



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

- **Iraqi lawmaker: Kuwait is an integral part of Iraq**

The State of Kuwait is part of the Iraqi territory and falls under the jurisdiction of Basra, Iraqi lawmaker Awatef Neema of the Al-Islah party said yesterday. The lawmakers said she was surprised by the claims of some members of the Kuwaiti National Assembly that the Khawr Abd Allah waterway belongs to Kuwait, describing the remarks as “ridiculous”.

More details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170208-iraqi-lawmaker-kuwait-is-an-integral-part-of-iraq/>

- **Iraqi forces close roads to Baghdad’s Green Zone**

Iraqi security forces started on Wednesday to close all roads leading to the gates of the Green Zone in central Baghdad, in anticipation of the demonstrations that are scheduled to take place today. Alsumaria News quoted an official source as saying, “Security forces started to close all roads leading to the gates of the Green Zone in central Baghdad,” pointing out that, “Vehicles movement was banned completely in Abu Nawas Street.”

More details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/iraqi-forces-close-roads-baghdads-green-zone/>

- **Iraq cleric supporters demand electoral reform**

Hundreds of supporters of Iraqi cleric Moqtada al-Sadr demonstrated in Baghdad Wednesday to demand electoral reform ahead of a planned provincial vote in September. The protesters, who have been demanding deep political reform since last year, argued that the current rules were tailored for Iraq's leading parties, which they accuse of corruption and nepotism.

More details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/08/02/2017/Iraq-cleric-supporters-demand-electoral-reform>

- **Iranian Speaker Stresses Necessity for Resolving Security, Terrorism Problems in Iraq**

"Certainly, in the current conditions, solving the security and terrorism problems in Iraq is important since the country is an important pivot in the region and certainly, resolving the Iraqi issue will lead to balance in the region," Larijani said in a meeting with former Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Adil Abdulmahdi in Tehran on Wednesday.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951120001457>

- **Turkey wants Iraq to take 'concrete' steps against PKK**

Turkey wants to see concrete steps from the central Iraqi government against the terrorist PKK presence in the Sinjar district, west of Mosul, the Turkish ambassador in Baghdad said. Speaking to Anadolu Agency, Fatih Yildiz addressed Turkey's stance as a member of a coalition fighting against the Daesh group in the region.

More details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/todays-headlines/turkey-wants-iraq-to-take-concrete-steps-against-pkk/744362>

- **US, Iraqi Defense Chiefs Discuss Western Mosul Liberation**

US Secretary of Defense James Mattis and Iraqi Defense Minister Arfan al-Hayali have discussed in a phone call preparations for liberation of western Mosul from Daesh terrorists, US Department of Defense spokesman Jeff Davis said in a press release. The spokesman added that Mattis and Hayali affirmed their commitment to bilateral cooperation and partnership.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/us/201702081050486143-usa-iraq-discuss-mosul/>

- **HRW: ISIS occupying medical facilities, putting civilians at risk in Mosul**

The Islamic State (ISIS) radical group is putting civilians and staff at risk by occupying hospitals in Mosul, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said on Wednesday. ISIS took control of al-Salam Hospital in eastern Mosul, and set up a consistent presence of about 10 fighters inside the hospital for more than two years.

More details:

<http://aranews.net/2017/02/hrw-isis-occupying-medical-facilities-putting-civilians-at-risk-in-mosul/>

- **Militants Burn Civilians to Death; 123 Killed in Iraq**

Followers of Shi'ite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr staged a protest in Baghdad, calling for electoral reform. U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Stephen Townsend said he believes both Mosul as well as Raqqa, Syria, will fall within six months. Canada announced that it will be sending weapons to Kurdish forces in Iraq. At least 123 were killed and 24 more were wounded.

More details:

<http://original.antiwar.com/updates/2017/02/08/militants-burn-civilians-to-death-123-killed-in-iraq/>

- **What Will Trump Do About Iraq's Displaced Millions?**

The battle to retake Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, from ISIS is underway. Iraqi forces with backing from the U.S. have retaken the east bank of the city. A renewed push to take back the more heavily populated west bank will begin soon. Fighting is expected to be ferocious, with heavy casualties among civilians and Iraqi soldiers, and destruction of the city's infrastructure.

More details:

<http://europe.newsweek.com/what-will-trump-do-about-iraqs-displaced-millions-554174?rm=eu>

- **Iraqi Forces Repel IS Attack in Salahaddin Province**

Iraqi security forces (ISF) have managed to repel an attack by the Islamic State (IS) militants in the province of Salahaddin on Wednesday. The attack occurred in midnight on Wednesday after dozens of IS extremists managed to spar heavy clashes, a source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity. In the early hours of the day, reinforcement units of the Iraqi Army arrived at the place backed by army helicopters and police units, forcing the IS militants to withdraw, the source added.

More details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/329152>

- **Peshmerga forces will not participate in second stage of liberating Mosul; Yawar**

Jabar Yawar, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Peshmerga said in a statement to PUKmedia that the Ministry of Peshmerga will reduce its expenses, stressing that Peshmerga forces will not participate in the second stage of liberation Mosul from the hands of Islamic State. Mr. Yawar said on Wednesday, that recently Peshmerga forces and ISIS terrorists hadn't clashed, which resulted in reducing the Ministry's expenses.

