



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

- **Hamoudi stresses the importance of youth role in nation building**

The head of the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council Hamam Hamoudi stressed the importance of the role of young people in building the state and considered them the guarantors of future of Iraq. He said, in his speech during the regular meeting of the General Authority of the Supreme Council for the Central Region, which was held today in the presence of a number of members of the command staff and the Central Shura and members of the Public Authority, "the Supreme Council is still active and influential in the political arena despite what it faced of great challenges, inspired by that of the Islamic and the depth of its association with the power of identity Religious authority and the Iraqi people.

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?5b58PQTTQfN%252fxTtPQWpPrcw%253d%253d

- **Kurdish govt: no handover of borders to Iraq, joint management instead**

Kurdistan government has rejected handing over the autonomous region's border management to the Iraqi federal cabinet, saying that the law instead provides for joint administration. "Instructions and laws emphasize on joint administration and oversight on border crossings, and the region is prepared to discuss matters related to airports and border crossings," Safeen Dizayee, a spokesperson of the Kurdish government, told Iraqi website Alghad Press.

More Details:

<https://www.iraqinews.com/baghdad-politics/kurdish-govt-no-handover-borders-iraq-joint-management-instead/>

- **Five civilians killed in two bomb attacks in Kirkuk**

Five civilians were wounded in one of two bomb blasts that targeted coffee shops in Kirkuk city on Saturday, security source said. Unidentified people attacked a coffee shop on al-Quds street in central Kirkuk using two IEDs, which left five civilians wounded, the source told Shafaq News.

More Details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=42448

- **Blast Rocks Baghdad on First Day of 2018**

A bombing targeted an Iraqi paramilitary group as the country was celebrating the New Year and hoping for a peaceful beginning of the post-Islamic State (IS) era. "A bomb placed under a vehicle,

driven by a member of the Tribal Mobilization Forces, exploded at noon, while passing al-Radwaniyah region, west of Baghdad,” a source confirmed to Alghad Press.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/404024>

- **Al Abadi urges unity as Iraq faces more challenges in 2018**

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al Abadi warned against those trying to "sabotage" the country's victory over extremists and called for unity to maintain stability as it faces the challenges of reconstruction, corruption and sectarianism. "Victory over ISIL was achieved due to the unity of the Iraqi army, Hashed Al Shaaby, Peshmerga and local tribes," Mr Al Abadi said during Iraq's victory festival.

More Details:

http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/1268ea81-2c8c-4583-bcc4-c5634203889f

- **Stabilizing retaken areas from ISIS is US-led coalition's priority**

Brett McGurk, the US special presidential envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIS, said that the US-led coalition seeks in 2018 to stabilize the retaken areas from ISIS in Iraq, US Department of State website reported. He said, "we are in the business, as we've said before, of stabilizing these areas, clearing landmines, humanitarian, basic water, basic health, electricity."

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/21788/Stabilizing-retaken-areas-from-ISIS-is-US-led-coalition-s-priority>

- **Iraqi forces kill scores ISIS terrorists near Iranian border**

The Iraqi Armed Forces confronted a large Islamic State (ISIS) group inside the Al-Miqdadiyah District of Diyala, today, resulting in a series of intense clashes. Led by Hashd Al-Sha'abi;s (Popular Mobilization Units) 4th Special Forces Brigade, the Iraqi Armed Forces eliminated at least 13 Islamic State terrorists in the Al-Miqdadiyah District on Sunday morning.

More Details:

<https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/iraqi-forces-kill-scores-isis-terrorists-near-iranian-border/>

- **Iran calls for closer ties with Iraq**

Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani on Thursday called for further development of economic and social ties between Iran and Iraq, IRNA reported. "Tehran-Baghdad relations should not be confined to

security issues; rather, development of economic and social relations is essential.” Larijani said, in a meeting with visiting Iraqi Minister of Youth and Sports Abdul-Hussein Abdul Redha Abtaan.

More Details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/419814/Iran-calls-for-closer-ties-with-Iraq>

- **Iraq invites firms to invest in new Kirkuk pipeline**

Iraq has invited local and international companies to invest in the oil export pipeline extension, which extends from the Kirkuk oilfield to the Iraqi-Turkish border, a media report said. The new project will run side-by-side with the old strategic pipeline to the Turkish port of Ceyhan, added the Iraq Business News report.

More Details:

http://www.tradearabia.com/news/CONS_334848.html

- **Daesh gunmen kill 3 in northern Iraq: Police**

Daesh terrorists shot dead at least three people and injured 12 others in northern Iraq, a police official said. “Daesh gunmen in a car attacked a number of civilians in al-Farhaniya area, northwest of Balad district in Saladin province,” Lt. Salahuddin al-Jabouri, the police officer, told Anadolu Agency. “The gunmen escaped immediately after the attack,” he added.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180101-daesh-gunmen-kill-3-in-northern-iraq-police/>

- **Imam Khamenei's envoy meets Hezbollah al-Nujaba leader in Iraq**

Iranian Leader’s Representative in Iraq and Syria, Ayatollah Hosseini, met and talked with Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba Leader Sheikh Akram al-Kaabi. At the joint meeting held at the headquarters of Nojaba Islamic Resistance (NRI) Party in Iraq, the two sides felicitated recent victories over ISIL terrorists by Resistance forces and appreciated their significant role in defending their homeland and holy beliefs.

More Details:

http://en.abna24.com/news/middle-east/imam-khameneis-envoy-meets-hezbollah-al-nujaba-leader-in-iraq_875192.html

- **Thousands still missing after Iraq defeated IS**

In 2014, Abdulrahman Saad was taken from his home in Mosul by Islamic State fighters, leaving his family in limbo. When the operation to retake Mosul began, his family heard he was being held in the western part of the city, with hundreds of other prisoners. But when the area was liberated, they found no trace of Saad, the 59-year-old owner of a wholesale food store.

