



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Procees of Iraq

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1. IRAQ

- **National Alliance Delegation Led By Hakim Arrives To Sulaymaniyah**

National Alliance delegation led by Ammar al-Hakim arrived in the city of Sulaymaniyah today for a meeting with the National Union of Kurdistan and the Change Movement to discuss a range of political issues and the reconciliation in post-Daesh.

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?hLbu4vLVHyle4G9hQJYhWA%253d%253d

- **Kurdish delegation to visit Baghdad to discuss secession following settlement talks**

A Kurdish delegation will visit Iraq soon to discuss Kurdistan Region's demand for statehood, according to an official at the autonomous region's ruling party. Ashwaq al-Jaff, an Iraq parliament member from the Kurdistan Democratic Party, said Kurdish political players have agreed to form a delegation to visit Baghdad for discussions over the region's long-demanded independence besides a set of other hanging issues.

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/baghdad-politics/kurdish-delegation-visit-baghdad-discuss-secession-following-settlement-talks/>

- **Iraqi Army Commando Patrol Targeted by a Blast in Salahaddin**

A soldier was killed together with five others wounded in a bomb blast that has targeted an Army Commando patrol, east of Salahaddin, Al Sumaria News reported on Monday. A source who spoke to Al Sumaria on Monday has said that an explosion has occurred this evening, while a patrol of Army Commando was passing the village of Zangil, eastern of Salahaddin, leading to the death of one soldier and wounding of five others, including an officer.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/328668>

- **Iraqi forces wage psychological war with jihadist corpses**

The flyblown corpses of Islamic State militants have been rotting along a main street in north Mosul for two weeks, a health risk for passersby. Suicide bombers' belts beside the fighters can still explode, killing anyone nearby. But the Iraqi army has no intention of burying the jihadists and hopes as many people as possible will get a good look at their blackened bodies, torn apart by bombs and bullets. As Iraqi forces prepare to expand their offensive against Islamic State from east to west

Mosul, they want to stamp out any sympathy that residents may have for the group, which won instant support when it seized the vast city in 2014.

More Details:

http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/686e52ed-08b3-475d-a89b-c78571e6c7dd/Iraqi-forces-wage-psychological-war-with-jihadist-corpse

- **Terrorist attack targets Iraqi Army in Khurmatu**

Five casualties were the result of the terrorists attack which targeted Iraqi army convoy in Khurmatu district. Mr. Muhammad Fayiq an Official in Khurmatu district announced in a statement to PUKmedia that one soldier was killed and four others were injured as an explosive device targeted the army's convoy.

More Details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=39671

- **Iranian Diplomat, UN Envoy Discuss Restoration of Stability to Iraq**

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and African Affairs Hossein Jaber Ansari held talks with visiting UN Special Representative for Iraq Jan Kubis on a range of issues, including the latest efforts to restore stability to the Arab country. In the meeting held in Tehran on Monday evening, Kubis briefed Jaber Ansari on the latest situation in Iraq and opportunities and challenges facing the country and described the fight against terrorism as the main priority of all Iraqi sides.

More Details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/02/07/1320705/iranian-diplomat-un-envoy-discuss-restoration-of-stability-to-iraq>

- **69 Killed in Iraq, Including Iranian Soldier**

Salah ad Din Governor Ahmed al-Jubouri warned that the security situation in the province is unstable, and several cities are suffering from daily attacks. He called on Baghdad to help. At least 69 were killed and six more were wounded: In Mosul, five civilians were killed for attempting to escape the city. An officer was killed and another was wounded when two different security forces clashed; one force, fearing sectarian abuses, would not permit the other to conduct searches of civilian homes.

More Details:

<http://original.antiwar.com/updates/2017/02/06/69-killed-in-iraq-including-iranian-soldier/>

- **Canada to arm Kurdish forces fighting ISIS in Iraq – reports**

The Canadian Defense Ministry says it has received official approval from Iraqi authorities to supply Kurdish Peshmerga forces with light weapons, communication tools, defense equipment and medicine to help them fight Islamic State terrorists in Iraq. “Canada had requested the Iraqi government to send an official endorsement on the arms delivery to the Kurdish forces and we have received Baghdad’s official endorsement, signed in December of last year,” the Canadian Defense Ministry’s Communications Advisor Dominique Tessie told Kurdish media outlet Xendan on Monday, Kurdistan 24 reported.

More Details:

<https://www.rt.com/news/376530-kurds-weapons-canada-iraq/>

- **IRGC adviser killed near Tal Afar in Iraq**

A member of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) who was embedded with Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) was killed on Saturday by an Islamic State booby trap near the Tal Afar airport, which is to the west of Mosul, according to Iranian media. The PMF, the umbrella organization of Iraqi-Shiite militias fighting the Islamic State that is dominated by IRGC-backed groups, has claimed new gains near Tal Afar during the past week. The death of Guard member Kheirollah Ahmadi underscores Iran’s involvement in Iraq.

