



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

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Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

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1. IRAQ

- **Parliament to Adjourn Its Session Today To Tomorrow For Lack Of Quorum**

The House of Representatives adjourned its meeting today to tomorrow (Monday) because of the lack of quorum. It is mentioned that the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Salim al-Jubouri held meetings with the Kurdish MPs to persuade them to attend the parliament session today.

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?1bL7fg9Xh583KPW0dvgJg%253d%253d

- **Death around corner for civilians living on Mosul's frontline**

Sitting in a wheelchair and wearing sunglasses, pensioner Abdelraziq Abdelkarim enjoys the afternoon sun outside his house in Mosul after a day of rain. He does not flinch when a mortar opens fire just around the corner. His home is on the busiest frontline in the northern Iraqi city just 200 m (yards) from Islamic State positions. Outside his house, Federal Police units are firing at the militants.

More Details:

<http://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/death-around-corner-civilians-living-mosuls-frontline/>

- **Iraqi Parliament Speaker Regrets Decision against Kurdistan Flag in Kirkuk**

Iraqi Parliament Speaker Salim al-Jabouri has regretted the decision of forcing the Kirkuk provincial administration to lower the Kurdistan flag, said a Kurdish lawmaker. "The heads of Kurdish parliamentary factions once again held a meeting with Salim al-Jabouri and they have reached an agreement to once again bring the issue to a parliamentary session which is scheduled to take place tomorrow [Monday]," MP Ashwaq Jaff told BasNews.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/340377>

- **Russia condemns US over 'absurd' response to Mosul civilian deaths**

Russia is stepping up its criticism of US military action in Iraq -- calling Pentagon comments about civilian casualties in Mosul "absurd." Russia's Ministry of Defense issued a statement Sunday that derides US officials' comments about the US-led coalition's possible role in more than 100 civilian deaths in Mosul last month. "Absurd statements of the Pentagon representatives justifying civil casualties caused by American bombing in Iraq give more information on the operation planning level and the alleged supremacy of the American "smart" bombs," the statement reads.

More Details:

http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/e4ddd818-071d-4381-a736-d4320ff0ff19/Russia-condemns-US-over--absurd--response-to-Mosul-civilian-deaths

- **Masum meets Kurdish Parliamentary Blocks**

The Iraqi President Fuad Masum had held a meeting with the Kurdish Parliamentary Blocks to discuss the Iraqi Parliament's decision regarding rising Kurdistan flag in Kirkuk. Yesterday, the Iraqi Parliament had voted in majority that the Iraqi flag will be the only flag to rise in Kirkuk, the decision which reflected in the Kurdish Blocks to boycott the session.

More Details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=40114

- **ISIS kills 20 including women, kids southern Nineveh: Security sources**

A medical source in Nineveh Governorate confirmed on Monday that 20 bodies belonging to women and children executed by ISIS were found south of the province. The source said in a press statement that "The Qayara Hospital south of Mosul, received 20 bodies of women and children, executed by the terrorist group while trying to escape from the right bank of Mosul" .

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/8914/ISIS-kills-20-including-women-kids-southern-Nineveh-Security-sources>

- **Iraqi MP alleges prison security set ISIS members in Mosul free for money**

An Iraqi parliament member accused Monday some Iraqi security members of setting ISIS captives free in return for money, urging intervention by Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, IraqiNews reported. "While accurate statistics of the numbers and nationalities of Daesh (ISIS) members arrested in Mosul are lacking, some weak-spirited security members release some of them in return for money," Alia Nassif, an outspoken MP from al-Islah (Reform) Front, said in a statement.

More Details:

<https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/iraqi-mp-alleges-prison-security-set-isis-members-in-mosul-free-for-money/>

- **Kurdish flag to fly above Kirkuk despite Iraq ban**

Kurdish authorities in Iraq said they will take no notice of a Baghdad parliamentary decree banning the raising of the Kurdish flag over state buildings in a city controlled by the Kurdistan Regional Government [KRG]. The KRG will disregard a parliamentary vote on Saturday that revoked a decision

this week by Kirkuk's provincial council to raise the Kurdish regional flag - a move that has escalated tensions with Baghdad.

More Details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/4/2/kurdish-flag-to-fly-above-kirkuk-despite-iraq-ban>

- **ISIL second-in-command reportedly killed in air strike**

Ayad al-Jumaili, believed to be ISIL's second-in-command after Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, has been killed in Iraqi air strikes near the Syrian border, Iraqi state TV reported. Jumaili and two other commanders were reportedly killed in the al-Qaim region in the western Anbar province. Brigadier general Yahya Rasool of Iraq's Joint Operation Command, citing military intelligence, said the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as ISIS) group's director of administrative affairs, Salem Mudafar al-Ajmi, were also killed in the raid.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/04/isil-command-reportedly-killed-air-strike-170402114605013.html>

- **Russia Denounces Western Coalition's Crimes in Iraq**

The Russian Defense Ministry (MINDEF) today denounced the war crimes committed by the United States-led coalition against civilians in the Iraqi city of Mosul, where they are fighting the terrorist Islamic State (ISIS). The statements by the allied forces representative, Joseph Skrock, are surprising as he promised to investigate the causes of the declassification of a video on the deaths of civilians, stated MINDEF Spokesman Igor Konashenkov.