More Details:

<https://www.shine.cn/archive/world/Thousands-still-missing-after-Iraq-defeated-IS/shdaily.shtml>

- **Canada still trying to determine future Iraq mission as coalition officials outline priorities**

Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan says he expects the Canadian Forces leadership to sometime in the new year come up with options for Canada on the ongoing Iraq mission. That comes as U.S., Iraqi and coalition commanders say the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant is defeated. But some coalition officials already are pointing to the potential way ahead in Iraq.

More Details:

<http://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/defence-watch/canada-still-trying-to-determine-future-iraq-mission-as-coalition-officials-outline-priorities>

- **Baghdad-KRG Talks Should Ensure Iraq's Integrity**

The Baghdad government should seek assurances from the Kurdistan Regional Government to commit itself to upholding Iraq's territorial integrity before any bilateral talks to settle a dispute over a recent Kurdish secession vote, a lawmaker said. "Iraq should close the door to dialogue until the Kurdistan region agrees to respect the integrity of Iraq," Jabbar Kouchakinejad said in an interview with ICANA on Saturday.

More Details:

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/national/79112/baghdad-krq-talks-should-ensure-iraq-s-integrity>

- **Iraq: Yezidi Fighters Allegedly Execute Civilians, Says HRW**

Yezidi fighters in Iraq allegedly forcibly disappeared and killed 52 civilians from the Imteywit tribe in June 2017, Human Rights Watch said. Relatives of victims told Human Rights Watch that on June 4, 2017, Yezidi forces detained and then apparently executed men, women, and children from eight Imteywit families who were fleeing fighting between the Islamic State (also known as ISIS) and Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) west of Mosul. Yezidi forces were also implicated in two other incidents of enforced disappearances of members of the Imteywit and Jahaysh tribes in late 2017.

More Details:

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/02012018-iraq-yezidi-fighters-allegedly-execute-civilians-says-hrw/>

- **The Remarkable Resilience of the Prime Minister of Iraq**

For the past three years, Iraq has been held together by one common goal: the defeat of the Islamic State. In pursuit of this objective, the United States provided air support to Iranian proxies; Baghdad made concessions to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) over disputed oil exports; and political parties contained protests against rampant corruption to preserve a sense of unity. This balancing of tensions, a consensus of sorts, saved Iraq. Then, on December 9, Haider al-Abadi, the country's prime minister, gave a televised address in which he declared "final victory" over ISIS—effectively ending the consensus. Now, the question is whether he can tackle the myriad challenges rushing to greet him.

More Details:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/01/iraq-abadi-iran-middle-east-kurds-isis/549431/>

- **36,898 Killed in Iraq During 2017**

At least 36,898 people were killed, and 8,753 were wounded in Iraq during 2017. These figures should be considered lowball estimates, especially considering that the number of casualties being reported publicly was reduced. During 2016, 52,369 people were killed 21,795 were wounded. The Iraqi government chose to censor information about security casualties and perhaps even civilian ones. Consequently, at the end of 2016, the United Nations was hectorred into limiting the number of casualties it was allowed to compile on the ground.

More Details:

<http://original.antiwar.com/updates/2018/01/01/36898-killed-iraq-207/>

- **Iraq's Exports from Southern Oilfields Hit Record in December**

Oil exports from Iraq's southern Basra ports rose to a record high of 3.535 million barrels per day (MMbbl/d) in December from 3.5 MMbbl/d the previous month, two oil officials said on Jan. 1. Southern exports are on the rise as Iraq seeks to offset the halting of shipments from its Kirkukoilfields in the north in mid-October after Iraqi forces took back control of fields from Kurdish fighters.

More Details:

<https://www.oilandgasinvestor.com/iraqs-exports-southern-oilfields-hit-record-december-1676146>

2. SYRIA

- **Syria regime forces advance in northwest**

Syrian regime forces advanced against jihadists Saturday on the edge of the northwestern province of Idlib, the last outside government control, a monitor and the state news agency said. Government and allied forces backed by Russian warplanes have since Monday been fighting mostly jihadist fighters in an area straddling the border between Idlib and Hama provinces.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86604>

- **Syria's war: Scores dead after air strikes on Ghouta**

A video has emerged from Syria showing children being rescued from rebel-held parts of Damascus, following government air strikes. At least 19 people, including six children, are believed to have been killed in the bombardment.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/syrias-war-scores-dead-air-strikes-ghouta-171231161001973.html>

- **More than 1k ceasefire agreements signed in Syria in 2017**

The Russian Center for Syrian Reconciliation reported that leaders of illegal armed formations have signed 140 ceasefire application forms. More than 1,000 ceasefire agreements have been signed with Syrian towns and settlements in 2017, the Russian Center for Syrian Reconciliation said Saturday.

More Details:

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/130778/More-than-1k-ceasefire-agreements-signed-in-Syria-in-2017>

- **Russian Troops Help Evacuate over 110 People from Syria's Eastern Ghouta**

The Russian Reconciliation Center for Syria assisted the evacuation of 111 people from Eastern Ghouta as part of the first humanitarian evacuation of critically ill patients and hostages from territories controlled by the militants. The last part of evacuation operation, when 111 people left militant-occupied Eastern Ghouta, including 29 seriously ill patients and 31 hostages, ended, the AMN reported on Sunday.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13961010000480>

- **Putin Underlines Unity, Settlement, Reconstruction as Priorities in Syria**

Russian President Vladimir Putin stressed on Saturday that his country will continue in helping Syria preserve its sovereignty, while pushing for the adoption of a political settlement to end the conflict. He voiced his priorities for the war-torn country during a cable he sent to regime leader Bashar Assad on the occasion of the holidays.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1128926/putin-underlines-unity-settlement-reconstruction-priorities-syria>

- **Thousands more displaced as war continues in Syria's Idlib**

As the world starts its new year, Syria gets closer to entering its eighth year of war with no end in sight for the ongoing conflict. Although the Syrian province of Idlib is designated within a de-escalation zone, attacks continue in the area, forcing thousands of residents to move from one place to another for safety.

