



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

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1. IRAQ

- **Rights Watch accuses Kurdish security forces of arresting protesters and subjecting them to pledges**

Human Rights Watch accused Kurdish security forces of arresting participants in the December 2017 protests in Sulaymaniyah and forcing them to sign pledges not to criticize the government. "The protesters were detained for up to eight days without being brought before a judge and forced to sign pledges not to protest or criticize the government for social media, the Asayish forces in Iraqi Kurdistan detained also three journalists who were covering the protests, because of their work. "

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?1FXFadOJ9eJG3UXvKnRo1g%253d%253d

- **Iraq eyes Turkish investment to revive economy: Iraqi FM**

Iraq's foreign minister on Feb. 28 called on Turkish businesspeople and investors to participate actively in the reconstruction of the country's economy, which is recovering from a nearly nine-year U.S.-led invasion that ended in 2011. In an exclusive interview with state-run Anadolu Agency, Ibrahim al-Jaafari recalled that in 2014-2015 the trade turnover between Iraq and Turkey amounted to \$18 billion. The volume fell to \$12 billion recently.

More Details:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/iraq-eyes-turkish-investment-to-revive-economy-iraqi-fm-128078>

- **Mosul people fearful of Islamic State's chemical reserve left behind**

People in the Iraqi city of Mosul are still filled with apprehension from chemicals left over from Islamic State militants' bygone presence in the country's second largest city, a news agency reports, saying that security forces do little to work out a solution. Though Iraqi forces recaptured Mosul, Islamic State's birthplace in Iraq, in July, the extremist group's reserve of chemical weapons stocked inside civilian property remains a source of concern for civilians, according to Anadolu Agency.

More Details:

<https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/mosul-people-fearful-islamic-states-chemical-reserve-left-behind/>

- **Iraqi Troops Withdraw from Suburb of Tuz Khurmatu to Kirkuk**

Large units of the Iraqi armed forces on Wednesday made a rapid withdrawal from their positions around Tuz Khurmatu district, relocating in Kirkuk, a source stated. Arsalan Ali, head of Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) branch office in Tuz Khurmatu, told BasNews that the Iraqi forces have now abandoned certain positions in Khdir Wali suburb of Tuz Khurmatu, where small units of Hashd al-Shaabi and federal police are made responsible to spread around.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/419032>

- **Australian troops to continue Iraq training mission, Defence chief says**

Australian troops will remain in Iraq for 2018 to continue training local security forces despite the defeat of Islamic State, the head of the Defence Force says.

More Details:

http://www.shafaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/82004a70-2c59-4915-9279-46d264629520

- **Qubad Talabani: Baghdad won't do what they've promised to do**

Deputy of Kurdistan Regional Government affirms "By bringing excuses up Baghdad wants to not Keep their promises." Today, Qubad Talabani Deputy of Kurdistan Regional Government during a press conference specialized for Electronic System Intelligence in Higher Education Ministry and Science Research of Kurdistan Regional Government had a speech and pointed out the finances of Kurdistan Regional Government.

More Details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=42856

- **MP: Political parties' law guarantees election's fairness**

The political parties' law will guarantee the transparency and integrity of the election, according to member of the Iraqi Parliamentary Legal Committee Selim Shawky on Thursday. The next election will mark the first time to apply the law, making sure that it regulates the work of the political parties and determine their structure, according to Shawky.

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/24303/MP-Political-parties-law-guarantees-election-s-fairness>

- **Daesh hideaway full of weapons discovered in Iraq**

Iraqi security forces arrested members of the Daesh terrorist group and discovered a warehouse belonging to them in the north of Iraq, in the province of Nineveh. A source in the Iraqi security forces told Sputnik that “the Department of Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism in the province of Nineveh arrested members of Daesh in the area of al-Maidan in the old city of western Mosul.”

More Details:

<https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/daesh-hideaway-full-weapons-discovered-iraq-photos/>

- **Iraq MPs call for timetable for foreign troop pullout**

Iraq's parliament called for the government to draw up a timetable for the withdrawal of foreign troops from the country in a resolution passed on Thursday, the speaker's office said. "The Iraqi parliament expresses its gratitude to all countries which have supported Iraq in its fight against Daesh (the Islamic State group) and calls for the government to draw up a timetable for the withdrawal of foreign troops," it said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-5449779/Iraq-MPs-call-timetable-foreign-troop-pullout.html>

- **Spain to deploy transport helicopters to Iraq**

Spain is preparing to send up to five military transport helicopters to Iraq to help support the US-led international coalition forces in their operations against remnants of the Islamic State (IS). Army Chief of Staff General Francisco Varela Salas said the aircraft from its Air Mobile Force (FAMET) are expected to be dispatched in the first half of the year and will be based in or near Baghdad.