More Details:

<http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/02/irgc-adviser-killed-near-tal-afar-in-iraq.php>

- **Iraq's Security, Integrity Key to Mideast Stability**

A senior Iranian official said any threat to Iraq's security and territorial integrity will affect the entire Middle East, stressing that the Islamic Republic opposes Iraq's partition and any interference in its internal affairs. Speaking to reporters in Tehran on Sunday after a meeting with Jan Kubis, the UN special representative for Iraq, Ali Akbar Velayati, the senior adviser to Leader of Islamic Revolution on international affairs, said the two sides discussed ways of reinforcing Iraq's territorial integrity and national sovereignty, Press TV reported.

More Details:

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/national/59047/iraqs-security-integrity-key-to-mideast-stability>

- **NATO counter-IED instructors deploy to Iraq**

The NATO Counter Improvised Explosive Devices (C-IED) Centre of Excellence is deploying a multinational team of instructors to Iraq. These experts will train Iraqi security forces on how to counter improvised explosive devices (IEDs), a press release by NATO said. IEDs or roadside bombs

are inexpensive and easy to get by terrorists, and ISIL is making an extensive use of these bombs in the occupied areas, aiming to provoke terror among the population, the press release added.

More Details:

<http://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/nato-counter-ied-instructors-deploy-iraq/>

- **U.S. embassy in Iraq reports threat against Baghdad hotels**

The U.S. embassy in Baghdad said on Monday it has limited the movement of its personnel after receiving "credible threats of possible attacks on hotels frequented by Westerners". "As a reminder, U.S. citizens should maintain a heightened sense of security awareness and take appropriate measures to enhance their personal security at all times when living and working in Iraq," an emergency security message for U.S. citizens on the embassy's website said.

More Details:

http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-usa-iraq-warning-idUSKBN15L2BW?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Reuters%2FworldNews+%28Reuters+World+News%29&rpc=401

- **Iraqi prelate: foreign troops, sectarian militias could endanger Iraq's future**

Chaldean Catholic Patriarch Raphael Louis Sako has said that there is no need for either foreign troops or sectarian militia groups to protect Christians in Iraq's Nineveh Plains region, recently liberated from the grasp of the Islamic State.

More Details:

<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/headlines/index.cfm?storyid=30681>

- **Children of Mosul in N Iraq Tortured to Death by Barbaric Daesh Terrorists**

The Daesh terrorists who occupied the Iraqi city of Mosul more than two years ago are losing their grip of the city. While in control, they subjected local residents to horrific torture, a local woman who fled the city during the course of its liberation by Iraqi troops told Sputnik Arabic. Last month, the Iraqi military announced they had retaken control of east Mosul from the terrorist group Daesh (ISIS-ISIL) after months of fighting.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201702061050404975-daesh-mosul-terror-children/>

- **World Bank tells Iraq financial rescue plan must focus on reconciliation**

The World Bank has reiterated its intention to provide financial aid for Iraq, but stressed the economic help must go together with projects to foster reconciliation among the country's different ethnic groups. In December 2016, the bank sanctioned a new loan of \$1.48bn (£1.2bn), bringing its total support to the nation to nearly \$3.4bn, to help Iraq front the cost of the war on Islamic State and to ease the burden on an economy already ravaged by low oil prices.

More Details:

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/world-bank-tells-iraq-financial-rescue-plan-must-focus-reconciliation-1605105>

- **DyFM underlines necessity to strengthen central government of Iraq**

Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and Africa Affairs Hossein Jaber Ansari underlined on Monday the necessity to strengthen central government of Iraq and maintaining its unity and territorial integrity. According to the report of Foreign Ministry Media Department, Ansari in meeting with special envoy of the UN secretary general for Iraq affairs Jan Kubis by referring to a number of positive developments in the region in recent months and relations between regional developments and their reciprocal affects, said that terrorism is the important problem of Iraq, region and the world and added that Iraqis and its different political and social currents by common understanding on terrorism threats have reached to a gradual unity in confrontation against Daesh (the ISIS).

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82419103/>

- **Daesh executes five civilians in Iraq's Mosul**

Daesh militants have executed five civilians for attempting to flee the northern city of Mosul, according to an Iraqi army officer. First Lieutenant Nayef al-Zubeidi said the civilians had been killed in western Mosul for violating Daesh orders not to flee the city.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/daesh-executes-five-civilians-iraq%E2%80%99s-mosul-934110>

- **Military should investigate itself, Iraq abuse report will urge**

A report into the Iraq Historical Allegations Team (IHAT), which investigates claims alleging that UK troops engaged in abuse and torture in Iraq, will call for the initiative to be replaced by a military-led team. The report due out next week is fronted by former soldier turned Tory MP Johnny Mercer, who has been a leading critic of investigations into potential war crimes.

More Details:

<https://www.rt.com/uk/376446-iraq-abuse-report-findings/>

- **Iraqi refugee family welcomed in Portland after Trump order halted**

A refugee family from Iraq was greeted by balloons and cheers at Portland International Airport Sunday. "They seem great," said Mat Dos Santos, ACLU Legal Director. "They were so excited to land and be greeted by all the folks."

More Details:

<http://www.kgw.com/news/local/iraqi-refugees-arrive-to-cheers-at-portland-airport/401177150>

2. SYRIA

- **President al-Assad: Most European countries harmed their people's interests through their support for terrorist organizations**

President Bashar al-Assad said most of the European countries have followed an unrealistic policy towards Syria since the beginning of the war in it. His remarks came during a meeting on Monday with the visiting Belgian parliamentary delegation headed by member of Belgium's Federal Parliament Filip Dewinter.

