



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Procces of Iraq

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

Energy Security

Enerji Güvenliđi

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Peace Process

Barış Süreci

Ethnic and Secterian Groups

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

Non State Actors

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Relations with the West

Batı'yla İlişkiler

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1. IRAQ

- **Jaafari Receives an Invitation To Visit Armenia**

Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari received an invitation from his Armenian counterpart to visit Armenia. "Jaafari met the Armenian ambassador to Iraq, Karen Grigoryan, who invited him to visit Armenia. Jaafari promised to meet it in the coming period," a foreign ministry statement said.

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?cuTWKqLbfcJgtrT38r1QNA%253d%253d

- **Coalition airstrike kills, wounds 6 IS elite leaders of Wilayat Baghdad and Wilayat al-Janub**

Iraqi Intelligence Service announced, on Wednesday, that six elite leaders of the Islamic State were either killed or wounded by a US-led coalition air strike, while pointed out that these members are occupying important media positions in the so-called Wilayat Baghdad and Wilayat al-Janub. The intelligence Service released a statement saying that the international coalition air force, based on accurate information obtained from Iraqi National Intelligence Service, conducted an air strike, targeting a vehicle carrying a number of the Islamic State members.

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/coalition-airstrike-kills-wounds-6-elite-leaders-wilayat-baghdad-wilayat-al-janub/>

- **Masrouf Barzani: Defeat of IS an Opportunity to Consider Realistic Solutions for Iraq's Conflict**

Kurdistan Region Security Council (KRSC) Chancellor Masrouf Barzani stated on Wednesday that defeating the Islamic State (IS) is an opportunity for the Iraqi authorities to consider "realistic solutions" to Iraq's perpetual conflicts. Chancellor Barzani explained "the defeat of ISIL represents an opportunity to consider long-term, realistic solutions to address Iraq's unending conflict."

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/kurdistan/342647>

- **Street turned to rubble shows cost of fight for Iraq's Mosul**

Two houses are all that remain standing on the street with no name in western Mosul, just blocks from the front lines of the battle to retake Iraq's second-largest city from the Islamic State group. The

once-bustling neighborhood has been reduced to rubble, its sidewalks piled high with a jumble of concrete, bricks and metal.

More Details:

http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/8dcdeaea-c249-4846-87c5-b6b751974172/Street-turned-to-rubble-shows-cost-of-fight-for-Iraq-s-Mosul

- **New UNHCR camp opens as West Mosul displacement intensifies**

The UN refugee agency has opened a new camp in Hammam al-Alil to house thousands of newly-displaced Iraqis who continue to flee the military offensive in western Mosul. The first 500 families began arriving at Hammam al-Alil 2 camp today. Each household, depending on family size, will receive a tent and other basic items including blankets, mats, a cooker, solar light and kitchen set. To date, some 2,500 tents are ready, enough to shelter more than 15,000 individuals. A second phase of the camp is nearing completion and the site will have total capacity for up to 30,000 people.

More Details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=40196

- **Turkmen MP calls for consensual solution among all factions in Kirkuk**

The Turkmen MP affiliated with the State of Law Coalition, Jassim Mohammed Jaafar called for reaching a consensual solution in Kirkuk among its factions, warning of imposing of fait accompli policy in the province. Jaafar said in a press statement that: "The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan does not support linking Kirkuk with Kurdistan, and we must sit to find a consensual solution, pointing out that" it is not in the interest of the province to head for instability.

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/9283/Turkmen-PM-calls-for-consensual-solution-among-all-factions-in-Kirkuk>

- **FCO Minister visits Iraq**

Minister for the Middle East Tobias Ellwood met with political leaders in Baghdad and Erbil to reaffirm the UK's commitment to defeating Daesh and support efforts to bring unity to Iraq. In Baghdad, Minister Ellwood met with Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi, Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari, and Speaker of Parliament Salim Al-Jibouri, to emphasise the UK's continued commitment to post-Daesh stabilisation efforts, including the training of Iraqi Security Forces. Mr Ellwood also discussed social justice initiatives with a group of nine female MPs from Ninewa.

More Details:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fco-minister-visits-iraq>

- **Iraq's Fall Elections Can Help Stabilize the Country—if Steps are taken Now**

For the first time since the outbreak of the Islamic State (ISIS, ISIL, Daesh) conflict, Iraqis across the country will be able to make their voices heard at the ballot box in provincial elections in the fall of 2017. Voters will elect provincial councils in every governorate, and especially in places affected by the Islamic State conflict, the composition and effectiveness of these councils will be important to post-insurgency reconstruction. However, political and social conditions in various provinces do not bode well for the legitimacy and stability the elections are supposed to produce.

More Details:

<http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/iraq-s-fall-elections-can-help-stabilize-the-country-if-steps-are-taken-now>

- **Millions of refugees in Iraq are desperate for help**

There is a huge humanitarian crisis in Iraq that has been largely overlooked. Millions of people have been displaced and are living as refugees where they cannot work as normal, in areas that do not have the ability to sustain such huge populations, in camps that have been under-supplied. And right now there are hundreds of thousands of civilians trapped in Daesh (the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant)-held sections of Mosul who are starving and whose children are suffering from dreadful malnutrition as the fighting grinds on for months as Iraqi forces retake the city — house by house, street by street.

