



# MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

## GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

**Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries**

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

**The Restructuring Procees 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

**MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN**

**13 OCTOBER 2017**

**NO: 2461**

<b>1. IRAQ.....</b>	<b>4</b>
• President Meets US Ambassador To Iraq.....	4
• Agency: Iraqi PM Abadi orders halt of military push towards Kirkuk .....	4
• A rare look inside the 'heart of society' for Iraq's Shi'ites.....	4
• Masum continues efforts to mend Erbil-Baghdad crisis – PUK leader.....	4
• Iraq: Hawijah offensive pushes nearly 14,000 people to neighbouring districts.....	5
• Top US ground commander all but declares victory over ISIS in Iraq .....	5
• Iraq refuses talks with Kurds unless they commit to unity .....	5
• Iraq tensions rise after Kurds warn of attack .....	6
• Kurds offer talks with Iraq over airport, banks ban.....	6
• Threat of new civil war in Iraq overshadows recent successes against Islamic State.....	6
• IOM Community Centres Engage Iraq's Displaced, Returnees and Host Communities in Peacebuilding .....	7
• Kurds deploy thousands of peshmerga in Kirkuk fearing Iraq attack.....	7
• Iraq will not use army against inhabitants of Kurdistan Region.....	7
• EU assists stabilisation of Iraq .....	8
• Aspen Medical opens third trauma hospital in war-torn Iraq.....	8
• Iraq PM attempts to defuse tensions with Kurds.....	8
• Army downs Peshmerga drone in N. Iraq: Military source .....	8
• Iraq army launches operation to retake Kirkuk from Erbil.....	9
<b>2. SYRIA.....</b>	<b>9</b>
• Suicide attacks kill Deir Az Zor refugees and Kurds.....	9
• ISIS recruiter 'White Widow' believed dead after US strike in Syria .....	9
• ISIS in serious trouble as Syrian Army troops tighten siege on Al-Mayadeen .....	10
• Most Russians support continuing Syria aid after war ends .....	10
• Lavrov calls on US to explain coalition's behavior in Syria .....	10
• IS attacks kill at least 50 in east Syria .....	10
• US Daesh fighter in Syria poses dilemma for White House .....	11
• Russian military says nearly 92% of Syria freed from ISIS terrorists .....	11
• UNICEF: 140,000 Doses of Vaccines Destroyed in Syria's al-Mayadin .....	11
• China, a privileged partner in Syria's reconstruction .....	12
<b>3. IRAN.....</b>	<b>12</b>
• Trump defies world leaders as he blasts Iran deal.....	12
• 'It's become a monster': is Iran's revolutionary guard a terror group? .....	12
• Trump to rebuke Iran but won't call for sanctions that threaten nuclear deal .....	13
• Iran nuclear deal: Trump poised to withdraw support .....	13
• Trump's Iran plans driving EU toward Russia and China: Germany .....	13
• The conservative case to keep the Iran deal.....	13
• What Trump's move on Iran means for the US and the world .....	14
• Trump set to break with allies and go it alone on Iran .....	14

• CIA Director Pompeo Lashes Out at Iran, Compares It to ISIS .....	14
• Trump to force GOP reckoning on Iran .....	14
<b>4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE.....</b>	<b>15</b>
• Palestinian Rivals Fatah, Hamas sign Reconciliation Accord .....	15
• Theresa May should give Netanyahu a piece of her mind – Thatcher would have .....	15
• What Is Behind the Hamas-Fatah Reconciliation? .....	15
• Israeli-Palestinian Issue Back in Spotlight after US Leaves UNESCO .....	16
• Israel Responds With Restraint to Palestinian Unity: 'We'll Follow Developments and Act Accordingly' .....	16
• U.S. Quits United Nations body UNESCO accusing it of anti-Israeli bias for letting Palestine be a member and calling Israel 'occupying power' .....	16
• Hamas: Unity deal is so we can all 'work together against Zionist enterprise' .....	17
• Speakers discuss Israeli-Palestinian environmental cooperation at Lunch & Learn .....	17
• Attack on UN agency exposes Israeli charge of Palestinian 'incitement' .....	17
• With Unprecedented Chaos in Washington, Israel Sets New Red Lines over Iran in Syria.....	18
<b>5. JORDAN and LEBANON.....</b>	<b>18</b>
• Jordan: Jews on Temple Mount are a 'provocation' to Muslims .....	18
• German troops begin duty in Jordan amid ongoing immunity row over Sharia .....	18
• Jordan, Cyprus discuss economic cooperation .....	18
• Bids on Lebanon offshore energy blocks close .....	19
• Tax increase puts spotlight on Lebanon's miserable finances .....	19
• Hariri Discusses Syrian Crisis Impact with Pope Francis.....	19
• Hamas Can Achieve the Right to Work for Palestinians in Lebanon by Reconciling With Fatah and Iran .....	20
• New deal on work permits helps Syrian refugees in Jordan .....	20
<b>6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA.....</b>	<b>20</b>
• The Agreement between Saudi Arabia and Russia – Analysis.....	20
• FCA chief admits to meeting Saudi Aramco ahead of £1.5 trillion float .....	21
• Saudi group provides \$710m in aid to Yemen .....	21
• Rohingya crisis: Is there a Saudi role? .....	21
• Top Growth Opportunities: Confectionery in Saudi Arabia .....	21
• Congress, end America's role in Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen.....	22
• Egypt and Qatar in diplomatic tiff over Gulf support for UNESCO candidates .....	22
• Qatar Leads Race to Head UNESCO, Arab States Work to Thwart Bid as Diplomatic Row Continues.....	22
• Qatar's Iran leap will lose it long-term leverage .....	23
• Bahrain opens door to Italian investors .....	23
<b>7. EGYPT.....</b>	<b>23</b>
• Appeal court overturns Ahmed Douma's life sentence, orders retrial .....	23
• Coptic priest killed in stabbing incident in Cairo outskirts .....	24
• Egypt extends its state of emergency .....	24
• Egypt, Russia broker cease-fire in southern Damascus.....	24
• Egypt accepts leading activist's appeal of life sentence.....	24
• Egypt court orders retrial of 2011 key activist .....	25



ORTADOĞU STRATEJİK ARAŞTIRMALAR MERKEZİ  
CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STRATEGIC STUDIES  
مركز الشرق الأوسط للدراسات الاستراتيجية

• China withdraws candidate for UNESCO chief in favor of Egypt's Moushira Khattab .....	25
• Egypt arrests prominent columnist .....	25
• Armed attack kills six soldiers in Egypt's Sinai - army .....	25
• Egypt non-oil imports increase 11% increase in first 8 months of 2017 .....	26
<b>8. NORTH AFRICA.....</b>	<b>26</b>
• Algerian Christian on hunger strike after being jailed for blasphemy .....	26
• Algerian opposition warns of holding on to President in light of his health .....	26
• Protests-erupt-in-Tunisia-over-migrant-boat-tragedy .....	27
• Tunisia's economy to grow 2.3% at end 2017 and 3% in 2018 (IMF) .....	27
• Ministry of Women calls on journalists to respect children's dignity .....	27
• Russia and Morocco signed a Memorandum of understanding in the field of agriculture .....	27
• International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation and National Company of Transports and Logistics in bid to bridge Morocco, Sub Sahara Africa gap .....	28
• WTO meet in Morocco: Suresh Prabhu seeks permanent solution to world food security .....	28
• News Analysis: Libya still caught in economic crisis despite increase in oil production .....	28
• Libyan Oil Output Covers 25% Of 2017 Budget Needs.....	29
• NOC proposes how it should be protected and funded.....	29
<b>9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN .....</b>	<b>29</b>
• U.S. Woman and Family Freed After 5 Years in Captivity in Afghanistan .....	29
• Daniel Ellsberg calls on whistleblowers to leak info on Afghanistan, Iraq & North Korea.....	30
• EU Putting Thousands of Lives at Risk with Illegal Deportations to Afghanistan.....	30
• Karzai warns of growing US-Russia rivalry in Afghanistan .....	30
• Blaming Islamabad for security failures in Afghanistan is insulting: Pak Minister .....	31
• Army Jawan, civilian killed, six injured in Pakistan shelling along loc .....	31
• SCO- Afghanistan Contact Group Meeting, Moscow (October 11, 2017).....	31
• India calls for action on Pakistan-N Korea nuclear-missile links .....	32
• Pakistan Electoral Body Bars Political Party Due to Terror Ties .....	32
• Pakistan Should End Child Marriage.....	32
<b>10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST.....</b>	<b>32</b>
• Turkish troops enter northern Syria in new operation .....	32
• Main force of Turkish troops enter Syria's Idlib .....	33
• Turkey: Syrian jet pilot released from custody .....	33

## 1. IRAQ

- **President Meets US Ambassador To Iraq**

US Ambassador to Iraq Douglas Silliman confirmed his country's commitment to support Iraq in its fight against terrorism. "The United States is keen to help the Iraqis in their quest to consolidate stability and confront the challenges that stand in the way of developing the political process," Silliman said during a meeting with President Fuad Masum at the Salam Palace in Baghdad.

