



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Proces of Iraq

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

Energy Security

Enerji Güvenliđi

Economy News

Ekonomi Haberleri

Peace Process

Barış Süreci

Ethnic and Secterian Groups

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

Non State Actors

Devlet-dış Aktörler

Relations with the West

Batı'yla İlişkiler

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09 MARCH 2017

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1. IRAQ

- **West Mosul Families Huddle at Home Terrified of Jihadists**

Mosul- For two weeks, Yunis Mohammed and 17 relatives huddled terrified in the cellar of his west Mosul home as ISIS jihadists fought off advancing Iraqi forces outside. “The jihadists would knock on the door but we wouldn’t open,” the 39-year-old mechanic says, finally sitting under a tree in the sunlight after Iraqi forces recaptured his neighborhood this week.

More Details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/2017/03/article55368962/west-mosul-families-huddle-home-terrified-jihadists>

- **Iraq: Christians, Yazidis Seeking Semi-Autonomous Region**

Several representatives of Iraqi minority groups considered to be some of the oldest inhabitants of the country, including the Assyrian Christians and Yazidis, have joined forces to urge Baghdad and the international community to allow them to establish a semi-autonomous region in northwestern Iraq.

More Details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/03/08/iraq-minority-groups-including-christians-yazidis-seeking-semi-autonomous-region/>

- **Carnage at Tikrit Wedding; 178 Killed in Iraq**

Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has reportedly left the Mosul Theater. Badush prison, where hundreds if not thousands of inmates have been executed, was captured on Wednesday. The retaken antiquities museum in Mosul is a scene of utter destruction. Crushed statues, burnt manuscripts, and other ancient artifacts lie ruined. Elsewhere, authorities discovered several ancient carvings in a captured tunnel used by the militants. The previously unknown artifacts may be part of a temple or palace that the militants have accidentally found.

More Details:

<http://original.antiwar.com/updates/2017/03/08/carnage-at-tikrit-wedding-178-killed-in-iraq/>

- **We will take out terrorists outside Iraq if they pose threat, warns premier**

Iraqi forces recaptured a prison northwest of Mosul where Daesh reportedly executed hundreds of people and held captured Yazidi women, the military said on Wednesday. Iraqi Special Forces units are spearheading the operation to retake west Mosul, which began on Feb. 19, while soldiers and pro-government paramilitaries are fighting Daesh in areas outside the city.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1065536/middle-east>

- **New memorial to all involved in Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts**

Sculpture, by Paul Day, honouring military and non-military personnel to be unveiled by the Queen in London. A memorial honouring the contribution and sacrifice of thousands of UK servicemen and women, aid workers and civilian personnel during the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts will be unveiled by the Queen on Thursday.

More Details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/mar/09/new-memorial-to-all-involved-in-iraq-and-afghanistan-conflicts>

- **Iraqi PM Pledges to fight IS militants to the end**

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi said Wednesday that Iraq will continue striking the Islamic State (IS) militants in neighboring countries to protect Iraqi cities. "I respect the sovereignty of other states, and won't hesitate to strike the positions of terrorists in the neighboring countries. We will keep fighting them," said Abadi in the city of Sulaimaniya in Iraq's northern semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan.

More Details:

http://www.china.org.cn/world/2017-03/09/content_40432733.htm

- **Up in flames: Islamic State's parting shot to people of Iraq**

We can see the plumes of smoke from 30 kilometres away. This is the oil wealth of the Iraqi people going up in flames, and Islamic State's final act of vandalism. In July, retreating militants blew up 19 wells in Qayyarah, the centre of northern Iraq's oil industry, as the army expelled them from these rolling hills and villages.

More Details:

<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/world/up-in-flames-islamic-states-parting-shot-to-people-of-iraq-20170309-guu8r6.html>

- **Iraq: Islamic State Paid Woman to Flog Other Women for Baring Their Ankles**

Yass Khathr is serving time in a Kurdish prison, but before her arrest for taking part in the Islamic State's jihad, Khathr was being paid by the terrorists to flog other women in Mosul. Islamic State terrorists paid Khathr to torture those who dared to show their ankles under their niqabs and those

who smoked or consumed forbidden literature, The Times reported. “The 26-year-old Islamic State member was responsible for lashing other women as part of the jihadists’ two-and-a-half-year reign of Iraq’s second biggest city,” The Times reported.

More Details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/03/08/islamic-state-iraq-paid-woman-flog-women-baring-ankles/>

- **The Crumbling of ISIS**

Officially, the Iraqi government is still dampening expectations of an early victory in Mosul. But the news on the ground tells a different story. General Stephen Townsend, commanding the US “assistance” mission, last week: ISIS is down to 2,000 fighters in Mosul, including those now isolated in Tal Afar.

More Details:

<http://washingtonmonthly.com/2017/03/08/the-crumbling-of-isis/>

- **Why Kurdish Oil Is a Wild Card for Markets: QuickTake Q&A**

If Iraq’s Kurdish territory were a country, it would probably qualify for OPEC membership. It wouldn’t even be the smallest member, given its production of about 600,000 barrels of oil per day. That’s an impressive achievement for a landlocked enclave that started exploring only a decade ago. The region’s potential is greater still, though it faces political, military and economic challenges to expanding its output.