More Details:

<http://www.plenglish.com/index.php?o=rn&id=11138&SEO=russia-denounces-western-coalitions-crimes-in-iraq>

- **US calls 100,000 plus Shia paramilitary forces in Iraq 'a concern'**

The United States' top military official in the Middle East, General Joseph Votel, on Sunday expressed his concerns about the presence of 100,000 plus Shia paramilitary forces in Iraq. "I share in your concern about Iran and their long-term intentions here. And certainly with the 100,000 plus Shia militia group members [Popular Mobilisation Units] on the ground there, this is extraordinarily — big concern as we move forward on," General Votel said.

More Details:

<http://aranews.net/2017/04/us-calls-100000-plus-shia-paramilitary-forces-in-iraq-a-concern/>

- **Ghosts of Mosul stalk Iraq's fleeing children**

The children proudly wield donated plastic water bottles like freshly dug nuggets of treasure, smiling despite the fear and death and destruction they have faced in their ruined city. With the impetuosity that only children can muster, they forget for a moment the hell they've endured in Mosul.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/region/ghosts-mosul-stalk-iraq%E2%80%99s-fleeing-children>

- **Will Iraq re-embrace its Arab roots?**

It has recently been a cause for great optimism to see the Arab world rediscovering Iraq, but how ready is Iraq to rediscover the Arab world? The keynote development was the visit of Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir in late February, the first visit by a Saudi foreign minister since 1990. This led to an intensification of diplomatic activity, not least efforts by the Kingdom and regional states to play a stronger role in Iraqi reconciliation efforts after the battle for Mosul. Regrettably, goodwill generated by this visit has been somewhat undermined by false claims by Al-Jubeir's Iraqi counterpart Ibrahim Al-Jaafari that Saudi Arabia agreed to forgive all of Iraq's debts.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1078141>

- **Japanese gov't, U.N. group begin farming project in Iraq for refugees**

The Japanese government and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) kicked off a new farming project in the Kurdish autonomous region of Iraq on April 1 to improve the lives of refugees there. Employment projects for refugees in the Kurdish autonomous region are said to be rare, and the project will include hiring Syrian refugees who fled the civil war that began in 2011. While the burden on both the countries that are accepting refugees and the refugees themselves is increasing, the international community's concern for their plight is waning, leading to the Japan-UNIDO agreement.

More Details:

<http://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20170403/p2a/00m/0na/002000c>

- **Iraq's Kirkuk provincial council prepares proposal on joining Kurdistan**

The Kirkuk Provincial is preparing to return Kirkuk to the Kurdistan Region through an old proposal, following the controversy over a decision to raise the Kurdistan flag from official premises in the city. The Brayati bloc in the Kirkuk Provincial Council, which has the majority of seats, has collected 22 signatures to bring the proposal, approved in 2008, to the council for a vote.

More Details:

<http://ekurd.net/kirkuk-proposal-joining-kurdistan-2017-04-03>

- **Iraq Delays Mosul Operations for Civilian Safe Passageways**

The Iraqi military temporarily halted operations around the densely populated areas around west Mosul's Old City to allow safe passage for civilians. "Currently, there is a delay, to open safe passageways for families and residents towards the safe areas and camps," said Lieutenant Colonel Emad Khalas on Sunday, presstv reported. Over the past few weeks, the battle against ISIL in the city has been mostly focused around the vicinity of the al-Nuri mosque where ISIL's leader, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi made his notorious sermon in 2014.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960114000166>

- **Iraq: Stabilising emergencies in a pocket of safety**

In Tal Afar district, northwest of Mosul, the lack of functional medical facilities is preventing the population from accessing healthcare. MSF has expanded its activities in the area, opening a maternity clinic in October last year and, recently, a stabilisation unit and children's ward in the village of Tal Marağ. MSF started to work in the area in 2015 because many medical structures were completely destroyed and those only partially damaged lacked basic medical material, drugs, and human resources. They were unable to provide healthcare to the population.

More Details:

<http://www.msf.org/en/article/iraq-stabilising-emergencies-pocket-safety>

- **Iraq sees export potential increasing**

Oil exports from the southern port of Basra could increase by substantial levels following upgrades to infrastructure, the Iraqi oil minister said. Iraqi oil exports from the southern ports peaked in December, one month before the start of a multilateral deal to curb production in an effort to balance the market. Members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Country in January began implementing a deal to cut production by 1.2 million barrels per day. Iraq, the second-largest producer in OPEC, said it would cut 200,000 bpd.

More Details:

http://www.upi.com/Energy-News/2017/04/03/Iraq-sees-export-potential-increasing/6661491213139/?utm_source=sec&utm_campaign=sl&utm_medium=1

- **Three police killed in car bombing in Iraq's Fallujah**

Three police personnel were killed Monday in a suicide bombing in Iraq's western city of Fallujah, according to a local military officer. A bomber blew up his car at a checkpoint in the city's western entrance, Army Colonel Walid al-Dulaimi told Anadolu Agency. He said seven troops – four police personnel and three army soldiers – were injured in the attack.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/three-police-killed-car-bombing-iraq%E2%80%99s-fallujah-958224>

- **Trump sends Kushner on fact-finding mission to Iraq**

President Donald Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, Jared Kushner, is due to spend Monday in Iraq with the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a senior administration official said. The official did not release additional details about the trip in which Kushner is accompanying Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Gen. Joseph Dunford. The official said that Kushner wanted to see the situation in Iraq for himself and show support for the Baghdad government.