More details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=39698

- **Local Arabs west of Mosul train and join Peshmerga forces**

As the Iraqi army focuses on liberating western Mosul from ISIS, eastern Mosul and its outlying areas require security, so some of its local Arab population have turned to the Kurdish Peshmerga for training and to be included within the Zeravani force. "I want to join Peshmerga units and fight ISIS. We are always ready," Amir Khidir told Rudaw, who was one of as many as 965 Arab people from the towns of Zummar and Rabiaa celebrating their completion of Peshmerga-provided training earlier this week at Khanasi Base in Sheikhan town in Nineveh province north of Mosul.

More details:

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/080220171>

- **Iraqi Kurds to receive sniper rifles, anti-tank weapons, mortars from Canada**

Canada will provide long-range sniper rifles and anti-tank weapons to the Kurdish forces fighting the Islamic State (ISIL) in northern Iraq, the Department of National Defence said Wednesday. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced a year ago that Canada would arm the Kurds, and DND said Wednesday the list included .50-calibre sniper rifles equipped with silencers, 60mm mortars, as well as Carl Gustav anti-tank systems. Details about the numbers of each type of equipment were withheld for security reasons.

More details:

<http://www.vancouver.sun.com/news/national/iraqi+kurds+receive+sniper+rifles+anti+tank+weapons/12869989/story.html>

- **Islamic State has damaged 1000 civilian houses in eastern Mosul: official**

Islamic State militants caused damages to nearly 1000 houses in eastern Mosul since they took over the city in 2014 and until security forces recaptured that region, an official said Thursday. Hossam al-Abbar, a member of the Nineveh Governorate Council, was quoted by Almaalomah website as saying that IS had damaged 1000 houses during its occupation of Mosul and through its battles with security forces seeking to liberate the city.

More details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/features/islamic-state-damaged-1000-civilian-houses-eastern-mosul-official/>

- **Iraq's PM: Kills 20 ISIL Militants West of Mosul**

The Iraqi popular forces, also known as Hashd al-Sha'abi said in a statement the Iraqi forces killed 20 ISIL militants, including four wearing explosive belts, after a failed attack by the militants on al-Hajaf, in the town of Tal Abta, West of Mosul, Iraqi News reported. The Iraqi forces also said three vehicles used by ISIL were destroyed in the encounters.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951120001599>

- **PM: Czech Republic to help Iraq until it is needed**

The Czech Republic will provide aid to Iraq until the country needs it, Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka said after a meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari yesterday, the

Government Office has announced. Prague also wants to participate in the reconstruction of Iraq after the Islamic State (IS) terrorist organisation is defeated, Sobotka (Social Democrats CSSD) said.

More details:

<http://www.praguemonitor.com/2017/02/09/pm-czech-republic-help-iraq-until-it-needed>

- **ISIL in West Mosul Faces Choice: Surrender or Die, OIR Spokesman Says**

Terrorists with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in the western part of Iraq's second-largest city face two options: surrender or die, the spokesman for Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve told Pentagon reporters today. "The enemy is completely surrounded in West Mosul, and those who do not surrender to the Iraqi security forces will be killed there," Air Force Col. John Dorrian said in a news briefing from Baghdad.

More details:

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1076615/isil-in-west-mosul-faces-choice-surrender-or-die-oir-spokesman-says>

- **'This land is ours': Iraqi-Kuwait tensions rise in waterway row**

Anger has spread across Iraq over the government's apparent agreement to concede ownership of the Khor Abdullah waterway to Kuwait "We were stunned to see the Kuwaiti flag fluttering in the creek of our waterway," a shipping agent in Basra said, referring to the port that separates Iraq from its southern neighbour.

More details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/gulf-war-iii-iraq-kuwait-tensions-rise-over-disputed-khor-abdullah-waterway-1813721720>

- **Iraq puts out fires at Qayyara oil field in northern Iraq: ministry**

Five oil wells are still burning out of 25 that Islamic State set on fire in Qayyara, south of Mosul, an oil ministry statement said on Thursday. State-run North Oil Company crews are working to control the fires torched by the hardline militants to slow down the advance of U.S.-backed Iraqi forces toward Mosul, their last major city stronghold in Iraq.

More details:

http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-oilfire-idUSKBN1500VA?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Reuters%2FworldNews+%28Reuters+World+News%29&&rpc=401

- **Sunni Insurgency Threatens to Take Hold in Iraq Amid ISIS Defeats**

A Sunni insurgency is taking root in Iraq as the U.S.-led coalition continues to weaken the Islamic State's territorial strongholds, particularly in Mosul, according to a new report. The D.C.-based Institute for the Study of War warned that al Qaeda's top leadership likely will capitalize on ISIS's continued losses and attempt to gain influence within splinter militant groups opposed to the Shia-led government of Iraq.

More details:

<http://freebeacon.com/national-security/sunni-insurgency-threatens-take-hold-iraq-amid-isis-defeats/>

2. SYRIA

- **President al-Assad: Situation in Syria is moving in the direction that Syria and Russia want**

President Bashar al-Assad said on Wednesday the situation in Syria is moving in the direction that both Syria and Russia want. His remarks came during a meeting with a delegation of the Russian State Duma, headed by member of Russian Federation Council Dmitry Sablin, who is the coordinator of relations between the Duma and the People's Assembly.

More Details:

<http://sana.sy/en/?p=99770>

- **Ankara: Trump, Erdogan Agree Syria Cooperation**

President Donald Trump and Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan have agreed to act jointly against ISIS in Syria, in their first phone call since the new U.S. leader took office last month, Ankara said Wednesday. The two leaders also agreed that the new CIA chief, Mike Pompeo, would visit Turkey this week, a Turkish presidential source said.