More Details:

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-03-08/why-kurdish-oil-is-a-wild-card-for-markets-quicktake-q-a>

- **CERAWeek ‘17: Iraq to reach 5 MMBopd in 2017, additional farm-outs for PEMEX**

Iraq achieved production of 4 MMBopd in mid-2016, but the country plans to reach 5 MMBopd by the second half of 2017, said Jabbar Ali Al-Luiebi, Minister of Oil for the Republic of Iraq, during a ministerial address Tuesday at the 2017 CERAWeek conference.

More Details:

<http://www.worldoil.com/news/2017/3/8/ceraweek-17-iraq-to-reach-5-mmbopd-in-2017-additional-farm-outs-for-pemex>

- **Mosul: Iraqi army in control of Badush prison where Isis executed over 650 non-Sunni inmates**

The Iraqi army has taken control of Badush prison near Mosul where Islamic State (Isis) militants executed hundreds of inmates in 2014, a military unit said in a statement. The prison is located about 10km northwest of Mosul on the road to Tel Afar. The Iraqi army's command that is leading the "We are Coming Nineveh" operation said their forces have also taken control of a segment of the road leading to Tel Afar, cutting off Isis' route between Mosul and the city, Rudaw reported.

More Details:

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/mosul-iraqi-army-control-badush-prison-where-isis-executed-over-650-non-sunni-inmates-1610541>

- **Flawed Vetting? Iraqi Insurgent Fighter Allegedly Lied about Identity, Entered US**

Federal lawmakers are investigating how a former Iraqi insurgent fighter was able to lie about his identity and still get through America's 'extreme' vetting process. The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee has asked Attorney General Jeff Sessions to find out why the terror suspect's pending arrest was allegedly spiked just over a week before the election. Trump had run on a tough-on-terror platform and had been critical of President Obama's refugee policy.

More Details:

<http://nation.foxnews.com/2017/03/08/flawed-vetting-iraqi-insurgent-fighter-allegedly-lied-about-identity-entered-us?section=10367>

- **At least 20 dead after suicide attackers target wedding party**

Iraqi forces battled Isil militants in their stronghold of Mosul yesterday and took control of the last major road leading west from the city, before bomb blasts ripped through a wedding party near Tikrit, killing more than 20.

More Details:

<http://www.independent.ie/world-news/middle-east/at-least-20-dead-after-suicide-attackers-target-wedding-party-35514888.html>

- **Most of Daeshis left in Iraq are Saudis, Iraqi intelligence sources say**

Iraqi intelligence sources say that most of the Daesh terrorists remaining in Iraq are Saudi nationals. "The Saudi presence in Daesh is very large. What we have left are mainly Iraqis and Saudis," a senior Iraqi counterterrorism intelligence officer was quoted by Fox News as saying on Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/03/08/513578/saudi-arabia-iraq-daesh>

- **US eyes 1,000 reserve troops in fight against IS**

The US is considering a deployment of up to 1,000 American soldiers to Kuwait to serve as a reserve force in the fight against Islamic State as US-backed fighters accelerate the offensive in Syria and Iraq, Reuters reports, citing US officials. Proponents of the option, which has not been previously reported, said it would provide US commanders on the ground greater flexibility to quickly respond to unforeseen opportunities and challenges on the battlefield.

More Details:

<http://www.ejinsight.com/20170309-us-eyes-1000-reserve-troops-in-fight-against-is/>

- **Iraqi Militia Creates Brigade to Liberate Golan Heights from Israel – Spokesman**

The Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba movement has formed a brigade to liberate the Golan Heights from Israel. The Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba movement, Iraq's Shiite militia organization, has formed a brigade to liberate the Golan Heights from Israel, spokesman for the movement, Seyed Hashem Moussavi said on Wednesday.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703091051390813-iraq-militia-liberate-golan-aeights/>

- **Why Iraq's law on Popular Mobilization Units isn't all that popular**

As elections draw closer, there's a tug of war in Baghdad over the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), a mostly Shiite coalition of militias. Under a law passed in November but not implemented, the PMU was to become an official security body affiliated with the Iraqi armed forces. On one side of the issue, opponents are pulling hard to keep that from happening; the other side wants to expedite the process so PMU members can run for office and otherwise participate in politics.

More Details:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/iraq-election-pmu-shiite-militias-abadi.html>

- **Iraqi insurgent fighter allegedly lied about identity, got through 'extreme' vetting**

Federal lawmakers are investigating how a former Iraqi insurgent fighter was able to lie about his identity and still get through America's 'extreme' vetting process. The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee has asked Attorney General Jeff Sessions to find out why the terror suspect's pending arrest was allegedly spiked just over a week before the election. Trump had run on a tough-on-terror platform and had been critical of President Obama's refugee policy

More Details:

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/03/08/lawmakers-probe-claim-doj-aided-iraqi-terror-suspect-days-before-november-election.html>

2. SYRIA

- **Geneva to host new round of Syrian peace talks on March 23**

Steffan de Mistura, UN special envoy on Syria, plans to start a new round of peace talks between Damascus and opposition on March 23, reports the TASS news agency.