More Details:

<http://www.macleans.ca/politics/trump-sends-kushner-on-fact-finding-mission-to-iraq/>

2. SYRIA

- **Army forces continue to push back terrorists through Syria**

Syrian government forces have killed at least 10 Daesh terrorists during operations in the country's eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/04/02/516500/syria-gains-daesh-terrorists>

- **Russian MoD Delivers About 2 Tonnes of Aid to Syrian Civilians Over 24 Hours**

The Russian Center for Syrian reconciliation delivered 1.98 tonnes of humanitarian aid to the Syrian provinces of Aleppo and Latakia over the past 24 hours, the Russian Defense Ministry said on Monday in a humanitarian bulletin.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201704031052223469-russia-aid-aleppo-latakia/>

- **U.N. calls on Gulf countries to do more to help Syrian refugees**

A senior United Nations refugee official on Sunday called on Gulf Arab states to give more to help Syrians displaced by six years of civil war, saying she saw little sign that the crisis would end any time soon.

More Details:

<http://news.trust.org/item/20170402154433-abjtt/>

- **US-backed forces repel major IS attack near Syrian dam**

US backed Syrian forces repelled a major counter-attack by Islamic State militants holding out at the country's largest dam and in the nearby town of Tabqa, the group and activists said yesterday.

More Details:

<http://www.gulf-times.com/story/542897/US-backed-forces-repel-major-IS-attack-near-Syrian>

- **Israel says their troops will enter Syria only if Hezbollah poses a threat**

Interfax reports that according to Israeli Ambassador to Russia Gary Koren, Israeli troops will enter Syria only if there is a serious threat from the Iranian movement, Hezbollah.

More Details:

<http://uawire.org/news/israel-says-their-troops-will-enter-syria-only-if-hezbollah-poses-a-threat>

- **Turkey Says 50,000 Displaced Syrians, Refugees Return To Retaken Areas**

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu says some 50,000 displaced Syrians and refugees have returned to areas captured by Turkey and its opposition allies in northern Syria.

More Details:

<http://www.rferl.org/a/turkey-syria-refugees-return/28405554.html>

- **Syrian army foils al-Nusra attack in Lattakia**

Syrian army unit thwarted an attack by Jabhat al-Nusra terrorists on military posts in the northern countryside of Lattakia coastal province. SANA reporter in Lattakia said that an army unit engaged in fierce clashes with a terrorist group affiliated to Jabhat al-Nusra after it had infiltrated into the surroundings of the military posts on the axis of the villages of Fulla, al-Shahra and al-Shammas in Lattakia northern countryside.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124508/Syrian-army-foils-al-Nusra-attack-in-Lattakia>

- **White House backs Haley, Tillerson on Assad**

The White House on Friday backed top aides' comments that the United States is not now focused on making Syrian President Bashar Al Assad leave power, saying the US focus is on defeating Daesh militants.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/1b62c2a8-5c2d-4586-809c-1be5857d46b1.aspx>

- **Syrian crisis leaves Lebanon at breaking point: paper**

It's been a little over six years since Syria's tumultuous rupture into civil war over the regime of President Bashar Al Assad. The unprecedented bloodshed, murder and violence has led to the destruction of cities and villages, dividing the populace as never before, creating the conditions where Daesh could fester and spread its evil, said The Gulf News in an editorial on Monday.

More Details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302606599>

- **Doha meeting pledges more than \$260 mln in Syrian aid**

More than \$260 million has been pledged in humanitarian aid for Syria following a meeting in Doha on Sunday involving the UN and 25 non-governmental organisations from across the region.

More Details:

<http://www.france24.com/en/20170402-doha-meeting-pledges-more-260-mln-syrian-aid>

3. IRAN

- **Iran envoy expresses reservations about fmr Pak army chief's role in military alliance**

Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan has expressed reservations on issuance of No Objection Certificate (NOC) by the Pakistani government for appointing former army chief General (ret'd) Raheel Sharif as the head of Saudi-led military alliance.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82480185/>

- **Iran confirms deal to buy 12 Russian planes**

Iran has shown interest in purchasing 100 Russia's medium-haul Sukhoi Superjet 100 (SSJ100) passenger planes, but the agreement has only been reached regarding 12 aircraft as of the moment, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak was quoted as saying in a media report.

More Details:

http://www.tradearabia.com/news/TTN_322808.html

- **Netanyahu threatens Iran while unveiling new anti-missile system**

Israel sent a "clear message" to Iran on Sunday after launching its new medium-range missile defence system in a widely-publicised ceremony.

More Details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/4/3/netanyahu-threatens-iran-while-unveiling-new-anti-missile-system>

- **Iran Nuclear Deal, 2 Years In: US Senators Seeking to Sabotage It**

Only two years ago seven world powers, including Washington and Moscow, ratified a historic treaty guaranteeing that Iran would not develop or deploy nuclear weapons. Now, promises made by the US as part of the deal stand in danger of being circumvented by the administration of President Donald Trump.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/politics/201704031052221936-us-senators-want-end-iran-deal/>

- **Iraqi Speaker Underlines Importance of Tehran Ties**

Iraqi Parliament Speaker Salim al-Jabouri hailed Iran as a major neighboring country having much in common with his nation, stressing the need for efforts to enhance bilateral relations.