More Details:

<http://sana.sy/en/?p=99624>

- **Report claims 13,000 executed in Syria jail**

Syrian authorities have killed at least 13,000 people since the start of the 2011 uprising in mass hangings at a prison north of Damascus known to detainees as "the slaughterhouse," Amnesty International said.

More Details:

<http://www.thestandard.com.hk/breaking-news.php?id=84511>

- **Russia's ambassador says Syrian army may start new offensive against IS in Palmyra**

The Syrian Army, which is supported by the Russian Aerospace Force, is making attempts to recapture the initiative from the militants in the area of Palmyra, the Russian ambassador to Syria, Alexander Kinshchak told TASS.

More Details:

<http://tass.com/politics/929330>

- **Next Astana meeting On Syria likely in mid-February**

The next round of negotiations on Syrian peace settlement may take place in Astana in the middle of February, Kazakh Foreign Minister Kairat Abdrakhmanov said Tuesday. "Of course," the minister said, when asked if the meeting would take place in Astana.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/123334/Next-Astana-meeting-On-Syria-likely-in-mid-February>

- **Guarantor states on Syrian settlement discussed in Astana performance of cease fire regime**

The delegations of Russia, Turkey, Iran and the UN discussed performance of cease fire regime on the Syrian territory at the technical round of negotiations in Astana, said Stanislav Gadzhimagomedov, deputy head of the operations department of the general headquarters of the armed forces of Russia, head of the Russian delegation.

More Details:

<http://www.kaztag.kz/en/news/detail.php?ID=521992>

- **Understanding the US plan to establish security zones in Syria**

US President Donald Trump announced that he "would absolutely do safe zones in Syria." The project still seems vague, but it has to be taken seriously since it came from the president of a superpower. Trump phoned Saudi King Salman and received his support for the project. It cannot be implemented without Saudi financial support, but another source of finance could be the EU.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1050351>

- **Iran Optimistic About Trilateral Syria Initiative**

The Foreign Ministry spokesman is optimistic that Iran, Russia and Turkey can consolidate the current ceasefire in Syria and take steps to restore peace and security to the war-ravaged Arab country.

More Details:

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/national/59046/iran-optimistic-about-trilateral-syria-initiative>

- **UN Chief: IS on Defensive in Conflict Areas but is Adapting**

The Islamic State extremist group is militarily on the defensive in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria but is partially adapting by moving to covert communications and recruitment and expanding its areas of attack away from conflict areas, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a new report.

More Details:

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/UN_UNITED_NATIONS_ISLAMIC_STATE_EXTREMISTS_ASOL-?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-02-06-16-27-30

- **UN, Red Cross Send 41 Vehicles with Aid to Syrian Homs Province**

The Russian Defense Ministry said that United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Syrian Arab Red Crescent sent 41 vehicles with aid to the Syrian town of Talbiseh in the province of Homs.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201702071050411848-un-red-cross-send-aid-syrian-homs/>

3. IRAN

- **Top General Warns Trump about Iran's Defense Capabilities**

Commander of Iran's Basij (Volunteer) force Brigadier General Gholam-Hossein Gheib-Parvar rejected claims about a shift in the United States' Iran policy under the new US administration, but meantime warned that his country knows how to defend itself.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951117002001>

- **Iran to announce post-JCPOA nuclear achievements in April: AEOI**

The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi made the announcement during a press conference held in the Iranian holy city of Qom on Monday. Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council -- the United States, France, Britain, Russia and China -- plus Germany started implementing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on January 16, 2016.

More Details:

<http://iran-daily.com/News/177164.html>

- **President: Iran welcomes boosting cooperation with Belarus, Eurasia**

President Hassan Rouhani in a meeting with Chairman of the Council of the Republic of Mikhail Myasnikov in Tehran on Monday underlining that the two countries have close political stances and international cooperation, said Tehran has always welcomed increasing the level of cooperation with Eurasia countries, especially Belarus.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82419029/>

- **Iran: US sanctions, main hurdle to Americans' participation in energy projects**

Iran has imposed no restrictions on US oil firms willing to participate in the Iranian energy projects, but American sanctions have made such collaborations impossible, Iran's deputy oil minister said on Monday.

More Details:

<http://www.iran-daily.com/News/177123.html>

- **Iran says denied carbon fiber for nuclear facilities**

Iran has been denied fiber carbon that it had ordered for use in its nuclear industry, Head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran Ali Akbar Salehi has told Fars news agency February 6.

More Details:

<http://en.trend.az/iran/politics/2717883.html>

- **Ayatollah Khamenei to Meet Iranian Air Force Commanders, Personnel**

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei will meet a group of Iranian Air Force and Air Defence commanders and personnel in Tehran on Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://ifpnews.com/news/politics/local/2017/02/ayatollah-khamenei-to-meet-iranian-air-force-commanders-personnel/>

- **Iran Unveils New Weapons**

Iran's Defense Ministry unveiled five new military products on Monday, including a guided rocket and assault weapons, and officially started producing them in the assembly line.