More Details:

<http://www.janes.com/article/78267/spain-to-deploy-transport-helicopters-to-iraq>

- **Investment in Iraq smacks of exploitation; regional big-hitters should open their coffers**

Eighty per cent of Iraq's immediate humanitarian needs have been met by Iraqis themselves, as they seek to rebuild vast swathes of the country post-Daesh. The push for the other twenty per cent has resulted in an international fund-raising round by Haider Al-Abadi, but it is faltering. The Iraqi Prime Minister says that \$88.2 billion is still required, preferably in donations. He walked away two weeks ago from a Kuwait-hosted conference with around \$30bn, most of which is pledged in loans and investments. For all the pan-Arab bluster in support of Iraq when Daesh arrived on the scene, there is remarkably little attention being paid now that the extremists have been pushed out.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180301-investment-in-iraq-smacks-of-exploitation-regional-big-hitters-should-open-their-coffers/>

- **Iraq can help mend Iran-Saudi ties: Jaafari**

Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari has said in a press conference that Baghdad can help Iran and Saudi Arabia mend ties, Mehr reported on Wednesday. Iran and Saudi Arabia have been at odds since the conflict arose in Syria in 2011. The relations suffered more setbacks as 464 Iranian pilgrims were crushed to death in a stampede in Mecca in September 2015.

More Details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/421652/Iraq-can-help-mend-Iran-Saudi-ties-Jaafari>

- **Al-Jaafari: Iraq intends to buy Russian missile defence system**

Iraqi Foreign Minister, Ibrahim Al-Jaafari, revealed that his country intends to buy a Russian missile defence system as part of its efforts to rebuild its weapons capabilities after a three-year war against the terrorist group Daesh. This came in Al-Jaafari's statements during a joint press conference he held on Wednesday with Russian Vice President Dmitry Rogozin in the Russian capital Moscow, according to a report by the Iraqi Foreign Ministry.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180301-al-jaafari-iraq-intends-to-buy-russian-missile-defence-system/>

- **Abadi's Islamist Alliance: A Gloomy Picture for the Future of Iraq**

On Sunday 14 January, a spokesperson for Ammar al-Hakim's National Wisdom Movement announced a trilateral alliance for the upcoming elections consisting of his own National Wisdom Movement, the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF), and Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi's Victory and Unity list. Since al-Abadi primarily came to power to appease the Sunni community and is generally seen as a moderate figure, his decision to join Hadi al-Amiri's PMF alliance took Iraq watchers by surprise. However, all of three days later, the coalition fell apart.

More Details:

<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2018/02/28/abadis-islamist-alliance-a-gloomy-picture-for-the-future-of-iraq/>

2. SYRIA

- **Al-Jaafari: Terrorists plot for wide-scale chlorine gas attack to accuse the Syrian Arab army of it**

Syria's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Bashar al-Jaafari, said that the Syrian government had information that terrorists are planning for a wide-scale terrorist attack with chlorine gas to accuse the Syrian Arab army of it. Speaking at the UN Security Council's meeting on Wednesday, al-Jaafari added that terrorists have strict instructions from western and Turkish intelligence agencies to fabricate a terrorist attack with chlorine gas before March 13th, the date on which the 87th session of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) will be convened.

More Details:

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=128899>

- **Russia and Syria clash with US and West on Syria cease-fire**

Russia and Syria clashed with the U.S. and its Western allies Wednesday over responsibility for the failure of a cease-fire to take hold in Syria as the U.N. said humanitarian convoys are ready to head to 10 locations including besieged eastern Ghouta near the capital Damascus. The contentious Security Council meeting four days after members adopted a resolution demanding a cease-fire "without delay" for at least 30 days throughout Syria to deliver humanitarian aid and evacuate the critically ill and wounded reflected frustration and anger on both sides at the continued fighting and bombing.

More Details:

https://article.wn.com/view/2018/03/01/Russia_and_Syria_clash_with_US_and_West_on_Syria_ ceasefire_1x/

- **North Korea sent Syria missile and chemical weapon items, says UN report**

North Korea sent Syria more than 40 items used in ballistic missile and chemical weapons programmes in the five years from 2012-17, a leaked UN report has said. The panel of experts monitoring sanctions against North Korea said its investigations into Pyongyang's transfer of prohibited ballistic missile, conventional arms and dual use goods found the previously unreported shipments.

More Details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/28/north-korea-sent-syria-missile-and-chemical-weapon-items-says-un-report>

- **Satellite Images of Iranian Missile Base in Syria May Signal an Israeli Strike**

Judging by historic precedent, the report Fox News aired Wednesday on the new Iranian military base in Syria is like cocking a gun: it's the warning before the blast. The same happened in December. A few weeks after the BBC reported based on "Western intelligence" sources, on a base for pro-Iranian Shiite in Syria, the base was bombed from the air. Foreign media attributed the attack to Israel, though Israel as usual declined to comment.