More Details:

<http://www.kaztag.kz/en/news/detail.php?ID=528095>

- **Syria: Airstrikes hit Rebel-held areas east of Damascus despite Ceasefire**

In Syria warplanes have bombed rebel-held towns east of Damascus, striking residential areas where less than 24 hours earlier Russia declared a ceasefire.

More Details:

http://www.euronews.com/2017/03/08/syria-airstrikes-hit-rebel-held-areas-east-of-damascus-despite-ceasefire?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+euronews%2Fen%2Fnews+%28euronews+-+news+-+en%29

- **US Marines deploy artillery battery to Syria**

The United States has sent a Marine Corps artillery battery into Syria to help defeat the Islamic State group in Raqa, the capital of their supposed caliphate, a US official said.

More Details:

<https://www.afp.com/en/news/23/us-marines-deploy-artillery-battery-syria>

- **Russia Conducts 6 Humanitarian Operations in Syria's Aleppo**

The Russian center for Syrian reconciliation informs that Russian servicemen have carried out six humanitarian operations in the Syrian city of Aleppo in the past 24 hours, delivering food to local residents.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703091051392599-russia-aleppo-humanitarian/>

- **Putin and Netanyahu: A complex diplomatic dance**

Russia's direct intervention in the Syrian war has consolidated President Bashar al-Assad's position and ensured that regime change will not happen any time soon. It has also transformed the tactical environment in which the Israeli Air Force operates.

More Details:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-39213488>

- **US Envoy to UN says 'we Need to Get Iran' out of Syria**

The United States supports the UN-led Syria peace talks, UN Ambassador Nikki Haley said on Wednesday, saying Syria could no longer be a "safe haven for terrorists" and that it was important "we get Iran and their proxies out."

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Breaking-News/US-envoy-to-UN-says-we-need-to-get-Iran-out-of-Syria-483655>

- **2 die in bombing of Syria rebel bastion**

Two people were killed on Wednesday in bombardment of a Syrian rebel bastion near Damascus, a monitor said, less than 24 hours after Russia announced a freeze in fighting there.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/db33ed3a-1d95-491a-94bb-63b8bf482013.aspx>

- **Irish aid agency warns of ever increasing humanitarian crisis in Syria**

Violence has seeped into every aspect of life for people in Syria after six years of civil war, an Ireland based aid agency has warned.

More Details:

<http://www.breakingnews.ie/world/irish-aid-agency-warns-of-ever-increasing-humanitarian-crisis-in-syria-780760.html>

- **India willing to participate in reconstruction process in Syria**

Indian Minister of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises Anant G Geete affirmed his country's support to Syria and its willingness to participate in the reconstruction process in all fields.

More Details:

<http://sana.sy/en/?p=101629>

- **Syrian widow carries on with admirable strength**

In the Syrian war, as in every war, men mostly fight on the frontline, get killed, or flee the country. In the particular hard times, some women have shown their remarkable strength and determination to carry on with life after their husbands were lost.

More Details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/09/c_136115198.htm

3. IRAN

- **Iran's defense minister promises strong response to enemy moves**

Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Hossein Dehqan says the country's defensive military power will catch enemies off guard in case of an act of aggression against the Islamic Republic.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2017/03/08/513519/Iran-Defense-Minister-Hossein-Dehgan-defense-power-military-equipment>

- **Zarif in Qatar amid frosty Arab ties**

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif paid a formal visit to Doha on Wednesday, the third Arab country Tehran is consulting with within a month to mend fences with the Arab world.

More Details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/411789/Zarif-in-Qatar-amid-frosty-Arab-ties>

- **Iran condemns using chemical weapons by terrorists in Syria, Iraq**

Iranian Ambassador to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Alireza Jahangiri called on the organization to avoid politicizing the case of Syria.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82457991/>

- **Larijani: It's rude for US officials to talk about Iran's elections**

Majlis (Parliament) Speaker Ali Larijani said on Wednesday while the Americans took to the streets to protest to latest controversial presidential election in that country, it is rude for the US officials to talk about Iran's elections.

More Details:

<http://www.iran-daily.com/News/189000.html>

- **Trump's First Positive Move towards Iran Deal Implementation**

Latest reports reveal that the US Department of the Treasury has permitted the Americans residing in Iran to, in case needed, open accounts with Iranian banks, a move which could be indicative of the new US government's willingness to fulfill its commitments on the implementation of the nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, signed between Iran and the P5+1.