More Details:

<https://www.trtworld.com/mea/thousands-more-displaced-as-war-continues-in-syria-s-idlib-13799>

- **Syria's Assad replaces defence minister in surprise cabinet reshuffle**

Syria's Defence Minister Fahd Jassem al-Frej has been replaced by President Bashar al-Assad, in a surprise cabinet reshuffle on Monday. General Ali Abdullah Ayoub was announced as the new defence minister, Syria's state SANA news agency reported, and is believed to have ties with Iran's Revolutionary Guard. "President Assad issued a decree, the first of 2018, naming General Ali Abdullah Ayoub minister of defence," the agency said.

More Details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2018/1/1/syrias-assad-replaces-defence-minister-in-surprise-cabinet-reshuffle>

- **Syria condemns stances of US administration and Zionist entity towards current situation in Iran**

The Syrian Arab Republic expresses strong condemnation and absolute rejection of the stances adopted by the US administration, the Zionist entity and their tools regarding the current situation in Iran, an official source at Foreign and Expatriates Ministry said Tuesday. The source added that such stances confirm the destructive role of those countries in destabilizing the region with the aim of

controlling it, seizing its resources and national choices, weakening the resistance axis in the region following the failure of the conspiratorial scheme thanks to the victories achieved against the Takfiri terrorist groups in Syria, and Iraq as Iran was a main partner in those victories.

More Details:

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=123094>

- **'We must prevent Iran from establishing itself in Syria'**

Chief of the General Staff, Lt. Gen. Gadi Eizenkot, spoke this morning, Tuesday, at the 6th annual conference in memory of Lt. Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya. Eizenkot referred to the continued rocket fire from Gaza in the past month, saying that "the declarations calling for much more force at this stage are not responsible, deterrence is not measured in one day, and not according to what the daily newspapers say."

More Details:

<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/240136>

- **Over 10,000 civilians killed in Syria in 2017: report**

A total of 10,204 civilians were killed mainly by the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria in 2017, according to a report of the London-based Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) released on Monday. The report said 2,298 children and 1,536 women were among those killed. A total of 4,148 civilians, including 754 children and 591 women were killed by torture and attacks carried out by the Assad regime last year, it said.

More Details:

<https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/02/01/2018/Over-10,000-civilians-killed-in-Syria-in-2017-report>

- **A Russian Blackwater? Putin's Secret Soldiers in Ukraine and Syria**

Fierce fighting between Kremlin-backed militias and Ukrainian forces has intensified and is now the worst it has been since last February. Soviet-era GRAD rockets started raining on the streets and houses of Novoluhanskote in eastern Ukraine right before the holiday season. Once again with every day that passes the war that has killed more than 10,000 people is sending victims to the hospitals and cemeteries on both sides of the front line.

More Details:

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/a-russian-blackwater-putins-secret-soldiers-in-ukraine-and-syria>

3. IRAN

- **Protests reported in Tehran, Kermanshah and Mashhad**

Hundreds of protesters have rallied in several Iranian cities against rising prices, unemployment and economic inequality, according to anti-government activists and Iran's semi-state news agency Fars. About 300 people protested in Kermanshah, a city in western Iran, on Friday, according to Fars. Police intervened after protesters damaged public property, the news agency reported.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/protests-reported-kermanshah-mashhad-iran-171229142706874.html>

- **Iran: 450 protesters arrested over 3 days in Tehran**

A semi-official news agency in Iran is reporting that 450 people have been arrested over three days in Tehran since Saturday. The ILNA news agency report on Tuesday quoted Ali Asghar Nasserbakht, a security deputy governor of Tehran, offering the figure. Nasserbakht said that 200 protesters were arrested on Saturday, 150 on Sunday and 100 were arrested yesterday.

More Details:

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/01/02/iran-450-protesters-arrested-over-3-days-in-tehran.html>

- **Iran intelligence blames US, UK and Saudi Arabia for protest actions**

Secretary of the Iranian Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani said protest actions are being held within the framework of “hybrid war” launched by several countries against Iran, RIA Novosti reported with reference to Tasnim agency. He said the United States, Britain, and Saudi Arabia are behind the protest and are leading campaigns in social networks, which affect the protests.

More Details:

<https://news.am/eng/news/429544.html>

- **21 Killed in Anti-Government Protests across Iran**

An estimate of 21 people, including a police officer, have been killed in anti-government protests across Iran, according to the Daily Mail. At least five people were killed Monday in protests in Isfahan province, according to Iran's state-run Asriran news agency. According to Iran-based news outlet the

Young Journalists Club, a protester opened fire on police officers with a shotgun, wounding four at the scene. One of the officers succumbed to his wounds.

More Details:

<https://www.albawaba.com/news/least-16-killed-anti-government-protests-across-iran-1067918>

- **Thousands rally in support of government in Iran**

Thousands of people took to the streets across Iran on Saturday in a show of support for the regime in the wake of a two-day anti-government protests across the country. According to local media reports, government supporters in major cities, including capital Tehran called on the regime to comply with the economic recommendations of the country's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/thousands-rally-in-support-of-government-in-iran/1018972>

- **Deadly protests spread like wildfire across Iran**

A semi-official Iranian news agency reported Tuesday that at least 450 people have been arrested in just the last three days, as violent protests against the country's leadership spread across the Islamic Republic. CBS News correspondent Elizabeth Palmer says it all began Thursday, with a single demonstration in the eastern Iranian city of Mashhad, over economic hardship, and a dramatic jump in food prices in particular.

More Details:

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/iran-protests-hundreds-arrested-20-killed-ayatollah-khamenei-hassan-rouhani/>

- **Canada 'encouraged' by peaceful protests in Iran**

The Canadian government has expressed support for people protesting in Iran. "Canada is encouraged by the Iranian people who are exercising their basic right to protest peacefully," Global Affairs said in a written statement that also called on Iranian authorities to honour "democratic and human rights." "Canada will continue to support the fundamental rights of Iranians including the right to freedom of expression," the statement goes on.

