



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

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Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

Non State Actors

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Relations with the West

Batı'yla İlişkiler

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14 APRIL 2017

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1. IRAQ

- **Change Movement Refuses To Meet the Kurdish Negotiations Delegation**

A leading figure of the Change Movement described the meetings and the joint statements between the Patriotic Union and the Kurdistan Democratic on the popular draft referendum just a political biddings to cover the problems and political and economic crises that plague the Kurdistan region. Raouf Othman, head of the General Council of the Change Movement told the National Iraqi News Agency (NINA) that the referendum requires a number of resolutions by the Kurdistan Parliament, which is still stalled by a party decision, adding that the issue of popular referendum is not a partisan issue but a comprehensive national issue , and the movement believes in the establishment of the Kurdish state and considers it a legitimate right of the Kurdish people.

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?%252fpg30NHgeaRCyzJDQvxuoA%253d%253d

- **Two IS executioners arrested in Kirkuk**

Police in Kirkuk arrested on Friday two members of the Islamic State who had taken part in executions of Kurdish Peshmerga forces. Police chief Sarhad Qader was quoted by Aljournal News saying a police force arrested the pair near Daqouq region, west of the province. He said the two members took part in battles against Peshmerga forces and also executed some of its troopers in the Islamic State stronghold town of Hawija, southwest of the province.

More Details:

<http://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/two-executioners-arrested-kirkuk/>

- **IS Mufti Killed in Western Mosul**

Warplanes belonging to the US-led coalition have killed Islamic State (IS) Sharia jurist (Mufti) in western Mosul, north of Iraq. Abdullah Bardani, known as Abu Ayoub Attar, was IS's authorized figure for giving religious rulings in the city, said commander of Nineveh operations, Najim al-Jabouri.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/342944>

- **US State Dept Approves \$1B Trainer Aircraft Logistics Support Deal With Iraq**

The State Department has approved Iraq's request to procure pilot and maintenance training, base support and contractor logistical support for C-172, C-208 and T-6 trainer aircraft under a potential \$1.06 billion foreign military sales agreement. Iraq requested contractor aircraft modification

services, repair and spare parts, publications, aircraft ferry, miscellaneous parts, training base operation and base life support, security, construction and other elements of program support, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency said .

More Details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=40206

- **Map illustrates latest developments in battle for Mosul**

A map showing the latest development in the battle aiming to regain the right bank of Mosul city from ISIS was obtained by The Baghdad Post on Tuesday. The areas in green illustrate the completely regained ones, areas in orange show the areas currently witnessing clashes while the areas in white are still controlled by ISIS terrorist group.

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/9337/Exclusive-Map-illustrates-latest-developments-in-battle-for-Mosul>

- **Jordan's MGH to build 7,000MW Iraq power plant**

Jordan-based Mass Group Holding (MGH) has partnered with GE to build a mega power plant in Iraqi city of Baghdad which on completion will take the total power production of MGH in the country to 7,000 MW, said a report. The company have successfully commenced simple cycle commercial operations of four advanced GE 9F gas turbines under phase I of the Ministry of Electricity's (MOE) Baghdad Power Plant in Besmaya, according to Iraq Business News.

More Details:

http://www.tradearabia.com/news/CONS_323409.html

- **Baghdad against Expansion of UN Commission on Chemical Attacks in Iraq**

Baghdad supports the United Nations' investigation of chemical attacks in Syria, but it opposes the expansion of the United Nations' investigation on its territory, Iraqi Ambassador to Russia Haidar Mansour Hadi told Sputnik.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201704131052608673-iraq-un-attack-ambassador/>

- **Iraq requests pilot training and logistical support from US**

The US State Department has approved a request from Iraq for pilot and maintenance training, contractor logistical support for trainer aircraft, and base support. The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of pilot training; maintenance training; and contractor logistical services support for C-172, C-208, and T-6 aircraft for up to five years to include contractor aircraft modification; repair and spare parts; publications; aircraft ferry; and miscellaneous parts, along with training base operation support, base life support, security, construction, and other related elements of program support.

