



# MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

## GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

**Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries**

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

**The Restructuring Procces of Iraq**

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## 1. IRAQ

- **Iraqi PM hails participation of women in political life**

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi on Wednesday hailed legislation that allows “broad participation” by women in the country’s political life. Al-Abadi made the remarks in a speech delivered in Baghdad to mark International Women's Day, which will fall on Thursday. “Current laws and legislation grant women broad powers to participate in Iraq’s political process,” al-Abadi said. “This should be taken advantage of.”

More Details:

<https://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/iraqi-pm-hails-participation-of-women-in-political-life/1082627>

- **Al-Jaafari arrives in Cairo to attend the meetings of the 149th ordinary session of the Council of the Arab League at the ministerial level**

Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari arrived in the Egyptian capital Cairo today to attend the meetings of the 149th ordinary session of the Council of the Arab League at the ministerial level. "It is hoped that Al-Jaafari will hold several meetings with his Arab counterparts in the context of strengthening bilateral relations, activating common interests and facing common dangers," a Foreign Ministry statement said.

More Details:

[http://www.ninanews.com/News\\_Details.aspx?Sq2yVpzDeSUZiDPWvIV39w%253d%253d](http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?Sq2yVpzDeSUZiDPWvIV39w%253d%253d)

- **Baathism Caused the Chaos in Iraq and Syria**

The United States intervened militarily in Iraq in 2003, 15 years ago this month, and the result was war and chaos. But the United States did not intervene in Syria in 2011 when the regime there was challenged, and the result was still war and chaos. Though the media has interpreted the past decade and a half of armed conflict in the Levant exclusively through the failure of U.S. policy, the fact that the policy in Syria was 180-degrees different from the one in Iraq and yet the result was the same indicates that there has to be a deeper, more fundamental force at work in both countries that journalists and historians must acknowledge.

More Details:

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/07/baathism-caused-the-chaos-in-iraq-and-syria/>

- **Red Cross warns Iraq of resentment by kin over inability to access Islamic State prisoners**

The head of the International Committee of the Red Cross warned Iraq on Wednesday of resentment among relatives of detainees suspected of fighting for the Islamic State group. The ICRC's Peter Maurer called for reconciliation in the country three months after the Iraqi government declared victory over the IS jihadis.

More Details:

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/03/08/world/social-issues-world/red-cross-warns-iraqi-resentment-kin-inability-access-islamic-state-prisoners/#.WqDnmexubcs>

- **Iraq's Nexus of Sectarianism and Corruption**

Iraq enters into another electoral season, yet elections and political parties alone do not mean successful democracy. Rather, government policies and strategies need to be drafted in line with good governance standards in order to ensure synergy between all domestic actors (the state, institutions, civil society organizations, and society), in addition to regional and international organizations. Such measures are necessary to bolster the fight against terrorism, especially in light of the need to restructure after the war with ISIS. It is also imperative to strengthen national identity, deal with the abuse of power, combat corruption, and stop the use of religion as a political facade to monopolize the perks of power.

More Details:

<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/fikraforum/view/iraqs-nexus-of-sectarianism-and-corruption>

- **Iran, Iraq to sign comprehensive MoU**

A comprehensive memorandum of understanding on trade, industry, technical and engineering services and standard will be signed by Iran's visiting First Vice-President Eshaq Jahangiri and Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi. The MoU in 10 articles will be signed by Eshaq Jahangiri who starts a three-day visit to Iraq on Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82854684>

- **U.S., Iraq's S-400 deal dispute to be resolved with diplomacy: ambassador**

Iraq can resolve the differences with the United States over the purchase of Russian anti-aircraft defense systems through diplomatic means, the Iraqi ambassador to Moscow said. Speaking to Russian agency Sputnik, Haider Mansour Hadi said if there were any objections from the U.S. side to

Iraq's purchase of S-400 , they could be resolved through diplomacy, reiterating that Baghdad maintains good relations with Washington.

More Details:

<https://www.iraqinews.com/features/u-s-objection-s-400-purchase-resolved-diplomacy-ambassador/>

- **Iraq Receives Second Batch of T-50 Jets**

The Iraqi government received on Wednesday the second batch of T-50 warplanes from South Korea, a security source confirmed. The delivery contained two fighter jets which were handed over to Iraqi authorities at the Martyr Mohammed Alaa airbase in Baghdad International Airport, the source told al-Ghad Press.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/420834>

- **12,000 police personnel to be appointed in Nineveh: official**

Nineveh Operations command on Wednesday said a ministerial committee will be formed in relation to the imminent appointments in the police body. Commander of the operations Nijm al-Jabouri said 12,000 police personnel will be appointed in Nineveh.