More Details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/2017/02/article55367103/ankara-trump-erdogan-agree-syria-cooperation>

- **Syrian Rebels, Regime Vie For Control Of Islamic State Stronghold**

Syrian rebels, backed by Turkey, were vying with government forces Wednesday for control of al-Bab, the last remaining significant stronghold of Islamic State in the northern part of the war-torn country, a monitoring group said.

More Details:

http://www.lse.co.uk/AllNews.asp?code=tazk9qkd&headline=Syrian_Rebels_Regime_Vie_For_Control_Of_Islamic_State_Stronghold

- **Chechnya provides 10 tons of humanitarian aid to Syria**

Chechnya's Akhmad Kadyrov Fund has organized delivery of more than ten tonnes of food and other relief aid to Syria, Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov said on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://tass.com/world/929875>

- **Assad Says He Will Step Down if He Loses Election, Fails to Schedule Election**

In his first session with reporters since Amnesty International published a report accusing his government of human rights atrocities against political dissidents, Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad said he would immediately step aside if he lost an election.

More Details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/02/08/assad-syrian-elections-amnesty-int/>

- **Syria situation moving toward what Syria, Russia want**

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said Wednesday that the situation in the country is moving in a way desired by Damascus and Moscow, according to state news agency SANA.

More Details:

http://www.china.org.cn/world/2017-02/08/content_40251670.htm

- **Syrian refugees have been vetted properly**

A recent letter to the editor made me wonder if readers actually follow the news. The letter dealt with the ban on immigrants relating to safety. Apparently the writer was not aware that the Syrian refugees admitted to our country had been vetted for two years.

More Details:

<http://www.mcall.com/opinion/letters/mc-jayson-immigrants-ban-vetting-20170208-story.html>

- **Israel Targets Syrian Government Forces After Shell Lands on Israeli Territory**

An Israeli helicopter fired at Syrian government forces positions in the province of Quneitra in southern Syria, after a shell landed in Golan Heights, Beirut media report.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201702091050488437-israel-targets-syria/>

- **Syrian regime rejects Amnesty's report about execution of 13,000 prisoners in Saydnaya**

The Syrian Ministry of Justice on Wednesday rejected an Amnesty International report of mass hangings of 13,000 prisoners near the capital Damascus, saying the allegations were "totally untrue".

More Details:

<http://aranews.net/2017/02/syrian-regime-rejects-amnestys-report-about-execution-of-13000-prisoners-in-saydnaya/>

- **Russia Delivers 50 Missiles to Syria**

Russia has sent the largest missile shipment to date to Syria, a month after Russian President Vladimir Putin pledged to withdrawal some forces.

More Details:

<http://radio.foxnews.com/2017/02/08/russia-delivers-50-missiles-to-syria/>

3. IRAN

- **Iran 1979: The Tyrant Dies and His Rule Is Over, the Martyr Dies and His Rule Begins**

On Friday, February 10, millions of Iranians will take to the streets nationwide to mark the 38th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951120000988>

- **Iran espouses unity of action on fighting terrorism**

Parliament speaker has told former Iraqi oil minister specific countries are delusional about creating enemies out of nothing.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/123404/Iran-espouses-unity-of-action-on-fighting-terrorism>

- **U.S. consensus-building waning, Rouhani says**

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday the U.S. ability as a global consensus-builder has increasingly eroded, calling on Non-Aligned Movement countries to act more consequentially.

More Details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/410931/U-S-consensus-building-waning-Rouhani-says>

- **Iran plays crucial role in Persian Gulf security, stability: Hungarian PM**

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said on Wednesday that Iran plays a significant role in the Persian Gulf security and stability.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82422771/>

- **Russia: Iran missile tests not violating UN bans**

Russian UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin expressed surprise at an outcry provoked by the new US administration over Iranian missile work, saying Tehran's missile tests are not violating any UN bans, legally speaking.

More Details:

<http://www.iran-daily.com/News/177286.html>

- **Iran launches oil storage facility, ups storing capacity by 36%**

Trend: Iran has launched a crude oil storage facility which increases the country's crude oil storage capacity by 10 million barrels.

More Details:

<http://en.trend.az/iran/business/2718922.html>

- **Military Confrontation Not in Line with Trump's Campaign Promises: Iran's FM**

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says it is unlikely that US President Trump gets involved in a military confrontation given the promises he made during his presidential campaign. In an interview with Ettela'at daily newspaper on Tuesday, the Iranian Foreign Minister said getting

involved in military confrontation without preamble does not seem to be in conformity with the other policies adopted and promises made by Donald Trump.

More Details:

<http://ifpnews.com/interviews/2017/02/military-confrontation-not-in-line-with-trumps-campaign-promises-irans-fm/>

- **Iran Keeping Watchful Eye on Enemy Moves: Commander**

Lieutenant Commander of Iran's Army Brigadier General Ahmad Reza Pourdastan warned of the dire consequences an intruder in Iran's airspace will have to face.

More Details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/02/08/1322199/iran-keeping-watchful-eye-on-enemy-moves-commander>

- **Iran-Russia Currency Deal on Hold**

Despite the Central Bank of Iran's efforts to implement a bilateral currency swap agreement with Russia, the Central Bank of Russia has announced that it does not adhere to the process.