More Details:

<https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/iraq-requests-pilot-training-logistical-support-us/>

- **Iraq: UN assessment reveals extensive destruction in western Mosul**

Using satellite imagery and local researches, the most recent evaluation confirms that western Mosul has undergone extensive destruction, “far greater than in the east,” according to a senior United Nations aid official in the country. “The level of damage in western Mosul is already far greater than in the east, even before the battle to retake the Old City begins,” said Lise Grande, Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, in a news release issued by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

More Details:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56560#.WPDQqfnyjcs>

- **Iraq Fears Hasty Response to Idlib Incident to Hamper Peace Process - Ambassador**

The incident in Syria's northwestern province of Idlib on April 4 claimed lives of dozens of people. Blaming the attack on Syria's President Bashar Assad, the United States launched a cruise missile attack on the government airfield in Syria's province of Homs overnight April 6, which left at least two civilians from a nearby village and five Syrian servicemen dead according to Homs Governor Talal Barazi.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201704131052610745-iraq-response-idlib-ambassador/>

- **Fourteen years after US-led occupation, Iraq a ‘dead cancer-patient’**

The New Arab has obtained previously unpublished data highlighting the human and economic cost of the botched US-led occupation of Iraq and its failed promises. Fourteen years ago, America’s warrior-president George W. Bush declared victory from the USS Abraham Lincoln, promising an era

of security, freedom, prosperity and democracy in Iraq, but it doesn't take much effort to see that none of that ever materialised -- and the new data proves it.

More Details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/indepth/2017/4/9/fourteen-years-after-us-led-occupation-iraq-a-dead-cancer-patient>

- **Iraq Counterterrorism Efforts Destroy ISIS Bastion in Mosul**

Iraq's Federal Police announced on Thursday destroying an ISIS stronghold based in central Mosul, while the terror organization tightened its siege over civilians trapped in the areas under its control. ISIS has a long history of using civilians as human shields to slow the advance of Iraqi forces against their territory. "Our forces completely destroyed the command and control headquarters of ISIS terrorists in Mosul's Old City," said police chief Major-General Raed Shaker Jawdat.

More Details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/d-abdullah/news-middle-east/iraq-counterterrorism-efforts-destroy-isis-bastion-mosul>

2. SYRIA

- **Civilians, militants begin evacuating 4 Syria towns**

Civilians and militants begin leaving four Syrian towns in the provinces of Idlib and Rif Dimashq in an evacuation process agreed in a deal between the Damascus government and militant groups last month.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/04/14/517968/Syria-Foua-Kefraya>

- **18 Syrian Democratic Forces Members Killed in Friendly Fire**

Eighteen members of the Syrian Democratic Forces were killed in a misdirected airstrike as the forces launched on Thursday an operation to regain control of the ISIS stronghold of Raqqa in northern Syria. The airstrike by the US-led coalition this week killed 18 allied fighters battling ISIS in northern Syria, the US military said Thursday.

More details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/p-astatih/news-middle-east/18-syrian-democratic-forces-members-killed-friendly-fire>

- **Theresa May: Boris Johnson did 'excellent job' on Syria**

The British prime minister has come out in support of her Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson's efforts to reach an international agreement on the conflict in Syria, the Times reported Friday.

More details:

<http://www.politico.eu/article/theresa-may-boris-johnson-did-excellent-job-on-syria/>

- **Assad: America's 'Deep State' – Not Trump – Blew Up Airbase in Syria**

In his lengthy interview with AFP on Thursday, Syrian President Bashar Assad mused that the American "Deep State" was more responsible for pelting his Sharyat airbase with 59 cruise missiles than President Donald Trump.

More details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/04/13/assad-americas-deep-state-blew-up-my-airbase/>

- **Damascus: Hundreds Killed in US Strike Against Daesh Depot With Chemical Weapons**

The Syrian General Staff said Thursday that the US-led coalition had struck a warehouse presumably storing toxic agents, which belonged to Daesh terror group (outlawed in Russia), as a result killing and poisoning hundreds of people, including civilians, the claims which Washington has denied.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201704141052628398-daesh-depot-attack-hundreds-killed/>

- **Syrian President Assad accuses US over sarin attack on town**

Bashar al-Assad has dismissed claims that Syrian forces were behind last week's chemical weapons attack on civilians as a "100 per cent fabrication," saying, rather, that America, in league with terrorists, was responsible.

More details:

http://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/15224607.Syrian_President_Assad_accuses_US_over_sarin_attack_on_town/

- **Allegation of chemical weapon uses in Syria 'credible:' OPCW**

A preliminary assessment showed that the alleged use of chemical weapons in the Khan Sheikhun area of southern Syrian city Idlib "was a credible allegation," said the Hague-based Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on Thursday.

More details:

http://www.china.org.cn/world/2017-04/13/content_40618199.htm

- **Trump vows to end Syria's war so refugees can return home**

During his joint press conference with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, Donald Trump described Bashar Assad as a 'butcher' and said it is time to end the Syrian civil war and let the refugees who fled from the conflict return home.