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/24555/12-000-police-personnel-to-be-appointed-in-Nineveh-official>

- **Iraq militia turns to reconstruction post-Daesh**

Three months ago, Ibrahim Ali was using his digger to smash down defensive embankments built by Daesh group militants in northern Iraq. But after years of digging for victory, he and his comrades have now turned their skills to civilian use: gouging out irrigation channels for farmers in the southern province of Basra. "What I'm doing makes me happy," he said, gelled hair glimmering above his sun-browned face.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/bb6380a1-4818-4f90-99e7-713ebbb8c1b3.aspx>

- **Iran prepared to open \$3bn LOC for Iraq reconstruction projects: Jahangiri**

Iran says it is ready to provide Iraq with a line of credit (LOC) worth up to three billion dollars to pave the way for the Iranian private sector's active participation in the reconstruction of the neighboring country. First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri made the statement at a Wednesday meeting with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi in Baghdad, saying the two sides should work to remove the restrictions in bilateral banking relations, which he said is the main obstacle to closer trade ties between the two nations.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/03/08/554736/Iran-Iraq-Jahangiri>

## 2. SYRIA

- **Abdrakhmanov: Guarantor states' foreign ministers will adopt joint statement on future of solving Syrian crisis**

Kazakh Foreign Minister Kairat Abdrakhmanov announced that the guarantor states of the cessation of hostilities agreement, namely Iran, Russia and Turkey, are about to adopt a joint statement during the meeting of their foreign ministers to be held on March 16th that would include the future of solving the crisis in Syria.

More Details:

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=129589>

- **Russia may have committed war crime in Syria: UN investigators**

It was a devastating airstrike that killed at least 84 people, including five children, shopping at a crowded local market, at a police station, and at family homes nearby. But now, a United Nations panel has determined it was more than a bloody day in a suburb of Syria's once-largest city Aleppo: it may have been a war crime.

More Details:

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/russia-committed-war-crime-syria-investigators/story?id=53580112>

- **UN repeats call for Syria cease-fire**

The U.N. Security Council is reiterating its call for implementation of its Feb. 24 resolution demanding a cease-fire throughout Syria for at least 30 days without delay to deliver humanitarian aid and evacuate the wounded and critically ill. Council president Karel Van Oosterom of the Netherlands

told reporters after Wednesday's closed meeting that members expressed concern about the humanitarian situation.

More Details:

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/the-latest-russian-general-among-dead-in-syria-plane-crash/2018/03/07/5e4d2296-21f9-11e8-946c-9420060cb7bd\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.9e1e276eefb](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/the-latest-russian-general-among-dead-in-syria-plane-crash/2018/03/07/5e4d2296-21f9-11e8-946c-9420060cb7bd_story.html?utm_term=.9e1e276eefb)

- **AfD courts Assad in Syria in bid to send migrants home**

Angela Merkel and other leading German politicians have criticised the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party for taking a “disgusting” trip to Syria designed to prove the country is safe enough to send home migrants.

More Details:

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/03/07/afd-courts-assad-syria-bid-send-migrants-home/>

- **Erasing History: YouTube's Deletion Of Syria War Videos Concerns Human Rights Groups**

The Syrian civil war keeps plunging to new depths of unimaginable cruelty. On February 18, the regime of Syrian president Bashar al-Assad launched an aerial assault on Eastern Ghouta, an opposition-held enclave on the outskirts of Damascus where 400,000 residents have been living under a government-imposed siege since 2013. An estimated 500 civilians were killed in under a week.

More Details:

<https://www.fastcompany.com/40540411/erasing-history-youtubes-deletion-of-syria-war-videos-concerns-human-rights-groups>

- **Syria: Ramaphosa government pressured by activists to take a moral stand**

South African human rights activists have written an open letter to President Cyril Ramaphosa, slamming South Africa's “shocking disregard for the loss of human life” in the Syrian civil war. The Stop the Bombing Campaign has also urged the new president to sever diplomatic ties with Syria for its mass killing of civilians, to refer Syria to the International Criminal Court, and to arrest perpetrators of atrocities in the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and try them for crimes against humanity.

More Details:

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2018-03-08-syria-ramaphosa-government-pressured-by-activists-to-take-a-moral-stand/#.WqDrcdSLRxA>

- **France again presses Russia, Iran to ensure Syria respects ceasefire**

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian on Thursday pressed Russia and Iran to use their influence over Syria's President Bashar al-Assad to ensure Damascus respects a U.N. resolution calling for a 30-day ceasefire. Le Drian also reiterated that France will respond if it is proven chemical weapons have been used and killed people.

More Details:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-france/france-again-presses-russia-iran-to-ensure-syria-respects-ceasefire-idUSKCN1GK00X>

- **Assad regime ex-prisoner pleads for jailed Syrian women**

Thousands of Syrian women continue to languish in prisons in Assad regime-controlled areas of Syria, suffering unimaginable horrors, as the world marks International Women's Day, a female survivor of jail torture has told Anadolu Agency. In an exclusive interview with Anadolu Agency, Nur Alhuda Hijazi spoke about the torture and sexual harassment she herself had to endure during her one-month long incarceration at a prison in Damascus.

