



# MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

## GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

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## 1. IRAQ

- **U.S. diplomats warning GE's major deals in Iraq at risk over travel ban**

The Iraqi government is warning that a pair of pending deals with General Electric could be at risk from President Donald Trump's travel ban, according to internal State Department documents.

More Details

<http://www.politico.com/story/2017/02/iran-travel-ban-general-electric-234517>

- **Travel ban blocks Iraqi from human rights award ceremony for fighting ISIS**

Her fight against ISIS made her one of the militant group's "Most Wanted" women, nudged a reluctant United States to launch a humanitarian rescue effort in Iraq, and earned her a human rights award from a foundation that has honored the Dalai Lama.

More Details

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2017/02/01/travel-ban-blocks-iraqi-from-human-rights-award-ceremony-for-fighting-isis/IZS8ROhPUndDbp6SfRkaLN/story.html>

- **Americans in Iraq warn of travel ban blowback**

President Trump's travel ban has complicated lives of Americans working in Iraq. People there see the ban as insulting, and the parliament has vowed to retaliate. Charlie D'Agata reports.

More Details

<http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/americans-in-iraq-warn-of-travel-ban-blowback/>

- **Iraqis who aided US military can still get visas, State Department says**

Iraqis who worked with the US military and government, often at great danger to themselves and their families, will continue to be allowed to enter the United States under a special visa program for interpreters and others who provided wartime service, the US State Department said Wednesday.

More Details

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2017/02/01/iraqis-who-aided-during-war-still-eligible-for-visas-state-department-says/X2k2i6v25vYQ9djZcUDbpK/story.html>

- **Iraqis protest controversial maritime deal with Kuwait**

Hundreds protested in Iraq's southern Basra province this week against a 2013 maritime deal -- signed under Iraq's previous government -- ceding Iraq's Khawr Abdullah Canal to Kuwait.

More Details

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/iraqis-protest-controversial-maritime-deal-with-kuwait/739626>

- **Iraq's oil production unscathed for now by Trump travel ban**

Iraq won't bar U.S. citizens from entering the country, Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi said, averting a potential disruption to the oil industry of OPEC's second-biggest producer. U.S. President Donald Trump issued an executive order on Jan. 27 banning citizens of Iraq and six other Muslim-majority countries from entering the U.S., in the name of fighting terrorism. Iraqi lawmakers on Monday condemned the move, noting that Iraqi forces are on the front line in the battle against Islamic State militants, and urged their government to reciprocate.

More Details

<http://www.worldoil.com/news/2017/2/1/iraq-s-oil-production-unscathed-for-now-by-trump-travel-ban>

- **Iraq's President Masum criticizes Trump over travel ban**

In Iraq, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi is not the only senior official to have censured US President Donald Trump's travel ban targeting seven Muslim-majority countries; President Fuad Masum has also said Washington's move was "a shock."

More Details

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/02/01/508702/Iraq-Masum-trump-ban>

- **Dead in the water: IS launches doomed raids across Mosul river**

The Islamic State (IS) militants slipped into their boats and crossed the Tigris under the cover of heavy skies, fanning out on the eastern bank near a ramshackle fairground known as the "Mosul Jungle", and prepared their assault.

More Details

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/islamic-state-mosul-boat-assaults-drone-bombs-snipers-642145404>

- **First olive oil refinery opened in Iraqi Kurdistan**

Iraq's Kurdistan region,— An olive oil production refinery was officially opened in the capital of Iraq's Kurdistan Region, Erbil, for the first time on Tuesday.

More Details

<http://ekurd.net/olive-oil-refinery-kurdistan-2017-02-01>

- **Egypt in talks to import 12 million barrels of Iraqi oil**

Egypt is in talks with Iraq to import 1 million barrels of crude oil per month for one year, Tarek el-Hadidi, head of Egypt's state oil company EGPC, told reporters on the sidelines of a conference. Egypt's oil minister confirmed in December that talks were under way but said at the time that the aim was to import 1 million to 2 million barrels per month.

More Details

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-oil-iraq-idUSKBN15H0TI?rpc=401&>

- **What It's Like Putting Out Oil Fires Lit by Retreating IS Fighters**

VICE reporter Chris Shearer takes us to Iraq where he learned the dangers and frustrations of war-time firefighting.

More Details

[https://www.vice.com/en\\_uk/article/what-its-like-putting-out-oil-fires-lit-by-retreating-is-fighters](https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/what-its-like-putting-out-oil-fires-lit-by-retreating-is-fighters)

- **Muqtada al-Sadr: The Shia cleric ready to heal Iraq's sectarian divide**

There is perhaps no Iraqi more synonymous with the sectarian turmoil that has plagued Iraq during the past 15 years than Muqtada Al-Sadr. The bearded cleric has been dubbed a “firebrand” in countless newspaper columns, and has held an almost constant presence in the Iraqi political discourse since the fall of the Baath regime in 2003.