More Details:

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/canada-encouraged-by-peaceful-protests-in-iran-1.3740347>

- **What's Happening In Iran? Protests against Its Leaders Are Capturing the World's Attention**

In the largest protests to grip Iran since the 2009 "Green Movement" demonstrations, tensions continue to escalate as anti-government demonstrators have taken to the streets of Tehran to call for the unelected Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Hassan Rouhani to step down. Activists in Iran began to protest corruption and the rising cost of living in Iran on Thursday. Since then, the demonstrations have begun spreading to other major cities.

More Details:

<https://www.bustle.com/p/whats-happening-in-iran-protests-against-its-leaders-are-capturing-the-worlds-attention-7740207>

- **Iran blocks internet, may shut down Telegram app as protests spread**

Demonstrators attacked a town hall in the Iranian capital Saturday as protests spilled into a third night despite government warnings against any further "illegal gatherings" and moves to cut off the internet on mobile phones. Unverified videos on social media appeared to show thousands marching through the western cities of Khorramabad, Zanjan and Ahvaz, while reports spread rapidly that several people had been shot dead by police in the town of Dorud. According to Al-Arabiya, three Iranian protesters were killed by the Revolutionary Guards in the central Iran town.

More Details:

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-blocks-internet-may-shut-down-telegram-app-as-protests-spread/>

- **Donald Trump Ups Show of Support for Economic Protests in Iran**

President Donald Trump is upping his show of support for the economic protests in Tehran, saying the "entire world understands that the good people of Iran want change." Trump tweeted Saturday that Iran's leaders fear their own people. He says "Oppressive regimes cannot endure forever, and the day will come when the Iranian people will face a choice." He adds: "The world is watching!" Trump says that apart from U.S. military power, the Iranian people are what Tehran fears the most.

More Details:

<http://time.com/5082647/donald-trump-iran-economic-protests/>

- **Rouhani defends right to protest but rejects violence**

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani says people in the country have the right to protest but warned that violence is unacceptable. His comments on Sunday were the first since widespread anti-government

protests, the biggest show of dissent since huge rallies in 2009, broke out in the Islamic Republic earlier this week.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/rouhani-defends-protest-rejects-violence-171231193555086.html>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Israel law tightens grip on occupied Jerusalem sectors**

Israel's parliament on Tuesday gave final approval to legislation aimed at making it more difficult for the government to hand the Palestinians parts of Jerusalem under any future peace deal. The bill, approved by a 64 to 51 vote, is the latest blow to remaining hopes for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86613>

- **Israel indicts Palestinian teen activist Ahed Tamimi**

Bethlehem, occupied West Bank - Israeli authorities are seeking 12 charges against Ahed Tamimi, a prominent 16-year-old Palestinian activist filmed slapping and kicking two Israeli soldiers in the occupied West Bank. The teenager was detained on December 19, four days after the video showing her confronting the soldiers outside her family's home in the village of Nabi Saleh went viral.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/israel-indicts-palestinian-teen-activist-ahed-tamimi-180101183249057.html>

- **PPS: “Israeli Soldiers Abduct Fifteen Palestinians in The West Bank”**

The Palestinian Prisoners' Society (PPS) has reported that Israeli soldiers abducted, on Tuesday at dawn, fifteen Palestinians in several parts of the occupied West Bank, including Jerusalem. The PPS office in Hebron, in the southern part of the West Bank, said the soldiers stormed and ransacked many homes in the governorate, and abducted seven Palestinians, identified as Mohammad Ahmad Jawabra, 16, Ehab Kamal Jawabra, 17, Jamil Jaber Jawabra, 22, Baha'-Eddin Monir Jawabra, 20, Sa'id Abu Sneina, Salim Yousef Rajoub and Mohammad Sharif Halayqa, 17.

More Details:

<http://imemc.org/article/pps-israeli-soldiers-abduct-fifteen-palestinians-in-the-west-bank/>

- **PA Minister Claims Israel violates Muslim rights at tomb of the patriarchs**

Palestinian Minister of Religious Affairs Yousef Id claimed on Monday that Israel prevented Muslims' call to prayer at the Ibrahimi Mosque, also known as the Tomb of the Patriarchs, 645 times in 2017. Id demanded that international organizations, especially the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), pressure Israel to relinquish restrictions on the Islamic holy site.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/PA-minister-claims-Israel-violates-Muslim-rights-at-Tomb-of-the-Patriarchs-522628>

- **Israeli airstrikes target Hamas military site in southern Gaza Strip**

Israeli air forces conducted airstrikes targeting a Hamas military site in the southern Gaza Strip on Tuesday around dawn. Palestinian security sources said that Israeli planes targeted a site belonging to the naval division of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of the Hamas movement. Three airstrikes were reportedly conducted in the area, northwestern of Khan Younis city in southern Gaza. No injuries were reported.

More Details:

<http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=779711>

- **Settlers set up tents in Nablus area, seen as nucleus for building settlement**

Jewish settlers set up on Tuesday tents on Palestinian land that belongs to Deir al-Hatab village, east of Nablus, which is seen as a nucleus for a new settlement in the area, said a local activist. Ghassan Daghlas, who monitors settlement construction in the northern West Bank, told Wafa that settlers from the illegal Elon Moreh settlement set up tents on a land in Ras al-Ein, an area east of the village, and fenced it off.

More Details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=L5Bn7Za95884355985aL5Bn7Z>

- **Khalida Jarrar among 41 Palestinians ordered imprisoned without charge or trial**

The Israeli occupation military courts confirmed 41 more administrative detention orders against Palestinian political prisoners in the latter half of December 2017. There are currently over 450 Palestinians imprisoned without charge or trial under administrative detention orders. Administrative detention orders are indefinitely renewable and are issued for one to six months at a

time. Palestinians have spent years consecutively jailed with no charge and no trial under repeatedly renewed administrative detention orders. An artifact of the British colonial mandate over Palestine, Israeli administrative detention orders are used systematically to target community leaders and Palestinian activists.