More Details:

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/national/61639/iraqi-speaker-underlines-importance-of-tehran-ties>

- **Iran only hope against Israel: Tunisian president**

Tunisia's president has called Iran the only source of hope in confronting Israel and hailed the Islamic Republic's sacrifices in the war against terrorists in Syria.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/04/02/516439/Iran-Tunisia-Israel-Syria-Daesh>

- **Iraq keen to reach agreement with Iran on joint oil fields**

Iraqi Oil Minister Jabbar Allaibi said on Sunday his country plans to reach an agreement with Iran on exploitation of the joint oil fields.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82479822/>

- **Iran Condoles with Columbia, Indonesia over Fatal Landslides**

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman expressed condolences to the governments of Colombia and Indonesia over deaths in landslides in the Latin American and the Southeast Asian nations.

More Details:

<http://ifpnews.com/news/politics/foreign-policies/2017/04/iran-condoles-columbia-indonesia-fatal-landslides/>

- **Iran conveys reservations about Gen Raheel's role in Islamic alliance**

Iran has informed Pakistan formally about the reservations in the light of issuing a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for appointing General (retired) Raheel Sharif as the head of Islamic military alliance, say sources.

More Details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/196187-Iran-conveys-reservations-about-Gen-Raheels-role-in-Islamic-alliance>

- **Iran concerned over Raheel's appointment as head of Saudi-led military alliance: envoy**

Iran has expressed its reservations regarding the appointment of the former army chief, retired Gen Raheel Sharif, as head of the Saudi-led 39-nation Islamic military alliance, saying it is not 'satisfied' with the coalition.

More Details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1324597/iran-concerned-over-raheels-appointment-as-head-of-saudi-led-military-alliance-envoy>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Palestinian detainees suffer under occupation**

Israeli occupation forces have issued 46 administrative detention orders against Palestinian detainees, including a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), since March 21. The Palestinian Prisoners' Society (PPS) said an administrative detention order of four months was issued against Mohammad Ismail Al-Tel, a PLC member from Hebron city, adding that he previously served years under administrative detention.

More Details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1078296/middle-east>

- **Knesset to vote on making demolishing Palestinian homes easier**

The Israeli Knesset will vote on a law on Wednesday that will enable Israeli forces to demolish Palestinian homes with greater ease, after an Israeli parliamentary committee passed the bill on Sunday. The Planning and Building Law, which will speed up the demolition and removal of homes built without permits or licenses, was passed by the Interior and Environment Committee.

More Details

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/4/3/knesset-to-vote-on-making-demolishing-palestinian-homes-easier>

- **Israel denies Gaza access to human rights workers**

Human rights workers documenting abuses and advocating an end to them are barred by the Israeli military authorities from entering and leaving the Gaza Strip, Human Rights Watch said in a report released today. By doing so, the Israeli government is undermining its own claims of relying "on human rights organizations as an important source of information for their criminal investigations into potential serious crimes committed during the 2014 Gaza war," the monitor says.

More Details

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/rights-workers-denied-gaza-access-human-rights-watch-says-348111694>

- **Human Rights watch gives Israel Ultimatum over Gaza war crime Investigation**

Human Right Watch on Monday issued a report and warning to Israel that it must start letting its investigators into Gaza or must admit to the International Criminal Court Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda that its own war crimes probes of IDF soldiers are invalid.

More Details

<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Human-Rights-Watch-Let-us-into-Gaza-or-admit-to-weak-Israeli-war-crime-investigations-485937>

- **Egypt's Sissi to present Trump with Mideast peace plan**

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi and Jordan's King Abdullah II will reportedly present US President Donald Trump with a framework to an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal during their upcoming visits to the White House this week, reports said Monday.

More Details

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/egypts-sisi-to-present-trump-with-mideast-peace-plan-report/>

- **Israeli Arab Lawmaker Meets Lebanese Druze Leader, Call for Unity among Palestinians**

Knesset member Ayman Odeh, the leader of the Joint List, met Saturday in Paris with the Lebanese Druze leader Walid Jumblatt. "The Progressive Socialist Party, since its founding by Kamal Jumblatt (Walid Jumblatt's father) is the party that has been the most supportive of the Palestinian issue, even if there are differences between us in concept and vision, especially over the last decade," Odeh said, adding, "The very fact of the meeting and discussion is very important looking at the party and its work for the Palestinian issue."

More Details

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.780958>

- **Hamas charter still doesn't recognize Israel**

A Hamas political document leaked on Sunday reveals plans to soften the group's charter so that it recognizes a Palestinian state along the pre-1967 borders, but still does not recognize Israel, the Yediot Aharonot newspaper reports. The document was published by the Lebanese news site Al Mayadeen. It is due to be officially released in the coming days by Hamas leader and politburo chief Khaled Mashaal.

More Details

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/227651>

- **Bennett says Israel missed chance offered by Trump election**

Jewish Home leader Naftali Bennett on Monday reiterated criticism of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, saying that he had failed to take advantage of the election of US President Donald Trump in order to change the narrative of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

More Details

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/bennett-says-israel-missed-chance-offered-by-trump-election/>

- **Hamas said to be removing antisemitic references from its founding charter**

The Palestinian Resistance Movement, Hamas, is expected to officially recognise the state of Israel and its 1967 borders with Palestine in a new political charter to be unveiled soon. The ruling party in Gaza has been working to revise its charter, written in 1988, which critics accuse of being anti-semitic instead of anti-Zionist.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/hamas-said-be-removing-antisemitic-references-its-founding-charter-957974>

- **Elections commission: More than one million registered voters in West Bank**

Data revealed by the Palestinian Central Elections Commission on Monday showed that there were 1,134,636 registered voters in 11 districts in the West Bank. According to the data, 48.93 per cent of the voters were female, and 51.07 per cent males. It said 61 per cent of the registered voters range in age between 18 and 40 years old.