More Details:

<http://gulfnews.com/opinion/editorials/millions-of-refugees-in-iraq-are-desperate-for-help-1.2010372>

- **Street War Combat Force Joins Iraq's Mosul Liberation Operation**

Iraq's Interior Ministry announced the arrival of a street war combat force at Mosul's Old City from Baghdad to help Iraqi security forces in final stages of the operation to liberate the Northern city from ISIL. Captain Adnan al-Khafaji, from the ministry's Rapid Response Forces, said that Al-Raad force arrived few days ago in the Old City, Iraqi News reported.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960123001051>

- **Security forces repel Islamic State attack in Iraq's Anbar**

At the al-Waleed border crossing, Anbar Iraqi security forces repelled an an attack on the crossing, during which they killed five suicide bombers and destroyed a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (SVBIED). Reports did not contain details of other casualties.

More Details:

<http://www.janes.com/article/69493/security-forces-repel-islamic-state-attack-in-iraq-s-anbar>

- **Teaming Up: Syria Calls for More Anti-Terror Cooperation with Iraq**

In the light of Syria's call for more military co-operation with neighboring Iraq in the fight against terrorism, Iraqi and Syrian military experts told Sputnik that greater co-operation would benefit both countries and enable them to better control their joint border. On Monday, Syria's deputy foreign minister Feisal Mikdad told RIA Novosti that Damascus is keen to extend its military co-operation with neighboring Iraq in the fight against terrorism.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201704121052581644-iraq-syria-joint-military-operations/>

- **More US troops may be needed to fight ISIS in Syria, commander says**

The US general commanding the coalition fight against ISIS expects the fight for its de facto capital to have hit the city center by this summer, and in an exclusive interview with CNN, he held out the possibility that more US troops may be needed for that tougher fight. Speaking on a day trip to the Bakhaira base, where US troops provide assistance for the fight in the Iraqi city of Mosul, Lt. Gen. Stephen Townsend said, "I certainly hope that the assault on Raqqa is underway by this summer."

More Details:

<http://us.cnn.com/2017/04/12/middleeast/isis-fight-iraq-more-us-troops/index.html>

- **The Evolution of Iraq: A dialogue between the Iraqi FM and Kurdish presidency**

Speaking on a panel on Iraq's foreign policy, both Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari and Fuad Hussein, chief of staff for Kurdish President Masoud Barzani, agreed that Iraq today is very different from what it was under Saddam Hussein. Where they differed is on what needs to happen next. Federalism can unite Iraq if it is implemented properly, argued Jaafari, stressing that this is a new Iraq.

More Details:

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/13042017>

- **Exports to Iraq Via Qasr-e Shirin**

More than 3.25 million tons of products worth \$1.28 billion were exported to the Iraqi Kurdistan from Iran's border city of Qasr-e Shirin located in the western Kermanshah Province in the last Iranian year (ended March 20, 2017), according to Faramarz Akbari, the governor of Qasr-e Shirin.

More Details:

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/economy-domestic-economy/62320/exports-to-iraq-via-qasr-e-shirin>

2. SYRIA

- **Two Rangers personnel killed during a raid to arrest Syria trained militants in Karachi**

Two Pakistan Rangers Sindh personnel were killed during a raid to arrest militants trained in Syria and Afghanistan and working for foreign intelligence agencies were arrested from Mawaach Goth area of Karachi, the provincial capital of Sindh, reports The News.

More Details:

http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/detailed_news.asp?date1=4/13/2017&id=1#1

- **UN resolution on Syria vetoed**

The United Nations Security Council on Wednesday failed to adopt a draft resolution on the alleged chemical weapons attack in Syria's northwestern province of Idlib as Russia vetoed it. Russia and Bolivia vetoed the draft resolution tabled by France, the UK and the US. Ten of the 15 Security Council members voted in favor of it. China, Ethiopia and Kazakhstan abstained.

More Details:

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2017-04/13/content_28912537.htm

- **China's split with Russia on Syria signals warmer ties with US**

China's abstention from a United Nations resolution condemning the chemical attack in Syria is the most significant sign yet of warmer ties between Xi Jinping and Donald Trump after they met last week. China, which has since 2011 joined Russia to veto six UN Security Council resolutions on Syria, abstained from a vote Wednesday on a US-led proposal criticising last week's chemical weapons attack. The move left Russia - Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's chief ally - as the only veto-wielding council member to oppose the resolution.