More Details:

<http://samidoun.net/2018/01/khalida-jarrar-among-41-palestinians-ordered-imprisoned-without-charge-or-trial/>

- **11 Palestinian Parliamentarians Imprisoned by Israel**

The Israeli army arrested a Palestinian parliamentarian in the West Bank city of Salfit this morning, according to a report by Anadolu Agency. The latest arrest raises the number of jailed Palestinian parliamentarians to 11. According to eyewitnesses, the Israeli forces raided Nasser Abdel Gawad's residence and arrested him.

More Details:

<http://www.palestinechronicle.com/11-palestinian-parliamentarians-imprisoned-israel/>

- **Proper stance on Palestine stir anti-Iranian rants**

Chairman of International Union of Resistance Scholars Sheikh Maher Hamoud, while condemning recent riots in Iran, stressed the reason for West's attack on Iran was Tehran's stance on Palestine and Resistance. Sheikh Maher Hamoud made the remarks in a telephone conversation with Secretary General of World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought (WFPIST) Ayatollah Mohsen Araki.

More Details

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/130854/Proper-stance-on-Palestine-stir-anti-Iranian-rants>

- **Palestine's Hamas, Fatah Blast 'Radical' Israeli Ruling Party Vote To Annex West Bank**

Hamas and Palestinian Authority ruling party Fatah have blasted the decision by hardline Zionists in Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party to urge Israeli occupation authorities to annex settlements in the West Bank, a move that could leave very little land for the people of Palestine if any "two-state solution" comes to fruition.

More Details:

<https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Palestines-Hamas-Fatah-Blast-Radical-Israeli-Ruling-Party-Vote-To-Annex-West-Bank-20180101-0015.html>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Regent meets with governors on progress in decentralisation scheme**

HRH Prince Feisal, the Regent, on Sunday stressed the importance of enhancing development in the governorates through strategies that set the development and services priorities and following up on their implementation. Accompanied by Prime Minister Hani Mullki in a visit to the Interior Ministry and meeting with a number of governors, the Regent said that investments must be directed to the governorates, given that the economy is the top challenge that faces the Kingdom.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/regent-meets-governors-progress-decentralisation-scheme>

- **FM meets with head of Syrian negotiating body**

Minister of Foreign and Expatriates Affairs Ayman Safadi on Sunday met with head of the Syrian High Negotiations Committee Naser al-Hariri for a discussion on the latest developments pertaining to the Syrian crisis, especially the results of the eighth round of the Geneva talks and the eighth round of the Astana talks. Safadi stressed Jordan's position to find a political solution to the Syrian crisis through the Geneva process and on the basis of the UN Security Council resolution 2254 and in a manner that preserve Syria's unity, cohesion and sovereignty.

More Details:

http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=36870#.Wkt52FVI_cs

- **Saudi Ambassador Submits Copy of Credentials to Foreign Ministry**

Saudi Ambassador to Lebanon Walid al-Yaacoub has presented a copy of his credentials to Foreign Minister Jebran Bassil in preparation for presenting them to President Michel Aoun, ending a diplomatic tussle over presentation with each country delaying accreditation of the other's diplomat. Yaacoubi presented his letters of credence to Bassil at the Foreign Ministry, the State-run National News Agency reported on Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/240353-saudi-ambassador-submits-copy-of-credentials-to-foreign-ministry>

- **Army chief meets French military official**

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Lit. Gen. Mahmoud Freihhat on Monday met Chief of the Defence Staff of the French Army Gen. Francois Lecointre. Talks during the meeting touched on the latest

regional and international developments, as well as prospects of mutual coordination and cooperation and ways to foster them to serve interests of the two countries' military forces.

More Details:

http://petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=334419&CatID=13

- **Azzam Ahmad, Ibrahim meet over Palestinian situation**

Member of Fath Movement's Central Committee, Azzam Ahmad, met with General Security Chief, Brigadier General Abbas Ibrahim, in presence of Palestinian Ambassador to Lebanon, Ashraf Dabbour and Fatah Movement Secretary in Lebanon Fathi Abu Ardat. According to a statement by the Embassy of Palestine, it indicated that "discussions touched on the security situation at the Palestinian refugee camps in Ain Hilweh, as well as the need to improve their living conditions in Lebanon."

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/86871/Azzam-Ahmad-Ibrahim-meet-over-Palestinian-situation>

- **Lebanon 2017: from Daesh expulsion to resignation crisis management**

2017 was a year of ups and downs for Lebanon during which the Lebanese could pass the difficult situations including the fight against terrorism and the crisis of their premier's resignation. 1. Early 2017 was the first days of the work of new Lebanese cabinet under the premiership of Saad Hariri who was designated in late December 2016. Hariri's designation happened about two months after President Michel Aoun took office after over two years of a political gap in the country.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82782517>

- **Lebanon's Taymour Jumblat Will Only Run for Parliament with Balanced Bloc**

Lebanon's Democratic Gathering MP Antoine Saad said that Taymour Jumblat will not run in the parliamentary elections without a balanced list of candidates. He told Asharq Al-Awsat that Taymour will follow in the steps of his father, Walid, and form a "balanced" bloc that includes lawmakers from different Lebanese sects that make up "the fabric of Mount Lebanon and our political presence in various regions."

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1130716/lebanon%E2%80%99s-taymour-jumblat-will-only-run-parliament-balanced-bloc>

- **Jordan Introduces Cash Support to Poorer Citizens in 2018 Budget**

The Lower House on Sunday voted in favour of the state budget and budgets of independent government units draft law in a session that witnessed the absence of more than 30 MPs, who boycotted the deliberations, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported. Among the 99 legislators present (out of 130) in the evening session, 58 lawmakers voted yes. The Islamist Islah bloc (14 seats), and other deputies, had announced boycotting the debate in protest to lifting subsidies off essential commodities that have been a fixture in the national economy over decades, including bread.