More Details:

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-satellite-images-of-iranian-missile-base-in-syria-may-signal-israeli-strike-1.5865470>

- **Is the US doing more harm than good in Syria and Lebanon?**

Quite simply, the situation in Syria is a mess, with no easy or predictable solutions. It is likely that a year from now the situation will look worse, even if ISIS is totally defeated. There are Sunni Salafist, Muslim Brotherhood and al Qaeda militias, all eager to fill the radical Sunni vacuum, and in it for the long haul.

More Details:

<http://thehill.com/opinion/international/375710-is-the-us-doing-more-harm-than-good-in-syria-and-lebanon>

- **Turkish army, FSA liberate 1 more village in NW Syria**

The Turkish Armed Forces and Free Syrian Army (FSA) on Thursday liberated one more village from YPG/PKK-Daesh terrorists as part of the Operation Olive Branch in Syria's northwestern Afrin region. The village of "Seyh Mehmetli" in the Rajo district, located northwest of Afrin, has been cleared of the terrorists, Anadolu Agency's correspondents in the field reported.

More Details:

<https://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkish-army-fsa-liberate-1-more-village-in-nw-syria/1076833>

- **Civilians shun Russia's offer to quit Eastern Ghouta**

Wafideen Checkpoint, Syria - Civilians in Syria's Eastern Ghouta have continued to shun Russia's offer to quit the besieged enclave, as rebels and Moscow blamed each other for the humanitarian deadlock. The air strikes and clashes that killed 600 civilians in 10 days have reduced since the Kremlin announced five-hour halts in the bombardment.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=87481>

- **Syria regime strikes rebel enclave as aid trucks wait**

Syrian and Russian forces kept up military pressure on rebel-held Eastern Ghouta Thursday as their controversial unilateral truce failed to yield a humanitarian breakthrough. More than 40 trucks loaded with aid were unable to reach the 400,000 people living in the battered enclave, prompting fresh calls for a UN ceasefire to be implemented.

More Details:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-5449979/Syria-regime-strikes-rebel-enclave-aid-trucks-wait.html>

3. IRAN

- **Bulgarian president praises Iran's contribution to peace, security**

Bulgarian President Rumen Radev says his country backs Iran's efforts to promote stability and peace in the Middle East region. The Iranian foreign minister said that Bulgaria was an important European country to Iran, adding that it acted as a gate to Europe.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/02/28/553920/Iran-Zarif-Europe-Bulgaria-terrorism-nuclear-deal>

- **Top Commander: Drones, Helicopters Finding Bigger Role in IRGC Operation**

It is now less than two years that a decision has been made to equip the IRGC Ground Force with helicopters and start a helicopter unit," General Jafari told reporters on the sidelines of a ceremony on Wednesday to inaugurate an IRGC Airborne Force Center to overhaul helicopters near Tehran. He noted that the IRGC Ground Force has constructed 3 centers to overhaul helicopters, stressing that the new center is unique in the country.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13961209000800>

- **Iran, Croatia stress facilitation of banking transactions to boost trade coop.**

Iran's FM Zarif held talks with Minister of Labor of Croatia, Marko Pavić, Wed. night as the first formal step following his arrival in the East European country. During the meeting, the two sides noted the growing relations between Tehran and Zagreb, and called for further expansion of

cooperation in energy, investment, industries, and technical trainings. Foreign Minister Zarif and the Minister of Labour and Pension System of the Republic of Croatia, Marko Pavić, also stressed the need for facilitation of banking transactions as a means to boost economic and trade cooperation.

More details:

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/132516/Iran-Croatia-stress-facilitation-of-banking-transactions-to>

- **Iran's peace plan still the only solution to Yemen war, Zarif says**

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said that Iran's four-point peace plan is still the only solution to the Yemen conflict. "Desperate attempt UNSC by US&UK to cover up complicity in 3 years of Saudi & Emirati war crimes in Yemen failed. Since the very start, Iran called for ceasefire, aid, dialogue & inclusive government. This—not a delusion of military victory or accusations—remains the only solution," he tweeted on Tuesday. The Iranian foreign minister made the comment a day after Russia vetoed a resolution at the UN Security Council presented by Britain and strongly backed by the United States, which called for "additional measures" against Iran over allegations that it violated the 2015 arms embargo on the war-torn Arabian Peninsula state.