More Details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/02/06/1319612/iran-unveils-new-weapons>

- **China opposes US sanctions on Iran involving Chinese firms**

China has lodged representations to the United States over the latest sanctions against Iran which involve Chinese companies and individuals.

More Details:

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1031699.shtml>

- **Iran says US sanctions stop American oil firms taking part in projects**

Iran has imposed no restrictions on US oil firms willing to participate in energy projects in the country but American sanctions make such cooperation impossible, Iran's deputy oil minister said on Monday.

More Details:

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/business/07-Feb-17/iran-says-us-sanctions-stop-american-oil-firms-taking-part-in-projects>

- **Iran, Slovakia Agree to Ease Visa Restrictions**

Consular officials from Iran and Slovakia signed an agreement to facilitate issuing visa for nationals of the two countries.

More Details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/02/07/1320704/iran-slovakia-agree-to-ease-visa-restrictions>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **The Palestinian Plight in Syria**

Jerusalem has one of the largest concentrations of press in the world, and as a result, Israel is certainly one of the most scrutinized states. It is perhaps for this reason that the international media can only focus on the Palestinians in the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) and Gaza, while ignoring the plight of Palestinians elsewhere in the Arab World, and especially in the mayhem that is the Syrian civil war, where Palestinians are being brutalized by the Assad regime and the Islamist resistance. Naturally, the western comforts of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv are more appealing than the killing fields of Syria and Iraq. The fate of the Palestinians in Syria is of no interest to western journalists, if Israel cannot be blamed.

More Details

<http://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/265706/palestinian-plaint-syria-joseph-puder>

- **Palestinians take to the streets in Nablus**

Protesters shout slogans during a demonstration demanding the release of the Palestinians, held in Israeli prisons, in Nablus

More Details

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170207-palestinians-take-to-the-streets-in-nablus/>

- **Israeli Parliament Legalizes 4,000 Jewish Settlements on Private Palestinian Land**

Israel's parliament has passed a new law on settlements which are sure to be challenged in court and bring global wrath against Israel. The Knesset voted 60-52 Monday night to retroactively legalize 4,000 Jewish settlements on private Palestinian land in the West Bank — land Palestinians want for a future state.

More Details

<http://www.voanews.com/a/israeli-parliament-legalizes-jewish-settlements-on-palestinian-land/3709086.html>

- **Islamic Jihad blames Israel for Gaza escalation**

The Islamic Jihad terrorist group on Monday evening blamed Israel for the latest tensions in Gaza, and called on Israel to “stop its aggression”. “What is happening in Gaza is cruel aggression for which Israel bears full responsibility,” said Islamic Jihad leader Daoud Shihab, according to Walla! News.

More Details

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/224537>

- **Tensions with Gaza Flare shortly after IDF Drill Preparing for Escalation**

Tensions between Israel and militants in the Gaza Strip flared on Monday, one day after a Hamas militant died in an “accidental explosion” in the northern Gaza Strip and shortly after a large-scale IDF drill along the border.

More Details

<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Tensions-with-Gaza-flare-after-IDF-drill-preparing-for-escalation-480783>

- **Israeli Prime Minister Vows to 'Forcefully Fire Back' at Hamas**

Israel will “forcefully fire back” at the Palestinian Hamas movement in response to shelling of Israeli border servicemen and a rocket attack on an area in the south of the country, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Monday.

More Details

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201702071050409686-netanyahu-fire-back-hamas/>

- **Hamas: Israel 'fully accountable' for any escalation in fighting**

Gaza’s Hamas rulers said Monday that it holds Israel “fully accountable” for any escalation following a day in which Israel carried out a number of airstrikes against Hamas positions in the Strip after a rocket attack.

More Details

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-israel-fully-accountable-for-any-escalation-in-fighting/>

- **Israel hits Hamas in Gaza after rocket fired**

Israel carried out a series of strikes against the Islamist Palestinian movement Hamas in the Gaza Strip on Monday after a rocket fired from the enclave hit a border area. Three Palestinians were injured in around a dozen Israeli strikes throughout the day, including in Gaza City, medical sources in the Hamas-run territory said.

More Details

<http://jordantimes.com/news/region/israel-hits-hamas-gaza-after-rocket-fired>

- **Israel passes law to seize private Palestinian land for settlements**

Israel's parliament passed a law on Monday to legalise thousands of settler homes built on privately owned Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank.

More Details

<http://www.theage.com.au/video/video-news/video-world-news/israel-passes-law-to-seize-private-palestinian-land-for-settlements-20170207-4q9yd.html>

- **Fresh Israeli strikes injure 2 more Gaza residents**

The Israeli military has carried out a new round of strikes against the Gaza Strip, injuring two more Palestinians in the besieged coastal enclave.

More Details

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/02/07/509462/Gaza-Strip-Israel-strikes-Khan-Yunis-Gaza-City>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Jordanians tighten belts as government increases taxes to combat debt**

Mahmoud Issam was supposed to get married in June, but had to delay his plans indefinitely due to the rising cost of living in Jordan. Mr. Issam and his father are the chief breadwinners in their family of eight. The 23-year-old salesman, who works at a clothes store in Amman, earns a monthly salary of 500 Jordanian dinars (Dh2,590). He allocates JD200 for rent, spending the rest mostly on transportation, cigarettes and mobile cards.