More Details:

<https://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/assad-regime-ex-prisoner-pleads-for-jailed-syrian-women/1083024>

### 3. IRAN

- **Iran Calls on Saudi Officials to Stop Futile Words**

The Iranian foreign ministry deplored as "baseless and useless" the allegations raised in a joint statement by Riyadh and Cairo at the end of the Saudi crown prince's visit to Egypt claiming that Tehran interferes in the affairs of the regional states.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13961216001588>

- **Iran no threat to any country, says President Rouhani**

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani says the Israeli regime is in no position to call Iran a threat to the Middle East, stressing the development of the country's missile program is aimed at safeguarding peace and security.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/03/07/554668/Iran-Israel-Rouhani-Netanyahu-AIPAC>

- **Iran ready to open up to \$3bn credit line for Iraq reconstruction**

First Vice-President Jahangiri said Wed. that Iran is ready to open up to a \$3 billion credit line for Iraq as part of the Islamic Republic's contribution to Iraq reconstruction.

More details:

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/132683/Iran-ready-to-open-up-to-3bn-credit-line-for-Iraq-reconstruction>

- **Tehran, Moscow set to broaden economic co-op**

The 14th meeting of Iran-Russian Joint Economic Committee wrapped up on Tuesday with signing a cooperation document by Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Masoud Karbasian and Russian Economic Development Minister Maxim Oreshkin in Moscow.

More details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/421871/Tehran-Moscow-set-to-broaden-economic-co-op>

- **China expert: Iran plays key role in Syria's counter-terrorism move**

A Chinese expert said on Thursday the Islamic Republic of Iran plays a leading role in Syria's counter terrorism move and in reconstructing the war-hit Arab country.

More details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82855661>

- **Explosions at military base in western Iran cause fear among people**

Explosion of an ammunition depot at a military base in the western city of Dezful has caused panic among local people. The outbreak of fire and its spread to the ammunition depot have caused a series of explosions. The people residing inside the military unit are being evacuated, IRNA reported.

More details:

<http://www.iran-daily.com/News/211291.html>

- **Iran Rejects Allegations Raised in Saudi-Egyptian Statement**

Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Bahram Qassemi has categorically dismissed the accusations raised against the Islamic Republic in part of a joint statement by Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

More details:

<http://ifpnews.com/exclusive/iran-rejects-allegations-raised-saudi-egyptian-statement/>

- **Iran says US non-compliance with JCPOA undermining nuclear deal**

The Iranian envoy to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has criticized the US for failing to live up to its commitments under the nuclear deal signed between Tehran and the 5+1 group in 2015.

More details:

<http://parstoday.com/en/news/iran-i78449-iran-says-us-non-compliance-with-jcpoa-undermining-nuclear-deal>

## 4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Canada's Social Democrats: Anti-Palestinian History**

The NDP leadership's naked suppression of debate on the "Palestine Resolution" is rooted in a long pro-Israeli nationalism history. At last month's convention the party machine blocked any debate of the Palestine Resolution, which mostly restated official Canadian policy, except that it called for "banning settlement products from Canadian markets and using other forms of diplomatic and economic pressure to end the occupation." As I detailed previously, the Palestine Resolution was confusingly renamed, deprioritized and then blocked from being debated on the convention floor. The suppression of a resolution unanimously endorsed by the NDP youth convention, many outside groups and over 25 riding associations was the latest in a long line of leadership anti-Palestinian actions.

More details:

<http://www.palestinechronicle.com/canadas-social-democrats-anti-palestinian-history/>

- **Israel's El Al seeks UN help in bid to fly through Saudi airspace**

El Al Israel Airlines has appealed to the United Nations over a bid to reroute its services between Tel Aviv and India through Saudi Arabian airspace. Air India said on Wednesday it planned to begin

thrice-weekly non-stop flights from Delhi to Tel Aviv this month via Saudi airspace. This route, shorter than the alternatives, has so far been off limits to all Israel-bound commercial planes.

More details:

<https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5149725,00.html>

- **Japan donates \$40 million for projects in Palestine**

Japan has provided \$40 million to a number of sectors and projects in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, particularly Jerusalem, a statement by the prime minister's office said on Wednesday. Khayria Rissas, an adviser to Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah, received a letter from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) regarding the new \$40 million Japanese aid package to the Palestinian people.