More Details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/421657/Iran-s-peace-plan-still-the-only-solution-to-Yemen-war-Zarif>

- **Iranian minister: Deals with Belgium paves grounds for more ties**

Iranian Health Minister Seyyed Hassan Qazizadeh Hasehmi described the agreement signed between his country and Belgium as a ground for boosting economic ties between the two countries. 'Fortunately, there are good relations between Iran and Belgium, and what the two countries gained through the meetings held on Wednesday is not limited to the agreements signed between Belgian and Iranian firms,' the health minister told Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA).

More details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82847745>

- **Iran health minister underlines need for EU to implement JCPOA**

Iranian Minister of Health Seyyed Hassan Qazizadeh Hasehmi has stressed the need for the European Union to remove obstacles in the way of European and Belgian companies' activities in Iran, in line with implementation of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal. The Iranian minister also noted that as Iran has remained committed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), EU should do so, he said. One of such obligations is supporting investment, solving banking problems and removing financial

issues and the Belgian government can offer incentives for the country's investors and companies to start activities in Iran.

More details:

<http://www.iran-daily.com/News/210850.html>

- **Iran bans using dollars in import documents**

Iran moved a step closer to a plan to ditch the dollar in its trade activities by announcing that purchase orders by merchants that are based on the greenback would no longer be allowed to go through import proceedings. According to Press TV, the policy was in line with an official request by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and was specifically meant to address fluctuations in market rates of the dollar. IRNA quoted Mehdi Kasraeipour, CBI's Director of Foreign Exchange Rules and Policies Affairs, as saying that the move had become effective from Wednesday by virtue of a letter sent to the Ministry of Industry, Mines and Trade.

More details:

http://parstoday.com/en/news/iran-i77797-iran_bans_using_dollars_in_import_documents

- **France's words, behavior do not match**

Referring to French Foreign minister's upcoming visit to Iran, Ali Akbar Velayati said Wednesday that Iran do not trust French government's approach towards the nuclear deal. On the sidelines of the meeting between Ali Akbar Velayati and Syria's Minister of Religious Endowments Mohammed Abdul Sattar and his accompanying delegation comprised of Syrian clerics in Tehran on Wednesday afternoon, the Leader's top advisor told reporters that Russia's action in vetoing the British-drafted resolution in UN Security Council meeting on Monday was of great importance.

More details:

<http://irannewsdaily.com/frances-words-behavior-not-match/>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Ground Forces to play a bigger role in next war**

IDF sees increased chance for war in 2018, displays innovations of the modern battlefield, including drones at disposal of field officers, new mini-rockets, mortars, semi-automatic artillery cannons.

More Details:

<https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5137783,00.html>

- **Gazan girl in need of transplant travels without parents after Israel denies permits**

A Palestinian girl was forced to travel without either of her parents from Gaza to the central occupied West Bank city of Ramallah on Tuesday, where she is scheduled to receive a kidney transplant.

More Details:

<http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=779896>

- **Presidential churches committee renews support for Jerusalem churches**

The Higher Presidential Committee of Churches Affairs Wednesday said it supports the position of the Jerusalem churches that are protesting against Israel's tax plan.

More Details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=cdx3Dia96711429342acdx3Di>

- **California Democrats Oppose Bills to Penalize BDS**

On Sunday, February 25, at their annual convention in San Diego, California, Democrats approved a set of positions on pending legislation that includes opposition to S 720/HR 1697, the Israel Anti-Boycott Act, a federal bill that would impose draconian penalties for boycotts regarding Israel under certain circumstances; and S 170/HR 2856, the Combatting BDS Act, which purports to permit and encourage states to enact similar laws—as many have.

More Details;

<http://www.palestinechronicle.com/california-democrats-oppose-bills-penalize-bds/>

- **Israel suspends taxation legislation for Jerusalem's churches**

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre has announced it will reopen its doors after Israel decided to suspend legislation regarding collecting taxes from churches and their properties in Jerusalem. Following international pressure and rising protests from Palestinian Christians, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced the formation of a committee to discuss the imposition of the property tax, or arnona, on Jerusalem's churches.

More Details:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/02/israel-suspends-taxation-legislation-jerusalem-churches-180227164222822.html>

- **Injured Palestine teen recalls detention, interrogation**

Mohammad Fadel al-Tamimi, 15, cousin of Palestinian resistance icon Ahed al-Tamimi, was released this week after being detained by Israeli authorities despite having recently suffered a severe head injury. On Dec. 28, Mohammad was struck by a rubber-coated bullet that was fired by an Israeli soldier during clashes that erupted in his village -- Nabi Saleh -- near the West Bank city of Ramallah.