More Details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=Y25B42a72474087444aY25B42>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **UK to Train Jordanian Pilots Fight Daesh**

May is heading for a three-day Middle Eastern tour later in the day. The prime minister will visit Jordan and Saudi Arabia to discuss boosting trade and security ties as the United Kingdom begins Brexit negotiations with Europe.

More Details

<https://sputniknews.com/world/201704031052224933-uk-daesh-jordan-pilots/>

- **PM to visit Saudi Arabia and Jordan to 'deepen true strategic partnerships'.**

Tackling the terror threat and developing new capabilities to strike at the heart of Daesh are the centrepiece of a new joint initiative between the UK and Jordan, the Prime Minister will announce

today. On her first visit to Jordan as Prime Minister, she will also confirm a plan to improve cooperation on countering violent extremism in the region.

More Details

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-to-visit-saudi-arabia-and-jordan-to-deepen-true-strategic-partnerships>

- **Fluidity around the poverty line**

The World Bank claimed in a recent report that one third of the Jordanian population may fall below the poverty line within a year. This unpleasant statement caused worry, even though there is nothing new about it. The statement calls attention to a possibility, but it does not necessarily mean that it will actually happen.

More Details

<http://jordantimes.com/opinion/fahed-fanek/fluidity-around-poverty-line>

- **Hariri: Israel Seeking New War against Lebanon**

Hariri made the comments after arriving in Paris, also dismissed concerns that Hezbollah might provoke a conflict with Israel, France24 reported. "I think that Israel is the one that wants to launch a war against Lebanon, and not Hezbollah," he said. "Israel does not want the Arabs to rest. Look at the daily Israeli violations of our airspace, land and territorial waters," Hariri added.

More Details

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960114000478>

- **Lebanon's foreign minister urges moderate voices to fight against extremism**

Lebanon's foreign minister Gebran Bassil has met with members of Australia's Lebanese community and told them not to accept anyone who will not follow Australia's laws. Mr. Bassil also warned the West against falling into the trap of Islamophobia when it came to countering extremism.

More Details

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-04-03/foreign-minister-tells-lebanese-australians-to-abide-by-laws/8411854>

- **Army Commander Aoun: I Want to Windup the File of Abducted Servicemen**

Newly appointed Army Commander General Joseph Aoun stressed his adamant will to uncover the fate of the Lebanese abducted servicemen regardless what their fate turns out to be, as he said his focus will concentrate on distancing the army from political interference.

More Details

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/227914-army-commander-aoun-i-want-to-windup-the-file-of-abducted-servicemen>

- **Syrian crisis leaves Lebanon at breaking point**

It's been a little over six years since Syria's tumultuous rupture into civil war over the regime of President Bashar Al Assad. The unprecedented bloodshed, murder and violence has led to the destruction of cities and villages, dividing the populace as never before, creating the conditions where Daesh could fester and spread its evil, said The Gulf News in an editorial on Monday.

More Details

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302606599>

- **Lebanon's Prime Minister says that Israel - not Hezbollah - looking for war**

Prime Minister Saad Hariri reiterated concerns Sunday that recent Israeli actions have indicated a desire for future conflict, as the Jewish state unveiled the latest addition to its multilayer missile defenses. Hariri said that while he was opposed to Hezbollah's actions in Syria, which he said affected Lebanon's security, he was not concerned that the party might provoke a conflict with Israel.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/lebanon%E2%80%99s-prime-minister-says-israel-not-hezbollah-looking-war-958004>

- **Mashnouq Condemns Hizbullah's Armed Appearance in Beirut Suburb**

Interior Minister Nouhad al-Mashnouq denounced on Monday Hizbullah's armed deployment over the weekend in Beirut's southern suburb of Bourj al-Barajneh stating it as a "challenge to the new term" of President Michel Aoun. "Hizbullah's manifestation is condemned and rejected. It is a slap in the face for the new term and a challenge to the logic of the State," said Mashnouq on Twitter.

More Details

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/227918-mashnouq-condemns-hizbullah-s-armed-appearance-in-beirut-suburb>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **ICCI considers Pak-Bahrain conference milestone for economic ties**

Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has lauded the Pakistan-Bahrain Business Opportunities Conference held here on March 30 and considered it a milestone in economic and trade relations between two countries.

More details:

<http://nation.com.pk/business/03-Apr-2017/icci-considers-pak-bahrain-conference-milestone-for-economic-ties>

- **UAE, China talk relations**

Mohammed Abdullah Al Shamsi, Charge d’Affaires of the UAE Embassy in China, met with Zheng Xiaosong, Vice Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China, to discuss ways to promote cooperation while developing a strategic partnership between the UAE and China.

More detail:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/781a33ac-65ea-4dd3-9dac-db90003e760a.aspx>

- **Al-Daqaq reacts to stripping of his Bahraini citizenship by regime**

Sheikh Abdullah Al-Daqaq, prominent Bahraini cleric and director of Hawza in Iranian City of Qom, commented on the verdict issued by a Bahraini court, sentencing him along with 2 others to 10 years in prison and revoking their citizenship.