More Details

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/iraqs-answer-sunni-shia-divide-muqtada-al-sadr-1442520467>

- **Sweden stops flights to Iraqi Kurdistan over security concerns**

Iraq's Kurdistan region, — Sweden has suspended all flights to Iraq and Kurdistan Region due to security concerns, the Swedish Transport Agency (Transportstyrelsen) said on Wednesday.

More Details

<http://ekurd.net/sweden-flights-kurdistan-2017-02-02>

- **Liberating Nineveh Is Confirmation Message Of the Unity Of Iraq to the world. Iraq Victories Will Secure the World's Future**

The Presidency of the Council of Representatives member, Humam Hamoudi said the "the liberation of Nineveh is confirmation message of the unity of our people to the world."

More Details

[http://www.ninanews.com/News\\_Details.aspx?jOYWxzux3vRkU%252fBhuvDmmw%253d%253d](http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?jOYWxzux3vRkU%252fBhuvDmmw%253d%253d)

- **Asayish forces find booby-trapped IS flag northeast of Baqubah**

A local source in Diyala Province revealed that Asayish forces found a booby-trapped flag belonging to the Islamic State in a village northeast of Baqubah, Alsumaria News reported on Wednesday.

More Details

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/asayish-forces-find-booby-trapped-flag-northeast-baqubah/>

- **Islamic State executes 5 civilians on charges of spying in Hawija**

The self-proclaimed Islamic State group executed five civilians in Hawija District, west of Kirkuk, on charges of spying, a source told Alsumaria News on Wednesday.

More Details

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/islamic-state-executes-5-civilians-charges-spying-hawija/>

- **Northern Baghdad blast kills 1, wounds 5**

One civilian was killed and five others were wounded on Wednesday when an explosive device went off near a popular marketplace north of Baghdad.

More Details

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/northern-baghdad-blast-kills-1-wounds-5/>

- **ISF Destroy IS Tunnels near Ramadi**

Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) have started to destroy the tunnels of the Islamic State (IS) in the area of Khalidiya, east of Ramadi, a source in the province of Anbar has revealed according to Al Sumaria News.

More Details

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/327730>

- **ISIS terror cell arrested in Kirkuk**

The General Directorate for combating terrorism/ Asayish in Kirkuk had managed to arrest a terrorist group on Tuesday, was involved in terrorist attacks on the province of Kirkuk and the surrounding villages.

More Details

[http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN\\_Direje.aspx?Jimare=39621](http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=39621)

- **Barzani Reiterates Planning for Post-IS Mosul**

Kurdistan Region President Masoud Barzani received an Italian military delegation on Thursday headed by Roberta Pinotti, Italian Defense Minister.

More Details

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/kurdistan/327866>

## 2. SYRIA

- **Guest column: In the words of Syrian refugees**

According to the president's executive order, "The entry of nationals of Syria as refugees is detrimental to the interests of the United States."

More Details:

<http://www.freep.com/story/opinion/contributors/2017/02/02/syrian-refugee-ban/97363610/>

- **How to Help Syrian Refugees**

President Donald Trump's executive order on refugees was a combination of ineptitude, irrelevance, counterproductivity and malice, lamely rationalized as a matter of public safety

More Details:

<http://townhall.com/columnists/stevechapman/2017/02/02/how-to-help-syrian-refugees-n2279979>

- **3 Syrian Kurds: 'Signs of Full Support' from Trump White House in Islamic State Fight**

Syrian Kurdish fighters belonging to a ground coalition known as the Kurdish-Arab Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) say the U.S.-led coalition against the Islamic State has provided them with unprecedented weapons support, expressing optimism that President Donald Trump will help their struggle more than the Obama administration did.

More Details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/02/01/syrian-kurds-fighting-islamic-state-say-trump-admin-supporting/>

- **Why are Syrian rebels stepping up efforts to isolate Iran?**

For the first time since the start of the Syrian war, representatives of the Syrian government and the rebels gathered last week in Astana, Kazakhstan, to talk about ways to strengthen the current cease-fire and further push it toward a political settlement.

More Details:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/02/iran-syria-rebels-astana-meeting-alloush-saudi.html#ixzz4XW0yNSIH>

- **Russia's foreign minister urges Syria's return to Arab League**

Russia's foreign minister says Syria's return to the Arab League could allow the organization to contribute to a political settlement of the crisis in the Arab country.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/02/01/508721/Russia-Lavrov-Syria-Arab-League>

- **Hundreds of militants hand over weapons to Syrian government forces**

Hundreds of foreign-backed militants have handed over their weapons to Syrian government forces in a strategic area northwest of Damascus.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/02/01/508730/Syria-Wadi-Barada-Daesh-Damascus-Homs-Aleppo>

- **Syria: UN, Security Council welcome Astana talks and look forward to intra-Syrian negotiations**

The United Nations and the Security Council have welcomed the international talks on Syria held in the Kazakh capital of Astana, and, in separate accounts to the press, said they look forward to the resumption of the intra-Syrian negotiations.