More Details:

<https://www.albawaba.com/business/jordan-introduces-cash-support-poorer-citizens-2018-budget-1068034>

- **Japan offers USD 170 mln aid to Jordan**

Japan has provided Jordan with the second tranche of a loan worth USD 170 million in a bid to bring financial stability to the Hashemite Kingdom, a Jordanian minister said on Saturday. Jordan's Minister of Planning Imad Al-Fakhouri told reporters that Amman received the first payment of the USD 230 million loan last year, saying that Japanese aid has been instrumental to his country's continued development.

More Details:

<https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2681275&Language=en>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **US will do 'anything we can' to limit civilian deaths**

US Defence Secretary James Mattis has defended his country's involvement in Yemen's war, saying Washington will do "anything we can" to limit civilian casualties. More than 10,000 people have been killed in Yemen since a Saudi-led military coalition began bombing the country in March 2015, aiming to curb the advances of Iranian-backed Houthi rebels.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/military-chief-defends-american-involvement-yemen-171230091727343.html>

- **Saudi Arabia pressures Canada over calls to end Yemen war**

Saudi Arabia is reported to have imposed a great deal of pressure on the Canadian Embassy in Riyadh over Canada's campaign to end the war in Yemen, a source close to the embassy has revealed. The pressure, it is said, includes unspecified "threats". According to Al-Khaleej Online, the informed source said that Canada is currently leading an international campaign to force Saudi Arabia to stop its war on Yemen which has killed thousands of civilians and caused famine in the country. Nearly 20 million people are starving and one million people have succumbed in a massive cholera epidemic.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180102-saudi-arabia-pressures-canada-over-calls-to-end-yemen-war/>

- **UAE and Saudi Arabia introduce VAT**

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia have begun charging VAT on goods and services from 1 January 2018, becoming the first two states to implement the new tax which has been agreed in principle by the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Traditionally Gulf States have offered a tax-free environment to attract foreign workers, but falling oil prices have led to the decision to introduce VAT at 5% across the region. The new tax applies to fuel, food, clothes, utility bills and hotel accommodation, but not financial services, medical treatment or public transport.

More Details:

<https://www.accountancylive.com/uae-and-saudi-arabia-introduce-vat>

- **Saudi Arabia implements eight economic changes in 2018**

Saudi Arabia will activate eight structural economic changes in 2018 which will directly impact the kingdom's residents lifestyle, Saudi daily Okaz reported Monday. The changes include the introduction of a 5 per cent VAT law which will impose an indirect tax on all goods and services starting from production until the final selling stage. The total cost will be paid by the consumers.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180102-saudi-arabia-implements-eight-economic-changes-in-2018/>

- **Suspected Saudi-led coalition air strikes in Yemen kill 23**

Yemeni witnesses and security officials say Saudi-led coalition air strikes have killed at least 23 people in the port city of Hodeida. They say Monday's strikes also wounded eight others. The blaze erupted in a market after a strike targeted a nearby petrol station in El Garrahi district, they said.

More Details:

<https://www.trtworld.com/mea/suspected-saudi-led-coalition-air-strikes-in-yemen-kill-23-13832>

- **Qatar Charity hands 50 residential units to Gazans**

A total of 50 Palestinian families received the keys of their newly reconstructed apartments worth QR8m in Al Dafer Tower in Gaza Strip. In collaboration with the Palestinian ministry of Public works, Qatar Charity has rebuilt the tower that was destroyed during the war on Gaza in 2014, said a release. This project is part of a series of reconstruction projects conducted by Qatar Charity in the Gaza Strip, including: the reconstruction of 400 housing units destroyed during the war, the furnishing of hundreds of units for the poor and needy families, as well as supporting other sectors such as health and education through in dozens of Relief and development projects.

More Details:

<https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/02/01/2018/Qatar-Charity-hands-50-residential-units-to-Gazans>

- **Bahrain's Foreign Ministry issues Iran advisory**

The Bahraini Ministry of Foreign Affairs has urged all Bahraini citizens to totally refrain, under any circumstances, from travelling to Iran, due to the widespread unrest, unstable security conditions and severe violence in the cities there.

More Details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302657697>

- **Bahrain Jails Two Pro-Democracy Activists, Revokes Their Citizenship**

The Bahraini regime sentenced two pro-democracy activists to five years in prison and revoked their citizenship as the ruling Al-Khalifah monarchy pushes ahead with brutal crackdown on dissent in the Persian Gulf kingdom. On Saturday, Bahrain's Supreme Court of Appeal found the defendants guilty of "training in the use of weapons and munitions, in addition to the possession of a firearm without the authorization of the Ministry of Interior for terrorist purposes," Al-Waght reported.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13961011000770>

- **Bahrain Defense Force Commander-in-Chief Receives GCC Secretary General**

Bahrain Defense Force Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa received here today Secretary General of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-

Zayani. During the meeting, the Bahraini Commander-in-chief welcomed the GCC Secretary General, praising his efforts to boost the GCC cooperation. He stressed Bahrain's permanent support to all trends that promote the integration among the GCC countries.

More Details:

<http://www.spa.gov.sa/viewfullstory.php?lang=en&newsid=1704255>

- **Kuwait to join UN Security Council as Arab member**

Kuwait will become one of the 15 members of the UN Security Council from Monday, taking over from Egypt as the representative from Arab nations. It is the first time in 40 years Kuwait has taken the position, with the Gulf state priding itself on its independent foreign policy and long-standing neutrality.

More Details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2018/1/1/kuwait-to-join-un-security-council-as-arab-member>

7. EGYPT

- **Egypt executes five inmates**

Egyptian prison authorities executed on Tuesday five inmates who had been sentenced to death, four of them over a bombing that killed military cadets, security officials said. The hangings came days after the execution of 15 inmates convicted of attacking police and the military in the largest mass execution in Egypt in recent memory.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86614>

- **Christians killed in horrific New Year attack - Egypt on alert**

The two men, who were brothers, were attacked by a masked gunman. The killer shot the men at their alcohol shop near Cairo in Egypt earlier today, security sources said. The incident took place just days after attacks on a Coptic church and another Christian-owned shop that killed more than 10 people.