More Details:

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/world/americas/donald-trumps-america/91571755/.html>

- **Objective Investigation Into Syria Idlib Chemical Attack Needed - Kazakh FM**

The objective investigation into the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria's northwestern province of Idlib on April 4 is necessary, the Kazakh Foreign Ministry said in a statement Thursday. "[Kazakh Foreign Minister Kairat] Abdrakhmanov noted that Kazakhstan stands for the objective, comprehensive and thorough investigation into the supposed fact of the implementation of the chemical weapons in Syria on April 4 under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) with the participation of all the interested parties," the statement read.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201704131052593790-kazakhstan-syria-chemical-attack/>

- **Tillerson visits Russia as tensions spike over US strike on Syria**

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's visit to Russia comes less than a week after US missile strikes in Syria. The strikes have further raised tensions between the two countries. Moscow says the strikes were illegal but the US has threatened Russia and Syria with more sanctions.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/04/13/517847/Russia-US-Rex-Tillerson->

- **Syria Ready to Provide OPCW Investigators Access To Shayrat Airbase**

Syria is ready to provide experts of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) access to Shayrat airbase to check whether sarin was stored there, Syria's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Bashar Jaafari, told a meeting of the UN Security Council. Western countries claimed that sarin was used during the attack against the city of Khan Sheikhoun on April 4.

More Details:

<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/wn/newsworld.php?id=1347418>

- **Poland may send medical aid to Syria: FM**

He said that Poland is not able to offer as much aid as Western European countries do. But he said that Poland's "heart is broken at sights from Syria, from its Turkish, Jordanian and Lebanese borders," adding that these are areas where Poland wants to channel as much help as it can.

Currently, Poland supports Syria through contributions to European funds, Waszczykowski said, as well as its own aid programmes, which he said would be expanded.

More Details:

<http://www.thenews.pl/1/10/Artykul/302536,Poland-may-send-medical-aid-to-Syria-FM>

- **Coalition strikes IS depot with chemical weapons in Deir ez-Zor – Syria MoD**

The Syrian General Staff said that the US-led coalition struck an Islamic State depot storing chemical weapons in Deir ez-Zor on Wednesday, Sputnik reports. The Syrian military said that this fact proves that terrorists possess chemical weapons. “The jets of the so-called US-led coalition launched a strike at about 17:30-17:50 [local time, 14:30-14:50 GMT] on a Islamic State (IS) warehouse where many foreign fighters were present. First a white cloud and then a yellow one appeared at the site of the strike, which points at the presence of a large number of poisonous substances. A fire at the site continued until 22:30 [19:30 GMT],” the Syrian army’s command statement obtained by Sputnik said.

More Details:

<http://www.armradio.am/en/2017/04/13/coalition-strikes-is-depot-with-chemical-weapons-in-deir-ez-zor-syria-mod/>

- **Japanese PM to Discuss Situation In Syria, Other International Issues During Visit To Russia**

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe plans to discuss the situation in Syria and other international issues during his visit to Russia scheduled for late April, Russia's TASS news agency reported Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga as saying on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/wn/newsworld.php?id=1347425>

- **Buses Arrive in Syria’s Foua, Kefraya to Evacuate Some 8,000 Civilians**

A convoy of 99 buses entered the besieged Syrian towns of Foua and Kefraya to evacuate thousands of civilians from the two Shiite-populated towns as part of a deal between the government and Takfiri militants. According to Tasnim dispatches, the buses, along with the International Committee of the Red Cross's (ICRC) aid convoys, arrived in Foua and Kefraya early on Thursday, expecting to transport nearly 8,000 residents from the two towns.

More Details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/04/13/1378150/buses-arrive-in-syria-s-foua-kefraya-to-evacuate-some-8-000-civilians>

3. IRAN

- **Spokesman: Iran's Missile Program Not Related to N. Deal**

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Bahram Qassemi cautioned the G7 to avoid escalating tensions over Tehran's missile power, reminding that his country's missile and defense program is not related to the 2015 nuclear deal with the world powers. In reaction to the G7's recent statement in Italy, Qassemi said that Iran expects full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) by all relevant parties in a constructive atmosphere.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960124000298>

- **Iran rejects foreign interference in Venezuela's affairs, backs dialog**

The Iranian Foreign Ministry says the country supports dialog between the Venezuelan government and the opposition aimed at diffusing tensions in the Latin American country. Foreign Ministry Spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Wednesday that Iran endorsed the democratically-elected government of Venezuela and backed "the continuation of talks between the government and the opposition aimed at resolving their differences peacefully."

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2017/04/12/517781/Iran-Venezuela-protest-Maduro-opposition-Bahram-Qassemi>

- **Mohseni Ejei rejects inordinate payments in Judiciary**

Judiciary spokesperson has refuted claims that Judiciary has been paying the staff in amounts which would be implicated in Salary Bill Scandal. Mr. Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei who was speaking in a press conference Monday evening rejected claims made in the Parliament by specific Reformist MPs as 'efforts to deflect the Judiciary from addressing corruption;' Mr. Ejei believed what had been claimed as inordinate amounts to the Judiciary staff had merely been legal rise approved by the government as usual administrative rises in the payments, which had by no means been comparable even remotely with lump sums government officials had received in the Salary Bill Scandal.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124746/Mohseni-Ejei-rejects-inordinate-payments-in-Judiciary>

- **Iran denounces extension of EU human rights sanctions**

The Iranian Foreign Ministry has condemned a recent decision by the European Union (EU) to extend its anti-Tehran sanctions that were in place over human rights situation in the Islamic Republic.