More Details:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56086#.WJLxg9SLRiw>

- **Syria ceasefire mechanism now in effect: Russian FM**

United Arab Emirates: A "tripartite mechanism" established by Russia, Turkey and Iran to monitor the ceasefire in Syria has come into force, according to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

More Details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/01/02/2017/Syria-ceasefire-mechanism-now-in-effect-Russian-FM>

- **Christian Refugees Merit Priority Status**

In November of 2015, President Barack Obama told a G20 press conference that proposals to give priority status to Christian refugees from Syria were "shameful." He said, "We do not have a religious test for our compassion."

More Details:

<http://www.newsmax.com/BillDonohue/christian-Christians-refugee-u-n-/2017/02/01/id/771455/>

- **The new Syrian constitution is good, but requires courage**

The Russian-proposed constitution for Syria is raising eyebrows, not only in opposition circles but within the pro-regime street as well.

More Details:

<http://gulfnews.com/opinion/thinkers/the-new-syrian-constitution-is-good-but-requires-courage-1.1971664>

### 3. IRAN

- **Iranian President: Visa Ban Typical of Novice Politicians**

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani described separating nations with walls and banning people from entering a country as measures expected from novice politicians, seemingly in reference to recent moves by new US President Donald Trump.

More Details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/02/01/1315182/iranian-president-visa-ban-typical-of-novice-politicians>

- **Envoy Stresses Importance of Iran's Chabahar Port for Afghanistan**

Afghan Ambassador to Tehran Nasir Ahmad Nour underlined that Iran's Chabahar port is of paramount importance for his country's economy.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951113001402>

- **Iran sees oil refining megadeals with Japan, China soon**

Iran expects to sign its biggest oil refining contracts worth \$8.6 billion with a number of Japanese, Chinese and Korean companies this month or later, a minister said on Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/02/01/508680/Iran-oil-refining-deals-China-Japan-South-Korea>

- **Iran Warns US against Violation of N. Deal Undertakings under Trump**

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Europe and America Majid Takht Ravanchi underlined that the US undertakings based on the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and the world powers shouldn't be affected by Donald Trump's "undigested" decisions.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951113001291>

- **Zarif: Tehran-Yerevan ties well proceeding**

Foreign Minister, Mohammad-Javad Zarif, said on Wednesday that the Iran-Armenia ties could serve as a model in a world in which extremist approaches spread in the name of different religions.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82411909/>

- **Dehqan: US-Britain-France drill will go nowhere**

Iran's defense minister said it was natural for the US, Britain and France to decide to hold a joint naval war game in the Persian Gulf in the current situation, noting that such moves will go nowhere.

More Details:

<http://iran-daily.com/News/176823.html>

- **Iranian MPs underline need for boosting national deterrence power**

Iranian lawmakers have thrown their weight behind the country's missile program, underlining the need for boosting deterrence power to guarantee national security.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/02/01/508705/Iran-missile-test-US-nuclear-deal-JCPOA-UN-resolution>

- **Economy Ministry: 6.2% Growth, 9.8% Inflation Next Year**

Iran's GDP is projected to grow by 6.2%, as inflation is expected to average 9.8% in the next Iranian year (March 2017-18), according to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance's estimates.

More Details:

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/domestic-economy/58754/economy-ministry-62-growth-98-inflation-next-year>

- **Iran Calls for Colossal Efforts to Fight Terrorism, Extremism**

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in a meeting with Armenian Defense Minister Vigen Sargsyan in Tehran on Wednesday underlined the need for rising efforts by all the world countries to confront and uproot the terrorist groups in the region.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951113001732>

#### 4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Palestine Wants ICC to Investigate New Israeli Settlement Push**

The top Palestinian negotiator is calling on the International Criminal Court to probe Israel’s recent “colonial” settlement expansion in the West Bank.

More details:

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Palestine-Wants-ICC-to-Investigate-New-Israeli-Settlement-Push-20170201-0066.html>

- **Jamaica Council of Churches questions PM’s visit to Israel**

The Jamaica Council of Churches (JCC) yesterday raised questions about Prime Minister Andrew Holness’ visit to Israel and asked the Government to say whether there is a foreign policy shift concerning the State of Israel and Palestine.

More details:

[http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/Jamaica-Council-of-Churches-questions-PM-s-visit-to-Israel\\_88275](http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/Jamaica-Council-of-Churches-questions-PM-s-visit-to-Israel_88275)

- **Netanyahu Asks Rabbis to Pray for Trump**

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu paid a visit to the leaders of one of Israel’s most influential ultra-Orthodox Jewish sects last week, and asked them to pray for the success of US President Donald Trump.