More Details:

[http://www.ninanews.com/News\\_Details.aspx?IiITMUJqy94Jhvhml0NPZg%253d%253d](http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?IiITMUJqy94Jhvhml0NPZg%253d%253d)

- **Agency: Iraqi PM Abadi orders halt of military push towards Kirkuk**

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi ordered Friday to halt security troops advancement towards areas evacuated by Kurdish Peshmerga troops in Kirkuk, hours after he denied intentions for an invasion of the province. Russian Sputnik agency reported that Abadi ordered to halt the entry of security forces into Kirkuk for 48 hours after Peshmerga lowered their flags and emptied their barracks in Taza and Bashir villages.

More Details:

<https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/agency-iraqi-pm-abadi-orders-halt-military-push-towards-kirkuk/>

- **A rare look inside the 'heart of society' for Iraq's Shi'ites**

For more than 1,000 years, the al-Hawza al-Ilmiyya south of Baghdad has been one of the hearts of Shi'ite Islamic scholarship, training the clerics who lead Shi'ite communities across the Muslim world. Thousands of students, from teenage boys to university graduates, study Islam at its schools in the holy cities of Najaf and Kerbala.

More Details:

[http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En\\_NewsReader/d0511417-7d22-4b5d-9681-a2cc4640900f](http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/d0511417-7d22-4b5d-9681-a2cc4640900f)

- **Masum continues efforts to mend Erbil-Baghdad crisis – PUK leader**

Iraq's President Fuad Masum continues his efforts for a dialogue between Erbil and Baghdad to end the current crisis, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) leader Adnan al-Mufti said on Friday. In a press statement, Mufti said that Masum is working hard to find a solution to the current crisis, so both sides can start negotiations.

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/18184/Masum-continues-efforts-to-mend-Erbil-Baghdad-crisis-PUK-leader>

- **Iraq: Hawijah offensive pushes nearly 14,000 people to neighbouring districts**

The offensive on the district of Hawijah has forcibly displaced nearly 14,000 people to towns in neighbouring districts of Kirkuk governorate, northern Iraq, where Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is witnessing them arriving in urgent need of care. On arrival at the so-called entry points, 25 kilometres north and 40 kilometres east of Hawijah's centre, people urgently need shelter, medical care and food. Between the start of the offensive, on 21 September, and 5 October, an estimated 14,000 people arrived at Debis checkpoint, Daquq camps for displaced people, and Maktab Khalid entry point.

More Details:

<https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/iraq-hawijah-offensive-pushes-nearly-14000-people-neighbouring-districts>

- **Top US ground commander all but declares victory over ISIS in Iraq**

Increasingly desperate Islamic State fighters in Iraq are in full retreat and showing other signs of giving up in the face of a relentless campaign by Iraqi forces, backed by coalition airpower, the top U.S. military land commander in Iraq said Thursday. "The Iraqis are winning. To use a sports analogy they are 7 and 0," said Maj. Gen. Robert White, the Combined Joint Forces Land Component commander.

More Details:

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/top-us-ground-commander-all-but-declares-victory-over-isis-in-iraq/article/2637306>

- **Iraq refuses talks with Kurds unless they commit to unity**

The Iraqi government said on Thursday it would not hold talks with the Kurdish autonomous region on reopening its airports and providing dollars for its banks, unless the Kurds commit to "Iraq's unity". Iraq's central government imposed a ban on direct international flights to the autonomous Kurdish region after the Kurds held a Sept 25 referendum on independence, which Baghdad says was illegal. It is calling for its neighbors to shut the landlocked region's borders.

More Details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-kurds-referendum-iraq/iraq-refuses-talks-with-kurds-unless-they-commit-to-unity->

[idUSKBN1CH0N6?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+Reuters%2FworldNews+%28Reuters+World+News%29&&rpc=401](http://idUSKBN1CH0N6?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Reuters%2FworldNews+%28Reuters+World+News%29&&rpc=401)

- **Iraq tensions rise after Kurds warn of attack**

Tensions escalated between Iraq's Kurds and Baghdad on Thursday as warnings of a "major attack" by government forces prompted Kurdish peshmerga fighters to temporarily block roads from other parts of the country. The move came just over two weeks after Kurdish voters overwhelmingly backed independence in a non-binding referendum the central government slammed as illegal. Iraqi Kurdish forces closed the two main roads connecting Irbil and Dohuk with Mosul for several hours, a Kurdish military official said.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1176511/middle-east>

- **Kurds offer talks with Iraq over airport, banks ban**

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) offered to hold talks with Iraqi authorities on the status of Kurdish airports, border posts and banks, on which they placed restrictions following an independence referendum. Baghdad took the measures in an attempt to isolate the KRG after last month's referendum. The government in Baghdad, which declared the vote illegal, imposed a ban on direct international flights to the northern region. It also demanded that the KRG hand over control of its border posts, and stopped selling dollars to four Kurdish-owned banks.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/fc3886a6-5682-4750-8953-31d56a93f77e.aspx>

- **Threat of new civil war in Iraq overshadows recent successes against Islamic State**

Coalition forces in Iraq are reporting faster-than-expected progress against the so-called Islamic State, though that success has been marred by fears that a new civil war is brewing in the country. The Iraqi military declared Tuesday that it had regained control of the town Hawija and the surrounding area after three weeks of fighting, eliminating ISIL's last major stronghold in Iraq.

More Details:

<https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/threat-of-new-civil-war-in-iraq-overshadows-recent-successes-against-islamic-state/article36574285/>

- **IOM Community Centres Engage Iraq's Displaced, Returnees and Host Communities in Peacebuilding**

As Iraq recovers from years of conflict and widespread displacement, support is required not only to repair damaged physical infrastructure, but also to strengthen social relations. There are 3.2 million internally displaced persons in Iraq due to the current conflict, as well as 2.2 million displaced who returned to their place of origin. While host communities have shown remarkable hospitality towards displaced people, over-stretched resources strain social relations, and even the most resilient communities have been affected by occupation and conflict.

More Details:

<http://www.iom.int/news/iom-community-centres-engage-iraqs-displaced-returnees-and-host-communities-peacebuilding>

- **Kurds deploy thousands of peshmerga in Kirkuk fearing Iraq attack**

Kurdish authorities deployed thousands of fighters around the disputed oil city of Kirkuk on Friday for fear of an attack by Iraqi government troops and militia, a senior official said. "Thousands of heavily armed peshmerga units are now completely in their positions around Kirkuk," a top aide to Kurdistan regional president Masoud Barzani said on Twitter. "Their order is to defend at any cost," Hemin Hawrami said.

More Details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/kurds-deploy-thousands-peshmerga-kirkuk-fearing-iraq-attack-998810128>

- **Iraq will not use army against inhabitants of Kurdistan Region**

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi said that the country's armed forces will not be used against the people of the northern Kurdistan region, where on Monday, September 25, over 92% of residents voted for autonomy from Baghdad in a referendum that was not initially recognized as central authorities and other countries. "We will not use our army against our own people or wage war against our Kurdish citizens," said al-Abadi during an expanded meeting on strengthening stability in the southwestern Iraqi province of Anbar.

