<http://imemc.org/article/army-injures-many-palestinians-in-hebron-2/>

- **Pence: America stands with Israel, always**

Vice President Pence speaks at AIPAC conference, reiterates America’s commitment to Israel. U.S. Vice President Mike Pence on Monday evening addressed the AIPAC Policy Conference in Washington, DC. “Tonight, I bring greetings from a great friend of the State of Israel. The most pro-Israel president in United States history. I bring greetings from President Donald Trump,” he began his remarks.

More details:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/242753>

- **Ashrawi of PLO condemns Guatemala's decision to relocate its embassy to Jerusalem**

PLO Executive Committee Member Hanan Ashrawi condemned the "dangerous and provocative" announcement made by Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales at AIPAC's annual conference to relocate the embassy of Guatemala from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

More details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=r112g5a96766631016ar112g5>

- **40% of Israeli Cemeteries on Private Palestinian Lands**

Approximately 40 percent of Israeli settlers' graves in the occupied West Bank were built on privately-owned Palestinian land, an Israeli survey published on Sunday. A survey published by Haaretz revealed, according to Al Ray, that more than 600 graves, on 10 settlements, were built on privately owned Palestinian lands in West Bank that Israeli occupation authorities expropriated.

More details:

<http://www.palestinechronicle.com/40-israeli-cemeteries-private-palestinian-lands/>

- **Trump may attend opening of Jerusalem embassy**

President Donald Trump signaled Monday he might visit Jerusalem to mark the opening of the U.S. embassy there in May. "I may. I may," Trump said in response to questions by a reporter during brief remarks at the White House alongside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "If I can, I will." The U.S. accelerated the planned move of its diplomatic headquarters from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem last month, hoping to hold the ceremonial opening on the same day Israel celebrates its 70th anniversary May 14.

More Details:

<https://aa.com.tr/en/americas/trump-may-attend-opening-of-jerusalem-embassy/1080615>

- **Netanyahu says Saudi agrees to open airspace to India-Israel flights**

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Saudi Arabia has agreed to allow Air India to use its airspace in flights to and from Israel in what could indicate a warming of ties. But Air India said on Tuesday that while it had issued such a request, the regulator had yet to give it a positive answer.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=87543>

- **Former close aide to Netanyahu gives his testimony to police**

Nir Hefetz, the former media advisor of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, signed on Monday a state witness deal with the police to testify against Netanyahu and his family, Israeli media reported. According to the Israeli news website Ynet News, Hefetz provided police with all of the information in his possession, including text messages, when he signed the deal.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180306-former-close-aide-to-netanyahu-gives-his-testimony-to-police/>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **War on Lebanon?**

The Lebanese taxi driver was both happy and upset. “You Saudis and Gulf visitors are always good news for us,” he started. “For years now we have fewer and fewer of you. Instead, we receive Iraqis, Afghanis and Iranians. Most of them come via Beirut on their way to Syria. Some are pilgrims visiting Shiite shrines, others are fighters joining Hezbollah and other (Iranian) militias. Few are diplomats or merchants. But in all cases, they don’t spend much here. They live in camps or cheap accommodations. Most bring along their food and water,” he complained.

More Details:

<http://saudigazette.com.sa/article/529781/Opinion/OP-ED/War-on-Lebanon?>

- **ARF Lebanon Condemns Attack on Doudaklian, Says Blaming the ARF is Irresponsible and Unacceptable**

On March 5, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) Central Committee of Lebanon’s issued a statement condemning an attack that took place on Tufenkian Foundation Executive Director Raffi Doudaklian outside of its Shaghzyan Cultural Center last week.

More Details:

<https://armenianweekly.com/2018/03/06/arf-lebanon-condemns-attack-doudaklian-says-blaming-arf-irresponsible-unacceptable/>

- **Shorter after meeting Geagea: elections represent important opportunity to boost inclusion and representation of women**

British Ambassador to Lebanon, Hugo Shorter, on Monday met with the leader of the Lebanese Forces Party Dr Samir Geagea. In a press release by the British Embassy in Beirut, Ambassador Shorter said on emerging: "I had a good meeting with the head of the Lebanese Forces Party, Dr Samir Geagea. Our discussions covered a range of issues including the upcoming parliamentary elections in May. I am hopeful that the Lebanese Forces are considering positively the inclusion of more female candidates on electoral lists".

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/88859/Shorter-after-meeting-Geagea-Elections-represent-important-opportunity-to-boost-inclusion-and-representation-of-women>

- **Sarraf denounces 'attack' on court over Itani case**

Defense Minister Yaacoub Sarraf denounced what he called an "attack" by some on the Military Tribunal, saying in a statement issued overnight Sunday that the court and its judges carry out their work with transparency.