“Unfortunately, the European Union has proven that it has no realistic and true understanding of the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Foreign Ministry Spokesman Bahram Qassemi said in a statement on Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/412566/Iran-denounces-extension-of-EU-human-rights-sanctions>

- **176 more presidential candidates register**

“The registration of 176 nominees out of 196 has been confirmed on the third day of enlisting candidates,” says Ali Pourali-Motlagh, the Secretary of Election Headquarters. “There is sum of 439 candidates registration since the beginning of the enlisting process,” said Porali-Motlagh.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82491583/>

- **Iran, Italy FM's review global developments**

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Italian counterpart Angelino Alfano reviewed the latest regional and global developments in a telephone conversation on Wednesday. Zarif described as unacceptable a recent US unilateral military action against a Syrian airbase over an alleged chemical attack Washington baselessly blames on Damascus, IRNA reported.

More Details:

<http://www.iran-daily.com/News/190749.html>

- **Iran to Provide Social Security for Foreign Nationals**

Foreign nationals and refugees who have a work permit and are residing inside the country will be covered by the Social Security Organisation and can benefit from pension payment, blood money coverage and disablement benefits, said the director general of foreign nationals' affairs at Social Security Organisation Hossein Joudaki.

More Details:

<http://ifpnews.com/coverage/2017/04/iran-provide-social-security-foreign-nationals/>

- **Battling Terrorism A Main Policy of Iran: Senior MP**

A senior Iranian lawmaker said combating terrorism and restoring security to the region remains one of the major policies of the Islamic Republic. One of the most important policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to continue its serious fight against the ominous phenomenon of terrorism in the region, Chairman of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Alaeddin Boroujerdi said in a speech at a ceremony held in Tehran on Wednesday marking Pakistan's National Day.

More Details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/04/13/1377824/battling-terrorism-a-main-policy-of-iran-senior-mp>

- **Iran's missile tests not linked to UN resolution on nuclear deal: Qassemi**

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman says the country's missile tests are not in contravention of a UN resolution endorsing the country's nuclear agreement with the 5+1 group of countries. According to Press TV, Bahram Qassemi said on Wednesday "The Islamic Republic of Iran asserts that its defense missile program is by no means linked to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and the nature and design of Iran's ballistic missiles are in a way that the country's missile tests are no breach of UN Security Council Resolution 2231."

More Details:

<http://parstoday.com/en/news/iran-i50196-iran%E2%80%99s-missile-tests-not-linked-to-un-resolution-on-nuclear-deal-qassemi>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Hezbollah's battle against mysterious 'Zionist' campaign**

A twitter account affiliated with the Lebanese terror organization Hezbollah has tweeted a warning followers about Facebook accounts used to spy for "the Zionist enemy." The "Mouqawama" (Resistance) twitter account posted "there are Facebook accounts under multiple names aimed at collecting information for the Zionist enemy. Beware of these most prominent ones." Underneath the tweet were several pictures of Facebook accounts allegedly used by so-called Zionist intelligence agencies.

More Details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4948783,00.html>

- **Defense minister knocks UN for ignoring when Palestinians kill Palestinians**

Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman slammed the United Nations on Wednesday for ignoring the Palestinian- on-Palestinian killings in Gaza and Lebanon, while regularly condemning “justified Israeli actions against terrorism.” Liberman’s comments, according to his spokesman, came during a telephone conversation on Wednesday with the UN’s Mideast envoy Nikolay Mladenov.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Defense-Minister-knocks-UN-for-ignoring-when-Palestinians-kill-Palestinians-486814>

- **Liberman: Boycott Haaretz for comparing Hezbollah with Jewish religious right**

Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman on Thursday called on Israelis to stop reading the Haaretz daily newspaper, railing at the left-leaning newspaper for an opinion piece that called Israel’s national religious community more dangerous than the terror group Hezbollah. The column by Klein (Hebrew) in Wednesday’s edition of Haaretz accused Israel’s national religious community, usually characterized by its hawkish views and attachment to the settlement enterprise, of deceitfully attempting to take over and subvert the country while carrying out a campaign of ethnic cleansing.

More Details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/liberman-calls-for-haaretz-boycott-over-hezbollah-comparison/>

- **And Netanyahu Was Silent**

White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer’s unfortunate remarks, according to which Hitler never used chemical weapons nor used gas against his own people during the Holocaust, are not only testimony to his personal ignorance. You don’t need to be an accredited historian to know that Hitler killed millions of people with gas starting in 1939, and that the victims included citizens of his country, both Jewish and non-Jewish.