Mors details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=fkHLvHa96790424841afkHLvH>

- **Cameron demands Government recognises State of Palestine**

Recognising a Palestinian state is not just about rectifying historic injustice" but also provides "the best means of ensuring the long-term peace and security of both Israel and Palestine", a city councillor said this week. Labour Galway City Central councillor, Billy Cameron, has called on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney, to "deliver on its commitment" in the 2016 programme for Government, by recognising the State of Palestine. Palestine is a de jure sovereign state, meaning the Palestinian Authority is recognised as being the legitimate government of a territory over which it has little, or no actual, control. Most of the areas claimed by the State of Palestine have been occupied by Israel since the 1967 Six-Day War. However, it is officially recognised by 136 UN member states.

More details:

<http://www.advertiser.ie/galway/article/99088/cameron-demands-government-recognises-state-of-palestine>

- **Israel passes law to strip residency of Jerusalem's Palestinians**

The Israeli parliament has passed a law that allows the minister of interior to revoke the residency rights of any Palestinian in Jerusalem on grounds of a "breach of loyalty" to Israel.

The bill, ratified on Wednesday, will also apply in cases where residency status was obtained on the basis of false information, and in cases where "an individual committed a criminal act" in the view of the interior ministry.

More details:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/03/israel-passes-law-strip-residency-jerusalem-palestinians-180307153033538.html>

- **Israel will always control Jordan Valley: Netanyahu**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Wednesday that the Jordan Valley region would remain part of Israel regardless of any future political settlement. “I think most Israelis would favor a situation where we could separate from the Palestinians. I don’t want the Palestinians as citizens of Israel and I don’t want them as subjects of Israel. I want a solution where they have all the powers they need to govern themselves but none of the powers that would threaten us,” Netanyahu said in a speech at the Economic Club of Washington, D.C., according to a statement issued by his office.

More Details:

<https://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israel-will-always-control-jordan-valley-netanyahu/1082866>

- **Israel establishment fears power struggle amid Abbas health scare**

The deterioration of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas’ health has caught the attention of Israeli security officials and politicians, amid fears that his resignation could spark a war of succession and destabilise current security arrangements in the West Bank. Amos Harel, a military analyst for Israeli newspaper Haaretz, has said that Israel is preparing for the possibility that “the continued deterioration of Abbas’ health will lead to a struggle for succession within the PA, which would destabilise the relative stability of the West Bank,” Arab 48 reported.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180307-israel-establishment-fears-power-struggle-amid-abbas-health-scare/>

- **Palestinians to Suspend Recognition of Israel**

Palestinian officials rejected on Tuesday US President Donald Trump’s call to return to peace negotiations, saying that he has isolated himself and Washington from any role in the political operation when he recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. They therefore added that they may suspend recognition of Israel as a state and seek to “internationalize” the conflict.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1197051/palestinians-suspend-recognition-israel>

## 5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Lebanon: Candidate Registration for Upcoming Elections Closes**

Registration of candidates for the upcoming parliamentary elections in Lebanon closed at midnight on Tuesday, with nearly 1000 running in the vote. The number of candidates registered with the Interior Ministry for the polls, slated for May 6, was the highest in the history of Lebanon's parliamentary elections.

More details:

<https://english.almanar.com.lb/458423>

- **Aoun to Grandi: for international action to facilitate gradual return of displaced people**

President of the Republic, General Michel Aoun, informed the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Filippo Grandi, during a meeting he held with him at Baabda Palace this Wednesday that "Lebanon is no longer able to shoulder the burdens of Syrian refugees and their repercussions at various levels".

More details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/88932/Aoun-to-Grandi-For-international-action-to-facilitate-gradual-return-of-displaced-people>

- **Women's rights activists in Jordan celebrate International Women's Day**

On this occasion, President of the Women's Union Amna Zu'bi said that "even though a number of women's rights are still denied, Jordanian women have made great achievements in education, shown effective participation in public work, and held societal and party leadership roles".

More details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/women%E2%80%99s-rights-activists-jordan-celebrate-international-women%E2%80%99s-day>

- **King receives deputy ruler of Dubai**

Sheikh Hamdan voiced his country's keenness to cement ties with the Kingdom in various fields of cooperation, stressing the Foundation's desire to support projects that aim at creating job opportunities for Jordanian youth.

More details:

[http://www.petra.gov.jo/public\\_news/Nws\\_NewsDetails.aspx?Menu\\_ID=&Site\\_Id=2&lang=2&NewsID=343554&CatID=13](http://www.petra.gov.jo/public_news/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?Menu_ID=&Site_Id=2&lang=2&NewsID=343554&CatID=13)

- **Grandi Urges More Aid for Lebanon's Refugee Hosting Effort**

Prime Minister Saad Hariri has met at the Center House with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi where talks highlighted the issue of Syrian refugees, Hariri's media office said. "I was pleased to meet with PM Hariri, together with the state minister for affairs of the displaced (Moein Merhebi) to discuss the situation of refugees in Lebanon and the region," said Grandi.