More details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2017/04/14/trump-vows-to-end-syrias-war-so-refugees-can-return-home>

- **US denies hitting Daesh poison gas depot**

The US-led coalition against Daesh on Thursday denied a Syrian army report it had carried out an air strike that had hit poison gas supplies belonging to Daesh and caused the deaths of hundreds of people.

More details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/0cee0d35-5ac4-411f-89b9-fbb49a6d12b0.aspx>

- **Peace activists marching to Syria**

A group of peace activists taking part in an international walk to Syria arrived in the Serbian city of Nis on Thursday. The Civil March for Aleppo was organized by activists in Berlin to end the bombing in the war-torn country and deliver humanitarian assistance to civilians.

More details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/peace-activists-marching-to-syria/796507>

3. IRAN

- **Iran's FM in Moscow to discuss Syria crisis**

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has left Tehran for Moscow on April 14 to attend trilateral talks with Russian and Syrian counterparts, IRNA reported.

More details:

<http://en.trend.az/iran/politics/2742356.html>

- **Iran Air Orders 20 ATR 72-600s**

Iran Air and ATR have signed an agreement for the purchase of 20 ATR 72-600s in a deal worth USD\$536 million at list prices. The first delivery could be as early as this month as several of the type already sporting the Iran Air logo are ready at ATR Toulouse.

More details:

<http://news.airwise.com/story/iran-air-orders-20-atr-72-600s>

- **Over 600 candidates register for Iran presidential race**

Iranian media say more than 600 candidates have registered to run in next month's presidential election. At least 638 have registered in the first three days of the process through Thursday, more than twice the number that had registered during the same period in 2013. Registration closes on Saturday.

More details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/over-600-candidates-register-for-iran-presidential-race/>

- **Iran: Political Prisoners Condemned the Detainment of a Sunni Cleric**

The political prisoners of Zahedan Central Penitentiary and Gohardasht West-Tehran Prison, in a statement condemned the detainment of Mowlavi Kuhi; a Sunni cleric, demanding his release.

More details:

<http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/iran-protests/22536-iran-political-prisoners-condemned-the-detainment-of-a-sunni-cleric>

- **Expert: Iran's Defense of Assad Raises Questions about Its Own Chemical Weapons Program**

Iran's support of the Syrian regime in the wake of a gas attack against civilians in northern Syria raises questions about its own chemical weapons program, a research fellow at the Foundation for Foundation of Democracies wrote Wednesday in the New York Daily News.

More details:

<http://www.thetower.org/4851-expert-irans-defense-of-assad-raises-questions-about-its-own-chemical-weapons-program/>

- **Iran Ramps Up Oil Output As OPEC Production Falls**

The OPEC Monthly Oil Market Report is out with OPEC's crude oil production numbers for March 2017.

More details:

<http://oilprice.com/Energy/Oil-Prices/Iran-Ramps-Up-Oil-Output-As-OPEC-Production-Falls.html>

- **CIA Director Says Syria Missile Strike a Message for Tehran**

CIA Director Mike Pompeo said Thursday that the U.S. cruise missile strike on a Syrian airfield last week signaled to Iran that the United States is prepared to use force to protect American interests.

More details:

<http://freebeacon.com/national-security/cia-director-says-syria-missile-strike-message-tehran/>

- **Iran calls on US to send peace message, not missiles, to region**

Head of Parliament NSFPC has criticized the US for its missile attack against Syrian airfield; says US should have sent message of peace rather than symbol of destruction.

More details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124751/iran-calls-on-US-to-send-peace-message-not-missiles-to-region>

- **House Leader Wants To Impose More Sanctions On Russia And Iran**

House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce told CNN Wednesday he is bringing back a bill that would place additional sanctions on Russia and Iran.,

More details:

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/04/13/house-leader-wants-to-impose-more-sanctions-on-russia-and-iran/>

- **Iran warns US action in Syria 'won't go unanswered'**

Any new US action in Syria "will not go unanswered", Iran's Defence Minister Hossein Dehgan warned Tuesday after America threatened to follow up a strike last week with more attacks.

More details:

<http://www.defencetalk.com/iran-warns-us-action-in-syria-wont-go-unanswered-69713/>

- **Iran's Missile Tests Not Related to JCPOA, UNSC Resolution**

Iran's Foreign Ministry said the country's missile tests have nothing to do with the 2015 nuclear agreement between Tehran and world powers, stressing that the launches do not violate UN Security Council Resolution 2231, either.

More details:

<http://ifpnews.com/wired/2017/04/irans-missile-tests-not-related-jcpoa/>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Israel arrests Hamas lawmaker and 14 others**

Israel has arrested a Palestinian lawmaker over Hamas "activities," an NGO and officials said on Wednesday, bringing to 13 the number of Palestinian deputies detained by Tel Aviv.