More Details:

<http://ifpnews.com/exclusive/2017/03/trumps-first-positive-move-towards-iran-deal-implementation/>

- **Iran says US stirring tensions in Gulf region**

A senior official in Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards on Wednesday accused the United States of provoking tensions after two separate incidents in the Gulf last week.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/aabf7c9d-18ff-406f-8bb8-f0c40cf27b15.aspx>

- **A Look at Iran's Latest Economic Calamitous Situation**

With the Persian year coming to an end, various analysis on Iran's critical economic situation in different sectors has been offered by economic newspapers and websites.

More Details:

<http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/economy/22324-a-look-at-iran-s-latest-economic-calamitous-situation>

- **Iran rejects anti-Iran report by US State Department**

Iran has rejected a recent report by the US State Department which has criticized Tehran over human rights and the nation's election process. The annual report is published at a time when the US administration itself is under fire over its electoral process and human rights record.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/03/08/513579/Iran-rejects-antIran-report-by-US>

- **Zarif, Qatari emir discuss better ties**

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Wednesday held talks with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani during a trip to Doha about liberal relations and issues of mutual concern.

More Details:

<http://iran-daily.com/News/188979.html?catid=3&title=Zarif--Qatari-emir-discuss-better-ties>

- **Iran Optimistic on Luxembourg Case Outcome**

Iran's top economic officials have reacted to the news that Iranian assets have been frozen by a Luxembourg court, expressing confidence that the case would end in Iran's favor.

More Details:

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/economy-business-and-markets/61109/iran-optimistic-on-luxembourg-case-outcome>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Hamas 'to soften anti-Israel rhetoric and accept 1967 borders' claim reports**

Hamas is set to adopt a new charter which tones down anti-Israel rhetoric and cut its ties to the Islamic Brotherhood, according to reports. It will also reportedly endorse a state of Palestine based on the 1967 borders, marking a shift from a years-long policy of reclaiming all of its historic land.

More Details

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/hamas-soften-anti-israel-rhetoric-accept-1967-borders-claim-reports-1610526>

- **UK foreign secretary, Netanyahu spar on settlements**

British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sparred over the issue of settlements on Wednesday as he visited for talks with Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

More Details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1065541/middle-east>

- **Israeli Minister Blocks Women's Day Event in East Jerusalem, Citing Palestinian Authority Ties**

Israeli police raided an East Jerusalem hotel on Wednesday to stop a cultural event for local Palestinian women, scheduled for International Women's Day. Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan issued an order preventing the performance, on the grounds that it was organized by the Palestinian Authority. After Erdan issued the order, policemen delivered it to organizers at the Saint George Hotel.

More Details

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.776098>

- **How a small-town street sign became center of latest Israeli-Palestinian dispute**

The mayor of the Palestinian town of Jatt in Israel is caught between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, the last thing a Palestinian patriot and representative of a nationalist community wants is to take down a street sign bearing the name of Yasser Arafat. On the other hand, the local official has to respect the law and the order by the Israeli minister of interior that requires governmental approval prior to posting any street sign.

More Details

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/israel-palestinian-village-street-yasser-arafat.html>

- **Israel Anti-BDS Law Would Ban Einstein from Entry**

The African-American intellectual is one of the BDS movement's most prominent figures and therefore could be denied entry into Israel under the new law.

More Details

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Cornel-West-Israel-Anti-BDS-Law-Would-Ban-Einstein-from-Entry-20170308-0019.html>

- **UK backs two-state solution, wants Israel ‘in peace with neighbors’**

British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson reiterates the UK support for a two-state solution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, asserting that Tel Aviv should make peace with its neighbors. The top diplomat made the remarks in East Jerusalem al-Quds, alongside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday.

More Details

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/03/09/513580/UK-wants-Israel-in-peace-with-neighbors>

- **Women Face ‘Dire’ Abuse In Israeli Jails**

THE plight of scores of Palestinian women and girls languishing in Israeli prisons was highlighted yesterday on International Women’s Day. The Palestinian Prisoners Society said 65 female detainees, including 12 minors, were being held in “dire conditions” in Israel’s HaSharon and Damon prisons, where cells are unbearably cold in winter and hot in summer.

More Details

http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/a-5c7b-Women-face-dire-abuse-in-Israeli-jails#.WMD9_Pnyhac

- **Israeli Attorney Files War Crimes Charges against Hamas at Int’l Criminal Court**

An Israeli attorney filed a petition on Monday to charge former Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh with war crimes at the International Criminal Court, accusing him of overseeing the use of human shields during the 2014 Gaza war. Calev Michael Myers filed the petition on behalf of the Israel-Li (Israel to Me) organization, which he leads, and the Jerusalem Institute of Justice, Ynet reported. He charged that the terrorist group “consistently used civilians as ‘human shields’” during the 50-day conflict.

More Details

<http://www.thetower.org/4692-israeli-attorney-files-war-crimes-charges-against-hamas-at-intl-criminal-court/>

- **‘Women’s Strike’ platform demands ‘decolonization of Palestine’**

The platform for a strike presumably in support of feminism and women’s rights was notable in that it did not limit itself to women’s issues, but also called “for the decolonization of Palestine.”