More Details

<http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/jordanians-tighten-belts-as-government-increases-taxes-to-combat-debt>

- **One million foreign workers in Jordan estimated to be illegal**

There are around 1.4 million guest workers in Jordan, a million of whom are illegal, Labour Ministry Spokesperson Mohammad Khatib said on Sunday, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported. By Sunday, the ministry has issued around 400,000 work permits, Khatib said, noting that the workers who have those permits make annual remittances of around \$1.5 billion, which constitute half the remittances that come from Jordanians working abroad.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/one-million-foreign-workers-jordan-estimated-be-illegal-934136>

- **Saudi Arabia reaffirms support to Lebanon**

Saudi Arabian Minister of State for Arab Gulf Affairs Thamer al-Sabhan revealed here on Monday that the kingdom will appoint a new ambassador to Lebanon and remove its travel advisory to Beirut.

More Details

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-02/07/c_136036283.htm

- **Lebanon cannot have it both ways**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was due to meet his British counterpart Theresa May yesterday to discuss a wide range of issues, with trade likely to be a key area of focus.

More Details

<http://www.thenational.ae/business/the-life/lebanon-cannot-have-it-both-ways>

- **Bassil extends official invitation to Congo President to visit Lebanon**

Foreign and Expatriates Minister, Gebran Bassil, culminated his official visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo by having audience with Congolese President Joseph Kabila, whereby he extended to him on behalf of President of the Republic General Michel Aoun an official invitation to pay a state visit to Lebanon.

More Details

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/75034/Bassil-extends-official-invitation-to-Congo-President-to-visit-Lebanon>

- **Saudi Arabia to appoint envoy to Lebanon**

Saudi Arabia will appoint a new ambassador to Lebanon, encourage the return of Saudi tourists and increase flights there by Saudi airlines, the Lebanese president's office said, in a sign of improved bilateral ties. The kingdom's Gulf Affairs Minister Thamer Al-Sabhan informed President Michel Aoun of the changes when they met at the presidential palace on Monday, Aoun's office said in a statement.

More Details

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/4af9a1fa-4e98-4560-8a39-ee56d1311d02.aspx>

- **Essex MP hails UK aid which is saving lives in Syria**

Essex MP Priti Patel has hailed the impact of UK aid following a visit to Jordan and Lebanon. But the international development secretary warned international efforts needed to be redoubled after she returned from a visit to the war-torn region.

More Details

http://www.eadt.co.uk/news/essex_mp_hails_uk_aid_which_is_saving_lives_in_syria_1_4879287

- **Abu-Ghazaleh Meets HM King of Spain, Calls for Hosting a Regional Office for the UNWTO in Amman**

Upon his nomination as a Special Ambassador to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the United Nations Specialized Agency for Tourism, in Madrid, January 16, 2017, HE Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh announced that he has already started consultations with the S.G. UN organization to establish a regional center in Amman, Jordan. Abu-Ghazaleh highly commended the positive response of Dr. Taleb Rifai.

More Details

<http://www.ag-ip-news.com/news.aspx?id=42163&lang=en>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Kuwait MPs urge military alertness as waterway dispute with Iraq fumes**

Kuwaiti parliamentarians on Monday urged the country's defense authorities to be alert as a controversy escalates in Kuwait and Iraq regarding sovereignty at a common waterway, Kuwaiti independent newspaper al-Jarida reported. Among other MPs, Askar al-Anzi, chairman of the parliament's defense committee, urged the government to "take seriously" Iraqi protests against the deal between both governments over maritime activity in Khawr Abdallah bay, the paper reported.

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/baghdad-politics/156657/>

- **Saudis below 40 forbidden to travel to Iraq alone**

Saudis below 40 will not be granted permission from concerned Saudi authorities to travel to Iraq alone, Okaz local newspaper reported on Tuesday. Males and females under the age of 40 can be allowed to travel with elder family members, according to the new rules by the Saudi passport directorate to regulate the travel of its citizens to Iraq.

More Details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-02/07/c_136038134.htm

- **Kuwaiti Information Minister quits over row with Parliament**

Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Shaikh Salman Al-Humood tendered his resignation to the Cabinet when it convened for its weekly session. Arabic newspaper Alqabas reported that the minister left the meeting after submitting his resignation.

More Details:

<http://www.gdnonline.com/Details/168358/Kuwaiti-Information-Minister-quits-over-row-with-Parliament>

- **Arab group renews UNSC permanent seat demand**

On behalf of the Arab group of states, Kuwait has renewed demand for a permanent seat for the group at the UN Security Council in the future reforms of the Council. Equitable representation at the UNSC is an essential pillar of the process to revitalize the work of the UN as a whole, Kuwait Permanent Representative to the UN Mansour Al-Otaibi said on Monday, according to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA).

More Details:

<http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/769193>

- **Bahrain opposition loses appeal against dissolution**

Bahrain's top court rejected on Monday an appeal by the country's main opposition group Al Wefaq against its dissolution over terrorism-related charges, a judicial source said. The court of cassation "denied the appeal against the dissolution of Al Wefaq and the seizure of its assets," the source said.