More Details:

<https://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/injured-palestine-teen-recalls-detention-interrogation/1076871>

- **Netanyahu welcomes Prince William Israel visit**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday welcomed what he called a "historic" visit by Britain's Prince William planned for this summer. "We welcome the announcement of Prince William's arrival in Israel, a historic visit," Netanyahu said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=87487>

- **Netanyahu refuses dialogue with Qatar, praises UAE**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has accused Qatar of supporting Hamas, rejecting calls for dialogue with Doha, while stressing the need for dialogue with other Gulf states. This came during a meeting held with leaders of Jewish organisations in the United States yesterday which dealt with the nature of relations between Tel Aviv and the Gulf states. Netanyahu said: "It is necessary to establish a dialogue with the constructive forces in the Gulf region." He added: "I certainly do not talk about Qatar."

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180301-netanyahu-refuses-dialogue-with-qatar-praises-uae/>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Hariri feted in Riyadh, meets king**

Prime Minister Saad Hariri received a lavish welcome traditionally given to heads of state on his arrival at the Yamama Palace in Riyadh Wednesday to meet with the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdel Aziz. Images released by the palace showed the two sipping coffee in a convivial manner at a room where presidents and kings are received by the Saudi monarch.

More Details:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2018/Mar-01/439812-hariri-feted-in-riyadh-meets-king.ashx>

- **King vows to 'get things done' for Indian investors**

His Majesty King Abdullah on Wednesday attended part of the Jordanian-Indian Business Forum that was held in New Delhi, where he promised potential investors all help possible to facilitate their businesses in Jordan, according to a Royal Court statement.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/king-vows-get-things-done%E2%80%99-indian-investors>

- **Jordan's King holds talks in New Delhi to boost ties**

Expanding bilateral cooperation in all fields has been the focus of talks Jordan's King Abdullah II and Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj held in New Delhi Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=37308#.WpevbaiWblU>

- **Berri Heard 'Very Positive Remarks' from Saudi Envoy**

Speaker Nabih Berri told lawmakers on Wednesday that his meeting with Saudi royal envoy Nizar al-Aloula on Tuesday was "characterized by a friendly atmosphere." MPs who attended the weekly Ain el-Tineh meeting with Berri said the Speaker heard from al-Aloula "very positive remarks about Lebanon and its historic and cultural role."

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/242834-berri-heard-very-positive-remarks-from-saudi-envoy>

- **King meets Indian Foreign Minister**

His Majesty King Abdullah II on Wednesday met with Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj for a discussion on ways to enhance cooperation between Jordan and India as well as regional and international developments.

More Details:

http://petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=342562&CatID=13

- **Kardel Visits Bekaa, meets Syrian refugees in qab Elias camp**

Acting UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon Pernille Kardel today visited the Bekaa, in east Lebanon. She met with Syrian refugees at a tented settlement in Qab Elias and heard their accounts of the challenges they faced, particularly those faced by women and youth. She also interacted with Lebanese municipal authorities, including the municipality of Qab Elias and the Union of Municipalities of Al-Bohaira, which includes the municipalities of Qaraoun, Aitanit, Baaloul, Saghbine, and Mashgharah.

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/88734/Kardel-visits-Bekaa-meets-Syrian-refugees-in-Qab-Elias-camp>

- **Lebanon's former judicial police Chief Brigadier General Issam Abu Zaki passed away**

Former judicial police chief Brigadier General Issam Abu Zaki passed away. Progressive Socialist Party leader MP Walid Jumblatt , who made the announcement said in a tweet: "Brigadier.

More Details:

<http://yalibnan.com/2018/02/27/lebanons-former-judicial-police-chief-brigadier-general-issam-abu-zaki-passed-away/>

- **President Aoun Vows Not to Grant Amnesty to Those Convicted of Murdering Soldiers**

Lebanese President Michel Aoun vowed on Wednesday not to grant amnesty to those who have been convicted of murdering Lebanese soldiers.

More Details:

<http://english.almanar.com.lb/454738>

- **Jordan raises electricity prices for third time since December**

The Jordanian government yesterday raised electricity prices for the next month by two fils (0.3 cents) in its first decisions following a cabinet reshuffle. The government's decision to raise electricity prices came a few hours after the announcement of a reduction in the prices of gasoline and diesel at rates ranging between 0.6 – 1.5 per cent.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180301-jordan-raises-electricity-prices-for-third-time-since-december/>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Yemen war: senators push to end US support of Saudi Arabia**

Three US senators have introduced a resolution that will force the chamber to vote for the first time on whether the US should continue to support Saudi Arabia in the war in Yemen, a conflict that has led to the deaths of at least 10,000 civilians there and driven the Middle East's poorest country to the brink of famine.

More details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/28/yemen-saudi-arabia-war-us-support-senator-push-to-end>

- **Saudi Arabia's King Salman meets Lebanon's Prime Minister Saad Hariri**

Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri met Saudi King Salman on Wednesday, in his first visit back to the country since he announced his resignation in the kingdom. Hariri announced on November 4 that he was stepping down in a televised address from Riyadh, only to rescind it the following month after France intervened.