More Details:

<https://frontnews.eu/news/en/15405/Iraq-will-not-use-army-against-inhabitants-of-Kurdistan-Region>

- **EU assists stabilisation of Iraq**

To support Iraq after the liberation of areas held by Islamic State (known also by its Arabic acronym Da'esh), the European Commission on October 12 announced the adoption of a €60.4m stabilisation package. This new funding comes in addition to EU humanitarian aid in the country and other forms of financial assistance that now total €608.4m since the beginning of the crisis.

More Details:

<https://www.neweurope.eu/article/eu-assists-stabilisation-iraq/>

- **Aspen Medical opens third trauma hospital in war-torn Iraq**

A Canberra-based international medical firm has opened a new trauma hospital in southern Iraq, the third hospital it has set up in the war ravaged country. The World Health Organisation commissioned Aspen Medical to urgently establish the 20-bed facility, only weeks after the Canberra company handed one of its facilities over to the Iraqi government.

More Details:

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/aspen-medical-opens-third-trauma-hospital-in-wartorn-iraq-20171012-gytc90.html>

- **Iraq PM attempts to defuse tensions with Kurds**

Iraq's prime minister on Thursday denied an attack on the Kurds was imminent, in a bid to defuse tensions that had prompted Kurdish peshmerga fighters to temporarily seal off road links with the rest of the country. "We are not going to use our army to fight our people or to make war on our Kurdish citizens or others," Prime Minister Haider Al Abadi said. "Our duty is to preserve the unity of our country, to implement the constitution, and to protect citizens and national forces," he told a meeting of tribal leaders from the western province of Anbar.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/ab5e2172-33dd-440b-af05-56ed95e85463.aspx>

- **Army downs Peshmerga drone in N. Iraq: Military source**

The Iraqi army has downed a drone belonging to Kurdish Peshmerga forces -- loyal to the Erbil-based Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) -- in Iraq's northern Nineveh province, an army officer said Thursday. "Army forces downed the drone near Al-Salamiyah village in the Nimrud district southeast of Mosul," Army Captain Bassam Saad told Anadolu Agency.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/news/194903/army-downs-peshmerga-drone-in-n-iraq-military-source>

- **Iraq army launches operation to retake Kirkuk from Erbil**

Iraqi troops launched operations on Friday to retake Kurdish-held positions in the disputed oil province of Kirkuk as tensions soar after an independence vote last month, a general told AFP. "Iraqi armed force are advancing to retake their military positions that were taken over during the events of June 2014," the general told AFP by telephone, asking not to be identified.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/128568/iraq-army-launches-operation-to-retake-Kirkuk-from-Erbil>

## 2. SYRIA

- **Suicide attacks kill Deir Az Zor refugees and Kurds**

ISIL suicide attackers have killed dozens of people, including Syrian refugees and Kurdish security personnel, with car bombs in northeastern Syria, according to multiple sources. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said Thursday's attack took place at Abu Fas, near the border of Deir Az Zor and Hasaka provinces, and the dead included refugees as well as members of the Kurdish Asayish security force.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/suicide-attacks-refugees-deir-az-zor-refugees-171012223403045.html>

- **ISIS recruiter 'White Widow' believed dead after US strike in Syria**

Jones, 50, a mother of two, who used to be a punk rock artist but later converted to Islam and fled to Syria to become a top recruiter for the Islamic State group, was reportedly killed in June during a drone strike near the border between Syria and Iraq. "The Americans zapped her trying to get away from Raqqa. Quite frankly, it's good riddance," a British source familiar with the strike told the Sun, which first reported Jones' death.

More details:

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2017/10/12/top-british-isis-recruiter-white-widow-believed-to-be-dead-after-us-strike-in-syria.html>

- **ISIS in serious trouble as Syrian Army troops tighten siege on Al-Mayadeen**

The Syrian Arab Army (SAA) made significant progress inside the strategic city of Al-Mayadeen, Thursday, liberating several districts that were occupied by the Islamic State (ISIS). Led by the elite Tiger Forces, the Syrian Arab Army managed to liberate the Al-Rashadeh District of Al-Mayadeen after a day-long battle inside the city.

More details:

<https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/isis-serious-trouble-syrian-army-troops-tighten-siege-al-mayadeen/>

- **Most Russians support continuing Syria aid after war ends**

Research conducted by the state-run VTSIOM agency showed that 73 percent of Russians consider it necessary to continue helping Syria after the end of the war. An even larger share of respondents – 75 percent – said they would like to see Russia continue sending humanitarian aid to Syria. Forty-five percent said that Russia’s main ally in the Middle East should receive military-technical help and 44 percent backed diplomatic support. Just under a quarter – 22 percent – said that simple monetary aid would be preferable.

More details:

<https://www.rt.com/politics/406465-most-russians-support-aiding-syria/>

- **Lavrov calls on US to explain coalition’s behavior in Syria**

Moscow expects Washington to give a definite answer on the US-led coalition’s actions near Syria’s al-Tanf and the Iraqi-Syrian border, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Thursday. “We often ask about these issues via the channels between the military, this is the main channel to clarify any doubts and suspicions,” TASS quoted Lavrov as saying. “I expect that the military, as people who are precise and business-minded, will get definite answers to their questions from the American partners.” On Wednesday, Russian military cited cases when Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS/ISIL) terrorists freely infiltrated the US-controlled zone and seized humanitarian aid intended for local people.

More details:

<https://www.rt.com/newsline/406474-lavrov-us-coalition-syria/>

- **IS attacks kill at least 50 in east Syria**

Islamic State suicide attackers have killed at least 50 people in a triple car bomb attack among a group of refugees in northeast Syria, a medical source in the Kurdish Red Crescent says. A large number of people were also injured in Thursday's attack, the source said. The attack took place at

Abu Fas, near the border of Deir al-Zor and Hasaka provinces, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor said, after earlier saying at least 18 people had died.

More details:

<http://www.news.com.au/world/breaking-news/is-attacks-kill-at-least-50-in-east-syria/news-story/fb38e75c0e9af4dc2cac3023f37f7ba3>

- **US Daesh fighter in Syria poses dilemma for White House**

On 12 September an American member who was allegedly fighting with Daesh in Syria surrendered to the Syrian Democratic Forces and was handed over to the United States' military custody in Iraq. The Department of Defence (DoD) is treating the fighter as an "enemy combatant". Whether the US decides to imprison him in Guantanamo Bay or fly him to US mainland to be tried in a civilian court is a major litmus test over the legality of the war against the Daesh group (or the Islamic State) in Syria, Iraq and beyond.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171013-us-daesh-fighter-in-syria-poses-dilemma-for-white-house/>

- **Russian military says nearly 92% of Syria freed from ISIS terrorists**

About 92 percent of Syria has been freed from Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS/ISIL) militants, TASS reports, citing weekly infographics published by the Russian Defense Ministry's Krasnaya Zvezda newspaper on Friday. The Russian Air Force performed about 517 combat sorties and destroyed over 1,260 facilities controlled by international terrorist groups in the past week, according to the Defense Ministry. This figure includes over 139 sorties by drones, which detected 129 terrorist-held objects.

More Details:

<https://www.rt.com/newsline/406555-syria-territory-russian-military/>

- **UNICEF: 140,000 Doses of Vaccines Destroyed in Syria's al-Mayadin**

The UN children's agency has received reports that a UNICEF-supported vaccine cold room in al-Mayadin district has been destroyed in ongoing violence in eastern Syria's Deir Ezzor, with at least 140,000 doses of vaccines lost. The report, which UNICEF regional director Geert Cappelaere said Thursday the agency is working to verify, is "alarming" and is likely to hamper an ongoing vaccination drive in the area. Al-Mayadin is the center of an outbreak of vaccine-derived polio which has so far paralyzed 48 children since March 2017.