More Details:

<http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/editorial/1.783137>

- **Right-wing Israeli groups tour Al-Aqsa on Passover amid crackdown on Palestinians**

Right-wing Israelis and settlers took to the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound on Tuesday, as hundreds more foreign tourists toured the site, amid ongoing security restrictions on Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem for the Jewish holiday of Passover. Thousands of Israeli police were deployed across the city to provide protection for Israelis, including the 291 "extremist settlers" who toured the holy site in groups of 30 to 35 between 7:30 and 11 a.m., according to the Islamic Endowment (Waqf) that manages the compound.

More Details:

<http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=776407>

- **Israeli police has failed to investigate ideologically motivated offenses committed against Palestinians, says Israeli group**

Israeli police has failed to investigate ideologically motivated offenses committed against Palestinians, the Israeli rights group Yesh Din said on Thursday. It said that data it and the police have collected “reflect a trend of protracted failure regarding investigations into ideologically motivated offenses committed against Palestinians.”

More Details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=SHz0q9a75411197202aSHz0q9>

- **Damascus Official to UN: Israel Supported Islamic State by Bombing Syrian Army Targets**

The Jerusalem Post reports: Syria’s Permanent Representative to the UN Bashar al-Jaafari accused Israel of providing support to the Islamic State group in Syria on Wednesday, claiming that the Jewish state has indirectly but significantly aided one of the most malicious terror groups in the region.

More Details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/jerusalem/2017/04/13/damascus-official-un-israel-supported-islamic-state-bombing-syrian-army-targets/>

- **British-Palestinian activist banned from seeing his family**

A British-Palestinian academic from the University of Birmingham has been banned from entering Israel last weekend. The ban prevented Professor Kamel Hawwash from visiting family in occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank, and is thought to have been instated because of activism as part of Israel’s controversial “BDS ban” law.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170412-british-palestinian-activist-banned-from-israel/>

- **Israel warns that Gaza will face power supply crisis**

Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) Maj. Gen. Yoav Mordechai is warning that the diesel fuel donated by Qatar to enable the operation of the Gaza Strip’s only power station will run out on April 14. According to Mordechai, the enclave is facing yet another power supply crisis, as electricity production was halted in January due to a dispute between the Hamas

rulers of Gaza and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank over which of them should pay for the fuel.

More Details:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/04/israel-hamas-gaza-strip-qatar-electricity-fuel-water.html>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Jordanian start-up wins global French business award**

As one of the winners of the French Tech Ticket programme, Jordanian start-up Aumet will get the opportunity to gain a wider professional experience in the French business environment, and to branch out to European markets. In the second edition of the programme, Jordanian start-up Aumet was the first local company to win the award, which comprises a 45,000 euro fund, a fast-track procedure to obtain French residency permits, and a 12-month incubation period in one of the partner French business incubators for each of the 70 winners around the world.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/jordanian-start-wins-global-french-business-award>

- **Social Security Corporation seeks health insurance for all workers**

The Social Security Corporation (SSC) on Wednesday stressed the importance of including all workers in health insurance to enhance social security and protection, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported. Statistics show that 27 per cent of Jordanians and 87 per cent of non-Jordanians in the Kingdom do not have health insurance, according to Mohammad Tarawneh, assistant of the SSC director for studies and information.

More Details:

<http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=34786#.WO-AxfmLTcs>

- **PM discusses judicial cooperation with Austrian justice minister**

Prime Minister Hani Mulki received at the Prime Ministry on Wednesday, Austrian Justice Minister Wolfgang Brandstetter in the presence of Justice Minister Awad Abu Jarad and the Austrian ambassador to Jordan. The prime minister highlighted the strong ties between Jordan and Austria in various fields, as well as keenness to further boost cooperation in the judicial field, and benefit from the experience of the two countries in this domain.

More Details:

http://petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=297545&CatID=13

- **Report: Baabda Circles Explain Aoun's 'Historic' Move**

President Michel Aoun's move where he invoked his constitutional powers to adjourn the parliament for one month, is only the second in Lebanon's history since 1926, media reports said on Thursday. In their first interpretation, Presidential Palace sources told al-Joumhouria daily that "Aoun has used his constitutional powers to freeze the work of the parliament under article 59 of the constitution, replicating a similar move in 1926 when then president did the same."

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/228399-report-baabda-circles-explain-aoun-s-historic-move>

- **Aoun promises new election law that preserves people's interests**

"The Lebanese will be able to enjoy a new electoral law that preserves their interests as per the pledge I made in my presidential oath," President of the Republic, Michel Aoun, told Baabda itinerates on Thursday. Aoun expressed utter relief at the fact that political leaderships, as well as popular and syndical bodies, had condoned his decision to postpone the parliament's legislative session for a month as per item #59 of the Lebanese constitution.

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/78093/Aoun-promises-new-election-law-that-preserved-people-39-interests>

- **Lebanon's Aoun blocks extension of parliament extension**

Lebanese President Michel Aoun suspended parliament activities for a month on Wednesday, temporarily blocking plans to extend the parliament's term without election for the third time since 2013 to try to push politicians to agree on a new electoral law .