More Details:

<http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/bahrain/bahrain-opposition-loses-appeal-against-dissolution-1.1973970>

- **Al Zayani and GCC Monetary Council Executive President discuss cooperation**

Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, GCC Secretary-General, and Dr. Rajaa Al-Bagmi, Executive President of the GCC Monetary Council, have discussed the constitutional and organisational composition of the council. Al-Bagmi briefed Dr. Al Zayani on the projects the council is planning to implement as part of its efforts to enhance joint cooperation in the fields of monetary and economic policies in the GCC states.

More Details:

<http://www.wam.ae/en/details/1395302595937>

- **Ansarullah's new strategy against Saudi Arabia: 'City for city, capital for capital'**

Two top Yemeni political and military officials have confirmed that a missile attack was carried out against the Saudi capital of Riyadh as an outcome of cooperation between the army and the popular

mobilization forces, drawing new strategy in response to the Saudi-led Arab military coalition's aggressions against Yemen.

More Details:

<http://en.abna24.com/news/report/ansarullahs-new-strategy-against-saudi-arabia-city-for-city-capital-for-capital.html>

- **HRW: Saudi Arabia intensifies actions against human rights advocates**

Saudi Arabia has intensified its arrests and convictions of human rights advocates and dissenting writers in 2017, Human Rights Watch (HRW) [advocacy website] reported [HRW report] on Monday. In January a Saudi court sentenced two human rights activists to long prison terms following allegations of contact with international human rights organizations and media. Two other men, Ahmed al-Musheikhis and Essam Koshak, were questioned and arrested in Mecca and Qatif. Although officials have not disclosed [BBC report] the reasons for their detentions, HRW speculates it is due to their peaceful activism. HRW notes that many of these activists are charged for "participating in protests" and "breaking allegiance with the ruler," neither of which constitute a crime under Saudi law.

More Details:

<http://www.jurist.org/paperchase/2017/02/saudi-arabia-intensifies-actions-against-human-rights-advocates-and-writers.php>

- **US Yemen Raid Targeted Leader of al-Qaeda Branch in Arabian Peninsula**

On January 29, the US Special Forces launched a raid in Yemen, killing 14 al-Qaeda militants as well as civilians, including the eight-year-old daughter of previously assassinated al-Qaeda leader Anwar Awlaki. According to the NBC broadcaster, the goal of the raid was to capture or kill Rimi, who is considered the third most dangerous terrorist in the world and a master recruiter.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201702071050414365-us-raid-yemen-al-qaeda/>

- **Yemen's Houthi fighters say they fired ballistic missile at Saudi capital**

Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah fighters have confirmed that they fired a ballistic missile at the Saudi capital of Riyadh for the first time, vowing that more attacks will be in the offing. The Houthis said in a statement carried by the official SABA news agency on Sunday that the missile "targeted" the al-Mazahmiya army base in western Riyadh, around 1,000 kilometers from the Yemeni capital of Sana'a.

More Details:

<http://en.apa.az/world-news/asia-news/yemen-s-houthi-fighters-say-they-fired-ballistic-missile-at-saudi-capital.html>

7. EGYPT

- **Italy says cooperation on Regeni case 'essential' to relations with Egypt**

Italy has said that judicial cooperation to resolve the case of Italian student Giulio Regeni, who was murdered in Egypt early in 2016, is "essential" to relations with Egypt, Italian news website AnsaMed reported. Italy is "evaluating the development of judicial cooperation" with the Egyptian authorities, "which for us is essential for the continuation of a certain kind of relationship with Egypt," Italian Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano was quoted as saying on Monday.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/257726/Egypt/Politics-/Italy-says-cooperation-on-Regeni-case-essential-to.aspx>

- **Al-Sisi holds meeting with SCAF and SCPF leading figures**

President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi held on Monday a meeting with a number of leading figures from the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) and the Supreme Council of Police (SCPF) with the attendance of Defence Minister Sedki Sobhi and Interior Minister Magdy Abdel Ghaffar, according to a statement from the Egyptian presidency. The official spokesperson of the Egyptian presidency, Alaa Youssef, said in the statement that the meeting was part of the consecutive meetings held by Al-Sisi with both councils to inspect the security conditions in the country and to review all plans to face terrorism.

More Details:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/02/06/al-sisi-holds-meeting-scaf-scpf-leading-figures/>

- **Egypt denies bombing South Sudanese rebel sites**

The Foreign Ministry denied as baseless the accusations made against Egypt's air force by the opposition in South Sudan on Sunday, which claimed Egyptian forces had dropped more than nine bombs on South Sudanese sites Saturday. This was the first time either side had alleged Egyptian involvement in South Sudan's festering conflict, which pits President Salva Kiir's military against forces loyal to his former vice president, Riek Machar.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com//news/egypt-denies-bombing-south-sudanese-rebel-sites>

- **Trump era heralds warming of US-Egypt ties**

As President Donald Trump tries to re-instate his controversial travel ban, there is one thing he does not need to worry about - any opposition from Egypt. When President Trump decided to temporarily close America's borders to citizens of seven mainly Muslim nations, the response from Cairo was striking.