More Details:

<https://english.aawsat.com/theaawsat/news-middle-east/unicef-140000-doses-vaccines-destroyed-syrias-al-mayadin>

- **China, a privileged partner in Syria's reconstruction**

As Syria edges towards peace, many investors and entrepreneurs around the world are beginning to consider the "golden" opportunities awaiting when the dust finally settles there. After nearly seven years of crushing war, Syria's economy has been seriously crippled, said to total about US\$226 billion in cumulative losses from 2011 until 2016 -- about four times the Syrian GDP in 2010 -- according to World Bank estimates in July.

More Details:

[http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2017-10/13/content\\_41726604.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2017-10/13/content_41726604.htm)

### 3. IRAN

- **Trump defies world leaders as he blasts Iran deal**

US President Donald Trump has repeated his criticism of the Iran nuclear deal, ahead of a crucial decision that could make or break the two-year-old international agreement. On Wednesday, Trump again called the agreement between Iran and six world powers "the worst deal" the US has ever signed.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/trump-defies-world-leaders-blasts-iran-deal-171012071043886.html>

- **'It's become a monster': is Iran's revolutionary guard a terror group?**

Soon after the Shah of Iran was forced from power in 1979, a small group of the uprising's young leaders suggested the creation of a national guard, tasked with preserving the new Islamic revolution and counterbalancing the country's conventional military. Ayatollah Khomeini, the charismatic cleric who soon became the country's supreme leader, hesitated to call the members of the new force "guards", fearing the word was too close to the French word widely used to refer to the ousted monarch's elite personal force.

More details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/12/its-become-a-monster-is-irans-revolutionary-guard-a-terror-group>

- **Trump to rebuke Iran but won't call for sanctions that threaten nuclear deal**

Donald Trump is expected to disavow the Iran nuclear deal in a speech on Friday denouncing the government in Tehran, but he will not call for the US to abandon the agreement, according to officials briefed on the president's intentions. European officials expressed relief that the White House speech did not appear to represent a US abrogation of the 2015 deal.

More details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/oct/12/trump-iran-nuclear-deal-speech-white-house>

- **Iran nuclear deal: Trump poised to withdraw support**

US President Donald Trump is expected to withdraw backing from the nuclear accord with Iran on Friday and lay out a more confrontational strategy. The move would not withdraw the US from the deal but give Congress 60 days to decide whether to do so by re-imposing sanctions.

More details:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-41605412>

- **Trump's Iran plans driving EU toward Russia and China: Germany**

German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel has spoken out repeatedly against Trump's likely step, but his latest comments aimed to spell out the impact it would have in starker terms. "It's imperative that Europe sticks together on this issue," Gabriel, a Social Democrat, told the RND German newspaper group. "We also have to tell the Americans that their behavior on the Iran issue will drive us Europeans into a common position with Russia and China against the USA."

More details:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-trump-germany/trumps-iran-plans-driving-eu-toward-russia-and-china-germany-idUSKBN1CH2OK>

- **The conservative case to keep the Iran deal**

There was always a basic problem with the so-called Iran nuclear deal inked back in 2015 that was never going to be resolved: Washington and Tehran have vastly different interests across the Middle East. It was never going to be easy to somehow compartmentalize the relationship, to in some way come to terms over Iran's nuclear program but not resolve countless other issues that have always driven these two nations apart. And it could someday tear the deal to shreds. But sheer necessity dictates that now is not the time for such an action. In fact, I would argue a move by President Trump to 'decertify' the agreement is against America's national interests.

More details:

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2017/10/12/conservative-case-to-keep-iran-deal.html>

- **What Trump's move on Iran means for the US and the world**

But when he declares that it has not been in US interests, he will consign the proudest legacy achievement of President Barack Obama's second term to a deeply uncertain future -- and could even set off a train of consequences that could eventually lead to its collapse. Should that be the case, Trump, or one of his successors in the Oval Office, may one day face the fateful choice that the deal was supposed to circumvent -- whether to use military force to stop the Islamic Republic racing toward the bomb.

More details:

<http://edition.cnn.com/2017/10/13/politics/trump-iran-analysis/index.html>

- **Trump set to break with allies and go it alone on Iran**

US President Donald Trump is to unveil a new strategy on Iran amid concerns he may collapse the Iran nuclear deal or refuse to recertify that Iran is in compliance with an international nuclear agreement. The 2015 agreement was signed between Iran and six world powers - Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the US - at talks coordinated by the European Union.

More details:

<https://www.rte.ie/news/2017/1013/912033-iran/>

- **CIA Director Pompeo Lashes Out at Iran, Compares It to ISIS**

On the eve of President Trump's decision on the certification of the Iran nuclear deal, CIA Director Michael Pompeo lashed out Thursday at the Islamic Republic in a speech at the University of Texas, calling it "a thuggish police state" and a "despotic theocracy," and comparing its ambitions to those of ISIS. The hardline speech, delivered as the keynote at a national security forum in Austin sponsored by the university, is "setting the stage" for the Trump administration's announcement on the nuclear agreement, expected Friday afternoon, said one senior U.S. intelligence official.

More details:

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/mideast/cia-director-pompeo-lashes-out-iran-compares-it-isis-n810311>

- **Trump to force GOP reckoning on Iran**

Republicans in Congress will face a wrenching choice if President Trump follows through on decertifying the Iran nuclear deal. Decertification would unlock a fast-track procedure for Congress

to reimpose sanctions, leaving Republicans with two unappealing options. Snap back the sanctions, and Iran likely walks, killing an agreement that top administration officials say is in the national interest. Do nothing, and the deal likely stands, preserving a pact that Republicans have lambasted for years.

More details:

<http://thehill.com/policy/defense/355048-trump-to-force-gop-reckoning-on-iran>

## 4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Palestinian Rivals Fatah, Hamas sign Reconciliation Accord**

The rival parties' agreement on Thursday came after senior Hamas and Fatah delegations met in Cairo over for two days. "The two sides agreed to measures to enable the [PA] national unity government to undertake its full responsibilities in administrating the affairs of the Gaza Strip as it does in the West Bank," an official Egyptian statement published in PA media said.

More details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Palestinian-rivals-Fatah-Hamas-sign-reconciliation-accord-507279>

- **Theresa May should give Netanyahu a piece of her mind – Thatcher would have**

He has not yet confirmed that he is coming. But having warmly described Theresa May's invitation to visit Britain to commemorate the centenary of the Balfour declaration as "speaking volumes" about the UK-Israel relationship, the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, is unlikely to pass up the opportunity. The anniversary of Arthur Balfour's letter to Lord Rothschild announcing that "His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people" will be seen in very different ways.

More details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/oct/12/theresa-may-rethink-uk-attitudes-israeli-palestinian>

- **What Is Behind the Hamas-Fatah Reconciliation?**

Egypt's enthusiasm to arbitrate between feuding Palestinian factions, Hamas and Fatah, is not the outcome of a sudden awakening of conscience. Cairo has, in fact, played a destructive role in manipulating Palestinian division to its favor, while keeping the Rafah border crossing under lock and key. However, the Egyptian leadership is clearly operating in coordination with Israel and the United States. While the language emanating from Tel Aviv and Washington is quite guarded regarding the

ongoing talks between the two Palestinian parties, if read carefully, their political discourse is not entirely dismissive of the possibility of having Hamas join a unity government under Mahmoud Abbas' direction.

More details:

<http://www.palestinechronicle.com/what-is-behind-the-hamas-fatah-reconciliation/>

- **Israeli-Palestinian Issue Back in Spotlight after US Leaves UNESCO**

State Department officials on Thursday defended the U.S. decision to withdraw from UNESCO, citing the need to see real reform at the United Nations cultural agency. "We would like to see the politics kept out of it," State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert told reporters. "And we see with this anti-Israeli bias that is long documented on the part of UNESCO, that that needs to come to an end."

More details:

<https://www.voanews.com/a/israel-palestine-us-unesco/4068625.html>

- **Israel Responds With Restraint to Palestinian Unity: 'We'll Follow Developments and Act Accordingly'**

Israel avoided attacking the Palestinian reconciliation agreement reached Thursday between Hamas and Fatah, striking a diplomatic tone in its response. "Israel will follow developments on the ground and will act accordingly," officials from the Prime Minister's Office said. The response by was noticeably more restrained than that voiced by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office last week. "Any reconciliation between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas must meet the Quartet's conditions – accepting international agreements, recognizing Israel and disarming Hamas," the official said.