More details:

<http://www.israeltoday.co.il/NewsItem/tabid/178/nid/31050/Default.aspx>

- **Texas Governor calls for anti-BDS laws**

Texas Governor Greg Abbott called in his budget for the passing of laws cutting off businesses that adhere to Israel boycotts from Texas pension plans and for broadening laws banning state investments in Iran, JTA reported on Wednesday.

More details:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/224277>

- **Palestinians demand UN action over Israeli approval of settlement homes**

The Palestinian UN ambassador accused Israel of an “extreme barrage of illegal behavior” over the last 10 days and demanded that the UN Security Council take action.

More details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/palestinians-demand-un-action-over-israeli-approval-of-settlement-homes/>

- **Israeli Soldiers Abduct Twelve Palestinians in Aida Refugee Camp**

Dozens of Israeli soldiers invaded, on Thursday at dawn, ‘Aida refugee camp, and north of the West Bank city of Bethlehem, searched many homes and abducted twelve young Palestinian men. The soldiers also summoned two Palestinians for interrogation.

More details:

<http://imemc.org/article/israeli-soldiers-abduct-twelve-palestinians-in-aida-refugee-camp/>

- **Palestinian President Abbas in city**

A red carpet was rolled out as Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas arrived yesterday on a three-day official visit at the invitation of his Bangladesh counterpart Abdul Hamid.

More details:

<http://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/foreign-affairs/2017/02/02/palestinian-president-abbas-in-city/>

- **US warns Palestinian leaders against suing Israel**

The United States has warned Palestinian leaders there will be harsh consequences for suing Israel in international courts, including steps against the Palestinian Authority, according to Israeli daily Haaretz reported on Wednesday.

More details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/americas/us-warns-palestinian-leaders-against-suing-israel/739648>

- **Freedom House: Israel only free State in the Middle East**

Civil liberties and political freedoms are under threat worldwide and have been rolled back in the world’s founding democracies, Freedom House declared on Wednesday in its annual report.

More details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Freedom-House-Israel-only-free-state-in-the-Middle-East-480295>

## 5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **King continues meetings with influential US lawmakers**

His Majesty King Abdullah on Wednesday continued his meetings with US Congress leaders in Washington, DC, holding talks with the leadership of the House of Representatives and the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee.

More details:

<http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/king-continues-meetings-influential-us-lawmakers>

- **US embassy move to Jerusalem will hurt peace: Jordan**

The relocation of the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem would undermine Middle East peacemaking efforts, Jordan's King Abdullah II has warned.

More details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/01/02/2017/US-embassy-move-to-Jerusalem-will-hurt-peace-Jordan>

- **Riachy: Mixed voting system not buried yet**

Information Minister, Melhem Riachy, said that the mixed balloting system has not been buried yet, stressing that the debate will resume at this level since the mixed law rectifies Christian representation and does not affect Druze representation.

More details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/74834/Riachy-Mixed-voting-system-not-buried-yet>

- **Lebanese, Palestinian meeting broaches situation in Ain el Helwe**

A Lebanese-Palestinian security meeting was held at noon on Wednesday between the head of the Army Intelligence branch in South Lebanon, General Khodr Hammoud, and the Palestinian High Security Committee chaired by Palestinian National Security Commander, General Sobhi Abu Arab.

More details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/74827/Lebanese-Palestinian-meeting-broaches-situation-in-Ain-el-Helwe>

- **Beirut's last public beach: residents fear privatisation of Ramlet al-Baida**

A private development close to Beirut’s last remaining public beach is sparking anger among residents who fear companies will leave nothing for the poor and middle classes – encroaching further into a city that already lacks public space.

More details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/feb/02/beirut-public-space-last-beach-residents-fear-privatisation-ramlet-al-baida>

- **Lebanon to set new parliamentary electoral law**

Lebanese political parties are currently in discussions over setting a new parliamentary electoral law by May to choose 128 members of parliament after the elections have been postponed twice for security reasons.

More details:

<http://thepeninsulagatar.com/article/01/02/2017/Lebanon-to-set-new-parliamentary-electoral-law>

- **Lebanon expects to start oil production in 2018, president Aoun says**

Lebanon expects to start oil production in 2018 and will deposit the resulting revenues into a sovereign wealth fund, President Michel Aoun said on Jan. 31.

More details:

<http://yalibnan.com/2017/02/02/lebanon-expects-to-start-oil-production-in-2018-president-aoun-says/>

- **Arslan Defends Four-Party Panel: Taken on too Much Responsibility**

Minister of the Displaced Talal Arslan defended the four-party committee studying drafts for a new electoral law and said it “was given more than it can handle,” as he assured that its main task is to study drafts that will be submitted to the cabinet or parliament, al-Joumhouria daily reported on Thursday.

More details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/224779-arslan-defends-four-party-panel-taken-on-too-much-responsibility>

- **Parliament panel meets with Estonian soldiers serving on UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon**

Members of the Estonian parliament's National Defense Committee visited the area of the UNIFIL peacekeeping mission in Lebanon in the first half of the week to get familiar with the tasks and service of Estonian peacekeepers.