More Details:

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/economy-business-and-markets/59231/iran-russia-currency-deal-on-hold>

- **Kazakhstan Temir Zholy, Iran Shipping Lines to establish a joint enterprise**

A Kazakh national railroad company signed an agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines to establish a joint enterprise on February 6 in Tehran, reports the Kazakhstan Temir Zholy NC.

More Details:

<http://akipress.com/news:588684/>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Two Palestinians Killed, Five Injured, By Israeli Missiles in Southern Gaza**

The Israeli air force fired, on Thursday morning, several missiles targeting a siege-busting commercial tunnel close to the Egyptian border, in Rafah, in the southern part of the Gaza Strip, killing two Palestinian workers, and wounding at least five others.

More Details

<http://imemc.org/article/two-palestinians-killed-five-injured-by-israeli-missiles-in-southern-gaza/>

- **Bahrain condemns ‘Settlement Law’**

Bahrain has condemned the so-called ‘Settlement Regularization’ recently passed by the Israeli Knesset in a bid to legitimise the confiscation of the Palestinian lands and expand construction of more settler homes.

More Details

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppId=30288&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=2>

- **Netanyahu summons Brussels envoy after Belgian PM meets with anti-occupation groups**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has ordered a reprimand of the Belgian Ambassador after a meeting between Belgium’s PM and leaders of two Israeli human rights groups accusing the Israeli army of abuse in occupied Palestinian territories.

More Details

<https://www.rt.com/news/376771-israel-summons-belgian-envoy-palestine/>

- **Israel Approves 1162 New Illegal Colonialist Units in The West Bank**

The Israeli committee, in charge of settlements’ affairs at the Higher Planning Council of the military-run “Civil Administration Office” in the occupied West Bank, has approved the construction of 1162 new units for illegal colonists.

More Details

<http://imemc.org/article/israel-approves-1162-new-illegal-colonialist-units-in-the-west-bank/>

- **Israeli audacity**

Israel couldn’t have chosen a more appropriate time to legalise its theft of more Palestinian land, knowing it would enjoy greater support from the new occupant of the White House than it did from the Democratic administration. On Monday, Israel passed a law that legalises with retrospective effect 4,000 Jewish homes built in 72 settlements and 55 ‘outposts’ on over 800 hectares of a land that belongs to the sons of the soil — a move that has evoked scathing criticism from the UN and world capitals but elicited a rather bizarre response from the Trump administration.

More Details

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1313550/israeli-audacity>

- **Palestinian journalist Mohammed al-Qiq begins new hunger strike**

Palestinian journalist Mohammed al-Qiq has begun a new hunger strike to protest his re-arrest and detention in an Israeli prison without charge or trial.

More Details

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/2/8/palestinian-journalist-mohammed-al-qiq-begins-new-hunger-strike>

- **Abbas warns to end security co-operation over settlements**

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said on Wednesday he could be forced to suspend security cooperation with Israel if the ramp-up of Israeli settlements continued. "If the colonisation continues, I would have no other choice, it would not be my fault," Abbas told France's Senate during a visit to Paris.

More Details

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/9c88612f-adfb-46b6-b3e0-a27cb04ba0da.aspx>

- **Land law is final nail in the two-state solution coffin**

The Israeli parliament passed the legalization law on Monday night -- a piece of legislation every bit as suspect as its title suggests. The law widens the powers of Israeli officials to seize the last fragments of Palestinian land in the West Bank that were supposed to be off-limits. Now, almost nowhere will be out of the settlers' reach.

More Details

<http://www.opednews.com/articles/Land-law-is-final-nail-in-by-Jonathan-Cook-Israeli-Settlements-Netanyahu-Palestinian-170208-743.html>

- **Israel to reproach Belgian envoy for meeting far-left NGO reps.**

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu instructed the Foreign Ministry to reprimand the Belgian Ambassador to Israel Olivier Belle after the Israeli premier learned of a meeting that took place between the Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel and representatives of far-left wing groups Breaking the Silence and B'Tselem.

More Details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4919960,00.html>

- **As Trump era begins, what does Israel actually want in the West Bank?**

On May 15, 1967, the night before Israel's nineteenth Independence Day, in a small religious seminary in downtown Jerusalem, an elderly rabbi with a black hat and a venerable, wispy white beard was admonishing his disciples. The rabbi, Zvi Yehuda Kook, would come to be recognized as the spiritual father of the West Bank settlement movement. But this was still weeks before the Six Day War, and Israel had yet to conquer the West Bank.

More Details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/as-trump-era-begins-what-does-israel-actually-want-in-the-west-bank/>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Lebanon issues terms for first offshore licensing round**

The Lebanese Council of Ministers has approved two decrees needed to complete the country's first offshore licensing round. The first decree divides the Lebanese Exclusive Economic Zone into 10 blocks and delimits their coordinates, while the second presents the tender protocol (TP) that defines the conditions for participating in the round, the criteria applied in the bids evaluation, and the model exploration and production agreement (EPA) that the state will sign with the successful consortium.

More Details

http://www.offshore-mag.com/articles/2017/02/lebanon-issues-terms-for-first-licensing-round.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+offshore-latest-news+%28OS+-+Latest+News%29

- **Is Lebanon's crisis due to elections or to the regime?**

Lebanon is only four months away from parliamentary elections, yet the political forces represented in the government and Parliament have not reached a final agreement on the draft of a new election law that will ensure holding the elections as scheduled.