More detail:

http://en.abna24.com/news/bahrain/al-daqaq-reacts-to-stripping-of-his-bahraini-citizenship-by-regime_821481.html

- **British police look at allegations of Saudi war crimes in Yemen**

British investigators at Scotland Yard are examining allegations of war crimes by Saudi Arabia in Yemen, a possible diplomatic row with Britain on the eve of UK Prime Minister Theresa May’s visit to the Arab state. The London Metropolitan police confirmed that their war crimes unit was assessing whether criminal prosecutions could be brought over Saudi Arabia’s devastating aerial campaign in Yemen.

More detail:

<http://www.scmp.com/news/world/middle-east/article/2084344/british-police-look-allegations-saudi-war-crimes-yemen>

- **New Saudi-Ukrainian airplane test-flown successfully**

The test flight of the new Saudi-Ukrainian light-weight multi-purpose airplane Antonov AN-132 took place on Saturday. It was flown for an hour and 40 minutes over Ukrainian territory by retired Gen. Muhammad bin Saeed Aiyash, accompanied by Ukrainian pilots and technicians. The pilots were received by Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko as the plane landed.

More detail:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1078356/saudi-arabia>

- **Oman, Kuwait set to sign Duqm refinery deal**

Kuwait will sign a partnership agreement with Oman for the 230,000-barrel-per-day Duqm refinery near the port in the Al Wusta region on April 10, a report said. Kuwait Petroleum plans to develop the refinery on a 50:50 equity joint venture with Oman Oil Company, added the Times of Oman report.

More detail:

http://www.tradearabia.com/news/OGN_322751.html

- **US flights electronic devices ban: Etihad, Qatar to provide business class passengers with laptops**

Qatar Airways and Etihad Airways are lending some passengers laptop computers and tablets to use on their flights following the new US ban on allowing passengers' to take their own devices into the cabin on flights to the United States. The security measures introduced on March 25 could deal a blow to the big, fast-growing Gulf airlines, which depend on business-class flyers stopping over in places like Dubai or Doha for far-flung destinations.

More detail:

<http://www.traveller.com.au/us-flights-electronic-devices-ban-etihad-qatar-to-provide-business-class-passengers-with-laptops-gvajky>

- **Canada-Qatar Business Council soon: Envoy**

In an important step to enhance trade and investment ties between Qatar and Canada, plans are under way to set up a joint business council soon. Canada-Qatar Business Council will be launched in September- October this year, says Adrian Norfolk, Canadian Ambassador to Qatar.

More detail:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/02/04/2017/Canada-Qatar-Business-Council-soon-Envoy>

- **Britain apologises after egg thrown at Saudi general**

Britain has apologised after an egg was thrown at a Saudi military official during a visit to London, Saudi state media said Sunday. An anti-war activist last week attempted a citizen's arrest of General Ahmed Assiri, spokesman for the Saudi-led Gulf coalition fighting rebels in Yemen, before another threw an egg that hit Assiri in the back. British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson called Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, son of the Saudi king and the country's defence minister, to apologise for 'the attack on General Ahmed Assiri, counsellor to the prince, by protestors,' the state-run SPA news agency said.

More detail:

http://www.gulf-times.com/story/542819/Britain-apologises-after-egg-thrown-at-Saudi-gener#section_183

- **JBIC, Japanese mega-banks to lend \$1 billion for Kuwait oil refinery renovation Project**

The Japan Bank for International Cooperation plans to extend \$1 billion to a Kuwaiti oil refinery company in concert with Japanese mega-banks and a major British financial firm, it was learned on Sunday.

More detail:

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/04/02/business/jbic-japanese-mega-banks-lend-1-billion-kuwait-oil-refinery-renovation-project/#.WOIEddSLRko>

7. EGYPT

- **Trump welcomes Egypt's Sisi in Washington**

US President Donald Trump meets his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah Al Sisi in Washington on Monday. For Sisi, the first foreign leader to congratulate Trump following his surprise election victory, the Oval Office meeting will have special meaning — he was never invited to the White House by former president Barack Obama.

More detail:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/9990d55a-8a91-4919-bb18-91b67703a9c0.aspx>

- **ISIS executes 4 Egyptians on charge of spying for gov.**

ISIS militants have increased their presence across Sinai province, setting up checkpoints in Arish city and seizing many desert villages. In response, the Iraqi Armed Forces have deployed a number of contingents to the sparsely populated governorate and hired civilians to identify the whereabouts of ISIS insurgents.

More detail:

http://en.abna24.com/news/middle-east/isis-executes-4-egyptian-on-charge-of-spying-for-gov-pics_821479.html

- **HRW: Israel and Egypt deny aid workers access to Gaza**

Human Rights Watch has accused Israel, Egypt and Hamas of systematically preventing rights workers from investigating abuses in the Gaza Strip. A new report also cast doubt on Israel's promise to conduct its own inquiry.

More detail:

<http://www.dw.com/en/hrw-israel-and-egypt-deny-aid-workers-access-to-gaza/a-38259802>

- **Will the mediation between Egypt and Haftar succeed?**

Some regional and international states try to mediate for the Dignity Operation commander, General Khalifa Haftar, to end his tensions with Egypt. The relations between both parties got tense, as reflected by statements made by the Egyptian Chief of Staff, the head of the National Committee for Libya, Mahmoud Hegazy, criticising Haftar for violations committed by his forces in Benghazi.