More details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/243107-grandi-urges-more-aid-for-lebanon-s-refugee-hosting-effort>

- **Terrorism, Israel biggest threats to Lebanon: Gen. Aoun**

The Lebanese military's two biggest challenges are the terrorist threats from Syria and the Israeli aggression on the country's sovereignty, Lebanese Army head Gen. Joseph Aoun said in an interview published Wednesday.

More details:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2018/Mar-07/440631-general-joseph-aoun-interview-with-al-jaysh-magazine.ashx>

- **Hariri Chairs 'Final' Budget Panel Meeting before Finalizing Discussions**

Prime Minister Saad Hariri chaired the meeting of the nine-member ministerial committee tasked with discussing the 2018 draft budget at the Grand Serail. The session is expected to be the last one before the budget is referred to the Parliament.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/243124-hariri-chairs-final-budget-panel-meeting-before-finalizing-discussions>

- **Hariri Tribunal Snubs Early Acquittal Request by 'Hezbollah' Suspect's Lawyer**

The Special Tribunal for Lebanon said Wednesday that the assassination of former Lebanese Premier Rafik Hariri in February 2005 was a terrorist act, and stressed that evidence presented by prosecutors "could" lead to the convictions of four "Hezbollah" suspects. The bombing that killed Hariri and 21 others on the Beirut seafront was a terrorist act, judges at the UN-backed court in the Hague said in a ruling.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1197211/hariri-tribunal-snubs-early-acquittal-request-%E2%80%98hezbollah%E2%80%99-suspect%E2%80%99s-lawyer>

## 6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Yemen officials say UAE barring ships with government cash**

The United Arab Emirates is barring ships carrying some 170 billion Yemeni rials (\$680 million) from entering the southern port of Aden, Yemeni officials said Wednesday. They told The Associated Press the money is meant for the salaries of government employees who haven't been paid for over a year. The officials, including one from the Yemeni central bank, spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak with reporters.

More details:

<https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/yemen-officials-say-uae-barring-ships-with-government-cash/>

- **UK, Saudi to monitor shipping lanes before Yemeni ports open: Al Arabiya**

Britain and Saudi Arabia will monitor shipping lanes in preparation for opening Yemeni ports, the British foreign minister said on Wednesday after meeting his Saudi counterpart in Yemen, according to Saudi-run Al Arabiya television.

More details:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-saudi-yemen/uk-saudi-to-monitor-shipping-lanes-before-yemeni-ports-open-al-arabiya-idUSKCN1GJ300>

- **Oman aviation set to soar as new Muscat airport terminal ready to welcome fliers**

The first flights from the new Muscat International Airport Terminal will take off for Salalah, Dubai, Kuwait, and Riyadh on March 20. These flights will depart from the new terminal building of the Muscat International Airport at some 6.50pm on March 20, 2018. The last flight of the national carrier from the old Muscat International Terminal will leave for Zurich at 2.45pm on the same day.

More details:

<http://timesofoman.com/article/129656>

- **UAE aircraft carrying 100 tonnes of food supplies arrives in Mali**

An aircraft carrying 100 tonnes of food supplies arrived in the capital of Mali, Bamako, as a gift from the UAE to improve the country's humanitarian conditions, as per the directives of President His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

More details:

<https://www.emirates247.com/news/emirates/uae-aircraft-carrying-100-tonnes-of-food-supplies-arrives-in-mali-2018-03-08-1.666493>

- **Kuwait's Bidoons allowed to join army**

Kuwait's parliament has voted to allow stateless people (Bidoon) to join the army. The breakthrough decision was adopted by 52 of the 58 members present at the second debate of the motion for a new army law. Five members opposed it and one abstained from voting.

More details:

<http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/kuwait/kuwait-s-bidoons-allowed-to-join-army-1.2183951>

- **Saudi skies are now open to flights to Israel**

For the first time ever, an international airline can use Saudi airspace to fly to Israel. Air India is launching a new flight from New Delhi to Tel Aviv, starting on March 22, and has been given permission to use the skies over Saudi Arabia, an Air India spokesperson told CNN. Israel and Saudi Arabia have never had official diplomatic relations, and interactions between their governments have taken place only through back channels.

More details:

<http://money.cnn.com/2018/03/07/news/india-israel-saudi-arabia-airspace-delhi-tel-aviv/index.html>

- **NATO, Qatar sign military agreement in Brussels**

NATO and Qatar on Wednesday signed a military agreement that will allow NATO forces and personnel to enter and transit the country and use an air base there, according to a written statement from the alliance. The deal came as NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg received Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani at NATO headquarters in Brussels and the two leaders discussed the security situation in the Gulf region and the partnership between NATO and Qatar, the statement said.