More Details:

<http://yalibnan.com/2017/04/13/lebanons-aoun-blocks-extension-of-parliament-extension/>

- **Calm Night in Ain Al-Hilwe as Palestinian Joint Security Force Deploy**

Ain Al-Hilwe Palestinian refugee camp in the southern Lebanese city of Sidon witnessed a calm night, as the Joint Security Force deployed in Al-Tireh neighborhood, Al-Manar correspondent said on Thursday. Our correspondent confirmed that members of the joint forces have deployed in several

areas across Al-Tireh. The neighborhood was a scene of fierce clashes between the Joint Security Force, led by Fatah movement, and Takfiri group of terrorist Bilal Badr since last Friday.

More Details:

<http://english.almanar.com.lb/237686>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Yemen, Syria, the Press, and Trump the War President**

How can you tell that Donald Trump is just another war president? Because in spite of the administrative chaos, the executive branch with its ever-shifting staff, and the half-conspiracies that surround him, the meat of the matter is the question, which near-war should the public pay attention to?

More Details:

<http://original.antiwar.com/lucy/2017/04/12/yemen-syria-the-press-and-trump-the-war-president/>

- **WFP scales up operations in Yemen**

The World Food Programme (WFP) is scaling up its emergency food operations in Yemen to provide food assistance to up to 9 million people in one of the world's worst hunger crises, a UN spokesman told reporters here Wednesday.

More Details:

http://www.china.org.cn/world/2017-04/13/content_40610841.htm

- **Qatari Minister Calls for Strengthening Qatar-South Africa Investment Relations**

Qatar Minister of Economy and Commerce Sheikh Ahmed bin Jassim bin Mohammed Al-Thani reaffirmed the importance of strengthening investment relations between Qatar and South Africa, especially as both countries share a promising vision and great aspirations in providing stability and prosperity for their peoples, Qatar News Agency (QNA) reported.

More Details:

<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/wn/newsworld.php?id=1347201>

- **Turkish companies seeking to expand in Gulf exhibit products in Qatar**

Tukey attracted \$19 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI) from Qatar in a 10-year term up until 2015, marking it as the fourth country the Qataris invested in the most. However, Turkish companies

now seek to expand their business ties with Qatar, aiming to get their share from the investments that the Qatari government is set to make for FIFA World Cup 2022. More than 150 Turkish companies from sectors like construction, health and furniture will showcase in Expo Turkey by Qatar, which will be held in Doha on April 19-21.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/economy/2017/04/13/turkish-companies-seeking-to-expand-in-gulf-exhibit-products-in-qatar>

- **Qatari delegation messed around as Presidency ducks protesters**

President Jacob Zuma hosted the Qatari head of state, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad al-Thani, on Tuesday night instead of Wednesday, in a last-minute schedule change to prevent the Qatari delegation from seeing first-hand the calls for Zuma to step down.

More Details:

<https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/national/2017-04-12-qatari-delegation-messed-around-as-presidency-ducks-protesters/>

- **-Dubai International Academic City celebrates 10 years of landmark growth and higher education achievements**

Dubai International Academic City, DIAC, this week marked 10 years of growth and achievements in the field of higher education, attributing its success to attracting academic partners focused on providing high-impact education.

More Details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302608407>

- **Ministry rubbishes rumours of spying**

Bahrain's Government confirmed yesterday that it was not spying on citizens and residents as alleged by posts circulating on social media, DT News has learnt.

More Details:

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppId=32296&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=2>

- **Scientists seek holy grail of climate change in Oman**

Deep in the jagged red mountains of Oman, geologists are drilling in search of the holy grail of reversing climate change: an efficient and cheap way to remove carbon dioxide from the air and oceans.

More Details:

<http://www.ctvnews.ca/sci-tech/scientists-seek-holy-grail-of-climate-change-in-oman-1.3366934>

7. EGYPT

- **Egypt identifies Alexandria church suicide bomber**

Egypt has identified the Alexandria church suicide bomber, describing him as a fugitive with links to militant cells that carried out previous strikes

More Details:

http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/world/76258/egypt_identifies_alexandria_church_suicide_bomber#.WO8p3dSLRix

- **Russia accuses Britain of backing Egypt Coptic Church terror attack**

In a stormy day at the United Nations, Russia's Ambassador to the UN accused Britain of supporting terrorist organisations, and directly linked their alleged support to the attacks on Coptic Christian churches earlier in the week.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170412-russia-accuses-britain-of-backing-egypt-coptic-church-terror-attack/>

- **3 children killed by explosive device in Egypt's Sinai**

Three children were killed by an explosive device that went off in the city of Al-Arish in Egypt's restive Sinai Peninsula, according to a local security source.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/3-children-killed-by-explosive-device-in-egypt-s-sinai/795197>

- **Egypt's FM to visit Khartoum next week to discuss contentious issues**

The Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry said he will visit Khartoum next week to participate in the joint political consultation meeting pointing the meeting aims to clear up any “misunderstanding” between the two countries.

More Details:

<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article62177>

- **Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi juggles insurgency,economy**

The deadly bombings of two churches have left Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi grappling with the question of how to defeat a tenacious Daesh insurgency that three years of warfare have failed to crush.