More Details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1051396>

- **Senior ISIL Commander Killed in Lebanon**

Ahmed Wahid al-Abed was killed on Tuesday as the explosion ripped through his vehicle on the outskirts of the town, Northeast of the capital Beirut, An unnamed security source told Daily Star.

The media bureau of Hezbollah resistance movement later announced in a tweet that the militant had been in charge of the so-called ISIL religious court.

More Details

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951120001749>

- **Lebanon foils extremist plot, suspects arrested**

The Lebanese Directorate of General Security confirmed Wednesday that it had foiled an extremist plot targeting Beirut's downtown area and arrested two suspects. The directorate said in a statement that its forces had arrested a Lebanese and a Palestinian, who confessed to plot a suicide attack by monitoring movement of politicians, obtaining their addresses and observing their security convoys in downtown Beirut.

More Details

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-02/09/c_136041873.htm

- **Lebanese police arrest two over Beirut attack plot**

Lebanese security forces arrested two alleged members of a "terrorist group" suspected of planning a suicide attack in central Beirut, security services said on Wednesday. The suspects, a Lebanese and a Palestinian, were detained for "belonging to a terrorist group", the General Security force said in a statement.

More Details

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/2/9/lebanese-police-arrest-two-over-beirut-attack-plot>

- **FNC signs MoU with Jordan's Senate**

Dr. Amal Abdullah Al Qubaisi, Speaker of the Federal National Council (FNC) and Faisal Al-Fayez, Jordan's Senate President (Majlis Al-Aayan), signed on Wednesday a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on improving means of discussion, co-ordination and exchanging views regarding areas of common interests.

More Details

<http://www.wam.ae/en/details/1395302596324>

- **Sameh Shoukry to meet with his Jordanian counterpart**

Egypt's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sameh Shoukry will meet with his Jordanian counterpart for bilateral talks, state-run media reported. The meeting will revolve around bilateral relations and the latest developments in the region, most notably the Palestinian issue and the latest developments in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, as well as the ongoing preparations for the upcoming Arab summit to be hosted by Jordan in March.

More Details

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/02/08/614932/>

- **Jordanian activists released after spy agency crackdown**

Jordan has released several government critics jailed for nearly one month after they demanded accountability and transparency on Facebook and in statements. Jordan's spy agency, the Mukhabarat, began rounding up scores of activists in early January who called for an end to corruption, family members and lawyers told Al Jazeera.

More Details

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/02/jordanian-activists-released-spy-agency-crackdown-170208115912801.html>

- **Jordan Supports Syrian Crisis Resolution Efforts, Including Astana Talks – FM**

Jordan supports any efforts aimed at resolving the Syrian crisis, including through the Astana platform, Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said Wednesday.

More Details

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201702081050455972-jordan-mfa-syria-astana/>

- **Protesters Say Jordanian Law Encourages 'Honour Killings' and Must Be Changed**

On February 1, 2017, a group of around 25-30 protesters peacefully gathered in front of the Jordanian parliament in Amman's Abdali district to call for the repeal of Article 340 of the Jordanian Penal Code, which allows for perpetrators of "honour killing" to benefit from mitigation. Global Voices' Nora B attended the protest.

More Details

<https://globalvoices.org/2017/02/08/protesters-say-jordanian-law-encourages-honour-killings-and-must-be-changed/>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Saudi Arabia Bond Sale Plan Said to Stall After Debt Head Leaves**

Saudi Arabia is unlikely to sell a planned Islamic bond in the first quarter after the head of its debt management office left, according to three people with knowledge of the matter. Plans for the issue have stalled since Fahad Al Saif, responsible for the country's international and domestic borrowing program, returned to Saudi British Bank in January after his secondment to the Finance Ministry, the people said, asking not to be identified as the discussions are private.

More Details:

<https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2017-02-08/saudi-arabia-bond-sale-plan-said-to-stall-after-debt-head-leaves-iywyg5p6>

- **The Yemen mess: Take the hint and extract U.S. forces from the war**

Two new developments related to Yemen, one of the poorest countries in the world, raise again in stark terms the question of why the United States continues to participate in the effort led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to pound that Middle Eastern country of 27 million into uninhabitable rubble. The first of these, a result of years of extensive U.S.-supported bombing, drone attacks and other military action against one of the factions in Yemen, is that a formidable level of famine is threatening the population of the country, including an estimated 2.1 million children. Humanitarian donors estimate that 12 million Yemenis are already suffering from malnutrition.

More Details:

<http://www.post-gazette.com/opinion/editorials/2017/02/09/The-Yemen-mess-Take-the-hint-and-extract-U-S-forces-from-the-war/stories/201702090025>

- **Qatar Petroleum President meets Saudi Aramco chief**

Saad Sherida Al Kaabi, President & CEO of Qatar Petroleum paid a one-day visit to Dhahran, in Saudi Arabia, and held talks with Amin H Nasser, the President & CEO of the Saudi Arabian Oil Company (Saudi Aramco). The two sides discussed topics of mutual interest. The meeting attendees included the official Qatar Petroleum delegation accompanying Al Kaabi and senior Saudi Aramco officials. Al Kaabi also visited a number of Saudi Aramco facilities, which included the Oil Supply, Planning and Scheduling Center, the Exploration and Petroleum Engineering Center (EXPEC), and the Upstream Professional Development Center (UPDC).