More Details:

<https://aa.com.tr/en/europe/nato-qatar-sign-military-agreement-in-brussels/1082816>

- **Mohammad bin Salman to deal with the ‘deal of the century’**

Arab diplomatic sources in Cairo revealed that the so-called ‘deal of the century’ on the Palestinian-Israeli question is the most prominent matter on Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman agenda. Palestinian sources confirm their absolute rejection of the so-called ‘deal’ diplomatic sources suggested that the steps implemented on the ground may be stronger than is apparent.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180308-mohammad-bin-salman-to-deal-with-the-deal-of-the-century/>

## 7. EGYPT

- **Egypt inaugurates customs office in contested Halayeb region: MP**

The Member of Parliament for Halayeb district in Sudan’s National Assembly said the Egyptian authorities have opened a customs office in Hadarba area in the contested region. The border triangle area of Halayeb, Abu Ramad and Shalateen, which is a 20,580 km area on the Red Sea, has been a contentious issue between Egypt and Sudan since 1958, shortly after Sudan gained its independence from the British-Egyptian rule in January 1956.

More Details:

<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article64892>

- **U.N. rights chief denounces 'climate of intimidation' in Egypt before vote**

The U.N. human rights chief said on Wednesday there was a “pervasive climate of intimidation” in Egypt in the run-up to this month’s presidential elections marked by arrests, torture of detainees and “silencing” of independent media.

More Details:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-rights/u-n-rights-chief-denounces-climate-of-intimidation-in-egypt-before-vote-idUSKCN1GJ14Q>

- **We will not accept any type of sit-ins or protests: Parliament speaker**

Egyptian Parliament Speaker Ali Abdel Aal said during a Tuesday parliamentary session that the Egyptian state will not accept the presence of any sit-ins or protests, noting that these acts are part of an old era.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/we-will-not-accept-any-type-of-sit-ins-or-protests-parliament-speaker/>

- **Egypt's SIS hands BBC 'protest note' over report alleging torture, forced disappearances in Egypt**

Egypt's State Information Service (SIS) officially handed the BBC's Cairo bureau chief a "protest note" over its controversial recent report on what the latter claimed are cases of torture and forced disappearances of Egyptian opposition members by Egyptian security forces.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptdailynews.com/detail/egypts-sis-hands-bbc-protest-note-over-report-alleging-torture-forced-disappearances-in-egypt>

- **Egypt's FM Shoukry discusses bilateral relations with Sudanese counterpart**

Egypt's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sameh Shoukry met on Wednesday with his Sudanese counterpart Ibrahim Ghandour to discuss bilateral relations on the sidelines of the Arab League's meeting of foreign ministers in Cairo, the Egyptian foreign ministry said in a statement. Shoukry told Ghandour that Egypt is keen on removing any obstacle to sound bilateral relations between the two countries.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/292346/Egypt/Politics-/Egypts-FM-Shoukry-discusses-bilateral-relations-wi.aspx>

- **Egypt Blacklists ISIS Affiliate, 300 Terror Suspects**

The official gazette in Egypt released on Wednesday a court ruling issued last week that places ISIS-affiliate, the Sinai State, on the terrorism blacklist. More than 300 terror suspects have also been blacklisted. Formerly known as Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, Sinai State has been active in North Sinai where it announced its allegiance to ISIS in 2014, eventually changing its name.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1197416/egypt-blacklists-isis-affiliate-300-terror-suspects>

- **House of Representatives rejects calls by British parliament to access Morsi**

The foreign affairs committee in the Egyptian Parliament has rejected on Wednesday calls by three British members of parliament who requested that Egyptian authorities allow them to visit the country's jailed former president Mohamed Morsi, raising concerns about his health. The committee also condemned accusing British newspaper The Guardian of "falsely claiming with no proof that his [Morsi's] health has deteriorating."

More Details:

<https://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2018/03/08/house-representatives-rejects-calls-british-parliament-access-morsi/>

## 8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Africom reports on its 2018 policy in Libya**

Presenting its 2018 Africom Posture Statement to Congress, U.S. Marine Corps Gen. Thomas D. Waldhauser, commander, U.S. Africa Command, testified in Washington DC yesterday before the House Armed Services Committee. Waldhauser set out Africom’s main policy objectives in Libya: “Turning to North Africa, our four primary objectives in Libya are: degrade terrorist groups who threaten U.S. interests and threaten to destabilize Libya and the region; avert civil war; support the political reconciliation process towards a unified central government; and assist to curb the flow of illegal migrants into Europe via Libya. Efforts by European allies and international organizations are underway to interdict the illicit flow of arms and drugs flowing into and through of North Africa due to porous borders and under-governed spaces.”