More detail:

<http://libyapropect.com/index.php/2017/04/02/will-the-mediation-between-egypt-and-haftar-succeed/>

- **Egypt military says top jihadist killed in Sinai**

18 'extremely dangerous' fighters die in air strike, including founder of Islamic State-affiliated terror group. CAIRO, Egypt — Egypt's military said Sunday a founder of a extremist faction in North Sinai that pledged allegiance to the Islamic State terrorist group was killed in an air strike.

More detail:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/egypt-military-says-top-jihadist-killed-in-sinai/>

- **Sisi discusses Egypt's economic reform programme with World Bank president**

Egyptian President Abdel-Fatah El-Sisi discussed with World Bank Group president Jim Yong Kim Egypt's ongoing economic reforms as well as cooperation in large development projects in a number of sectors in the country, including energy and transportation.

More detail:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/12/262130/-.aspx>

- **Egypt court upholds 'terror group' designation for leading Muslim Brotherhood figures**

Egypt's Court of Cassation rejected on Sunday an appeal by 18 Muslim Brotherhood members against an order placing them on an official list of "terrorist organizations." The appeal was filed by several leading figures in the now-banned Islamist group, including its supreme guide Mohamed Badie, along with Mohamed Mahdi Akef, Saad El-Katatny, Khairat El-Shater, Mohamed El-Beltagy, Essam El-Erian, Mahmoud Ezzat and Hossam Abu Bakr.

More detail:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/262100/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-court-upholds-terror-group-designation-for-l.aspx>

- **Egypt decides to give islands to Riyadh after reconciliation**

An Egyptian court has voided a previous decision to block the transfer of two Red Sea islands to Saudi Arabia, a judicial source told The New Arab. The Court of Urgent Matters on Sunday nullified a Supreme Court ruling that blocked the handover of Tiran and Sanafir islands to Saudi Arabia.

More details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/4/2/egypt-decides-to-give-islands-to-riyadh-after-reconciliation>

- **Egyptian delegation says Brotherhood was involved in forming IS**

The Egyptian Popular Diplomacy delegation met with the US Congress judicial committee on Saturday to assess a new bill that would label the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organisation, under the Trump administration. In the meeting, Ahmed al-Fadaly, head of the delegation, presented videos that feature crimes, terrorist operations and assassinations carried out by the group, indicating its involvement in forming the terrorist groups Islamic State and al-Qaeda.

More detail:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com//news/egyptian-delegation-says-brotherhood-was-involved-forming>

- **Army gains full control of al-Halal Mountain in Sinai**

The Egyptian Armed Forces has declared its complete control over al-Halal Mountain after purging all the caves, killing several extremists, arresting others and confiscating huge amounts of ammunition. Military spokesperson Tamer al-Refai posted on Facebook that the third field army achieved gains through security operations launched in central Sinai, which enjoys a mountainous nature. Al-Halal mountain is one of these areas where extremists took shelter, but the armed forces were able to gain full control, Refai said on Sunday.

More detail:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com//news/army-gains-full-control-al-halal-mountain-sinai>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Algeria still needs to import some goods to guarantee competition, better choice for consumers**

Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal said Saturday, in El Oued, that the reduction in imports does not mean the banning of certain goods because Algeria still need competition to set prices and offer a better choice to consumers.

More details:

<http://en.aps.dz/economy/17570-algeria-still-needs-to-import-some-goods-to-guarantee-competition,-better-choice-for-consumers>

- **A source of stability**

Important potential changes in British policy towards Libya may be afoot. The Conservative Middle East Council (CMEC) released its report following a trip to Libya by its director Leo Doherty and including Kwasi Kwarteng, a backbench Conservative MP and prominent Brexiteer who is in favour of expanding the UK's commercial relations with the Middle East.

More details:

<http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20170403/opinion/A-source-of-stability.644280>

- **Italy brokers deal with Libyan tribes to curb migrants**

The Italian government said Sunday that dozens of rival tribes in southern Libya had agreed to cooperate on securing the country's borders in an effort to curb the influx of migrants trying to reach Europe.

More details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/4/3/italy-brokers-deal-with-libyan-tribes-to-curb-migrants>

- **Hafter in talks with French ambassador on Libyan crisis**

French ambassador Brigitte Curmi has had talks with Khalifa Hafter on the crisis in Libya. The two met on Wednesday at the field marshal's Rajmah headquarters, near Benghazi's Benina airbase.

More details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/04/02/hafter-in-talks-with-french-ambassador-on-libyan-crisis/>

- **Tunis meeting on economic reform and GNA funding fails to make significant headway**

Hopes of a breakthrough in dealing with Libya's economic crisis were unfulfilled at a meeting of top economic figures last week in Tunis. However, reports of clashes and that the Central Bank of Libya, the Audit Bureau and members of the Presidency Council and its government of national unity were told to go away and then come back with more concrete proposals to solve Libya's financial crisis have been denied by some observers taking part.

More details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/04/02/tunis-meeting-on-economic-reform-and-gna-funding-fails-to-make-significant-headway/>

- **Istiqlal Party: Brawl among Hamid Chabat and Hamdi Ould Rachid Supporters**

Amid the growing uproar and tension among the Istiqlal Party (IP), the Saturday meeting of the party ended up with a brawl between the supporters of the Secretary General, Hamid Chabat and Hamdi Ould Rachid, one of the leading members of the party.