More Details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/09/02/2017/Qatar-Petroleum-President-meets-Saudi-Aramco-chief>

- **Iran-Oman gas pipeline to avoid UAE waters, online by 2020**

The Iran-Oman natural gas pipeline first proposed in 2013 is on track to come on-stream by 2020, officials from both country said, after a meeting in Tehran on Tuesday, in which they decided the exports line would bypass waters controlled by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kallanish Energy reports. Iran’s oil minister Bijan Zangeneh was quoted by local media as saying that “Tehran and Muscat have agreed that the pipeline will pass through deep waters without crossing waters under the governance of the United Arab Emirates.” The deep-water route won’t have any impact on the economic feasibility of the project, he added.

More Details:

<http://www.kallanishenergy.com/2017/02/09/iran-oman-gas-pipeline-to-avoid-uae-waters-online-by-2020/>

- **Bahrain says foils attempt by suspects in jail break to flee to Iran**

Bahrain said on Thursday it had foiled an attempt by "terrorist fugitives" wanted in connection with a January prison break to flee by sea to Iran. Security forces foiled the "trafficking" attempt in a dawn operation, a statement published on the interior ministry's Twitter account said. "Preliminary joint investigation indicates the fugitive boat was heading to Iran," the message said, adding further details would be announced later.

More Details:

http://www.reuters.com/article/us-bahrain-security-idUSKBN1500K9?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Reuters%2FworldNews+%28Reuters+World+News%29&&rpc=401

- **US President Donald Trump could soon sign off on the sale of high-tech precision-guided missiles to Saudi Arabia, and Lockheed Martin F-16s to Bahrain.**

If the Washington Examiner’s congressional source is correct, the deals will gain approval “quickly.” The missiles for Riyadh are valued at near \$300 million, while the F-16s would be part of a multibillion dollar package, the Washington Examiner reported. Proponents of the deals argue that Saudis can make a major contribution in the fight against Daesh. The sales could help “key gulf allies” deal with regional security threats posed by Tehran and Daesh, an official told the paper. The deal’s advocates are in “the new administration’s court for a decision—and I would anticipate the decision will be to move forward,” the source said.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/military/201702091050490180-trump-act-quickly-saudi-bahrain/>

- **Qatar says oil market can cope with higher shale output**

Higher oil prices may boost shale oil production but the global oil market can accommodate this as demand remains healthy, Qatar's energy minister said on Wednesday. US energy companies have been adding oil rigs and redeploying cash and workers, cautiously confident the energy sector has turned a corner after the election of President Donald Trump and a commitment signed by OPEC to curb production in the first half of 2017.

More Details:

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/business/09-Feb-17/qatar-says-oil-market-can-cope-with-higher-shale-output>

- **Yemen on the brink of famine: \$2 billion in aid desperately needed, says UN**

Yemen could be on the brink of famine, the UN warned on Wednesday, as the organisation made a plea for \$2.1 billion from the international community for aid to feed desperate Yemenis. "Two years of war have devastated Yemen and millions of children, women and men desperately need our help," warned UN humanitarian aid chief Stephen O'Brien in a statement.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/yemen-brink-famine-2-billion-aid-desperately-needed-says-un-935326>

- **Unclarity surrounds Sanaa position over US role in Yemen**

While some news agencies reported that Sanaa suspended any counterterrorism operations in Yemen with the US government, subsequent reports suggested that it did not, as evident from a statement issued by Yemen's UN ambassador. For its part, Arab News tried to get comment from the Yemeni government's spokesperson who received our question but did not reply as to what his government's actual position is.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1051571/middle-east>

- **Tehran, Hezbollah behind Syria upheaval: Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia has blamed Iran and Hezbollah's intervention in Syria for complicating matters and hindering the efforts aiming for a peaceful solution. In a joint press conference on Wednesday with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu, Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir said: "Our goal is to keep Syria's unity and help the nation restore its security and stability so that the Syrian people could start a country that meets their aspirations."

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1051576/middle-east>

7. EGYPT

- **Egypt: Workers Charged over Protests**

Egyptian prosecutors should drop all charges against at least 26 workers who were arrested and charged in recent months in connection with peaceful strikes and protests, Human Rights Watch said today. The parliament should also revise a new trade unions draft law to fully legalize independent unions and amend penal code provisions that criminalize the right to organize and strike.

More Details:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/02/09/egypt-workers-charged-over-protests>

- **Egypt's Foreign Ministry backs Trump's attack on western media**

Egypt's Foreign Ministry praised a statement from the White House criticizing western media for underreporting on 78 terrorist acts. The White House statement comes amid an on-going campaign by newly-elected President Donald Trump on American media.

More Details:

<http://www.madamasr.com/en/2017/02/08/news/u/egypts-foreign-ministry-backs-trumps-media-attack/>

- **Egypt to hold international tender for Iron and Steel restructuring in 6 weeks**

Egypt will hold an international tender for restructuring one of the country's largest public companies, Egyptian Iron and Steel Company (HADISOLB) within six weeks, minister of public sector affairs announced Tuesday. HADISOLB refurbishment plan includes a financial reform by increasing its capital through loans or current shareholders, and technical restructuring to outline the company's upgrading production needs, Minister Ashraf El-Sharkawy said in a press conference following a tour to the company's factory.

More Details:

<http://en.amwalalghad.com/investment-news/industry-trade/54859-egypt-to-hold-international-tender-for-iron-and-steel-restructuring-in-6-weeks.html>

- **Report: World Bank policies in Egypt may exacerbate climate change**

The World Bank's development policies are contributing to increased carbon emissions in Egypt and exacerbating risk for some of the country's most vulnerable communities, according to a report recently issued by the Bank Information Center (BIC), a non-profit NGO that monitors the policies of the World Bank, along with those of regional development banks.