More details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1256186/saudi-arabia>

- **Saudi Arabia increases aid effort in Yemen**

A multi-million dollar agreement was signed between the refugee agency UNHCR and the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre in support of Yemen's internally displaced persons (IDPs). Six million dollars (Dhs22.4 million) were allocated to provide emergency response and relief items to civilians affected by war.

More details:

<https://www.thenational.ae/world/gcc/saudi-arabia-increases-aid-effort-in-yemen-1.708925>

- **No increase in UAE federal fees for next three years**

"We decided not to increase the federal fees during the next three years to restore the economic and social stability of the state and to support our industrial and commercial sectors and attract more foreign investments," said His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai.

More details:

<https://www.khaleejtimes.com/news/government/no-increase-in-uae-federal-fees-for-next-three-years>

- **Emir holds phone conversation with King of Morocco**

Emir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani held a telephone conversation this evening with King Mohammed VI of Morocco, to reassure about his health and to congratulate him on the successful surgery he underwent, praying to Allah Almighty to bestow him with everlasting health and wellness. H H the Emir, earlier, sent a cable of congratulations to the King of Morocco on the successful surgery.

More details:

<https://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/28/02/2018/Emir-holds-phone-conversation-with-King-of-Morocco>

- **Qatar's Sheikh Tamim and Donald Trump to meet in April**

The Qatari government has announced that Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani will attend an April meeting in Washington, DC, with US President Donald Trump. The two leaders spoke by phone on Wednesday about regional developments and opportunities to "enhance the American-Qatari partnership on a range of security and economic issues", according to a White House press release.

More details:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/02/qatar-sheikh-tamim-donald-trump-meet-april-180228201420627.html>

- **Arab countries respond to Qatar claims at UN Human Right Council**

The UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt have accused Doha of playing up its ongoing row with the quartet and accused the Qatari foreign minister of making a speech to the UN Human Rights Council that contained "many fallacies". Mohammed bin Abdulrahman on Monday called on the council to take action over the quartet's months-long boycott of Doha, which he called "illegal".

More details:

<https://www.thenational.ae/world/gcc/arab-countries-respond-to-qatar-claims-at-un-human-right-council-1.708984>

- **Qatar's economy thriving despite Saudi-led blockade**

The economy of the oil-rich Gulf nation Qatar continues to flourish despite a Saudi-led blockade against the country, according to Saud Bin Abdullah Al-Attiah, Executive Director for Economic Policies and Research for the Qatari Ministry of Economy and Commerce.

More details:

<https://www.neweurope.eu/article/qatars-economy-thriving-despite-saudi-led-blockade/>

7. EGYPT

- **As Elections Near, Egypt Finds a New Target: Foreign News Media**

Egypt's chief prosecutor delivered a withering broadside against the news media on Wednesday, blaming the "forces of evil" for negative coverage and instructing his staff to take legal action against outlets deemed to be undermining Egypt's security.

More details:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/28/world/middleeast/egypt-elections-news-media.html>

- **Egypt Is Using Banned U.S.-Made Cluster Munitions in Sinai, Rights Group Says**

Egypt's armed forces have used internationally outlawed cluster bombs, made in the United States, in operations aimed at crushing Islamic extremists in northern Sinai, Amnesty International said Wednesday.

More details:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/28/world/middleeast/egypt-cluster-munitions-sinai-us-amnesty-international.html>

- **Egypt signals a social media crackdown ahead of next month's election**

Egypt's chief prosecutor urged his staff to hunt down "forces of evil" on social media and traditional news outlets Wednesday. The threatening message has human rights activists worried a fresh crackdown of Facebook or Twitter posts critical of the government may be in store ahead of presidential elections in March.

More details:

https://news.vice.com/en_us/article/59k4qz/egypt-signals-a-social-media-crackdown-ahead-of-next-months-election

- **Sweden, Jordan and Egypt planning conference to boost support for UNRWA**

Sweden, Jordan and Egypt are slated to co-host a conference later this month to assist the UN Relief and Works Agency in overcoming a major funding gap, Chris Gunness, a spokesman for the organization, said. The conference will take place on March 15 in Rome, according to Gunness.

More details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Sweden-Jordan-and-Egypt-planning-conference-to-boost-support-for-UNRWA-543907>

- **Ezz pays LE 1.8B in reconciliation deal with gov't**

Steel tycoon and Mubarak-era politician Ahmed Ezz will pay LE 1.8 billion, of which LE 600,000 million were withdrawn from abroad, in a reconciliation deal with the government announced Wednesday.