More Details:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38878679>

- **Egypt Military Kills 14 Terrorists in Central Sinai**

Egypt's military killed 14 militants in an exchange of fire during a raid in central Sinai, the military spokesman said in a statement on Monday. According to a statement published on Egypt's army spokesperson's Facebook page, the military arrested 10 other militants. Three car bombs and 10 explosive devices were destroyed and weapons and communication devices were seized by the military.

More Details:

<https://egyptianstreets.com/2017/02/06/egypt-military-kills-14-terrorists-in-central-sinai/>

- **Coptic Solidarity Makes Policy Recommendations to Reset US Policy towards Egypt**

President Trump has a golden opportunity to reset US relations with Egypt making human rights a high priority while simultaneously supporting Egypt's fight against terrorism. Egyptian President El-Sisi was the first foreign leader to call and congratulate Mr. Trump on winning the presidential election, signaling Egypt's eagerness to form a strong relationship with the new president.

More Details:

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/coptic-solidarity-makes-policy-recommendations-to-reset-us-policy-towards-egypt-300403136.html>

- **Egypt's Foreign Ministry officially calls Russian plane crash over Sinai act of terror**

The Egyptian Foreign Ministry has officially described the crash of the Russian airliner over the Sinai Peninsula in October 2015 as a terrorist attack, Foreign Ministry spokesman, Ahmed Abu Zeid, said on Tuesday in response to a list of 78 terrorist attacks, which did not get sufficient media coverage, released by the White House. Commenting on critical remarks by US President, Donald Trump, who accused US media of covering up terrorist attacks in Europe and elsewhere by not reporting them, the Egyptian diplomat noted that 9 out of 78 attacks occurred in Egypt.

More Details:

<http://tass.com/world/929391>

- **In Egypt, Christians Can Now Take Leave from Work To Go On Pilgrimage**

Christians in Egypt have now been granted right to take leave from work to go on pilgrimage, according to a high court ruling at the weekend. Egyptian Muslims are granted paid leave to go on the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca. Now, the High Constitutional Court of Egypt has ruled that Christian civil servants should have the same same right, RT News reports.

More Details:

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/in.egypt.christians.can.now.take.leave.from.work.to.go.on.pilgrimage/104488.htm>

- **Public Works Minister meets Egypt Ambassador, Transportation Directorate delegation**

Minister of Public Works and Transportation, Youssef Fenianos, met on Monday with Egyptian Ambassador to Lebanon, Nazih al-Najari, with talks touching on the current local and regional situation. Speaking to reporters following the meeting, the Ambassador indicated that his visit was to congratulate the Minister on his post, as well as on the election of a new president of the Lebanese republic.

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/75047/Public-Works-Minister-meets-Egypt-Ambassador-Transportation-Directorate-delegation>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Gaz Cylinder Explosion Kills 1, Injures 54 in Central Morocco**

A gas cylinder exploded on Monday inside a shop in the weekly market of Ain Aouda (Skhirat-Témara prefecture), killing one person and injuring 54 others, local authorities said.

More details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/02/207560/gaz-cylinder-explosion-kills-1-injures-54-central-morocco/>

- **Delegation from Al-Bunyan Al-Marsoos visits Algeria**

A military delegation from Al-Bunyan Al-Marsoos operation met with the Algerian Minister of Maghreb Affairs, African Union and Arab League, Abdelkader Messahel, in Algeris on Monday.

More details:

<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/delegation-al-bunyan-al-marsoos-visits-algeria>

- **Caid Essebsi inaugurates martyr Chokri Belaid’s Human Rights Square**

Chokri Belaid is the “Leader of the Revolution and one of the leaders of Tunisia,” President Beji Caid Essebsi said on Monday. “Chokri Belaid is a national leader. He is the martyr of Tunisia rather than the martyr of a political party or a specific category,” he said at the inauguration of martyr Chokri Belaid’s Human Rights Square in Tunis.

More details:

<http://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/8687569-caid-essebsi>

- **Formalization of Tamazight materializes further through elaboration of documents**

“The formalization of Tamazight is becoming a little more real every day with the elaboration of tangible documents, which represent founding bases for the future generations,” said Monday in Algiers, General Secretary of the High Commission of Tamazight (HCA), Si El Hachemi Assad, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the recognition by the Constitution of the Tamazight language.

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/16569-formalization-of-tamazight-materializes-further-through-elaboration-of-documents>

- **Morocco arrests 3 IS suspects**

Moroccan police arrested Monday three people with suspected links to the Islamic State (IS) group, the interior ministry said in a statement.

More details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-02/07/c_136036369.htm

- **The EU could “amend” some sanctions to help the political process**

The EU said today that some sanctions could be lifted to assist the peace process in Libya. Vowing to continue to support the political transition, the Council of the European Union said it stood “ready to amend its restrictive measures as necessary to help support peace, stability and security in Libya.” It did not specify what sanctions might be changed.

More details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/02/06/the-eu-could-amend-some-sanctions-to-help-the-political-process/>

- **Ennaceur: Parliament spares no effort for success of municipal elections**

The Parliament will spare no effort for the success of the next municipal elections, Speaker of the House of People's Representatives (HPR) Mohamed Ennaceur stressed Monday.

More details:

<http://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/8688224-ennaceur->

- **Tunisia attack: Survivor had been 'pushed' into holiday**

A survivor of the attack in Tunisia that killed 30 Britons has said he was "pushed" into holidaying in the country by a travel agent. Paul Thompson told an inquest a Thomson agent had said a terror attack in Tunisia in March 2015 was a "one-off".