More Details:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2018/Mar-06/440416-sarraf-denounces-attack-on-court-over-itani-case.ashx>

- **Khalil, FPM Ministers in New War of Words over Electricity**

A new war of words has erupted between the ministers of the AMAL Movement and the Free Patriotic Movement. The trading of barbs started overnight, when FPM chief and Foreign Minister Jebran Bassil accused Finance Minister Ali Hassan Khalil of blocking the construction of the Deir Amar power plant

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/243004-khalil-fpm-ministers-in-new-war-of-words-over-electricity>

- **Hamas refutes news on having rocket arsenal in South Lebanon**

An official source of Hamas movement on Monday refuted the Israeli claims that the Movement has established a rocket arsenal in South Lebanon to defend Gaza against Israeli attacks.

More Details:

http://en.abna24.com/news/middle-east/hamas-refutes-news-on-having-rocket-arsenal-in-south-lebanon_884597.html

- **King: Tourism has huge role in economy and impacts many downstream industries**

International tourism industry publication "Travel Weekly" published an article on Monday titled "The King of Jordan talks tourism", which included excerpts from a recent meeting His Majesty King Abdullah held with the paper's chief editor, Arnie Weissmann, in Amman.

More Details:

http://petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=343213&CatID=13

- **Jordanian trucks still awaiting green light to enter Iraq**

Around 80 Jordanian trucks laden with various types of commodities unload their freight at the Jordanian-Iraqi border every day, with the number expected to rise sharply soon, the Jordan Truck Owners Association said on Monday.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/jordanian-trucks-still-awaiting-green-light-enter-iraq>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Saudi Arabia and Egypt pledge \$10bn to kickstart construction of high-tech mega-city**

Saudi Arabia and Egypt have set up a \$10bn (£7.2bn) joint fund to develop a planned mega-city, committing more than 1,000 square kilometres in the south Sinai, as Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in Cairo.

More details:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/neom-saudi-arabia-egypt-jordan-crown-prince-mohammed-bin-salman-president-abdel-fattah-alsisi-a8241491.html>

- **Coalition refutes baseless claims on Yemen operation**

The Saudi-led Coalition fighting to restore legitimacy in Yemen refuted the claims of some international organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and Amnesty International, with regard to the military operations carried out by the forces in the country.

More details:

<http://saudigazette.com.sa/article/529823/SAUDI-ARABIA/Coalition-refutes-baseless-claims-on-Yemen-operation>

- **Saudi crown prince to face protests during UK visit over Yemen war atrocities**

A coalition of UK-based human rights groups have said protests will be held in London this week against a state visit by the powerful Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The coalition has planned demonstrations outside the prime minister's residence in Downing Street for when Theresa May meets Mohammed bin Salman, who is on his first official foreign tour as heir to the throne.

More details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2018/3/5/saudi-crown-prince-to-face-protest-during-uk-visit>

- **British PM May to raise concerns over Yemen to Saudi during visit**

Prime Minister Theresa May will raise Britain's concerns over the humanitarian situation in Yemen with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman when he visits the country later this week, her spokesman said on Monday.

More details:

<http://www.ipost.com/Breaking-News/British-PM-May-to-raise-concerns-over-Yemen-to-Saudi-during-visit-544238>

- **Cabinet lauds anti-terror operations**

The Cabinet chaired by His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa at the Gudaibiya Palace yesterday lauded the recent pre-emptive strike against the terror network, thwarting a major plot to subvert the Kingdom's security and stability.

More details:

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppId=42538&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=18&SUB=>

- **HM King hails Bahrain's sports achievements**

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa today received at Al-Sakhir Palace Supreme Council for Youth and Sports (SCYS) First Deputy Chairman, Bahrain Athletics Association (BAA) Chief and honorary president of Bahrain Mixed Martial Arts Association His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al-Khalifa.

More details:

<http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/829327>

- **Kuwait re-instates ban on Bangladeshi workers**

Kuwait has reportedly imposed a ban on recruiting Bangladeshis to work in the northern Arabian Gulf state. Interior Minister Shaikh Khalid Al Jarrah has ordered the ban and asked the interior ministry to apply it, Kuwaiti daily Al Jareedareported on Monday, citing a security source.

More details:

<http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/kuwait/kuwait-re-instates-ban-on-bangladeshi-workers-1.2182735>

- **MBC stops all Turkish TV drama**

A major Middle Eastern satellite network has stopped airing Turkish soap operas, the latest entertainment casualties in the region's volatile politics. The Dubai-based MBC Group stopped broadcasting its popular Arabic-dubbed Turkish soap operas on March 1, a decision that came just after its chairman, Waleed al-Ibrahim was released from being held in a mass arrest by Saudi authorities.