More details:

[http://www.baltictimes.com/parliament\\_panel\\_meets\\_with\\_estonian\\_soldiers\\_serving\\_on\\_un\\_peacekeeping\\_mission\\_in\\_lebanon/#](http://www.baltictimes.com/parliament_panel_meets_with_estonian_soldiers_serving_on_un_peacekeeping_mission_in_lebanon/#)

## 6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Abdullah bin Zayed: Trump's travel ban not Islamophobic**

The United Arab Emirates' foreign minister has said that US President Donald Trump's travel ban on citizens of seven mainly Muslim countries, which has triggered global outrage, is not Islamophobic and does not target any one religion. Trump's order affecting nationals from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen has sparked protests across the United States and beyond. Four US states have filed legal cases against the travel ban for alleged religious discrimination.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/02/abdullah-bin-zayed-trump-travel-ban-islamophobic-170201132819745.html>

- **Arab coalition slams Houthi attack on warship**

Arab coalition spokesman Ahmed Asiri slammed a Houthi attack on a Saudi warship earlier this week and said it was a dangerous indicator. "Launching attacks from the Hodeida port and targeting a Saudi warship is an act of sabotage and a dangerous indicator," Asiri told Al-Hadath channel, Al Arabiya's sister news channel, on Tuesday evening

More details:

<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/gulf/2017/02/01/Asiri-slams-Houthi-attack-on-Saudi-warship.html>

- **Thousands of fleeing civilians trapped in Yemeni port city of Al-Mokha: UN report**

The UN humanitarian coordinator in Yemen has warned that 30,000 civilians are trapped in the Red Sea port city of Al-Mokha, the scene of deadly fighting between government forces and Houthi rebels. "An estimated 20,000-30,000 people, almost one third of the population, are trapped in the

town and require immediate protection and relief assistance," Jamie McGoldrick said in a statement late Tuesday.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/thousands-fleeing-civilians-trapped-yemeni-port-city-al-mokha-un-report-932232>

- **US, Saudi Defense Chiefs Reject Iran Interventions**

Pentagon chief James Mattis and Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman express their full rejection of the suspicious activities and interventions by Iran and its agents. New Pentagon chief James Mattis agreed in a telephone call with his Saudi counterpart to oppose Iranian "interventions" in the Middle East, Saudi state media reported on Wednesday, February 1.

More details:

<http://en.alalam.ir/news/1919466>

- **Bahrain FM's visit to upgrade bilateral ties: Javed Malik**

Pakistan's Ambassador to Bahrain, Javed Malik has said that, Foreign Minister of Bahrain, Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Al Khalifa's visit to Pakistan would be instrumental in upgrading the bilateral relations between Pakistan and the Kingdom of Bahrain. While highlighting the details of the visit, Javed Malik said that "Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid Al Khalifa will visit Pakistan between 5-7th February and will be accompanied by a high level government delegation which would also include members of the Bahraini royal family.

More details:

<http://pakobserver.net/bahrain-fms-visit-to-upgrade-bilateral-ties-javed-malik/>

- **'Expo Turkey by Qatar' kicks off in April seeking to bolster bilateral trade**

Turkish and Qatari businesses will come together at "Expo Turkey by Qatar" in the Qatari capital Doha, April 18-20, to bolster economic and trade-related bilateral relations between the two countries. Expo Turkey by Qatar, which is to be held at the Qatar National Convention Center (QNCC), was introduced to the media on Jan. 29 in a press meeting with Abdul Aziz Al Emadi, CEO of QNCC and co-organizer of the event, and Hakan Kurt, chairman of Medyacity and co-organizer of the exhibition.

More details:

<http://www.dailysabah.com/business/2017/02/02/expo-turkey-by-qatar-kicks-off-in-april-seeking-to-bolster-bilateral-trade>

- **Foreign minister attends Arab-Russian forum**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, participated in the 4th session of the Arab-Russian Cooperation Forum at the level of foreign ministers, held today in the UAE capital Abu Dhabi. The ministers reviewed the results of the third session of the Arab-Russian Cooperation Forum, held on February 26, 2016, in Moscow, and the Action Plan which aims to implement the principles of the forum and its objectives.

More details:

<http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/768446>

- **Russia a key partner to Arab countries, says Abdullah bin Zayed**

Russia is a key political and economic partner in the endeavours to realise the comprehensive development of the Middle East and support its stability, H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, said during the opening speech of the 4th session of the Russian-Arab Cooperation Forum in Abu Dhabi, which he presided over today.