More Details:

<http://www.madamasr.com/en/2017/02/08/feature/economy/report-world-bank-policies-in-egypt-may-exacerbate-climate-change/>

- **The Trials of the Egyptian Pound**

Egypt agreed with the International Monetary Fund on November 11, 2016, for a \$12 billion loan in exchange for a series of economic reforms. These have already fundamentally transformed the Egyptian economy, particularly and most recognizably, depreciating the Egyptian pound against the U.S. dollar. The reforms package won praise at home and abroad for its foreign exchange market liberalization. Yet this move, which allows the price of the Egyptian pound to be determined by market forces instead of the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE), resulted in the pound-to-dollar exchange rate falling from EGP 8.88 to the dollar in early November to more than EGP 19.50 by late December.

More Details:

<http://seekingalpha.com/article/4044162-trials-egyptian-pound>

- **Deutsche Hospitality adds 2 hotels in Egypt to management portfolio**

Deutsche Hospitality has extended its portfolio by taking over two more hotels in Egypt. The Taba Hotel and Nelson Village in Taba and the Cairo Pyramids Hotel in Gizeh with immediate effect strengthen the company's presence in the country as it continues to expand. Cairo Pyramids Hotel offers 304 rooms as well as spectacular views of the Pyramids of Gizeh.

More Details:

<http://en.amwalalghad.com/business/real-estate/54867-deutsche-hospitality-adds-2-hotels-in-egypt-to-management-portfolio.html>

- **Egypt says Israeli settler law undermines two-state solution, impedes peace process**

Egypt has said a new Israeli law that retroactively legalises thousands of settler homes built on privately owned Palestinian land harms prospects for a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli crisis. The law, which the Israeli parliament passed on Monday, has faced a flurry of international criticism from countries including Britain, France and neighbouring Jordan, as well as the United Nations.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/257791/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-says-Israeli-settler-law-undermines-twostate.aspx>

- **Sinai MPs call on families to suspend calls for strike**

Several tribes based in North Sinai's city of Al-Arish declared on Tuesday that they will launch a partial civil disobedience on 11 February, not paying electricity and water bills. They further called to hold a conference on 25 February to discuss escalation of the strike. According to a statement from the Popular Committee inside Al-Arish, the civil-disobedience is in response to not revealing circumstances behind the security raid that targeted ten alleged militants in January. Their families claim that five of them were the sons of tribe members and had been detained a long time ago.

More Details:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/02/08/614959/>

- **Egypt's Parliament to discuss cabinet reshuffle on Sunday**

Prime Minister Sherif Ismail said he is concluding preparations for the anticipated cabinet reshuffle and will give a detailed presentation to the Parliament on February 12. Sources within the government said the prime minister's instructions suspended all travel, conferences and seminars for cabinet ministers until the reshuffle is announced.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com//news/egypt-s-parliament-discuss-cabinet-reshuffle-sunday>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Horchani calls for increased co-operation with Algeria**

National Defence Minister Farhat Horchani, on Wednesday, pointed to the development of security and military co-ordination between Tunisia and Algeria due to the terrorist threats that weigh on both countries.

More details:

<http://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/8695080-horchani-calls-for>

- **Parliamentary cooperation between Algeria, France is “excellent”**

The parliamentary cooperation between Algeria and France is “excellent” said Wednesday, in Algiers, the president of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French National Assembly, Elisabeth Guigou.

More details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/16593-parliamentary-cooperation-between-algeria,-france-is-%E2%80%9Cexcellent%E2%80%9D>

- **EU reaches out to Russia to broker deal with Libyan general Haftar**

European diplomats are attempting a last-ditch effort to dissuade Russia from helping the renegade military strongman Khalifa Haftar seize overall military power in Libya.

More details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/09/eu-russia-broker-libya-khalifa-haftar-libya-tobruk>

- **Libyan Presidency Council leader visits Ankara with economy, security, energy on agenda**

The head of the Libyan Presidency Council Fayez Mustafa Al-Sarraj arrived in Ankara yesterday where he met with Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım to discuss counterterrorism, energy and economic development between Turkey and Libya as well as the political process under the Libyan Presidency Council.

More details:

<http://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2017/02/09/libyan-presidency-council-leader-visits-ankara-with-economy-security-energy-on-agenda>

- **Tobruk govt says Libya-Italy migrant accord 'null and void'**

The Tobruk-based Libyan House of Representatives said Wednesday that it considers a recent Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Italian prime minister Paolo Gentiloni and Chairman of the Presidential Council of Libya Fayez Al-Serraj to be null and void.

More details:

http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/politics/2017/02/08/tobruk-govt-says-libya-italy-migrant-accord-null-and-void_b792f498-16d6-467d-817e-e41989e1ac14.html

- **Morocco agrees to help South Sudan build new capital city**

The Kingdom of Morocco has agreed to help the recently independent republic of South Sudan to build a new capital city.

More details:

<http://www.globalconstructionreview.com/news/morocco-agrees-help-south-su7dan-b7uild-n7ew/>

- **Italian MPs urge Europe to help Tunisia meet challenges**

Italian parliamentarians unanimously praised the Tunisian experience which they called unique, urging Europe to help Tunisia cope with the various challenges and risks. This was during the meeting held on Wednesday in the Italian Senate

More details:

<http://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/8695089-italian-mps-urge>

- **Moroccan House of Representatives' Autumn Session to End Monday**

The HR's council announced the termination in a communiqué, saying that it will hold a public meeting this Monday, February 13 at 3 PM.