More details:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/03/mbc-removes-turkish-tv-drama-broadcast-180305105648251.html>

- **Emails show UAE-linked effort against Tillerson**

The BBC has obtained leaked emails that show a lobbying effort to get US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson sacked for failing to support the United Arab Emirates against regional rival Qatar.

More details:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-43281519>

7. EGYPT

- **Afreximbank ready to assist Egyptian business women expand into rest of Africa**

The African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) can support Egyptian business women in expanding their trading activities into other African countries, participants in the Fourth Annual Multinational Conference of the Association of Business Women in Egypt were told.

More Details:

<https://africabusinesscommunities.com/news/afreximbank-ready-to-assist-egyptian-business-women-expand-into-rest-of-africa/>

- **Egyptian Minister visits GPIC**

Egyptian Youth and Sports Minister Khaled Mahmoud Abdulaziz, who is on a visit to the Kingdom of Bahrain, was received at the Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (GPIC) along with the Country's Ambassador Suha Ibrahim Al Far.

More Details:

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppId=42547&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=50>

- **Japanese ambassador to Egypt, JICA delegation inspect new terminal project at Borg El-Arab airport**

Japanese ambassador to Egypt Takehiro Kagawa and his accompanying delegation representing the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) visited Borg El-Arab airport on Monday to inspect the new passenger terminal, a statement by Egypt's Civil Aviation Ministry reads.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/12/292201/Business/Economy/Japanese-ambassador-to-Egypt,-JICA-delegation-insp.aspx>

- **Saudi Crown Prince Meets Pope Tawadros II at Coptic Orthodox Church in Cairo**

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, visited on Monday Saint Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Cairo's Abbasiya neighborhood.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1194956/saudi-crown-prince-meets-pope-tawadros-ii-coptic-orthodox-church-cairo>

- **Crown Prince meets Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar and Pope Tawadros II**

His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdul Aziz, the Crown Prince, Vice President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Defense, met in Cairo the Sheikh of Al-Azhar Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Al-Tayeb in the presence of the official delegation accompanying His Royal Highness the Crown Prince.

More Details:

<http://alriyadhdaily.com/article/4776f3bf36f448ada6272c8e3375a7ab>

- **Cultural Attaché at kingdom's embassy in Cairo highlights significance of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince's visit to Egypt**

The Cultural Attaché of the embassy of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in Cairo confirmed that the visit of His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, the Crown Prince, Vice President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Defense, to the Arab Republic of Egypt reflects the deep relations between the two countries.

More Details:

<http://www.spa.gov.sa/viewfullstory.php?lang=en&newsid=1733529>

- **Egyptian Army Announces Death of 10 'Takfiris', Four Soldiers in Sinai**

The Egyptian army announced Sunday that 10 "Takfiris" were killed during confrontations with elements of the armed forces and police in northern Sinai while two officers and two soldiers died during the same operations. Egyptian Military Spokesman Col. Tamer Rifai has issued statement No. 14 since the beginning of the counter-terrorist "Comprehensive Operation Sinai 2018" (COS 2018), on behalf of the armed forces that was launched mid-February.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1194841/egyptian-army-announces-death-10-%E2%80%98takfiris%E2%80%99-four-soldiers-sinai>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Sharara oilfield resumes production, stoppage cost \$30 million: NOC**

Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC) announced today that production has resumed at the Repopol operated Sharara oilfield. It said that the stoppage for over 24 hours had led to the loss of about 500,000 barrels and US\$ 30 million of potential revenue.

More Details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2018/03/05/sharara-oilfield-resumes-production-stoppage-cost-30-million-noc/>

- **UN: Evacuation of migrants' deal from Libya at risk**

International efforts to release people from Libyan detention centres to Niger have hit a deadlock, the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) has warned. A senior official from the UN agency told MEPs in the European Parliament on Monday (5 March) that if more refugees and asylum seekers were not

dispatched onwards from Niger to EU states, then the country may stop taking in people from Libya, EUobserver reported Monday.

More Details:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/un-evacuation-of-migrants-deal-from-libya-at-risk/>

- **"I will demonstrate to IMF security challenges facing Tunisia," says Claudia Roth**

Claudia Roth, vice-president of the German Bundestag, said she will demonstrate to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) the security challenges facing Tunisia by mobilising a large part of its budget to ensure security and stability to have hosted over one million 400 thousand Libyans, "which represents a great security challenge".

More Details:

<https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/9928243--i-will-demonstrate>

- **Tunisia's foreign exchange reserves are at 'critical' levels**

The Tunisian Central Bank announced that the country's foreign exchange reserves fell to 11.3 billion Tunisian dinars, equivalent to about 4.6 billion dollars, which covers no more than 80 days of the value of the country's imports, after it was covering 82 days. Experts said that this decline warns of many risks that Tunisia may face in case the reserves continue to fall to lower levels.