More Details

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/226408>

- **Foreign ministers at Arab League summit reject attempts to move embassies to Jerusalem**

Arab Foreign Ministers renewed their countries' full commitment to the Arab Peace initiative of 2002. The ministers resolutions came during the 147th session of Arab League Foreign Ministers Council on Tuesday at the organization's general secretariat headquarters in Cairo, Egypt, chaired by Algeria. The ministers adopted a resolution against any attempt to move diplomatic missions to Jerusalem, following President Donald Trump's campaign pledge to move the American embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/foreign-ministers-arab-league-summit-reject-attempts-move-embassies-jerusalem-947528>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Joseph Aoun is Lebanon's new military chief**

Lebanon appointed General Joseph Aoun as army commander on Wednesday, replacing General Jean Kahwaji at the head of a force that has been guarantor of civil peace since the 1975-90 civil war. The Lebanese government also filled several high-ranking security and judicial posts, Information Minister Melhem Riachi said in a televised announcement after a cabinet meeting.

More Details

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/e6e4e817-f83d-4218-a8c7-82a7dee19bf8.aspx>

- **Lebanon raids financial offices over transfers to ISIS**

Lebanese authorities carried out raids Wednesday against currency exchange offices and money transfer companies on suspicion they sent huge sums to ISIS, a judicial source told AFP. The source said the raids started Tuesday and were continuing on Wednesday against several institutions "on suspicion they transferred huge sums of money to areas controlled by ISIS in Raqqa and elsewhere," referring to an extremist stronghold in Syria.

More Details

<http://aranews.net/2017/03/lebanon-raids-financial-offices-transfers-isis/>

- **Lebanon raids financial offices over transfers to Daesh**

Lebanese authorities carried out raids Wednesday against currency exchange offices and money transfer companies on suspicion they sent huge sums to the Daesh group, a judicial source told AFP.

More Details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1065166/middle-east>

- **Ibrahim Says Clamping Down on IS Funding Enhances International Confidence in Lebanon**

General Security chief Maj. Gen. Abbas Ibrahim said the security achievement made after unveiling money-changing offices transferring money to the Islamic State group, proves Lebanon's persistence in confronting terrorism and reinforces international confidence in the country, al-Joumhouria daily reported on Thursday.

More Details

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/226672-ibrahim-says-clamping-down-on-is-funding-enhances-international-confidence-in-lebanon>

- **Jordan, Turkey target \$3B trade volume, new maritime line**

Jordanian Prime Minister Hani Mulki on Tuesday expressed Jordan's willingness to boost economic relations with Turkey through the establishment of special zones for Turkish industries and more Turkish investment in the Kingdom. In separate meetings with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Prime Minister Binali Yildirim, Mulki stated that Jordan also welcomes more Turkish participation in mega projects on the drawing board, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/jordan-turkey-target-3b-trade-volume-new-maritime-line-947144>

- **A good place to be in**

According to the Central Bank of Jordan, the total income from tourism and Jordanians' remittances increased by 8.5 per cent this January over the same month last year, with remittances making up 4.2 per cent and revenues from tourism 12.2 per cent of the increase.

More Details

<http://jordantimes.com/opinion/editorial/good-place-be>

- **Jordan rejects Israeli measure to limit mosque calls to prayers**

Jordan on Wednesday condemned the draft law endorsed by the Israeli parliament to limit mosque calls to prayers inside Israel and east Jerusalem, the state-run Petra news agency reported. "Jordan rejects such a measure and believes it entails discrimination and this move violates many

international laws and charters," Minister of State for Media Affairs Mohammad Momani said Wednesday.

More Details

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/09/c_136113606.htm

- **Israeli envoy to Jordan ‘warns of growing instability’**

Israel’s Ambassador to Jordan Einat Schlein recently warned that the Hashemite kingdom faces growing instability amid economic woes and an influx of Syrian refugees, according to a report in the Haaretz newspaper.

More Details

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-envoy-to-jordan-warns-of-growing-instability/>

- **Israel’s embassy recounts statement that Jordan is unstable**

Official government sources in Jordan have stated that Israel’s ambassador to Jordan, Einat Schlein, has recanted the statement she made several months ago to IDF's Chief of General Staff Gadi Eizenkot, in which she claimed that the situation in Jordan is unstable.

More Details

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4932893,00.html>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Kingdom will boost its oil and gas sector: Deputy PM**

Bahrain’s highly developed infrastructure is one of the most important factors responsible for the tremendous success enjoyed by the Kingdom in the Meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions(MICE) sector, Deputy Prime Minister HH Shaikh Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa stated during the 20th Middle East Oil and Gas Show and Conference(MEOS).

More details:

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppId=31161&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=1>

- **UN rights chief worried over Al Khalifah crackdown in Bahrain**

During his annual report to the UN Human Rights Council on Wednesday, Zeid bin Ra’ad Zeid al-Hussein called on the Al Khalifah regime to allow UN representatives swift access to the country.