More details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/02/207669/moroccan-house-representatives-autumn-session-end-monday/>

- **Libyan army and police must be empowered Kobler tells UN Security Council**

Narrow interests drive many of Libya's armed groups and there must consensus on the future command of a united Libyan army, UN special envoy Martin Kobler has told the Security Council today. Whilst the formation of the Presidential Guard was a positive step, he added, it was merely a transitional measure and had to be integrated into a combined Libyan army.

More details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/02/08/no-alternative-to-empower-libyan-army-and-police-kobler-tells-un-security-council/>

- **Moroccan envoy says prospects present for co-op with SOCAR**

There are broad prospects for cooperation with the Azerbaijani state oil company SOCAR on the project to construct a gas pipeline from Nigeria to Morocco, said Mohamed Adil Ambarch, Moroccan ambassador to Azerbaijan.

More details:

<http://en.trend.az/business/energy/2718758.html>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **ISIS leaders Omar Sadiq and Omar Farooq killed in East of Afghanistan**

Two senior ISIS leaders were killed along with nine other militants during separate airstrikes in eastern Nangarhar province of Afghanistan.

More details:

<http://www.khaama.com/isis-leaders-omar-sadiq-and-omar-farooq-killed-in-east-of-afghanistan-02843>

- **Afghan Red Cross pauses aid after 'despicable' attack**

The Red Cross is pausing its work in Afghanistan following a recent attack on its workers, which the aid agency called "despicable". Six workers were killed in an ambush of their convoy on Wednesday by suspected militants. Two others are missing.

More details:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-38912482>

- **Trump Administration Reaffirms Afghan Mission**

Afghanistan was missing from the list of U.S. election campaign issues, but while condemning Tuesday's deadly attack in Kabul, White House spokesperson Sean Spicer said National Security Adviser Michael Flynn has reaffirmed to his Afghan counterpart "our continued support for Afghanistan and for our strategic partnership."

More details:

<http://www.voanews.com/a/trump-administration-reaffirms-afghan-mission/3715114.html>

- **Afghan refugees' status extended until end of year**

Pakistani cabinet decides to push back Afghan refugees' legal right to stay in the country from March 31 to end of 2017.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/02/afghan-refugees-status-extended-year-170207180402885.html>

- **Karzai blames “enemies of Afghans” for Kabul attack**

Hamid Karzai, the former president, “strongly” condemned Tuesday’s suicide attack in Kabul, calling it against all human and Islamic principle carried out by the enemies of Afghanistan.

More details:

<http://afghanistantimes.af/karzai-blames-enemies-of-afghans-for-kabul-attack/>

- **Punjab elections 2017: Re-poll begins in five districts**

Voting in 48 polling stations in five districts in Punjab began on Thursday morning following re-polling announced by the Election Commission (EC).

More details:

<http://www.newsx.com/national/55341-punjab-elections-2017-re-poll-begins-in-five-districts>

- **Suspected terrorist may be in ISI custody, police tells IHC**

A suspected terrorist affiliated with the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), wanted by the anti-terrorism courts (ATC) in the assassinations of minorities affairs minister Shahbaz Bhatti and a Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) special prosecutor, may be in the custody of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).

More details:

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1313627/suspected-terrorist-may-be-in-isi-custody-police-tells-ihc>

- **Beneficial Pak-Afghan ties must for stability in region: Sartaj**

Adviser to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz has said Pakistan had a strong desire to strengthen its relations with its neighbouring countries and it attached special emphasis to Pak-Afghan ties.

More details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/185079-Beneficial-Pak-Afghan-ties-must-for-stability-in-region-Sartaj>

- **Taliban Leader Killed in Afghan Security Operation in Kabul**

Afghan Ministry of Defense said the local Taliban leader Rahim Gul was killed with his two fighters in Surobi district, Khaama Press reported.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951120001795>

- **ECP sends notices to lawmakers over asset details**

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has completed audit of the statements of assets and liabilities of 85 members of the National Assembly (MNAs) and sent notices to a majority of them, asking them to rectify discrepancies in their papers within two weeks.

More details:

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1313666/ecp-sends-notices-to-lawmakers-over-asset-details>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkey 'delivering on its promise' to resettle refugees**

A European Commission report on Wednesday said “further efforts” were needed by member states to relocate refugees and asylum seekers across the bloc. The progress report also said the number of resettlements from Turkey under the EU-Turkey Statement continued to increase. However, European Commission Vice-President Frans Timmermans, speaking to reporters in Brussels, criticized the bloc for only admitting around 12,000 Syrians from the 160,000 that was promised.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/184468/turkey-running-study-to-open-more-hospitals-in-syria>

- **Turkey 'running study to open more hospitals in Syria'**

Turkey has maintained its aid to Aleppans in northern Syria, long after the evacuation of the war-torn city, the head of the Turkish Red Crescent told Anadolu Agency on Thursday. Kerem Kinik said the Turkish Ministry of Health was running a feasibility study to open two more new hospitals in Idlib and Azaz, along the same lines as a facility set up by Turkey in the liberated area of Jarabulus.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/health/turkey-running-study-to-open-more-hospitals-in-syria/744712>

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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