More Details:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/898888/coptic-christians-egypt-coptics-persecution-cairo-attack>

- **Morsi gets 3 years in jail for 'insulting judiciary'**

An Egyptian court has sentenced former president Mohamed Morsi and 19 others to three years in prison on charges of insulting the judiciary. Morsi, democratically elected after Egypt's 2011 revolution, was deposed following mass protests and a military coup in July 2013.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/morsi-3-years-jail-insulting-judiciary-171230133747483.html>

- **Sisi discusses Egyptian-Saudi ties in phone call with Saudi Crown Prince**

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi received a phone call from Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman late Thursday in which the two leaders discussed Egyptian-Saudi ties and means to bolster mutual cooperation, El-Sisi's office said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/286205/Egypt/Politics-/Sisi-discusses-EgyptianSaudi-ties-in-phone-call-wi.aspx>

- **Egyptian politicians do not want Sudan to be powerful state: Sudanese FM**

Sudanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Ibrahim Ghandour said on Friday that there are “Egyptian politicians” who do not want Sudan to be a powerful state, adding that those politicians do not realise that a powerful Sudan is in Egypt’s interest. “I feel sorry for this, and we tell them that a powerful Sudan is important for a powerful Egypt,” said Ghandour during an interview with the Turkish TV station TRT.

More Details:

<https://dailynewsegypt.com/2017/12/31/egyptian-politicians-not-want-sudan-powerful-state-sudanese-fm/>

- **Security forces seize explosion store in 6th October City**

Security forces seized a store filled with explosives and incendiary materials in the Dahshour area of Greater Cairo’s 6th October City, judicial sources working at South Giza Prosecution revealed on Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/video-security-forces-seize-explosion-store-in-6th-october-city/>

- **Egypt 2017 trade deficit falls 26 percent year on year: Ministry**

Egypt's 2017 trade deficit fell 26 percent year on year by \$12 billion, the trade ministry said on Monday. Imports declined in the first 11 months of 2017 to \$51 billion from \$61 billion the same period in 2016, and exports increased to \$20.4 billion from \$18.4 billion, the ministry said in a statement. It said it expected exports to reach 22.4 for the whole of 2017, compared to 20.4 for the whole of 2016.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptdailynews.com/detail/egypt--trade-deficit-falls--percent-year-on-year-ministry>

- **2 Killed in an Armed Attack Targeting a Liquor Store in al-Omraniyah, Giza**

An armed attack targeting a liquor store in al-Omraniyah, Giza killed two and injured one according to security sources' reports to a number of local news organizations. Ashraf Bolis and his brother Adel Bolis, the owners of a car spare parts shop next to the liquor store, have been identified as the two dead, reported Youm7.

More Details:

<https://egyptianstreets.com/2018/01/01/2-killed-in-an-armed-attack-targeting-a-liquor-store-in-al-omraniyah-giza/>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Libya's shrines: Cultural legacy under threat**

Libya is in danger of losing a huge part of its cultural heritage. Ongoing conflicts are partly to blame, but some historical shrines are being deliberately destroyed, the graves they house defiled. In the last few years, dozens of shrines have been demolished by followers of the Salafist movement - which doesn't believe shrines have a place in Islam.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/libyas-shrines-cultural-legacy-threat-180102065220608.html>

- **Spain, Morocco's First Trading Partner in 2016**

Spain remained Morocco's top trading partner in 2016 with trade turnover totaling \$10.6 billion up from \$9.3 billion in 2015, Morocco's foreign exchange regulatory authority, L'Office des Changes said. Between 2015 and 2016, Morocco's imports from Spain rose from \$4.4 billion to \$6.2 billion, while its exports to the country jumped from \$4.2 billion to \$5.1 billion.

More Details:

<http://northafricapost.com/21535-spain-moroccos-first-trading-partner-2016.html>

- **Tunisia's Ennahda movement leader Ghannouchi: Muslim world can incorporate modernity without negating religion**

In an exclusive interview with Daily Sabah on issues concerning the Muslim world and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA region), the co-founder of Tunisia's Ennahda Movement, Rashed al-Ghannushi, has said the Islamic world today should be able to adjust to the dynamics of modernity, and that this adjustment does not mean that they ignore their religious values. Ghannouchi said although colonialism has left most formerly colonized countries, there is now a new form of imperialism imposed on the people at the economic, security and cultural levels. Moreover, he argues that with the diminished power of bipolarity and emergence of new influential players in world politics, oppression through means of colonialism will be limited.

More Details:

<http://tdailynews.net/story-z9667920>

- **NOC restores Sidra pipeline faster than expected**

Oil is once again flowing to the Sidra export terminal after the National Oil Corporation (NOC) repaired a damaged pipeline, which will ultimately restore up to 100,000 bpd of overseas crude sales. The Zaggut to Sidra pipeline was blown up, it is widely believed by terrorists, last Tuesday at a point 150 km south of Sidra, near Marada.

More Details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2018/01/01/noc-restores-sidra-pipeline-faster-than-expected/>

- **Chahed says will support Caïd Essebsi if he seeks new term**

Premier Youssef Chahed said he will support President Béji Caïd Essebsi if he runs for another term. "If Caïd Essebsi stands in the next presidential elections, I will support him," he said in an interview on "Kahwa Arbi" show that aired on Monday evening on Wataniya 1 tv channel. "Béji Caïd Essebsi offered me the opportunity to serve Tunisia for he believes young people should have access to opportunities; I can by no means be a contender," he said.

More Details:

<https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/9715196-chahed-says-will>

- **Moroccan Authorities Expel 2 Japanese Professors from Laayoun for ‘Separatism-Related Activities’**

Moroccan authorities expelled on December 29 two university professors from the southern Moroccan city of Laayoun after they were involved in separatism-related actions in the city. Arrived in Laayoun’s Hassan I airport on December 28, the Japanese university professors told the authorities that they are in the city for “tourism purposes.”