While stressing that repression will only add to the people's grievances, Zeid urged the government in Bahrain to take solid confidence-building measures.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/03/08/513574/un-bahrain-crackdown-human-rights>

- **Zarif discusses bilateral ties with Qatari counterpart**

Iran Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met with his Qatari counterpart Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani in Doha on Wednesday evening, IRNA reported. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral relations and regional as well as international cooperation.

More details:

<http://en.trend.az/iran/politics/2729571.html>

- **Qatar stresses importance of UN Security Council reform**

Qatar has stressed the importance of reforming the United Nations Security Council in light of the current challenges and conflicts. Addressing the UN General Assembly Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council Reform, Qatar's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani said the important role of the Security Council makes the need for its reform a necessity and a priority more than ever.

More details:

<http://www.gulf-times.com/story/536694/Qatar-stresses-importance-of-UN-Security-Council-r>

- **Saudi-led coalition used cluster bombs in Yemen: Amnesty**

Amnesty International on Thursday accused the Saudi-led Arab coalition battling rebels in Yemen of using banned cluster munitions in raids on residential areas. The Brazilian-manufactured munitions were fired in a February 15 attack on three residential districts and agricultural land in Saada province of northern Yemen, a stronghold of the Shiite Huthi rebels, it said in a statement.

More details:

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/news/world/saudi-led-coalition-used-cluster-bombs-in-yemen-amnesty/article/487495>

- **Disgraceful U.S. Support for the War on Yemen Continues**

As expected, the Trump administration is undoing the minimal, belated limits that the previous administration put on arms sales to the Saudis: The State Department has approved a resumption of

weapons sales that critics have linked to Saudi Arabia's bombing of civilians in Yemen, a potential sign of reinvigorated U.S. support for the kingdom's involvement in its neighbor's ongoing civil war.

More details:

<http://www.theamericanconservative.com/larison/disgraceful-u-s-support-for-the-war-on-yemen-continues/>

- **Missile force hit enemy Saudi bases in Jaizan, Aser**

The missile force of the army and popular forces targeted enemy Saudi soldiers' gathering in Bait al-Mathgaf, Om Serb, al-Thawabth, al-Sodanh, al-Gharn and al-Dkhan, causing heavy human and material losses, an army official told Saba on Thursday. The missile force also targeted leadership of al-Hagiz by salvo of Katyusha rockets, the official said.

More details:

<http://www.sabanews.net/en/news458407.htm>

- **China firm showcases fastest train at Middle East Rail**

China Railway Rolling Stock Company (CRRC) has showcased the world's fastest high-speed train at the Middle East Rail 2017, which concluded in Dubai, UAE, and yesterday. China Standard EMU train has the maximum operating speed of 380 km per hour and has achieved 420km/h during test runs last year when two trains passed each other at this speed on the new 363km Zhengzhou - Xuzhou high-speed line.

More details:

http://www.tradearabia.com/news/IND_321747.html

- **Omani-Italian Friendship Association Launched**

The Omani-Italian Friendship Association (TOIFA) was officially launched on Wednesday night, just as a major Italian trade delegation is visiting the country. The inauguration was held at the residence of Italian Ambassador H E Giorgio Visetti with the participation of the association's board members, the Deputy Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning, Talal al Rahbi, and visiting Italian Deputy Minister of Economic Development, Ivan Scalfarotto.

More details:

<http://www.muscatdaily.com/Archive/Oman/Omani-Italian-Friendship-Association-launched-4yyh>

- **China says ready to help resolve Saudi-Iran disputes**

China is ready to help resolve issues between the Kingdom and Iran, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Wednesday. “We hope Saudi Arabia and Iran can resolve the problems that exist between them via equal and friendly consultations,” Wang said. “China is friends with both Saudi Arabia and Iran. If there is a need, China is willing to play our necessary role.”

More details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1065516/saudi-arabia#>

7. EGYPT

- **The Christians fleeing their homes after ISIS attacks in Egypt**

The gunmen dragged Hakim's screaming mother outside the house before going back inside and shooting his father dead. The attackers then looted the house before torching it. His mother, Nabila Halim, survived the attack. Medhat Saad and Saad Hakim are the sixth and seventh Christians killed in the North Sinai town of Al-Arish in just over a month --- all targeted by Al Wilayat Sinai, a local affiliate of ISIS waging a low-level insurgency on the peninsula.

More details:

<http://us.cnn.com/2017/03/08/africa/egypt-isis-attacks/index.html>

- **Egypt to participate in Barcelona exhibition to promote investment in Suez Canal area**

Chairperson of the General Authority for the Suez Canal Economic Zone (SCZone) Ahmed Darwish said that the authority will review the draft contracts signed between the authority and Spanish companies, before drafting and implementing a cooperation protocol with the Spanish side.

More details:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/03/08/617733/>

- **Egypt condemns Al-Qaeda attacks against oil facilities in Libya**

Egypt's Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned on Tuesday the recent attacks by Al Qaeda-affiliated militants that targeted Libyan oil facilities. The ministry stated that these attacks are threatening the recently achieved progress, according to a media statement released by the ministry spokesperson. Egypt's official foreign ministry spokesperson, Ahmed Abou Zaid, noted that it is important to not grant a chance to illegal groups to assume a political role in Libya through destructive acts, according to state-run newspaper Al-Ahram.