More details:

<http://www.wam.ae/en/news/emirates-arab-international-internationalrelations/1395306805464.html>

- **Saudi-destroyed road linking capital to Red Sea city Hodeidah repaired**

The road linking the capital Sana'a and Red Sea port city of Hodeidah, that was hit three times by Saudi aggression warplanes, was repaired by the local council and residents, director of Bani Matar district told Saba on Thursday. "The road in Buan area is now ready for all kind of cars, thanking the efforts of the area's residents who helped the local council to repair it" director Abdul Latif al-Lamadhi said.

More details:

<http://www.sabanews.net/en/news454954.htm>

- **Saudi Arabia may raise US investments on Trump energy policy**

Saudi Arabia may increase its oil investments in the United States due to a more fossil fuel-oriented energy policy by the US administration of President Donald Trump, the kingdom's energy minister said. Trump had campaigned on a promise that Washington should boost U.S. energy independence from oil cartels such as OPEC, of which Saudi Arabia is its de facto leader and by far the group's biggest producer.

More details:

<http://www.arabianbusiness.com/saudi-arabia-may-raise-us-investments-on-trump-energy-policy-661769.html>

## 7. EGYPT

- **Egypt condemns attack on Saudi frigate in Red Sea**

Egypt has strongly condemned the vicious attack on the Saudi naval forces frigate in the Red Sea, which, a statement from the Egyptian Foreign Ministry said, represents a continuation of a policy of destabilisation in the region.

More details:

<http://www.wam.ae/en/news/arab-international/1395306812420.html>

- **Egypt allows passage of goods through border crossing with Gaza**

Egyptian authorities allowed goods to enter the Gaza Strip through the Rafah border crossing during the past four days, including shipments of cement, iron, wheat, food and medical supplies, the German News Agency DPA quoted Gaza's Economy Minister Abdel-Fattah Abu Moussa as saying.

The step came one day after a delegation from Gaza's Ministry of Interior, under the control of Hamas since 2007, arrived in Cairo to discuss border control with Egyptian officials.

More details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/257344/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-allows-passage-of-goods-through-border-cross.aspx>

- **Trial of Mubarak-era interior minister Habib El-Adly postponed to 18 February**

The Cairo Criminal Court postponed on Tuesday the trial of former Mubarak-era interior minister Habib El-Adly and twelve others in the case of embezzling money of the Interior Ministry to 18 February, according to state media. The court postponed the case to continue hearing the defence's statement.

More details:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/02/01/613793/>

- **Egypt Ready to Facilitate Next Round of Intra-Syrian Talks in Geneva – Ministry**

On Monday, Vitaly Naumkin, Russia's adviser to UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura, said that he did not rule out a possibility that the Arab countries, which were impacted by the Syrian

crisis, could join the three guarantor states of the Syrian peace process, noting that Egypt could play a huge role in the start of the peace settlement.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/politics/201702011050233961-egypt-talks-syria-ministry/>

- **Egypt under threat as Daesh activates nine ‘terror’ cells in Nile Valle**

Egyptian experts said that Daesh has activated its cells in the Nile valley away from the peninsula of Sinai, where it targeted security officers over the past three years. These warnings came with the release of a local study highlighting the flow of huge financial sums to fund extremist militant operations in Egypt. According to the study, such sums have played the biggest role in the revival of the extremist movements. These reports coincided with many significant measures taken by the Egyptian authorities

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/egypt-under-threat-daesh-activates-nine-%E2%80%98terror%E2%80%99-cells-nile-valle-931914>

- **Alleged phone leaks reveal Egypt-Saudi tensions**

Five alleged leaked phone conversations between Egypt’s president and foreign minister appear to shed fresh light on Egypt’s rocky relations with Saudi Arabia. One of the alleged leaked conversations between President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi and FM Sameh Shoukry -- broadcast Tuesday by the Muslim Brotherhood-linked Mukameleen television channel -- suggests that Iran had demanded an Egyptian presence at last October’s Lausanne Conference on Syria.

More details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/alleged-phone-leaks-reveal-egypt-saudi-tensions/739661>

- **Bills launched to confer Congressional Gold Medal on Anwar Sadat**

Bipartisan legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate would honor Anwar Sadat posthumously with the Congressional Gold Medal for leading Egypt to peace with Israel. The medal, the highest civilian honor bestowed by Congress, would be conferred in 2018, the centenary of the late Egyptian president’s birth.

More details:

<http://www.jta.org/2017/02/02/news-opinion/united-states/bills-launched-to-confer-congressional-gold-medal-on-anwar-sadat>

- **Israeli journalist tells Sisi to care for poor Egyptians not Palestinian issue**

An Israeli journalist has urged Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi not to be too distracted by the issue of moving the American embassy to Jerusalem and to instead focus on combatting the severe poverty in his country. Roi Kais referred to a picture of an 85-year old blind Egyptian woman living in a cardboard box selling vegetables, which caused a stir in Egypt.