More details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2018/03/07/africom-reports-on-its-2018-policy-in-libya/>

- **Morocco-EU: Rabat Needs New Diplomatic Approach in Brussels**

Rabat’s persistence on using traditional diplomatic avenues to address a judicial conundrum led to its recent stumble in Brussels. The European Court of Justice (ECJ) Ruling against Morocco excluding waters off the coast of “Western Sahara” from fisheries agreements between Morocco and the EU should not come as a surprise. Since the International Court of Justice issued an unfavorable advisory opinion against the Kingdom in 1975 and the United Nations does not recognize the territory as Moroccan, the chance of any court ruling in favoring Morocco is slim to none.

More details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2018/03/241917/morocco-eu-rabat-needs-new-diplomatic-approach-brussels/>

- **Malia Bouattia, the Algerian who chaired UK’s most powerful student organization**

gerian Malia Mazia Bouattia, who was elected head of the UK's most powerful student organization in 2016-2017, has been very much in the news because of her principles and ideals, drawn from the Revolution of her country of origin.

More details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/23190-malia-bouattia-the-algerian-who-chaired-uk-s-most-powerful-student-organization>

- **Sweden to soon reopen embassy in Tripoli, ambassador says**

The Head of the Presidential Council Fayez Al-Sirraj met with the ambassador of Sweden to Libya, Fredrik Florén, on Wednesday in Tripoli in the presence of deputy foreign minister Lutfi Al-Maghrabi. The Swedish ambassador said the Swedish diplomatic mission will return to the capital soon. He also discussed boosting relations between Libya and Sweden in all fields.

More details:

<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/inbrief/sweden-soon-reopen-embassy-tripoli-ambassador-says>

- **US hunts Benghazi consulate attack-linked terrorists in east Libya**

The US spy aircraft Havilland Canada Dash-8s carried out Monday a mission of surveillance above the eastern Libyan region to hunt “terrorists and individuals linked to the attack on US consulate in Benghazi in 2012.” The Drive revealed. The American website also reported that Dash-8s flew the missions over eastern Libya from Souda Bay on the Greek island of Crete in the Mediterranean.

More details:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/us-hunts-benghazi-consulate-attack-linked-terrorists-in-east-libya/>

- **National Authority of Access to Information issues seven access decisions on public Procurement Documents concluded by four Municipal Councils**

The National Authority of Access to Information issued Wednesday seven decisions, following a series of complaints filed by a private company specialising in sports equipment to access documents on public procurement concluded by Regional Councils of Manouba, Zaghuan, Beja and Sousse for the growing grass of the municipal stadiums of Battan, Borj El-Amri, Testour, Medjaz El-Bab, Hammam Zriba and Akouda.

More details:

<https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/9936039-national-authority>

- **French Muslims, Jews, and Christians visit Morocco**

A delegation made up of representatives of Muslims, Jews, and Christians from southwest France has been visiting Morocco since last Sunday in collaboration with France’s Union of Mosques (UMF). UMF, which facilitates interreligious dialogue in France, initiated this trip as part of a mission to represent French Islam, said Hauman Yaakoubi, Secretary-General of the Union.

More details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2018/03/241957/french-muslims-jews-christians-visit-morocco-religions/>

- **Tunisia celebrates battle of Ben Guerdane against ISIS**

Ben Guerdane, the last Tunisian city before the border with Libya, commemorates today the resistance of the armed forces and citizens against the attack two years ago carried out by a group of ISIS militants who were trying to gain control of military and civil targets in the city. The ISIS group had reached Libya with the help of local militants. The attack did not succeed thanks to the quick response of Tunisia's security forces and the military, backed by the local population. A reported 19 people, including seven civilians, died on one side while 54 terrorists were killed on the other, in clashes that continued until the jihadists surrendered. The population at the time took to the streets to help security forces, reporting the position of militants and often enabling their capture.

More details:

[http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/politics/2018/03/07/tunisia-celebrates-battle-of-ben-guerdane-against-isis\\_749ea60a-e285-4432-9560-1458cdcc88d5.html](http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/politics/2018/03/07/tunisia-celebrates-battle-of-ben-guerdane-against-isis_749ea60a-e285-4432-9560-1458cdcc88d5.html)

- **Tunisia Arrests Former 'Ansar al-Sharia' Spokesman on Suspicion of Terrorism**

The Tunisian security services in charge of combating terrorist crimes arrested a six-member terrorist cell in Kairouan city. The detainees include Sayf al-Din Ben Rayes, a former spokesman for the banned Ansar al-Sharia organization. On Monday evening, security units in Kairouan arrested members of the cell and handed them over to members of the National Unit for the Investigation of Terrorist Crimes, which is affiliated with the Ministry's National Police and National Guard, for further investigation.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1197176/tunisia-arrests-former-%E2%80%99ansar-al-sharia%E2%80%99-spokesman-suspicion-terrorism>

## 9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Nawaz, Zardari face-off**

The ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz(PML-N) and its allies suffered a rude shock on Wednesday when the Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) President Asif Ali Zardari rejected their offer of support to elect Mian Raza Rabbani as the Senate chairman for the second term.