More Details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2018/01/237534/moroccan-authorities-japanese-professors-laayoun-separatism-polisario/>

- **Libya’s Interior Ministry to recruit 500 diplomatic security personnel to protect foreign embassies**

Libya’s Interior Ministry of the UN-backed government has approved to recruit 500 new members of the diplomatic security service responsible for protecting foreign embassies and missions in Libya, according to a security official on Monday. Col. Wissam Al-Jama, head of the diplomatic security service, told Xinhua that this batch will receive substantial training and intensive lectures related to international relations knowledge.

More Details:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/libyas-interior-ministry-to-recruit-500-diplomatic-security-personnel-to-protect-foreign-embassies/>

- **Morocco's king congratulates Liberia's new president, vows to enhance bilateral ties**

Morocco's King Mohammed VI on Sunday congratulated Liberia's new president, George Weah, on his election victory, while vowing to strengthen the bilateral ties. In a message to Weah, the Moroccan king said the election result shows 'how keen the Liberians are to promote the democratic transition and make sure their aspirations for a prosperous future are fulfilled.'

More Details:

<http://marocgazette.com/story-z2900397>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Practical US pressure on Pakistan may work: Experts**

Some Kabul-based political experts believe if the United States practically pressurizes Pakistan, the neighboring country would quit supporting terrorist groups. One of them, Abdul Shakour Salangi,

said US President Donald Trump's new year's tweet showed Washington was frustrated with Islamabad's behavior.

More Details:

<https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2018/01/02/practical-us-pressure-pakistan-may-work-experts>

- **Top military brass reviews internal security situation**

The top military leadership on Tuesday reviewed evolving geo-strategic environment and internal security situation, Inter Services Public Relations said. According to ISPR, the media wing of the military, the 207th Corps Commanders' Conference was held at GHQ Tuesday. Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa presided over the Commanders' conference.

More Details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/263649-top-military-brass-reviews-internal-security-situation>

- **PM chairs NSC meeting to discuss Trump's accusations**

Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi is chairing a meeting of the National Security Council (NSC) to discuss US President Donald Trump's most recent accusations against Pakistan. In his first tweet of the new year, Trump had accused Pakistan of basing its relationship with the US on "nothing but lies and deceit".

More Details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1380351/pm-chairs-nsc-meeting-to-discuss-trumps-accusations>

- **Sindh government renews efforts to replace IGP AD Khawaja**

The Sindh Government on Tuesday wrote a letter to the establishment division to replace Inspector General of Police (IGP) AD Khawaja. Sardar Abdul Majeed Dasti, Ghulam Qadir Thebo, and Kaleem Imam have been suggested as the replacements of the incumbent IGP, according to a copy of the letter available with Geo News.

More Details:

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/174987-sindh-government-renews-efforts-to-replace-igp-ad-khawaja>

- **Intelligence circles attempting to destabilize Balkh, claims Noor**

The Chief Executive of Jamiat-e-Islami Ata Mohammad Noor claims that certain circles belonging to the government intelligence are attempting to spark chaos and destabilize Balkh province. Speaking

during a gathering and among his supporters in Balkh province, Noor said some circles belonging to the intelligence department have started to distribute weapons among the people.

More Details:

<https://www.khaama.com/intelligence-circles-attempting-to-destabilize-balkh-claims-noor-04175>

- **French, Uzbek Daesh Militants Killed in Jawzjan Air Operation**

Joint Afghan-foreign joint airstrike in Darzab district kills more than 26 Daesh militants at gathering. At least 26 Daesh militants including four French and three Uzbekistan citizens were killed in joint Afghan and foreign forces airstrike on Monday in Jawzjan province, local officials said Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://www.tolonews.com/index.php/afghanistan/french-uzbek-daesh-militants-killed-jawzjan-air-operation>

- **Minister Osmani Survives MPs' No-Trust Vote**

The minister of water and energy, Ali Ahmad Osmani, on Monday could survive Parliament's vote of non-confidence and remained in his position. Osamani was summoned to parliament for spending less than 60% of the budget and allegations of illegal hiring in the ministry. He, however, convinced the MPs and got the vote of confidence.

More Details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/politics/item/31475-minister-osmani-survives-mps%E2%80%99-no-trust-vote.html>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkish premier stresses 'lasting peace' in Syria**

Prime Minister Binali Yildirim on Sunday emphasized on "ensuring permanent peace" in Syria by establishing a new government in the Middle Eastern country. "We have taken initiative with Russia and Iran to end the civil war, which has been going on in Syria for 7 years and to end the turmoil," Yildirim said at the provincial congress of ruling AK Party in southern Burdur province.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkish-premier-stresses-lasting-peace-in-syria/1019289>

- **Afghan, Turkish Interior Ministers Discuss Military Cooperation**

Interior Minister Wais Ahmad Barmak has discussed military cooperation with his Turkish counterpart during a meeting in Ankara, a statement said Monday. Barmak arrived in the Turkish capital at the head of a high-level delegation on Sunday, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) said in a statement. Barmak and his Turkish counterpart Süleyman Soylu discussed bilateral cooperation and strengthening friendly relations between the two countries. They also talked about cooperation in increasing higher educational facilities for Afghan police officers pursuing bachelors and master's degrees, the source said.

More Details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/politics/item/31480-afghan-turkish-interior-ministers-discuss-military-cooperation.html>

- **Turkey calls for avoiding external intervention in Iran**

Turkish Foreign Ministry on Tuesday said violence and provocation along with external interventions should be avoided during ongoing protests in Iran. "Turkey is concerned about reports that demonstrations that started on Dec. 28 in Iran have spread, there are deaths and that public buildings have been damaged," the ministry said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/197455/turkey-calls-for-avoiding-external-intervention-in-iran>

- **Turkey looks to enhance cooperation with Qatar**

expects enhanced cooperation with Qatar, Turkish minister for transport, maritime affairs and communications said on Monday. Speaking via FaceTime from Turkey during a promotional event in the Qatari capital Doha for the www.turkishsouq.qa website, Ahmet Arslan said: "Our cooperation with Qatar will not be limited to e-commerce.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/economy/turkey-looks-to-enhance-cooperation-with-qatar/1020053>

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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