More details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170201-israeli-journalist-tells-sisi-to-care-for-poor-egyptians-not-palestinian-issue/>

- **Russia-Egypt 2016 trade turnover hit \$3.5 bln – Russian trade envoy**

Trade turnover between Moscow and Cairo have reached \$3.5 billion in 2016, Russian Trade Representative to Egypt, Fedor Lukashin told Sputnik. Russia is one of Egypt's biggest trade partners among the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) member states, more specifically, Russia has the 97-percent share in EAEU export sales to Egypt and 94-percent share in import from Egypt, according to Lukashin.

More details:

<http://en.amwalalghad.com/investment-news/industry-trade/54659-russia-egypt-2016-trade-turnover-hit-35-bln--russian-trade-envoy.html>

## 8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Peaceful resolution of conflicts: Messahel reaffirms Algeria's inalienable stance**

Minister of Maghreb Affairs, African Union and Arab League Abdelkader Messahel has reaffirmed, Wednesday in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates), Algeria's inalienable stance in favour of the peaceful resolution of conflicts and non-interference in internal affairs of other countries.

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/16509-peaceful-resolution-of-conflicts-messahel-reaffirms-algeria-s-inalienable-stance>

- **Abdullah bin Zayed receives Algerian Minister for Maghreb, African Union and Arab League Affairs**

H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, received on Wednesday Algerian Minister for Maghreb, African Union and Arab League affairs Abdulqader Musahel, in Abu Dhabi.

More Details:

<http://www.wam.ae/en/news/emirates/1395306784151.html>

- **Algerian-Portuguese Economic Cooperation Commission meets in Lisbon in March**

The Algerian-Portuguese Economic Cooperation Commission will meet on 2 and 3 March in Lisbon (Portugal), said Wednesday, the ministry of Industry and Mining in a communiqué.

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/economy/16514-algerian-portuguese-economic-cooperation-commission-meets-in-lisbon-in-march>

- **Morocco king begins 2-day state visit to South Sudan**

Morocco's King Mohammed VI arrived in war-torn South Sudan on Wednesday evening for a state visit aimed at strengthening bilateral and economic ties between the two countries.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/africa/morocco-king-begins-2-day-state-visit-to-south-sudan-/739608>

- **Morocco sees potential \$1 bln of international bond issues in 2017: finance ministry source**

Morocco is considering tapping international debt markets in 2017 through around \$1 billion of bond issues, a senior official in the finance ministry said.

More Details:

[http://af.reuters.com/article/investingNews/idAFKBN15G510?feedType=RSS&feedName=investingNews&utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+reuters%2FAFRICAbusinessNews+%28News+%2F+AFRICA+%2F+Business+News%29&&rpc=401](http://af.reuters.com/article/investingNews/idAFKBN15G510?feedType=RSS&feedName=investingNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+reuters%2FAFRICAbusinessNews+%28News+%2F+AFRICA+%2F+Business+News%29&&rpc=401)

- **Tunisian arrested on suspicion of planning attack in Germany**

A 36-year-old Tunisian asylum-seeker suspected of planning an attack in Germany was arrested on Wednesday, February 1, the Frankfurt prosecutor's office said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Top-Slide-EN/8673322-tunisian-arrested>

- **Rached Ghannouchi: 'The Libyan crisis is a Tunisian crisis'**

The Ennahda leader tells MEE he is working with the Tunisian, Algerian and Egyptian presidents and the UN to bring Libyan parties together.

More Details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/interview-rached-ghannouchi-libyan-crisis-tunisian-crisis-891203520>

- **Libyans understand Trump's motive behind order for travel ban**

With a population of 6 million and historically the most prosperous of the seven majority-Muslim nations on President Trump's contentious executive order curbing travel and refugee flows, oil-rich Libya stands out as the smallest and the wealthiest country in the group.

More Details:

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/feb/1/libyans-understand-trumps-reason-behind-order-for-/>

- **EU starts training for second batch of Libyan coastguards**

The European Union announced on Monday that it had started training the second group of Libyan coastguards in the Greek island, Crete, as part of the Operation Sophia Programme.

More Details:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/eu-starts-training-for-second-batch-of-libyan-coastguards/>

- **Libya may allow EU ships to pursue people-smugglers in its waters**

Libya's UN-backed prime minister, Fayez al-Serraj, has said Nato or EU ships could be permitted to operate in Libyan waters alongside the national military coastguard to slow the flow of people-smuggling across the Mediterranean.

More Details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/01/nato-eu-ships-tackle-people-trafficking-libya-mediterranean-refugees-migrants>

## 9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Afghanistan Loses Control of Nearly Half the Country under Obama**

Afghanistan, under the presidency of Barack Obama, lost control and influence of nearly half of its war-ravaged territory as armed clashes between the nation's security forces and the Taliban reached unprecedented levels, reports a congressionally appointed watchdog agency.

More Details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/02/01/u-s-military-afghan-govt-loses-control-influence-nearly-half-war-ravaged-country/>

- **Afghanistan Central Bank calls for proper maintenance of bank notes**

Afghanistan's central bank, Da Afghanistan Bank, announced on Monday that shabby banknotes will no longer be valid start of the coming solar year 1396.