More details:

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.816937>

- **U.S. Quits United Nations body UNESCO accusing it of anti-Israeli bias for letting Palestine be a member and calling Israel 'occupying power'**

U.S. officials have told The Associated Press on Thursday that the United States is pulling out of UNESCO, after repeated criticism of resolutions by the U.N. cultural agency that Washington sees as anti-Israel. The U.S. stopped funding UNESCO after it voted to include Palestine as a member in 2011, but the State Department has maintained a UNESCO office at its Paris headquarters and sought to weigh in on policy behind the scenes.

More details:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4973814/US-pull-UNESCO-amid-Palestinian-tensions.html>

- **Hamas: Unity deal is so we can all ‘work together against Zionist enterprise’**

Hamas has signed a reconciliation agreement with the Fatah party of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in order that all Palestinian forces can “work together against the Zionist enterprise,” Saleh al-Arouri, the Hamas deputy political leader, said in Cairo on Thursday. Speaking after the agreement was signed, Arouri, who headed the Hamas delegation that negotiated the deal, said Palestinian unity was vital “so that we can all work together against the Zionist enterprise, which seeks to wipe out and trample the rights of our people.”

More details:

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-unity-deal-is-so-we-can-all-work-together-against-zionist-enterprise/>

- **Speakers discuss Israeli-Palestinian environmental cooperation at Lunch & Learn**

During Thursday’s installment of the Environmental Studies Lunch & Learn Program, three alumni of The Arava Institute for Environmental Studies — Eve Tendler, Shadi Shiha and Jacklyn Best — spoke about their work on transboundary water management in Israel and Palestine. The event, cosponsored by the Tufts Institute of the Environment, the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life and Friends of Israel, was held in the Rabb Room in Lincoln Filene Hall. About 40 people were in attendance.

More details:

<https://tuftsdaily.com/news/2017/10/13/speakers-discuss-israeli-palestinian-environmental-cooperation-lunch-learn/>

- **Attack on UN agency exposes Israeli charge of Palestinian ‘incitement’**

Last month saw yet another attack on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the body supporting Palestinian refugees in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and wider region. “New UNRWA textbooks for Palestinians demonize Israel and Jews” ran the headline in The Jerusalem Post on 28 September, in a piece on a new “study” funded, carried out and published by the Los Angeles-headquartered Simon Wiesenthal Centre, the anti-Islam, Daniel Pipes-led Middle East Forum, and the Jerusalem-based Centre for Near East Policy Research (CNEPR).

More details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171012-attack-on-un-agency-exposes-israeli-charge-of-palestinian-incitement/>

- **With Unprecedented Chaos in Washington, Israel Sets New Red Lines over Iran in Syria**

It is still the best show in town. Almost nine months have passed since Hurricane Donald hit Washington for the first time, and a little more than 11 months since Trump's victory in the U.S. presidential elections. Sometimes it seems the world has begun to get used to the daily dose of drama. The Twitter attacks in the early morning hours, the late accounting on Twitter when sleep tarries, the biweekly resignations of senior officials – it is easy to become addicted to the ceaseless action of the most irregular president in the history of the United States.

More details:

<https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/1.816730>

## 5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Jordan: Jews on Temple Mount are a 'provocation' to Muslims**

The Jordanian government condemned Israel for allowing Jews to visit the Temple Mount, calling it "irresponsible" and "provocative to Muslims around the world." Jordan's Minister of State for Media Affairs Mohammad Momani published a statement declaring Israel's actions "unacceptable." Israel, he said, is "provoking in an irresponsible fashion" Muslims around the world.

More Details:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/236637>

- **German troops begin duty in Jordan amid ongoing immunity row over Sharia**

Having withdrawn from Turkey's Incirlik Air Base, German troops have had to start operations in Jordan earlier this week without immunity from Sharia law as the German government has not been able to strike a deal with the Jordanian government to obtain immunity for their personnel. Negotiations between Germany and Jordan have been on the table for months, and a deal has not been reached so far regarding immunity of German personel...

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2017/10/13/german-troops-begin-duty-in-jordan-amid-ongoing-immunity-row-over-sharia>

- **Jordan, Cyprus discuss economic cooperation**

Jordanian Minister of Foreign and Expatriate Affairs, Ayman Safadi, and his Cypriot counterpart, Ioannis Kasoulides, met on Wednesday and discussed steps to increase economic and investment cooperation between the two countries.

More Details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302638200>

- **Bids on Lebanon offshore energy blocks close**

Lebanon's Energy Minister Cesar Abi Khalil on Thursday said a tender had closed on a first round of offshore energy blocks, and told local media that two consortiums had submitted bids. It will take years for revenue from any of the blocks to start flowing to the country, he said in a televised news conference. "The first licensing round for oil exploration closed," he said. The country's petroleum authority and the cabinet will evaluate the bids, he added.

More Details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-energy/bids-on-lebanon-offshore-energy-blocks-close-idUSKBN1CH2P8?rpc=401&>

- **Tax increase puts spotlight on Lebanon's miserable finances**

Lebanon's parliament passed a new tax law Oct. 9 to fund raises for its civil servants, after repeated delays and a strike Sept. 25-28 by public sector workers. However, opponents said they will continue to challenge the law. In July, the Lebanese parliament passed Law No. 46/2017 pertaining to a raise for civil servants — after several years of dithering. This law was accompanied by Law No. 45, which contains a series of taxes to finance the raises, the total cost of which is estimated at between \$1 billion and \$2 billion a year.

More Details:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/10/lebanon-economy-public-salary-scale-tax-hikes.html#ixzz4vN7iJd4e>

- **Hariri Discusses Syrian Crisis Impact with Pope Francis**

Prime Minister Saad Hariri held talks Friday at the Vatican with Pope Francis, his office said. Talks tackled "the latest developments in Lebanon and the region and the repercussions of the Syrian crisis on the Lebanese situations, in addition to the relations with the Vatican," Hariri's office said.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/236660-hariri-discusses-syrian-crisis-impact-with-pope-francis>

- **Hamas Can Achieve the Right to Work for Palestinians in Lebanon by Reconciling With Fatah and Iran**

Despite the 12/12/2017 announcement by rival Palestinian factions Hamas and Fatah that a deal has been agreed to during this month's Cairo Reconciliation talks and that details would be announced later, it is doubtful that substantive progress will result. Or that this time the results will differ much from the preceding half-dozen still-born ones over the past decade.

More Details:

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2017/10/13/hamas-can-achieve-the-right-to-work-for-palestinians-in-lebanon-by-reconciling-with-fatah-and-iran/>

- **New deal on work permits helps Syrian refugees in Jordan**

Hussein has been a butcher all his working life, having followed his father, uncle and brother into the family business back in Syria. "I grew up with it. My father owned a butcher's shop back home. First I used to help out after school, and then it became my profession." His future appeared secure and he had just returned home from a lucrative four-year stint working in the Gulf when conflict broke out in 2011.

More Details:

<http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2017/10/59df254b4/new-deal-work-permits-helps-syrian-refugees-jordan.html>

## 6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **The Agreement between Saudi Arabia and Russia – Analysis**

In early October, King Salman of Saudi Arabia – with 1,500 members of his private entourage and 459 tons of luggage – landed at the Vnukovo airport for the first official visit of a Saudi king to the Kremlin. At military level, Saudi Arabia has already bought from Russia the S-400 Triumph anti-missile system (NATO reporting name: SA-12 Growler), already fully operational in China, which can intercept aircraft and missiles at a speed up to 4.8 kilometers per second (17,000 kilometers per hour) and has the ability of intercepting up to 36 targets at the same time.