More details:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/03/08/617738/>

- **Egypt sentences 9 to life behind bars for Israel spying**

An Egyptian court on Wednesday sentenced nine people -- including six Israelis -- to life behind bars for spying for Israel, according to a local judicial source. In 2013, the Egyptian authorities announced they had broken up a nine-member cell linked to Israel's Mossad spy agency.

More details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/egypt-sentences-9-to-life-behind-bars-for-israel-spying/766790>

- **Egyptians protest over new bread subsidies system**

Dozens of Egyptians protested across the country on Tuesday because they were unable to get their share of subsidized bread, police said. The protests followed a supply ministry decision to limit the number of subsidized loaves bakeries can sell to people who do not yet have digital cards that are being introduced under a new distribution system, Supply Minister Ali al-Meselhy said.

More details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/egyptians-protest-over-new-bread-subsidies-system/>

- **Warming relations between Egypt and Hamas**

After declaring Hamas a terrorist movement, Egypt is now utilizing the organization to deal with the ISIS branch in Sinai; however, change raises eyebrows in Israel, particularly after Egypt recently transferred two concrete pumps into the Gaza Strip, which Israel bans over fears that Hamas could exploit them for tunnel-building projects.

More details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4932791,00.html>

- **Why is IS targeting Copts in Sinai?**

On Feb. 24, hundreds of Christians escaped the city of el-Arish in the northern Sinai Peninsula to Ismailia governorate, 110 kilometers (68 miles) to the east of Cairo, after the Islamic State (IS) and its branch in Egypt, Wilayat Sinai, focused their operations on targeting them. This sparked questions about the change in IS' strategy in Sinai, thus confusing the Egyptian authorities that were consequently accused of slackening in protecting the Copts.

More details:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/egypt-sinai-islamic-state-killing-copts-christians.html>

- **Politics as a path – Feminist testimonies from Egypt**

Like most young men and women of my generation, my involvement in public affairs began with the January 25 revolution in 2011. It was for me the starting point for change and liberation. Perhaps one of the greatest moments of my life was the cheering and the realization that my voice can be heard and have an impact.

More details:

<http://www.madamasr.com/en/2017/03/08/feature/society/politics-as-a-path-feminist-testimonies-from-egypt/>

- **Is an 'Arab NATO' in the works?**

The convergence of views between Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and US President Donald Trump has seemingly led Trump to turn into a facilitator of Sisi's dreams. These dreams include banning the Muslim Brotherhood and founding a joint Arab force. On Feb. 15, The Wall Street Journal quoted unnamed Arab officials as saying that the Trump administration is in talks with Arab allies about forming a military alliance that would share intelligence with Israel to help counter their mutual foe, Iran.

More details:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/egypt-united-states-joint-arab-alliance.html>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Algerian president says terrorism remnants still threaten**

Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika on Wednesday warned that security and political instability hitting neighboring nations fuel the remnants of terrorism in Algeria.

More details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/09/c_136113594.htm

- **Rouhani visit to Algeria postponed at the request of Iranian party**

Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Ramtane Lamamra said Wednesday in Algiers that the visit Iranian president Hassan Rouhani was due to pay to Algeria has been postponed at the request of the Iranian party.

More details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/17217-rouhani-visit-to-algeria-postponed-at-the-request-of-iranian-party>

- **Algerian Ineptitude Leads to Resurgence of Al-Qaeda across the Sahel and Sahara**

While Europe remains distracted with the upcoming elections in France and Germany, extremist and terrorist groups are regrouping and expanding in the Sahara and the Sahel region.

More details:

<https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2017/03/210406/algerian-ineptitude-leads-resurgence-al-qaeda-across-sahel-sahara/>

- **Several MPs hint at forming a pro-LPA HoR outside Tobruk**

Several pro-Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) members from the House of Representatives (HoR) have condemned the voting of their fellow MPs in rejection of the LPA in the Tuesday session that was attended by 58 MPs out of 200.

More details:

<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/several-mps-hint-forming-pro-lpa-hor-outside-tobruk>

- **Battle for Libya's key oil ports takes dramatic turn**

The battle for control of Libya's key oil ports has taken a dramatic new turn with the militias who captured them on Friday handing them over to the United Nations-backed Government of National Accord (GNA).

More details:

<http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/battle-for-libyas-key-oil-ports-takes-dramatic-turn>

- **Moroccan lawmaker shot dead in Casablanca**

A Moroccan lawmaker was shot and killed in front of his home on Tuesday night in Casablanca, according to a statement from his political party and local media.

More details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1065451/middle-east>

- **Tunisia FM visits Baghdad for talks with Iraq officials**

Tunisian Foreign Minister Khemaies Jhinaoui on Wednesday visited Baghdad to discuss regional developments -- especially the fight against terrorism -- with Iraqi officials.