More Details:

<http://wadsam.com/afghan-business-news/afghanistan-central-bank-calls-proper-maintenance-bank-notes-232/>

- **Afghanistan claims halting Taliban offensive in south**

Afghan officials claimed on Wednesday the Taliban's coordinated attacks on Sangin district in the restive southern Helmand province had been thwarted after three days of fighting with multiple casualty claims on both sides.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/afghanistan-claims-halting-taliban-offensive-in-south/739556>

- **Germany Indicts Afghan Suspected of Taliban Membership**

German prosecutors say they have indicted a 28-year-old Afghan man on suspicion of fighting for the Taliban and breaking arms control laws.

More Details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/london/2017/02/01/germany-indicts-afghan-suspected-taliban-membership/>

- **Afghan Government Controls Less than 60 Percent of Country**

The Afghangovernment controls less than 60 percent of the country, a U.S. watchdog agency reported on Wednesday, after security forces retreated from many strongholds last year, Channel News Asia reported.

More Details:

<http://www.independent.mk/articles/40947/Afghan+Government+Controls+Less+than++Percent+of+Country>

- **UNDP sees Pakistan's neglect behind lingering of water disputes with India**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) says that Pakistan's negligence in conducting a sound analysis of trans-boundary water issues and delays in presenting the cases of dispute with India to the Indus Water Commission or the World Bank on the issues related to the Indus Waters Treaty have caused the issues to linger on and remain unaddressed.

More Details:

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1312231/undp-sees-pakistans-neglect-behind-lingering-of-water-disputes-with-india>

- **Pakistani crackdown on extremists: One hand works to neutralise the other**

Pakistan has put one of the world's most wanted men under house arrest in a half-hearted crackdown on a militant group with close ties to the military and intelligence, in a bid to persuade President Donald Trump from adding the country to those whose citizens were last week banned from travelling to the United States.

More Details:

<http://www.redressonline.com/2017/02/pakistani-crackdown-on-extremists-one-hand-works-to-neutralise-the-other/>

- **Pakistan snubs India on JuD chief detention issue**

Reacting to the statement of Indian External Affairs Ministry regarding detention of Hafiz Saeed, the Interior Ministry spokesman on Wednesday said Pakistan does not need any certification or endorsement from India in this regard.

More Details:

<http://dailymtimes.com.pk/pakistan/02-Feb-17/pakistan-snubs-india-on-jud-chief-detention-issue>

- **National Assembly rejects PTI's anti-Trump move**

Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) members on Wednesday protested in the National Assembly after they were not allowed to table a resolution against US President Donald Trump, who has recently drawn criticism around the world over his controversial visa ban on seven Muslim-majority countries.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/2ae3e234-7b3a-48e4-8202-721e6aa74650.aspx>

- **Pakistan does not need India's approval over action against Hafiz Saeed**

The Ministry of Interior on Wednesday stated that Pakistan does not need India's approval over the recent action the government took regarding Hafiz Saeed, chief of proscribed organisation Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD), Radio Pakistan reported.

More Details:

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1312071/pakistan-does-not-need-indias-approval-over-action-against-hafiz-saeed>

## 10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkish, Israeli officials resume ties after six years...**

Senior Turkish and Israeli officials met for the first time in more than six years on Wednesday to explore deepening ties, a diplomatic source said. Foreign Undersecretary Umit Yalcin and his Israeli counterpart Yuval Rotem met in Ankara for talks on cooperation in energy, economy, culture and tourism as well as discussing regional concerns, the diplomat said on condition of anonymity due to restrictions on talking to the media.

More Details:

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/184092/turkish-israeli-officials-resume-ties-after-six-years>

- **Turkish PM urges global community to support refugees**

Prime Minister Binali Yildirim has criticized the international community on Wednesday over its inadequate support for the Syrian refugees, saying it is "not enough to just appreciate" Turkey's efforts. Speaking during an award ceremony at the ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party's headquarters in Ankara, Yildirim said: "The international community should remember its

responsibilities. We will do whatever we should...[but] we want other countries to take some of the burden."

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/todays-headlines/turkish-pm-urges-global-community-to-support-refugees/739472>

- **51 Daesh terrorists killed by Turkish airstrikes, shelling in northern Syria**

Fifty-one Daesh terrorists have been killed by Turkish airstrikes and shelling in Syria's al-Bab, on the 163rd day of Operation Euphrates Shield, the military said on Thursday. 244 positions belonging to Daesh terrorists have been shelled, while 85 targets have been hit in airstrikes, destroying 83 buildings, 10 bomb-laden vehicles, two ammunition depots and two mortars.

More Details:

<http://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2017/02/02/51-daesh-terrorists-killed-by-turkish-airstrikes-shelling-in-northern-syria>

*\*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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