More Details:

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/13102017-the-agreement-between-saudi-arabia-and-russia-analysis/>

- **FCA chief admits to meeting Saudi Aramco ahead of £1.5 trillion float**

The head of Britain's financial watchdog has admitted that he held talks with oil giant Saudi Aramco over a potential two trillion dollar (£1.5 trillion) stock market flotation in London, as MPs warned over lax governance standards and political interference in the deal. Andrew Bailey, chief executive of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), said that discussions were held earlier this year amid a barrage of criticism over his proposals to change listing rules that would allow the Arab firm to plump for London over rival financial centres.

More Details:

<https://www.eveningtelegraph.co.uk/2017/10/13/fca-chief-admits-to-meeting-saudi-aramco-ahead-of-1-5-trillion-float/>

- **Saudi group provides \$710m in aid to Yemen**

The King Salman Centre for Relief and Humanitarian Aid in Yemen has so far completed 161 projects valued at \$ 710,534,133, providing relief services to a number of Yemeni governorates in various areas, including shelter, sanitation, water and agriculture. According to the Saudi Press Agency (SPA), the centre is also working in coordination with 85 international and local partners on projects for women and children and in support of Yemeni refugees in Djibouti and Somalia.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/b7ae5134-76e2-4244-8ccc-1dd774b6e646.aspx>

- **Rohingya crisis: Is there a Saudi role?**

The office of the National Security Council discussed in some detail West Asia and Rohingya refugees. He sat at the head of a long dining table, donning the grandest headgear, a combination of turban and hat, with neat, cascading pleats. Grand Mufti Ahmed Bader Eddin Mohammad Adib Hassoun, Syria's highest religious authority, held the ambassadors and a sprinkling of journalists in his thrall. It was an unstoppable torrent.

More Details:

<http://www.asianage.com/opinion/columnists/131017/rohingya-crisis-is-there-a-saudi-role.html>

- **Top Growth Opportunities: Confectionery in Saudi Arabia**

The Saudi Arabian confectionery market grew at a CAGR of 4.2% during 2011-2016. Saudi Arabia has large young population bases that have a strong affinity towards confectionery products in which they indulge frequently. Moreover, with high disposable incomes and rising consumer confidence, time-poor working consumers in the country seek out indulgent confectionery products to relax after

a hectic day. Consequently, growth in this market will accelerate to a CAGR of 4.8% during 2016-2021, and is expected to be worth US\$1,639.6 Million by 2021.

More Details:

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/top-growth-opportunities-confectionery-in-saudi-arabia-300535965.html>

- **Congress, end America's role in Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen**

The Saudi Arabia-led war in Yemen is a tragedy of epic proportions in which the United States is deeply and directly involved. The war has caused mass starvation and a cholera epidemic that is worse than any the world has witnessed in the past 50 years, with the latest estimate of Yemeni victims at well over half a million. This horrific situation is the result of Saudi/UAE bombing of roads, hospitals, bridges, water and sewage facilities...

More Details:

<http://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/355118-congress-end-americas-war-in-saudi-arabias-war-in-yemen>

- **Egypt and Qatar in diplomatic tiff over Gulf support for UNESCO candidates**

The disappointment and anger was palpable in the office of Moushira Khattab, Egypt's candidate for position of director general of UNESCO, as results from the first day of voting rolled in on Monday, with Khattab in an unexpected third place. According to an Egyptian diplomatic source, who spoke to Mada Masr from Paris on condition of anonymity, Khattab's team was surprised when Qatari candidate Hamad Bin Abdul Aziz al-Kawary received 19 votes in the first round instead of an anticipated 10-14. The French candidate Audrey Azoulay garnered 13 votes as widely predicted.

More Details:

<https://www.madamasr.com/en/2017/10/12/feature/politics/egypt-and-qatar-in-diplomatic-tiff-over-gulf-support-for-unesco-candidates/>

- **Qatar Leads Race to Head UNESCO, Arab States Work to Thwart Bid as Diplomatic Row Continues**

Arab states may want their turn at the helm of UNESCO, but the barbs hurled by Egypt at rival candidate Qatar during the vote highlights the fractious geopolitics paralysing the workings of the U.N. cultural agency. The vote for a new leader of UNESCO, comes amid U.S. President Donald Trump's threats to pull the U.S. out of the agency over an alleged anti-Israel bias. Trump intervened in the crisis between Qatar and its Arab Sunni neighbors on the side of Saudi Arabia and has since had a contentious relationship with Qatar, which is seen as trending towards Iran in the region.

More Details:

<https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/1.816898>

- **Qatar's Iran leap will lose it long-term leverage**

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's visit to Qatar last week, his second this year, was the latest in a series of diplomatic moves that brought Doha and Tehran closer in recent months. In the highly transactional sphere of international politics, there are hardly points of no-return. Yet the latest Qatari leap toward Tehran could prove further down the line to have gone a step too far, not only from the perspective of the three Gulf states that cut ties with Doha, but mainly when it comes to Qatar's own loss of leverage.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1176836>

- **Bahrain opens door to Italian investors**

A high-level Bahraini business delegation yesterday took part in the First Italian-Arab Business Forum in Milan as part of a roadshow held in Italy. The Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB) organised the visit as part of its wider strategy to attract investment into Bahrain. The three-day forum, which began on Wednesday, ends today.

More Details:

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppId=38610&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=>

## 7. EGYPT

- **Appeal court overturns Ahmed Douma's life sentence, orders retrial**

Egypt's Court of Cassation has accepted imprisoned political activist Ahmed Douma's appeal against a life sentence order handed to him in February 2015 in the Cabinet clashes case, state-run agency MENA reported on Thursday. A retrial is yet to be scheduled. Douma, a leading figure in the pro-democracy revolt that toppled Hosni Mubarak, was convicted of rioting, inciting violence and attacking security forces in late 2011. Douma, and 268 other defendants, are facing charges related to protesting, possession of weapons and Molotov cocktails, assaulting members of the armed forces and police, burning public premises, including the headquarters of the cabinet, Parliament, al-Shura Council, and Ministry of Interior.

More details:

<https://www.egyptdailynews.com/detail/appeal-court-overturms-ahmed-doumas-life-sentence-orders-retrial>

- **Coptic priest killed in stabbing incident in Cairo outskirts**

A Coptic priest affiliated with a church in Upper Egypt's governorate of Beni Suef was stabbed by a man on Thursday in Cairo's northeastern suburb of El-Marg, state-run newspaper of Akhbar Al Youm reported. The priest, Samaan Shehta, was in Cairo when a young unemployed man blocked the way in front of his vehicle and asked him to step down from it. He then hit the priest's head with cleaver and ran away, a local journalist told Egypt Independent on condition of anonymity.

More details:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/breaking-coptic-priest-killed-stabbing-incident-cairo-outskirts/>

- **Egypt extends its state of emergency**

President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi has extended the state of emergency in Egypt for another three months. The president's decision - a re-declaration of the state of emergency - was published in the official gazette on Thursday and was due to go into effect on Friday. The new declaration must be approved by parliament within seven days.

More details:

<http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/egypt-extends-its-state-of-emergency-20171012>

- **Egypt, Russia broker cease-fire in southern Damascus**

Syrian factions agreed to a cease-fire in southern Damascus as part of a deal brokered by Cairo and Moscow, Egyptian state media reported on Thursday. The cease-fire, which includes Jaish Al-Islam, Jaish Ababil and Aknaf Beit Al-Maqdis, went into effect at midday Thursday.

More details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1176791/middle-east>

- **Egypt accepts leading activist's appeal of life sentence**

An Egyptian court has granted a re-trial to one of the leading activists behind the 2011 uprising, who was sentenced to life in prison for taking part in a violent protest months later. Ahmed Douma was sentenced on charges of illegal protesting, possession of weapons, assaulting security personnel and attacking government buildings. The Court of Cassation accepted his appeal Thursday.

More details

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/egypt-accepts-leading-activists-appeal-life-sentence-50435603>

- **Egypt court orders retrial of 2011 key activist**

An Egyptian court ordered Thursday a retrial of activist Ahmed Douma, a leading figure in the 2011 uprising that toppled the government who had been sentenced to life, a judicial source said. Douma was arrested in 2013 on charges of having clashed with security forces in Cairo two years earlier, and in 2015 sentenced to life in prison.