More details:

<http://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/44106/Ezz-pays-LE-1-8B-in-reconciliation-deal-with-gov>

- **President Sisi inaugurates new city in Northern Sinai: Source**

President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi is set to inaugurate a new city in North Sinai within the coming few hours, a governmental source announced on Wednesday. The source, cited by Al Dostor Newspaper, added that the establishment of the new city comes within the government's ambitious vision to develop a terrorism-ridden Northern Sinai and it will expectedly include the world's largest industrial city and Africa's largest Sea Water Desalination Plan

More details:

<http://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/44120/President-Sisi-inaugurates-new-city-in-Northern-Sinai-Source>

- **2 Egyptian officers killed in Sinai operations: Army**

Two officers have been killed in an ongoing Egyptian army campaign against militant groups based in the Sinai Peninsula, according to a Thursday army statement. The statement, which was broadcast on state television, did not say how the officers had been killed except to say they were slain during "military operations". "At least 13 militants were killed in the same operations," the statement read.

More Details:

<https://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/2-egyptian-officers-killed-in-sinai-operations-army/1077025>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Civilians killed as armed groups clash in Libyan South**

Fighting between rival armed groups in the southern Libyan city of Sabha has left at least six civilians dead and wounded others, including women and children. Sporadic clashes between the Sixth Division, which is attached to the eastern-based Libyan National Army (LNA), and rival fighters from the Tebu ethnic group, started around Feb. 4, said Osama al-Wafi, a spokesman at Sabha's main hospital.

More details:

https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security/civilians-killed-as-armed-groups-clash-in-libyan-south-idUSKCN1GC2T0?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Reuters%2FworldNews+%28Reuters+World+News%29

- **Bangladesh, Morocco sign deal on avoidance of double taxation**

Bangladesh and Morocco have signed an agreement on avoidance of double taxation and a protocol on Foreign Office Consultations. The two instruments were signed by Foreign Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali and his Moroccan counterpart Nasser Bourita at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rabat on Wednesday.

More details:

<http://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/foreign-affairs/2018/03/01/bangladesh-morocco-sign-two-instruments/>

- **Algeria calls on Turkey to invest in producing goods banned from import into the country**

An Algerian government official called on Turkish companies to invest in producing the 850 commodities and goods which are banned from import into the country. This came in a speech delivered by Abdel Karim Mansouri, Director General of the Algerian National Agency for Investment Development (ANDI) (governmental), during the opening of the Algerian-Turkish Business Forum which was held in the capital Algiers.

More details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180228-algeria-calls-on-turkey-to-invest-in-producing-goods-banned-from-import-into-the-country/>

- **As Algeria ramps up pressure on Christians, World Evangelical Alliance calls for religious freedom**

Amid concerns over heightened government pressure on churches and Christians in Algeria, the World Evangelical Alliance's (WEA) Religious Liberty Commission has called on authorities there to ensure religious freedom for people of all faiths.

More details:

<https://www.christiantoday.com/uk/as-algeria-ramps-up-pressure-on-christians-world-evangelical-alliance-calls-for-religious-freedom/126549.htm>

- **International Economic Forum to be held in Algiers**

The International Economic Forum is to take place in Algiers in the second half of 2018 with the aim of promoting new business partnerships and strengthening North-South cooperation. Event aims to boost cooperation, Algerian business confederation.

More details:

http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/economics/2018/02/28/international-economic-forum-to-be-held-in-algiers_fec32576-21f4-4456-a13b-44628f36c684.html

- **Morocco sees leap in Chinese tourists after visa-free regime**

The number of Chinese tourists visiting Morocco reached 118,000 in 2017, Khalid Fathi, chief representative of the Moroccan tourist office in China. Since King Mohammed VI's decision to grant Chinese citizens visa-free access from June 1, 2016, Morocco has witnessed remarkable increase in the number of Chinese tourists, which used to be no more than 20,000 each year.

More details:

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-03/01/c_137007970.htm

- **Libya: New Gaddafi figure waits in the wings but says he has 'no time for democracy'**

In Libya, a dominant military figure stands out as a possible new leader of a unified country – that is, of course, if he wins at the polls – or even if he doesn't. But can the UN or the West even organize an election?

More details:

<https://www.rt.com/op-ed/420050-haftar-libya-gaddafi-war-west/>

- **Repsol earnings increase due to resumed Libya production**

Spanish energy company Repsol says cost reduction efforts, resumed production in Libya and rising market prices for crude boosted its earnings rise last year. Repsol S.A. said Wednesday it posted net income of 2.121 billion euros (\$2.6 billion) in 2017 — a 22 percent increase on the previous year and the highest in the last six years.

More details:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/repsol-earnings-increase-due-to-resumed-libya-production/>

- **Tunisia keen to open embassy in KL**

Tunisia is interested to open its embassy in Kuala Lumpur. This was conveyed by Tunisian Foreign Ministry Secretary of State for Economic Diplomacy Hatem Ferjani, who is here for a three-day working visit. The visit was aimed at strengthening bilateral relations between Malaysia and Tunisia, including by boosting economic opportunities for the two countries.