More details:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-38885582>

- **Algeria witnesses genuine reform process, commitment to advance towards stability**

Algeria is witnessing a "genuine reform process," said Monday the Chairman of the High Independent Authority for Election Monitoring (HIIE), Abdelwahab Derbal, underlining the State's commitment to "steering the country towards stability."

More details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/16568-algeria-witnesses-genuine-reform-process,-commitment-to-advance-towards-stability>

- **Families return to Libya's IS-purged city of Sirte**

At least 290 displaced families have reportedly returned to Libya's north-central city of Sirte within the past 24 hours -- one month after the city's recapture from the IS terrorist group.

More details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/07/02/2017/Families-return-to-Libya%E2%80%99s-IS-purged-city-of-Sirte>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Taliban Kills Afghan District Governor in Farah**

An Afghan district governor was killed in an explosion in western Farah province of Afghanistan last night, local officials said on Tuesday.

More details:

<http://ariananews.af/latest-news/taliban-kills-afghan-district-governor-in-farah/>

- **Afghan civilian casualties at record high in 2016: UN**

Civilian casualties in Afghanistan in 2016 were the highest recorded by the United Nations, the world body said, with nearly 11,500 non-combatants - one-third of them children - killed or wounded.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/02/afghan-civilian-casualties-2016-170206062807210.html>

- **Start talks with Taliban, be tough on Pakistan, Trump urged**

Urging the Trump Administration to remain open to restart talks with the Taliban, a group of eminent South Asian experts from top US think tanks Monday urged the White House to take tough measures against Pakistan and send a strong signal to Islamabad that it will not be business as usual.

More details:

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2017/02/07/start-talks-taliban-be-tough-pakistan-trump-urged>

- **Federal cabinet approves electoral reforms**

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif chaired the Federal Cabinet meeting in Islamabad today and approved electoral reforms.

More details:

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/02/07/federal-cabinet-approves-electoral-reforms/>

- **KP govt approves co-education in primary schools**

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cabinet on Monday made a landmark decision to introduce coeducation at primary level in the province and declared that only women teachers would be appointed to primary schools in future.

More details:

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1313184/kp-govt-approves-co-education-in-primary-schools>

- **Afghan diplomat shot dead at consulate in Karachi, Pakistan**

An Afghan diplomat was shot dead on Monday by a guard at the Afghan consulate in Pakistan's southern city of Karachi in a personal dispute, officials said.

More details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-afghanistan-shooting-idUSKBN15LORN>

- **Zardari holds Shehbaz responsible**

Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarian President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday held Punjab Chief Minister Shehbaz Sharif responsible for the attack on PPP leader Shaukat Basra.

More details:

<http://nation.com.pk/islamabad/07-Feb-2017/zardari-holds-shehbaz-responsible>

- **Deprived Provinces in Govt's Top Priorities, President Ghani**

Presided over by President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, a session was held yesterday with participation of a number of deputy ministers at presidential palace.

More details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/politics/item/27401-deprived-provinces-in-govt%E2%80%99s-top-priorities-president-ghani.html>

- **Afghanistan just ISIS launch pad for S. Asia: Envoy**

India and Afghanistan share a close bilateral relationship, and had inked a strategic partnership agreement in 2011.

More details:

<http://www.asianage.com/india/all-india/070217/afghanistan-just-isis-launch-pad-for-s-asia-envoy.html>

- **Better days ahead for US-Pak relations under Trump administration: Ambassador Jillani**

Pakistani Ambassador in the United States Jalil Abbas Jillani said on Monday that the US-Pak relations successfully achieved stability in recent years.

More details:

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/02/07/better-days-ahead-for-us-pak-relations-under-trump-administration-ambassador-jillani/>

10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkey condemns 'unacceptable' Israeli settlement law**

Turkey on Tuesday condemned a new Israeli law legalising dozens of Jewish settlements built on private Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank, as a senior government minister was visiting Tel Aviv in the first such trip in seven years. "We strongly condemn Israeli Parliament's adoption of a law that gives approval to various settlements consisting of 4,000 units built on the private property of the Palestinians," the Turkish foreign ministry said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/184366/turkish-minister-makes-first-israel-visit-since-crisis>

- **21 Daesh terrorists 'neutralized' in northern Syria**

At least 21 Daesh terrorists were "neutralized" in northern Syria in the last 24 hours as part of the ongoing Operation Euphrates Shield, according to a Turkish General Staff statement released early Tuesday. Turkish authorities often use the word "neutralized" in their statements to imply the terrorist in question was either killed or captured.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/21-daesh-terrorists-neutralized-in-northern-syria/742836>

- **Saudi FM in Ankara to discuss regional and international issues**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir will be in Ankara today and tomorrow to attend the first session of the Turkish-Saudi Coordination Council, the Turkish Foreign Ministry said in a written statement. The two sides last year agreed to hold a coordination council amid efforts to strengthen bilateral relations between the countries and address Turkish-Saudi cooperation.

More Details:

<http://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2017/02/07/saudi-fm-in-ankara-to-discuss-regional-and-international-issues>

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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