More Details:

<http://tdailynews.net/story-z9858190>

- **Morocco, Azerbaïdjan Join Voices Against Separatism in Sahara & Nagorno Karabakh**

Morocco and Azerbaïdjan reiterated their firm stands against separatism as they both continue to struggle against separatist militias funded and armed by neighboring countries. The two countries have fought separatist militias operating outside international legality for decades. Morocco managed to neutralize the Algeria-based Polisario separatist front, after the UN brokered 1991 ceasefire agreement, while Azerbaïdjan claims a quarter of its territory is under the occupation of the self-proclaimed Nagorno Karabakh state.

More Details:

<http://northafricapost.com/22564-morocco-azerbaïdjan-join-voices-separatism-sahara-nagorno-karabakh.html>

- **Algeria and Saudi's differing shale development**

Handicapped by corruption and political delays, Algeria has made scant progress in the eight years since it identified shale gas as an important opportunity, even though its revenues from hydrocarbons are in decline. Algeria's foot-dragging is of particular concern to some of its customers such as Spain, which buys 55% of its total gas consumption from there.,

More Details:

<http://www.petroleum-economist.com/articles/upstream/exploration-production/2018/algeria-and-saudis-differing-shale-development>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **With gas and diplomacy, Russia embraces Cold War foe Pakistan**

As U.S. influence in Islamabad wanes, Pakistan's former adversary Russia is building military, diplomatic and economic ties that could upend historic alliances in the region and open up a fast-growing gas market for Moscow's energy companies.

More details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/289105-with-gas-and-diplomacy-russia-embraces-cold-war-foe-pakistan>

- **Darul Aman repair: Kabul to have 4 wastewater filters**

The Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD) on Monday announced completing initial reconstruction work on the historic Darul Aman Palace.

More details:

<https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2018/03/05/darul-aman-repair-kabul-have-4->

- **Two Pakistanis Arrested In Nangarhar for 'Supplying Suicide Vests**

Police have arrested dozens of suspected insurgents after concerns were raised by Nangarhar residents.

More details:

<https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/two-pakistanis-arrested-nangarhar-supplying-suicide-vests>

- **Parties call for probe into Senate vote 'purchase'**

Crying foul a day after the Senate elections, several political parties, including the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, on Monday called for an investigation into the allegation of horse-trading.

More details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1393379/parties-call-for-probe-into-senate-vote-purchase>

- **Pakistan committed to objectives of SAARC charter**

Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said on Tuesday that Pakistan attaches great importance to South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and is committed to the principles and objectives of its charter.

More details:

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/185032-pakistan-committed-to-objectives-of-saarc-charter-pm>

- **President Ghani offered Taliban peace talks, not surrender**

A top US official has said President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has offered the Taliban group for participation in peace talks as the official insist that the offer did not mean that the group should surrender

More details:

<https://www.khaama.com/president-ghani-offered-taliban-peace-talks-not-surrender-us-04585/>

- **NPC Approves 12 Contracts worth 7.3 Billion Afghanis**

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani chaired the National Procurement Commission meeting here the other day, a presidential statement said.

More details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/business/item/32261-npc-approves-12-contracts-worth-73-billion-afghanis.html>

- **At Least 31 Suspected Militants Killed In Afghanistan, Army Says**

At least two people were killed when a bomb attached to a fuel truck exploded in eastern Nangarhar Province.

More details:

<https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-ground-air-strikes-militants-killed/2>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Iran Turkey Steadfast in Combating Terrorism: Speaker Larijani**

Speaking at a meeting with Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey Volkan Bozkir in Tehran on Monday, Larijani hailed the growing relations between Iran and Turkey as “age-old” and said the two countries have numerous cultural commonalities.

More details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2018/03/06/1673563/iran-turkey-steadfast-in-combating-terrorism-speaker-larijani>

- **Turkish FM to discuss Muslum extradition with Germany**

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu on Monday told reporters that he is to address the extradition matter of the former co-leader of PYD/PKK terrorist group Salih Muslum with his German counterpart on Tuesday. "Our efforts [for the extradition of Muslum] are not limited only to the Czech Republic or Germany. We will follow Salih Muslum wherever he goes," he said in the capital Ankara.

More Details:

<https://aa.com.tr/en/politics/turkish-fm-to-discuss-muslum-extradition-with-germany/1080542>

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.*

Bu bülten **ORSAM Ortadoğu Uzman Yardımcısı Firuze Yağmur Gökler tarafından hazırlanmaktadır. Bülten Ortadoğu ülkelerinin yerel haber kaynaklarından derlenmektedir. Belirtilen görüşler bölge ülkelerinin haber kaynaklarına ve ismi geçen yazarlara ait olup ORSAM'ın görüşünü yansıtmamaktadır.*