More Details:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-4974760/Egypt-court-orders-retrial-2011-key-activist.html>

- **China withdraws candidate for UNESCO chief in favor of Egypt's Moushira Khattab**

China announced on Thursday it will withdraw Qian Tang, the country's candidate for the post of UNESCO director-general, in favour of Egypt's candidate Moushira Khattab, the Egyptian Foreign Ministry announced on Twitter. "China announces the withdrawal of its candidature to UNESCO in support of Egypt," wrote Egypt's foreign ministry spokesperson Ahmed Abu Zeid on his official Twitter account, thanking China, which he described as a "long-standing and true friend."

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/278695/-.aspx>

- **Egypt arrests prominent columnist**

The Egyptian authorities arrested prominent columnist Soliman Al-Hakim yesterday while he was driving his car in the coastal city of Fayed, his family have reported. According to Al-Hakim's daughter Malath, an army officer took his mobile phone to prevent him from making any calls. The Interior Ministry is yet to announce details of the arrest or any charges that the writer is facing. However, it is known that Al-Hakim recently criticised Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi's policies in an interview on the Turkey-based Mekameleen TV with fellow journalist Soliman Gouda.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171013-egypt-arrests-prominent-columnist/>

- **Armed attack kills six soldiers in Egypt's Sinai - army**

Six Egyptian soldiers were killed on Friday when gunmen attacked a checkpoint in the Sinai Peninsula where Egypt is fighting an insurgency, an army statement said. Attacks targeting security forces have

been common since Egypt's Islamist president Mohamed Mursi was ousted in 2013 following mass protests against his rule.

More Details:

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-egypt-security/armed-attack-kills-six-soldiers-in-egypts-sinai-army-idUKKBN1CI1DV?rpc=401&>

- **Egypt non-oil imports increase 11% increase in first 8 months of 2017**

Egyptian Minister of Commerce and Industry Tarek Kabil said that the country's non-petroleum industrial exports have made "remarkable progress" between January to August this year, increasing 11 percent from \$13.5 billion to \$15 billion. According to a report quoting the minister published in Al-Ahram newspaper on Friday, imports also decreased from \$45.5 billion to \$35.1 billion, a 23 percent drop, in the same period, resulting in a 37 percent decrease in the trade balance deficit from \$32 billion to \$ 20.1 billion.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/12/278732/-.aspx>

## 8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Algerian Christian on hunger strike after being jailed for blasphemy**

An Algerian Christian has gone on hunger strike in prison after being accused of blasphemy. Slimane Bouhafis was sentenced to five years in prison last August for a post on Facebook that was considered insulting to Islam and the Prophet Mohammad. Due to rapidly declining health his family applied for parole but a court rejected the appeal last Monday, prompting Bouhafis to go on hunger strike, according to Middle East Concern.

More Details:

<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/algerian.christian.on.hunger.strike.after.being.jailed.for.blasphemy/115845.htm>

- **Algerian opposition warns of holding on to President in light of his health**

The deputy leader of Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), Sheikh Ali Belhadj, has warned of the dangers for the country by holding on to President Abdelaziz Bouteflika even while he is completely incapable of fulfilling his duties, and is unable even to speak. Algeria, said Belhadj, is being tossed towards the unknown by doing this. Speaking to Quds Press, Belhadj suggested that the official Algerian media images of the 80-year-old President Bouteflika receiving Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev ...

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171012-algerian-opposition-warns-of-holding-on-to-president-in-light-of-his-health/>

- **Protests-erupt-in-Tunisia-over-migrant-boat-tragedy**

Tunisian police fired tear gas to disperse an anti-government protest yesterday in the southwest of the country triggered by a recent deadly boat accident, local media and witnesses reported. Security forces clashed with protesters in the province of Kebili after they had torched local administration offices and blocked a major road in the area, they added. The demonstrators also demanded authorities carry out development projects in the area in order to dissuade jobless locals from going on risky voyages to Europe.

More Details:

<http://www.gulf-times.com/story/567210/Protests-erupt-in-Tunisia-over-migrant-boat-tragedy>

- **Tunisia's economy to grow 2.3% at end 2017 and 3% in 2018 (IMF)**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has estimated that economic growth in Tunisia will reach 2.3% by the end of 2017, in line with projections made by the World Bank. In its latest report, "World Economic Outlook", published on October 10, on its official website, the IMF forecasts a growth rate of 3% in 2018 for Tunisia and a slight improvement in the country's external balance, from -8.7% in 2017 to -8.4% in 2018, while the balance was -9% in 2016.

More Details:

<https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Economy/9458732-tunisia-s-economy>

- **Ministry of Women calls on journalists to respect children's dignity**

The Women, Family and Children Ministry warned on Thursday in a press release journalists against any attempt to harm the dignity of children. This warning follows the disclosure of personal information of the Tunisian child who was handed over on Monday to Tunisian authorities after being held in Libya.

More Details:

<https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Culture-and-Media/9457971-ministry-of-women>

- **Russia and Morocco signed a Memorandum of understanding in the field of agriculture**

11 October in the framework of the official visit of Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev to the Kingdom of Morocco signed an interagency Memorandum of understanding on

cooperation in agriculture. According to the results of high-level talks with the participation of relevant Ministers of both countries signed a number of bilateral documents and agreements, including interagency Memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of agriculture.

More Details:

<http://www.blackseagrains.net/novosti/russia-and-morocco-signed-a-memorandum-of-understanding-in-the-field-of-agriculture-1>

- **International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation and National Company of Transport and Logistics in bid to bridge Morocco, Sub Sahara Africa gap**

The International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC), a member of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group, signed a partnership agreement with the National Company of Transport and Logistics, SNTL, in the Kingdom of Morocco, under the umbrella of the Aid for Trade Initiative for Arab States (AFTIAS), to launch a Study for the Development of Logistical Platforms for Trade & Investment Facilitation between Morocco and Sub-Saharan Africa. The signing took place during the Opening Session of the OIC Trade Promotion Organizations (TPOs) Meeting, in Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco between Eng.

More Details:

<http://africabusinesscommunities.com/news/international-islamic-trade-finance-corporation-and-national-company-of-transport-and-logistics-in-bid-to-bridge-morocco-sub-sahara-africa-gap/>

- **WTO meet in Morocco: Suresh Prabhu seeks permanent solution to world food security**

Commerce and Industry Ministry Suresh Prabhu on October 9 and 10 attended the Informal WTO Ministerial Gathering in Marrakesh, Morocco. Prabhu led discussions on behalf of the developing world and extended the commitment to Doha Round referring to the agreed objectives of the agricultural negotiations earlier. Prabhu also called for the continuation of the reform process and urged to avoid any further widening and perpetuation of imbalance between the developed and developing countries, an official PIB statement said.

More Details:

<http://www.financialexpress.com/economy/wto-meet-in-morocco-suresh-prabhu-seeks-permanent-solution-to-world-food-security/892013/>

- **News Analysis: Libya still caught in economic crisis despite increase in oil production**

Despite the increase in oil production to roughly 1 million barrels per day (bpd), Libya still suffers financial crisis triggered by the decline of oil export. The oil production, which is the country's main source of income, began to decline due to years-long frequent armed attacks and clashes in oil fields

and ports. The daily oil production once plummeted from 1.6 million bpd before the 2011 uprising to about 250,000 bpd in 2014.

More Details:

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-10/13/c\\_136675601.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-10/13/c_136675601.htm)

- **Libyan Oil Output Covers 25% Of 2017 Budget Needs**

Despite the recovery in Libyan oil production over the course of 2017, Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC) been able to raise funds to cover 25 percent of the its budget, according to a recent announcement by NOC Chairman Mustafa Sanalla. A previous goal to raise Libyan output to 1.25 million barrels per day by the end of the year will be "very difficult" to achieve, he said, given the financial shortfall that doesn't leave much room for operational expenses.