More details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/tunisia-fm-visits-baghdad-for-talks-with-iraq-officials/766881>

- **Germany deports 22 Tunisians including Islamic State suspect**

A German state government has deported 22 failed asylum seekers to Tunisia, one of whom is suspected of membership in the Islamic State terrorist group, officials said Wednesday.

More details:

<https://eblnews.com/news/europe/germany-deports-22-tunisians-including-islamic-state-suspect-62143>

- **Farhat Horchani receives Deputy Assistant Secretary-General for Defence Policy and Planning at NATO**

Cooperation between Tunisia and NATO in the field of training and intelligence and the exchange of views on issues of mutual interest were at the centre of the meeting on Wednesday afternoon between Minister of National Defence Farhat Horchani and Deputy Assistant Secretary-General for Defence Policy and Planning at NATO Jonathan Parish, a ministry statement said.

More details:

<https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/8792265-farhat-horchani>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Peshawar Zalmi's players are likely to visit Kabul at the invitation of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, owner of the team Javed Afridi said on Wednesday.**

Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Karzai spoke to Javed Afridi, congratulated him on the victory and on behalf of the president, invited the team to visit Afghanistan. Karzai called Zalmi 'Khpal' (own) team.

More details:

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/03/09/peshwar-zalmi-get-invited-to-kabul/>

- **Afghanistan writes to UN Security Council amid growing artillery shelling**

The Afghan government has written a formal memo to the United Nations Security Council to file a complaint regarding the growing artillery shelling by the Pakistani military in eastern provinces of the country located along the Durand Line.

More details:

<http://www.khaama.com/afghanistan-writes-to-un-security-council-amid-growing-artillery-shelling-02357>

- **Thousands earning more than RM10K applying for BR1M, says minister**

Thousands of individuals earning more than RM10,000 monthly have applied for the 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M) scheme, says the Second Finance Minister.

More Details:

<http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2017/03/09/thousands-earning-more-than-rm10k-applying-for-br1m/#dgKbb2KZeKpaDMCE.99>

- **Afghan politician alleges that Turkmenistan has contacts with Taliban**

Former Minister of Water and Energy of Afghanistan Mohammad Ismail Khan has claimed "Turkmenistan has contacts with the Taliban and it provides military equipment to the insurgents." Salamwatandar reported.

More details:

<http://akipress.com/news:589814/>

- **Pakistan temporarily reopens border with Afghanistan**

Torkham and Chaman crossings reopened for 48 hours to allow stranded visitors in both countries to return home.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/pakistan-temporarily-reopens-border-afghanistan-170307054711005.html>

- **Over 30 killed as gunmen dressed as medics attack Afghan military hospital**

Gunmen dressed as medics attacked a hospital in the Afghan capital on Wednesday and battled security forces for hours, killing more than 30 people and wounding dozens in an assault claimed by Islamic State.

More details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-blast-idUSKBN16FOGP>

- **Kabul lodge complains against Pakistan to UN**

Some parliamentarians believe that Kabul can complain against Pakistan to the United Nations Security Council based on recent criticisms raised by Pakistani legislators against Islamabad administration.

More details:

<http://afghanistantimes.af/kabul-lodge-complains-against-pakistan-to-un/>

- **Pakistan wants to enhance ties with EU for socio-economic development: NA speaker**

Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq the other day said that Pakistan attached high importance to deep-rooted ties of friendship, cooperation and mutual understanding on various issues with the European Union.

More details:

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/03/09/pakistan-wants-to-enhance-ties-with-eu-for-socio-economic-development-na-speaker/>

- **Pakistan, Iran on threshold of establishing strong trade ties: Pak MP**

Pakistani top parliamentarian of ruling party and Chairman of National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari who recently paid an official visit to Iran believes that both Iran and Pakistan are on the verge of establishing strong economic relations.

More details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82458194/>

- **Belarus delegation in Pakistan to discuss bilateral cooperation**

The two-day working visit of the Belarusian delegation led by Industry Minister Vitaly Vovk to Karachi (the administrative center of Pakistan's Sind Province) started on 9 March, BelTA learned from the Belarusian Embassy in Pakistan.

More details:

<http://eng.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-delegation-in-pakistan-to-discuss-bilateral-cooperation-99316-2017/>

10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkey condemns attack on hospital in Afghan capital**

Turkey's Foreign Ministry condemned Wednesday's terrorist attack on a hospital in the Afghan capital Kabul that left dozens of people dead. In a written statement, the ministry "strongly condemned the heinous attack" on the hospital "where people in need of care were receiving treatment.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/turkey-condemns-attack-on-hospital-in-afghan-capital/766893>

- **Turkey Pushes Syria Safe Zones**

Turkey is pushing the idea once again of establishing safe zones in northern Syria and wants the issue on the agenda at the next round of U.N.-led peace talks in Geneva, which are scheduled for later this month.

More Details:

<http://www.voanews.com/a/syria-safe-zones-proposal/3755893.html>

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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