More details:

<https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2018/02/339916/tunisia-keen-open-embassy-kl>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Ghani Makes Taliban an Offer To Join Peace Process**

Addressing the Kabul Process meeting the Afghan president made a number of offers to the Taliban in a solid gesture of reconciliation.

More details:

<https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/ghani-makes-taliban-offer-join-peace-process>

- **Imran's Bani Gala house: 'Phoney' permission that built a mansion**

The Supreme Court (SC) was informed on Wednesday that the No Objection Certificate (NOC) submitted by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan regarding his Banigala residence construction was fake and had never been issued by the authority concerned.

More details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/286941-imran-s-bani-gala-house-phoney-permission-that-built-a-mansion>

- **Don't let politics harm security, Nicholson asks politicians**

A top American military commander has asked Afghanistan's political leaders not to let politics undermine the security situation in the country.

More details:

<https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2018/03/01/don't-let-politics-harm-security-nicholson-asks-politicians>

- **Pakistan confirms being placed on FATF's grey list**

Pakistan has confirmed being placed on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list, escaping the threat of inclusion in the black category

More details:

<https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2018/03/01/pakistan-confirms-being-placed-fatfs-grey-list>

- **US general dispels impression of friction with Pakistan**

A top US general has dispelled the impression that the United States and Pakistan were on a collision course, saying they valued the military-to-military relationship with Pakistan.

More details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1392450/us-general-dispels-impression-of-friction-with-pakistan>

- **Ghani invites Taliban to peace talks with 7 key proposals**

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani on Wednesday invited Taliban to peace talks as he disclosed the government's seven key proposals to the group for reconciliation.

More details:

<https://www.khaama.com/ghani-invites-taliban-to-peace-talks-with-7-key-proposals-04556>

- **22 ISIS Fighters Killed, Wounded In Jawzjan**

At least 9 ISIS adherents were killed during clashes with Afghan security forces in northern Jawzjan province. Col. Nasrat Jamshidi in-charge of publication in 209 Shaheen army corps said BNA correspondent, the clashes took while a group of ISIS fighters attacked on Afghan security troops' checkpoints in relevant areas of Darzab district of the province.

More details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/security/item/32209-22-isis-fighters-killed-wounded-in-jawzjan.html>

- **UNAMA Welcomes Govt's Offer To The Taliban**

The mission said it strongly supports the vision for peace through intra-Afghan dialogue and urges all parties involved to engage at the earliest time.

More details:

<https://www.tolonews.com/index.php/afghanistan/unama-welcomes-govt's-offer-taliban>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **4 PKK terrorists killed in airstrike in northern Iraq**

A total of four PKK terrorists have been killed in an airstrike in the rural areas of northern Iraq, the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) said Thursday in a written statement. The counter-terror operation was launched in northern Iraq's Hakurk/Kani region, where terrorists opened harassing fire at Turkish military posts, the statement elaborated.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2018/03/01/4-pkk-terrorists-killed-in-airstrike-in-northern-iraq>

- **US can't dictate which terror groups to fight: Turkey**

Turkey on Thursday accused the U.S. of a double standard in trying to dictate which terrorist groups can be fought or not. Speaking to reporters in Ankara, Deputy Prime Minister and government spokesman Bekir Bozdag said Turkey is fighting Daesh terrorists in Syria like the U.S. "Turkey is also focusing on Daesh. We are also fighting it in the region. But we can't accept such an illogical idea that 'terrorist groups which the U.S. isn't focused on can't be countered'," he argued.

More Details:

<https://aa.com.tr/en/todays-headlines/us-cant-dictate-which-terror-groups-to-fight-turkey/1077162>

- **Turkish arms showcased in Afrin, Syria operation**

Turkey is using a host of domestically made vehicles, weapons, and ammunition, including howitzers and drones, in its current counterterrorist operation in Afrin, Syria, just across Turkey's southern borders. Manned or unmanned drones, mostly used for target location or monitoring, have been

used since 2015. These locally made drones can easily neutralize moving or fixed terrorist targets using smart missiles.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/199326/turkish-arms-showcased-in-afirin-syria-operation>

- **Turkey's Afrin operation to continue until YPG terrorism eliminated altogether**

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said the Afrin operation against the PKK terror organization's Syrian affiliate will continue until the mission is fully completed, and that no factor can deter Turkey from its duty to eliminate threats posed to its national security.

More Details:

<http://www.aneews.com.tr/turkey/2018/03/01/turkeys-afirin-operation-to-continue-until-ypg-terrorism-eliminated-altogether-1519867126>

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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