More details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/d1f501ea-4d32-4d1c-85ab-8c9b974c8577.aspx>

- **It is not time to recognize A Palestinian state, says France's macron**

French independent presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron said on Sunday that recognizing a Palestinian state at this stage would serve nothing.

More details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/It-is-not-time-to-recognize-a-Palestinian-state-says-French-presidential-front-runner-486837>

- **Six Palestinian students injured amid clashes with Israeli forces in West Bank**

At least six Palestinian students have sustained gunshot wounds after clashes broke out between a group of young Palestinian protesters and Israeli military forces in the central part of the occupied West Bank.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/04/13/517900/Palestinian-students-Israel-shooting-university-campus-West-Bank-Abu-Dis>

- **Israel arrests Hamas affiliated lawmaker in West Bank**

The Israeli army arrested a Palestinian lawmaker on Wednesday when conducting dawn raids in the West Bank, according to a statement by the Palestinian Prisoners' Society.

More details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/4/13/israel-arrests-hamas-affiliated-lawmaker-in-west-bank>

- **385 Israeli settlers storm Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque**

Hundreds of Israeli settlers Thursday stormed the Al-Aqsa Mosque in the occupied East Jerusalem amid protests by Jerusalem-based Muslim bodies, Palestinian officials said.

More details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/385-israeli-settlers-storm-jerusalems-al-aqsa-mosque/796374>

- **Palestinian Authority Suspends Ties with UN Agency for Creating Less Hateful Curriculum**

The Palestinian Authority suspended ties with the United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) Thursday due to the agency's plans to change its curriculum, which currently contains material inciting violence against Israelis. The PA's Education Ministry called the possible reforms "an affront to the Palestinian people, its history and struggles."

more details:

<http://www.thetower.org/4853-palestinian-authority-suspends-ties-with-un-agency-for-creating-less-hateful-curriculum/>

- **Abbas seeks new steps to end Palestinian split**

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas warned that he will take "unprecedented steps" to end the political division between his West Bank-based autonomy government and the Hamas-run Gaza Strip.

More details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1083976/world>

- **Palestinian Force Deploys in Ain el-Hilweh after Clashes**

A local Palestinian security force deployed across southern Lebanon's Ain el-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp on Thursday, a commander said, ending a week of sporadic clashes with an extremist group.

More details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/228463-palestinian-force-deploys-in-ain-el-hilweh-after-clashes>

- **Wang meets Palestine's foreign minister, affirms support for a two-state solution**

China supports the establishment of a Palestinian state and urges the resumption of peace talks between Palestine and Israel, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in Beijing on Thursday.

More details:

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2017-04/14/content_28926422.htm

- **Fatah, Hamas Spat Undermines Chances of Success at Gaza Meeting**

Recent spat between the two chief Palestinian parties, Hamas and Fatah, has cast doubt over the possibility of bridging the rift at the anticipated meeting to be held in Gaza. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas had earlier vowed to undertake decisive and unprecedented measures to end Hamas' monopoly over Gaza.

More details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/kifah-ziboun/news-middle-east/fatah-hamas-spat-undermines-chances-success-gaza-meeting>

- **Modi's Israel visit to spur missile deal as ties deepen**

India is close to signing two defense deals with Israel as it seeks to deepen ties with the Middle Eastern nation before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit in July, according to people with knowledge of the matter.

More details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/198533-Modis-Israel-visit-to-spur-missile-deal-as-ties-deepen>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **ISF arrests 31 Syrians in Swiri for illegal entrance to Lebanon**

Internal Security Forces (ISF) directorate on Thursday issued a statement saying that it managed on April 12, 2017 to stop at 23:00 a minibus carrying 31 Syrians for entering Lebanese Swiri village in Bekaa in an illegal way, knowing that the plate number of the minibus was a fake one.

More details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/78103/ISF-arrests-31-Syrians-in-Swiri-for-illegal-entrance-to-Lebanon>

- **Lebanon president suspends parliament for one month**

Lebanese President Michel Aoun suspended parliament on Wednesday to prevent it from extending its own term for the third time in less than four years. The legislature had been due to meet on Thursday to vote on an extension.

More details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/4/13/lebanon-president-suspends-parliament-for-one-month>

- **Lebanon to Stop Palestinians Clashes outside Camps**

Lebanese army commander General Joseph Aoun warned today that the Lebanese army will forcefully prevent any attempt to extend the fighting between Palestinian militias in the Ain El-Hilweh camp to the city of Saida.