More Details:

<https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2017/04/12/egyptian-president-abdel-fattah-el-sissi-juggles-insurgency-economy.html>

- **Civil society plays a major role in economic development: ECPPS study**

The process of achieving higher levels of development and achieving economic and financial stability, as well as supporting the market policies, are among the state's main missions that can be achieved in cooperation with civil society organisations, according to a recent study published by the Egyptian Centre for Public Policy Studies (ECPPS) under the name “Role of Civil Society in Economic Development”.

More Details:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/04/13/civil-society-plays-major-role-economic-development-ecpps-study/>

- **Egypt: Poverty leads parents to kill their children**

An Egyptian father threw his two sons from a bridge over the River Nile last week because the economic crisis in the country meant he could no longer feed them, local media reported.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170412-egypt-poverty-leads-parents-to-kill-their-children/>

- **Egypt has highest level of government restriction on religion, according to global report**

Restrictions on religion around the world, both by governments and their citizens, are once again on the rise after a hiatus in recent years, according to a new study issued by the Pew Research Center.

More Details:

<http://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/6982/0/egypt-has-highest-level-of-government-restriction-on-religion-according-to-global-report>

- **Egypt votes in favor of UN resolution on Syria chemical weapons attack**

Egypt voted in favor of a United Nations Security Council resolution, presented by P3 countries including the US, UK and France, to condemn a recent chemical weapons attack in Syria, on Wednesday. The resolution obliges Syria to comply with relevant recommendations of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

More Details:

<http://www.madamasr.com/en/2017/04/12/news/u/egypt-votes-in-favor-of-un-resolution-on-syria-chemical-weapons-attack/>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Libya Resumes Wafa Oil Loadings as Biggest Field Still Closed**

Libya's Wafa oil field resumed production two weeks after closing, allowing the OPEC member to lift force majeure at pipelines connected to one of its export terminals.

More Details:

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-04-12/libya-resumes-wafa-oil-loadings-as-biggest-field-still-closed>

- **'Libya's Haftar met with senior US official in UAE'**

A senior US military official met with Libyan Colonel Khalifa Haftar in Abu Dhabi on Monday, during the controversial general's visit to the United Arab Emirates, Libyan sources revealed to The New Arab.

More Details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/4/12/libyas-haftar-met-with-senior-us-official-in-uae>

- **General strike over jobs hits Tunisia city**

More than a thousand people demonstrated Tuesday in the southern Tunisian city of Tataouine during a general strike to denounce marginalization and demand development and jobs, an AFP correspondent said.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1083561/middle-east>

- **Italy-Tunisia deal solved illegal arrivals says ambassador**

Tunisia's Ambassador to Rome Moez Sinaoui told an ANSA Forum on Wednesday that an agreement between Italy and Tunisia on migration has effectively solved the problem of illegal arrivals from that North African nation.

More Details:

http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/politics/2017/04/12/italy-tunisia-deal-solved-illegal-arrivals-says-ambassador_24e8f074-c89b-4661-a1e4-acbd6de677d0.html

- **Tunisia's public debt, budget deficit hit alarming levels**

Tunisia's budget deficit has widened to 5,452 million Tunisian dinars, or 6% of GDP (against 3.9%, provided for by the 2016 Finance Law), said the memo on the economy for the month of March 2017 published Tuesday by the Central Bank of Tunisia.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/tunisia-public-debt-budget-deficit-hit-alarming-levels-961778>

- **Spanish Navy Rescues 30 Migrants Sailing From Morocco**

A woman and a child died after the boat in which they and 31 other migrants were trying to reach Europe capsized in the Mediterranean Sea, Spain's maritime rescue service said Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/london/2017/04/12/spanish-navy-rescues-30-migrants-sailing-morocco/>

- **Under the Radar: Indonesia's Relations with Algeria**

Indonesia's relations with North African countries typically receive little attention. The topic only made a appearance in the news early this year, when Zulfikli Hasan, chairman of Indonesia's People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), met with the current Algerian ambassador to Indonesia, Abdelkader Aziria, and called on the two countries to strengthen their partnership.

More Details:

<http://thediplomat.com/2017/04/under-the-radar-indonesias-relations-with-algeria/>

- **Algeria's economic growth reaches 4% in 2016**

Algeria's GDP growth reached 4% in 2016 against 3.8% in 2015, with a steady growth of hydrocarbon GDP, said Wednesday the Governor of the Bank of Algeria Mohamed Loukal.

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/economy/17749-algeria%E2%80%99s-economic-growth-reaches-4-in-2016>

- **Algeria's foreign exchange reserves still above US\$ 100 billion**

Since late February 2017 and until now, foreign exchange reserves exceed US\$ 100 billion, affirmed Loukal while presenting the report on the country's economic and monetary developments in 2015 and 2016, during a plenary session of the Council of the Nation (Upper House of Parliament) chaired by the Speaker of the Council Abdelkader Bensalah.