More details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/289655-nawaz-zardari-face-off>

- **Ghani defends his peace offer, vows water management**

President Ashraf Ghani on Wednesday insisted on continuation of efforts to revive the peace talks but in the same breath described strengthening the security forces as the only option to achieve durable peace and stability.

More details:

<https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2018/03/07/ghani-defends-his-peace-offer-vows-water-management>

- **Iran Ready to Help Afghanistan Advance Its Peace Process**

Afghanistan's Defence Minister Ahmad Tamim Asey and Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Seyyed Abbas Araqchi have discussed the Afghan peace process in Tehran.

More details:

<http://ifpnews.com/exclusive/iran-ready-help-afghanistan-advance-peace-process/>

- **IMF concerned at Pakistan's weakening economy**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Wednesday expressed concern over Pakistan's weakening macroeconomic situation, including widening external and fiscal imbalances, reduction in foreign exchange reserves and emerging risks to economic and financial outlook.

More details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1393806/imf-concerned-at-pakistans-weakening-economy>

- **TTP Chief Mullah Fazlullah's son reportedly killed in Kunar airstrike**

The Pakistani Taliban, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) Chief, Mullah Fazlullah's son has reportedly been killed in an airstrike in eastern Kunar province of Afghanistan.

More details:

<https://www.khaama.com/ttp-chief-mullah-fazlullahs-son-reportedly-killed-in-kunar-airstrike-04598/>

- **Huge Explosion Jolted Jalalabad City; Casualties Feared**

Jalalabad City (BNA) Few moments ago a suicide attacker blow-up himself in Jalalabad city the provincial capital of eastern Nangarhar province.

More details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/security/item/32287-breaking-news-/-huge-explosion-jolted-jalalabad-city-casualties-feared.html>

- **US Intelligence Agencies Warn Against More Taliban Attacks**

Addressing the US Senate Committee, senator Jack Reed expressed concern over what he said was Russia's possible collusion with the Taliban.

More details:

<https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/us-intelligence-agencies-warn-against-more-taliban-attacks>

- **Asif Zardari rejected re-electing Raza Rabbani**

In an interesting development, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) chief Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday rejected the idea of re-electing Raza Rabbani as Senate chairman as proposed by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) chief Nawaz Sharif.

More details:

<http://paktribune.com/news/Asif-Zardari-rejected-re-electing-Raza-Rabbani-280501.html>

## 10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkish, Iranian presidents mull situation in Syria**

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani discussed the situation in Syria, in particular, the crisis in Eastern Ghouta, in a telephone conversation on March 7, the Turkish media report.

More details:

<https://en.trend.az/world/turkey/2870256.html>

- **Turkey's Opposition member questions US support for PKK**

A senior leader of the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) on Thursday called on the U.S. to clarify its position against Turkey. Speaking to journalists at the parliament, Engin Altay, CHP parliamentary deputy group chairman, said: "The U.S. should take a decision. Is the strategic partner of the U.S. PYD/PKK or Turkey?" "We should also know it," he added.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/199559/turkeys-opposition-member-questions-us-support-for-pkk>

- **Over 3,000 terrorists 'neutralized' in Afrin operation**

A total of 3,055 terrorists have been "neutralized" so far since the start of Operation Olive Branch in Syria's northwestern Afrin region, the Turkish General Staff said in a statement on Thursday. Turkish authorities often use the word "neutralized" in their statements to imply the terrorists in question either surrendered or were killed or captured. The military also added that air-and-land operations were continuing.

More Details:

<https://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/over-3-000-terrorists-neutralized-in-afrin-operation/1082967>

- **Turkey, Iraq to carry out joint operation against PKK terror group in northern Iraq**

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu has announced that the Turkish and Iraqi army will jointly launch a military offensive against the PKK terrorists after Baghdad holds the parliamentary elections. Turkey and Iraqi central government in Baghdad will carry out a joint operation against the PKK terror group in northern Iraq, Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu was quoted as saying on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://www.aneews.com.tr/world/2018/03/08/turkey-iraq-to-carry-out-joint-operation-against-pkk-terror-group-in-northern-iraq>

- **Turkish military, FSA liberate Afrin's Jandarıs from YPG/PKK terrorists**

Turkish soldiers and Free Syrian Army (FSA) fighters liberated Thursday Jandarıs town center from PKK-affiliated People's Protection Forces (YPG) terrorists as part of Operation Olive Branch in northern Syria, leaving only Afrin town center as a large settlement in the hands of YPG. At least 3,055 terrorists have been "neutralized" in Operation Olive Branch in Syria's Afrin, the Turkish military said in a previous statement Thursday.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2018/03/08/turkish-military-fsa-liberate-afrins-jandarıs-from-ypgpkk-terrorists>

*\*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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