More Details:

<http://oilprice.com/Latest-Energy-News/World-News/Libyan-Oil-Output-Covers-25-Of-2017-Budget-Needs.html>

- **NOC proposes how it should be protected and funded**

The National Oil Corporation (NOC) has proposed how it and its oil and gas monopoly should be protected during Libya's current political transition ahead of a election of a new government and parliament. In what is clearly a further step by NOC boss Mustafa Sanalla to keep the state oil company properly funded and out of the political firing line, "Protecting Libya's Oil" was a two-day conference near London which set out eight guiding principles.

More Details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/10/12/noc-proposes-how-it-should-be-protected-and-funded/>

## 9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **U.S. Woman and Family Freed After 5 Years in Captivity in Afghanistan**

An American woman, her Canadian husband and their three young children have been freed after five years in captivity by an extremist group in Afghanistan, the White House said Thursday. Caitlan Coleman, now 32, was several months pregnant when she and her husband, Joshua Boyle, were abducted in 2012 while on a trip to Afghanistan. That child, and two more, were born while the couple was held by the Haqqani network, an Afghan extremist group affiliated with the Taliban.

More Details:

<http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/10/12/557326885/u-s-woman-and-family-freed-after-5-years-in-captivity-in-afghanistan>

- **Daniel Ellsberg calls on whistleblowers to leak info on Afghanistan, Iraq & North Korea**

US whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg, who helped end the Vietnam War by releasing the so-called Pentagon Papers, has told RT that there may be similar documents on Afghanistan and Iraq. He is calling on whistleblowers to end those wars and prevent one with North Korea. In 1971, Ellsberg exposed the secret history of the Vietnam War when he leaked the Pentagon Papers – a study of US-Vietnam relations from 1945 to 1967 – to the New York Times and Washington Post, as well as other newspapers.

More Details:

<https://www.rt.com/usa/406482-ellsberg-interview-whistleblower-korea/>

- **EU Putting Thousands of Lives at Risk with Illegal Deportations to Afghanistan**

Amnesty International is calling for a moratorium on deportations from Europe to Afghanistan, warning that the security situation there has become worse rather than better in recent years and deportees seriously risk being tortured, kidnapped or murdered, the NGO's Afghanistan expert Horia Mosadiq told Radio Sputnik. In their eagerness to send asylum seekers home, EU governments are "willfully blind to the dangers" they face in Afghanistan, the human rights campaigners warn in a new report.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/world/201710121058163123-afghanistan-refugees-europe-illegal-deportations/>

- **Karzai warns of growing US-Russia rivalry in Afghanistan**

The former Afghan President Hamid Karzai warned of the growing rivalries between the United States and Russia in Afghanistan as he once again reiterated his opposition towards the new US strategy for Afghanistan and South Asia. Speaking to reporters during a press conference in Kabul, Karzai said the United States and Russia were engaged in rivalries against each other during the Jihad times against the Soviet forces, Khaama Press reported on Thursday.

More Details:

<https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/2/27307/Karzai-warns-of-growing-US-Russia-rivalry-in-Afghanistan>

- **Blaming Islamabad for security failures in Afghanistan is insulting: Pak Minister**

Pakistan's Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal has said that blaming Islamabad for security failures in Afghanistan was unhelpful and insulting for the people of his country. "Blaming Pakistan for the security failures in Afghanistan is unhelpful as well as offensive to the people of Pakistan, whose sacrifices in the fight against terrorism are without parallel in the region," the Dawn quoted Iqbal, as saying. Speaking at a gathering of students, academicians, analysts, and media persons at an event organised by the Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies in Washington D.C

More Details:

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/blaming-islamabad-for-security-failures-in-afghanistan-is-insulting-pak-minister-117101200786\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/blaming-islamabad-for-security-failures-in-afghanistan-is-insulting-pak-minister-117101200786_1.html)

- **Army Jawan, civilian killed, six injured in Pakistan shelling along loc**

An army spokesperson said that, "One jawan along with a defence porter martyred in unprovoked ceasefire violation by Pakistan today in KG sector". He identified the deceased soldier as Sepoy T K Reddy and defence porter Mohammad Zahier. An army jawan was among two people killed, while six others including a defence porter injured in unprovoked mortar shelling by Pakistani troops along the Line of Control in Krishna Ghati and Karmara areas of Poonch district in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday.

More Details:

<https://www.easterneye.eu/army-jawan-civilian-killed-six-injured-pakistan-shelling-along-loc/>

- **SCO- Afghanistan Contact Group Meeting, Moscow (October 11, 2017)**

Secretary (West), Smt. Ruchi Ghanashyam led the Indian delegation to the meeting of SCO- Afghanistan Contact Group Meeting that was held in Moscow on October 11, 2017. This was the first meeting of the Group following the expansion of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in June 2017 with India becoming its full member. India shared its perspectives on the situation in Afghanistan, including security challenges posed by terrorism imposed from beyond its borders, the need to strengthen Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, need for an Afghan led,

More Details:

<http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/29022/SCO+Afghanistan+Contact+Group+Meeting+Moscow+October+11+2017>

- **India calls for action on Pakistan-N Korea nuclear-missile links**

India has called attention to the Pakistan-North Korea nuclear-missile nexus and said the international community should act against those involved in such deals. "The international community should take a united stand against those who indulge in or benefit from clandestine (nuclear) proliferation linkages," Amandeep Singh Gill...

MoreDetails:

[http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/61064578.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/61064578.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

- **Pakistan Electoral Body Bars Political Party Due to Terror Ties**

Pakistan's Election Commission (ECP) on Wednesday rejected the registration application of a newly established political party with alleged ties to a banned militant group in the country. Milli Muslim League (MML) has been disqualified to participate in the country's state and general elections. The electoral commission's decision is said to be based on a request made earlier by the country's Ministry of Interior Affairs, stating that Milli Muslim League.

More Details:

<https://www.voanews.com/a/pakistan-bars-political-party-due-to-terror-ties/4068627.html>

- **Pakistan Should End Child Marriage**

Pakistan's Senate chose to mark the United Nations International Day of the Girl Child this week in an unusual way: by rejecting a bill that would have raised the minimum age for girls to marry from 16 to 18. The grounds for rejection? Apparently the proposed amendment was "contrary to religious injunctions," said the Senate Standing Committee on Interior. The UN children's fund says 21 percent of Pakistani girls are married by the age of 18, and 3 percent before 15.

More Details:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/10/12/pakistan-should-end-child-marriage>

## 10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkish troops enter northern Syria in new operation**

Turkish troops travelling in a convoy of 12 armoured vehicles have entered northern Syria in a new military operation. Turkish news media reported that the vehicles carrying the troops crossed into Idlib province late on Thursday. The development came after Turkey said it was sending troops into Syria to enforce a de-escalation zone in Idlib.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/turkish-troops-enter-northern-syria-operation-171013001304475.html>

- **Main force of Turkish troops enter Syria's Idlib**

Turkish troops have crossed into Syria's Idlib province to monitor de-escalation zones that aim to bring an end to the six-and-a-half-year conflict, the military said Friday. Military convoys crossed from Reyhanli in southern Turkey's Hatay province on Thursday night. In a statement, the Turkish Armed Forces said soldiers had begun establishing observation points. "Turkish Armed Forces elements that are to serve in the Idlib de-escalation zone have started their activities by establishing observation posts from Oct. 12, 2017, as part of the Astana agreement...

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/todays-headlines/main-force-of-turkish-troops-enter-syrias-idlib/934550>

- **Turkey: Syrian jet pilot released from custody**

A Turkish court early Friday decided to release on judicial control a Syrian military pilot whose jet crashed near the Turkish border in March, according to judicial sources. Mehmet Sufhan, 56, faces charges of espionage and border violations, and was released pending trial, said the source, who asked not to be named due to restrictions on talking to the media.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/194925/turkey-syrian-jet-pilot-released-from-custody>

*\*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.*

*\*Bu bülten **ORSAM Ortadoğu Uzman Yardımcısı Firuze Yağmur Gökler** tarafından hazırlanmaktadır. Bülten Ortadoğu ülkelerinin yerel haber kaynaklarından derlenmektedir. Belirtilen görüşler bölge ülkelerinin haber kaynaklarına ve ismi geçen yazarlara ait olup ORSAM'ın görüşünü yansıtmamaktadır.*