More details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/04/212731/istiqlal-party-brawl-among-hamid-chabat-hamdi-ould-rachid-supporters/>

- **Iran only hope against Israel: Tunisian president**

Tunisia's president has called Iran the only source of hope in confronting Israel and hailed the Islamic Republic's sacrifices in the war against terrorists in Syria.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/04/02/516439/Iran-Tunisia-Israel-Syria-Daesh>

- **Morocco Elected Vice-President of the UN Fight Against Nuclear Weapons**

Morocco was elected Vice-President of the United Nations' conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading toward their total elimination in New York on March 30.

More details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/04/212730/morocco-elected-vice-president-un-fight-nuclear-weapons/>

- **Tunisians seek justice over 'boats of death'**

Hundreds of Tunisian men have disappeared while attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea towards Italy.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/03/tunisians-seek-justice-boats-death-170314132146969.html>

- **Japan provides 679.500 US dollars to support Libyan IDPs over 12 months**

Japan, through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has committed USD 679,500 to support a 12-month project addressing the immediate needs of internally displaced families in Libya.

More details:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/japan-provides-679-500-us-dollars-to-support-libyan-idps-over-12-months/>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **2,248 military personel died in Afghanistan since 2001: US Defence Dept**

The US Department of Defence announced on Saturday that at least 2,248 members of its military had died in Afghanistan since 2001 while a total of 4,520 had been killed in Iraq since 2003. The statistics would be another cause of concern for the Trump administration, which has vowed to reduce US war losses and is busy reviewing policy for the Pak-Afghan region.

More details:

<http://paktribune.com/news/2248-military-personel-died-in-Afghanistan-since-2001-US-Defence-Dept-278555.html>

- **ISIS leader among 27 killed in Nangarhar airstrikes and clearance operations**

At least twenty seven militants affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group were killed during the clearance operations and airstrikes in eastern Nangarhar province of Afghanistan.

More details:

<http://www.khaama.com/isis-leader-among-27-killed-in-nangarhar-airstrikes-and-clearance-operations-02495>

- **Quetta: Symbol of Pakistan's war on militants or Taliban haven?**

Ever since becoming leader of the Taliban in 2015, Mullah Akhtar Mansour knew he was at the very top of the CIA's kill list. Aware of the prospect of a missile with his name on it, he stayed on the move and often travelled incognito.

More details:

<http://www.thenational.ae/world/south-asia/quetta-symbol-of-pakistans-war-on-militants-or-taliban-haven>

- **Australian Hazaras protest visit of Afghan president Ashraf Ghani**

Thousands of Australian Hazaras, many of whom fled persecution in Afghanistan, have taken to the streets of Canberra to protest the state visit of the Afghan president, Ashraf Ghani.

More details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/03/australian-hazaras-protest-visit-of-afghan-president-ashraf-ghani>

- **SHC orders immediate reinstatement of AD Khawaja as IG Sindh**

The Sindh High Court suspended on Monday the provincial government's notification for removal of Inspector General of Police (IGP) AD Khawaja.

More details:

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1372939/shc-orders-immediate-reinstatement-ad-khawaja-ig-sindh/>

- **Imran urges nation to rise against corruption**

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan on Sunday said that resistance against corruption had now turned into a nationwide campaign and Pakistan would soon change for good.

More details:

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/03-Apr-17/imran-urges-nation-to-rise-against-corruption>

- **Clashes Leave 10 Civilians Dead in Southern Afghanistan**

Witnesses and relatives in southern Afghanistan say a pre-dawn bomb blast killed at least 10 civilians, mostly children and women, in an area where Afghan national security forces were conducting anti-Taliban operations.

More details:

<http://www.voanews.com/a/clashes-leave-10-civilians-dead-in-southern-afghanistan/3792863.html>

- **'Nawaz not stepping down due to his stubbornness'**

President of Pakistan People's Party in Sindh Nisar Ahmed Khuhro has said that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif should have stepped down—owing to the involvement of his and his sons' names in the "notorious" case being heard by the courts.

More details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/196222-Nawaz-not-stepping-down-due-to-his-stubbornness>

- **Pakistan Sufi shrine: 20 murdered in Punjab**

Twenty people have been murdered and several others wounded at a Sufi shrine near the city of Sargodha, in Pakistan's Punjab province, police say.

More details:

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-39471017?intlink_from_url=http://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cd832879-ac76-4842-8c33-be2be67e53b8/pakistan&link_location=live-reporting-story

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Ankara backs Iraqi central gov't on flag controversy**

Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım late Saturday voiced support for the Iraqi central government's decision not to allow northern Kurdish administration's flags over the city of Kirkuk. "We are supporting Iraqi government on this issue," Yıldırım said during a televised interview. If need be, we can enter dialogue with the UN and other institutions," he added. The prime minister said he discussed the issue with his Iraqi counterpart Haider al-Abadi on Friday.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/187235/ankara-backs-iraqi-central-govt-on-flag-controversy>

- **Turkish airstrikes hit terrorist PKK targets in northern Iraq**

The Turkish Air Forces hit several terrorist PKK targets in Turkey's southeast as well as northern Iraq Monday, the Turkish General Staff said. According to a statement, an air operation was launched in the Avasin-Basyan region of northern Iraq and Turkey's southeastern Hakkari province at 11.15-11.42 (GMT). Four weapon depots and shelter targets were rendered unusable by the airstrikes.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkish-airstrikes-hit-terrorist-pkk-targets-in-northern-iraq/786873>

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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