More Details:

[http://en.aps.dz/economy/17740-algeria-s-foreign-exchange-reserves-still-above-us\\$-100-billion](http://en.aps.dz/economy/17740-algeria-s-foreign-exchange-reserves-still-above-us$-100-billion)

- **Algeria warily edges toward Islamic finance as energy income dives**

When experts in Islamic banking gathered earlier this year at a state-run hotel in Algiers to share their experiences on sharia-compliant finance, no one from the government showed up.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1083191/business-economy>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Trump sending Gen. McMaster to Afghanistan to review the situation**

The US President Donald Trump is sending General McMaster to Afghanistan in a bid to review the situation in the country.

More Details:

<http://www.khaama.com/trump-sending-gen-mcmaster-to-afghanistan-to-review-the-situation-02557>

- **Suicide Bomber Kills Five in Kabul**

An Islamic State suicide bomber on foot detonated his vest near the gates of the Ministry of Defense in Kabul, an attack Afghan officials said killed at least five people and wounded three others.

More Details:

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/suicide-bomber-kills-five-in-kabul-1492024140>

- **Afghan Ulemas once again slam Pakistan’s Maulana Fazal for his remarks**

The Afghan Ulemas once again slammed the Pakistani politician and religious figure Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman for his controversial remarks regarding Afghanistan, emphasizing that he is not having a religious and academic status.

More Details:

<http://www.khaama.com/afghan-ulemas-once-again-slam-pakistans-maulana-fazal-for-his-remarks-02558>

- **'No light at end of this tunnel, US can't win Afghanistan war'**

Brian Becker: General Votel’s request for a troops surge in Afghanistan comes almost exactly eight years after President Obama carried out a troop surge, at that time with more than 30,000 additional troops in Afghanistan. Here we are eight years later: the war is not over, the war continues. It now continues to be the longest war in US history. Any troop surge in Afghanistan will not be decisive. The American people won’t tolerate sending hundreds of thousands of troops so that it would be a smaller surge. Nonetheless, it won’t “win the war.”

More Details:

<https://www.rt.com/op-edge/384474-afghanistan-us-taliban-troops-war/>

- **India, Afghanistan to call for action against Pak-based terror heavens in Friday’s Moscow meet**

Afganistan is expected to be on the same page as Inndia at the multilateral talks in Moscow on Friday and clearly state that peace cannot return to the country until safe heavens for terrorists contune to flourish in the neighbourhood, a stance that chimes with the Narendre Modi goverment’s efforts to isolate Pakistan in the international community.

More Details:

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/afghanistan-to-raise-terror-havens-in-pakistan-in-moscow-talks/articleshow/58154939.cms>

- **Pakistan says UN should send fact-finding mission to Syria**

Talking to IRNA, foreign ministry spokesperson Nafees Zakaria said that it is upto the UN to decide on such matters.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82491513/>

- **Pakistan has undeniable evidence against Yadav: FO**

Pakistan has undeniable evidence against Indian spy Kulbhushan Yadav, who was caught red-handed planning espionage and subversive activities in the country, said the Foreign Office spokesperson on Thursday.

More Details:

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1382487/pakistan-undeniable-evidence-yadav-fo/>

- **Gas pipeline project becomes costlier**

There is a shocking development. Pakistan has defaulted the first one-year extension in government-to-government framework agreement signed with China on April 2015 on the \$1.6 billion Gwadar-Nawabshah LNG Terminal and Gas Pipeline Project (GNGP).

More Details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/198115-Gas-pipeline-project-becomes-costlier>

- **Chinese firm to set up \$2b refinery in Sindh**

Pakistan is expected to slash its spending on import of petroleum products as a Chinese company has shown keen interest in setting up a huge oil refinery with an investment of \$2 billion in Sindh province.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/ac0071d4-4621-45fa-9cd7-715c9db5734d.aspx>

- **Pakistan: 5 al-Qaeda members nabbed for planned attacks**

Pakistan Wednesday announced the arrest of five suspected al-Qaeda operatives said to be planning major terrorist attacks in the country's commercial capital, Karachi.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/pakistan-5-al-qaeda-members-nabbed-for-planned-attacks/795457>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **World watches as Syria dies: Turkish presidential aide**

Assad regime's use of chemical and conventional weapons is not only killing Syrian women and children but also humanity itself is dying, Presidential aide Ibrahim Kalin said in his column on Wednesday. Writing for the Daily Sabah, Kalin evaluated the recent incidents in Syria following the regime's chemical attack in Idlib on April 4.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/187814/world-watches-as-syria-dies-turkish-presidential-aide>

- **Muslim scholar lauds Turkey aiding Islamic, Arab world**

Turkey's desire and effort to serve the Islamic and Arab world have helped all sides, a prominent Muslim scholar told Anadolu Agency Thursday. Ali Muhiuddin Al-Qaradaghi, secretary general of the International Union of Muslim Scholars, spoke to Anadolu Agency at the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) office in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq about Turkey's momentum, European countries' double standards, and the future of Sunnis in Iraq.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/muslim-scholar-lauds-turkey-aiding-islamic-arab-world/796239>

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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