More details:

<http://www.plenglish.com/index.php?o=rn&id=11657&SEO=lebanon-to-stop-palestinians-clashes-outside-camps>

- **Lebanon needs \$10B in infrastructure aid to cope with Syrian refugees: PM**

Lebanon is seeking \$10-\$12 billion in infrastructure investment from the international community over the next seven years to cope with the huge presence of Syrian refugees in the country, Prime Minister Saad Hariri's adviser on Syrian refugees said Wednesday.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/lebanon-needs-10b-infrastructure-aid-cope-syrian-refugees-pm-962776>

- **Tajeddine part of U.S. terror prosecution trend**

The recent indictment of Kassem Tajeddine, a Lebanese businessman accused of violating U.S. sanctions laws, represents part of an increasing – and potentially questionable – trend in terrorism prosecutions, experts say.

More details:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2017/Apr-14/401900-tajeddine-part-of-us-terror-prosecution-trend.ashx>

- **Jordan condemns Israelis' 'provocative' storming of Al Aqsa**

The government on Thursday condemned the Israeli occupation authorities for allowing Jewish extremists and settlers to storm Al Aqsa Mosque/Al Haram Al Sharif under the protection of their forces, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

More details:

<http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/jordan-condemns-israelis%E2%80%99-provocative%E2%80%99-storming-al-aqsa>

- **PM chairs meeting for government economic team**

Prime Minister Hani Al Mulki on Thursday, chaired a meeting at the Prime Ministry for the government's economic team. The government's team agreed to pay field visits over the next two weeks to promising sectors deemed as an engine for the national economy.

More details:

<http://en.ammonnews.net/formviewer.aspx?form=AllDetails§ionid=2>

- **Jordan, Saudi Arabia to hold joint military drills**

The Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army and the Saudi Armed Forces will hold joint military drills as of next week within a joint training program.

More details:

http://www.petra.gov.jo/public_news/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?Menu_ID=&Site_Id=2&lang=2&NewsID=297735&CatID=13

- **Jordan's public debt reaches JD26.1 billion at end of February**

The Kingdom's total public debt reached JD26.120 billion by the end of February, or 94.3 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) for 2017 compared to 95.1 percent of the GDP in 2016, Finance Ministry figures showed.

More details:

<http://www.fananews.com/en/jordan/338654/>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **More than 30,000 Syrians to be evacuated under Qatar-Iran deal**

Civilians and fighters began evacuating four towns besieged by rebels and government forces Friday under a deal brokered by opposition backer Qatar and regime ally Iran, an AFP correspondent and a local source said.

More details:

<http://www.france24.com/en/20170414-syria-four-towns-begin-evacuating-30000-qatar-iran-deal-madaya-zabadani>

- **Qatar's love affair with the UK is at stake**

GCC country plans to increase its investment in the United Kingdom by \$6.3bn over next five years. Financial technology company Al Resala Group, based a short walk from the curve of Doha Bay, is growing fast. Its brisk international expansion means CEO Sakib Arain is often on the go, too; he spends about half of his time travelling.

More details:

<http://www.arabianbusiness.com/qatar-s-love-affair-with-uk-is-at-stake-670031.html>

- **Qatar Stock Index Drops 37.81 Points**

Doha: Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE) index dropped 37.81 points (-0.36%) when the bourse closed trading at 10,451.47 points Thursday.

More details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/13/04/2017/Qatar-Stock-Index-Drops-37.81-Points>

- **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>

- **US lawmakers growing skeptical of Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen**

Dozens of elected officials are pushing measures that may halt additional US assistance to Saudi Arabia's military. Dozens of elected officials are pushing measures to put the brakes on additional US assistance to Saudi Arabia's military, which has waged a vicious war in Yemen, killing thousands of civilians and wrecking the country's infrastructure.

More details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/us-lawmakers-worry-arm-sales-saudi-might-increase-bloodshed-yemen-1482158840>

- **Hunger Strikers at UN Headquarters Call for End to Yemen War**

Peace activists are holding a week-long vigil and hunger strike at United Nations headquarters in New York City to demand an end to the U.S.-backed, Saudi Arabia-led war in Yemen and humanitarian aid for the country's starving population.

More details:

<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2017/04/13/hunger-strikers-un-headquarters-call-end-yemen-war>

- **President of Yemen: The Houthis Have Sold Themselves to Iran Regime**

President, Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi in a speech on Monday, April 10th stated that the Houthi militants sold themselves to the Iran regime and have become a tool for the development policies of Iran in the region. In his speech, Mansur Hadi stated:"the Houthis have simply become a tool for Iran in order to carry out Tehran's plans and policies for controlling Yemen and casting dominance on the Arab States."

More details:

<http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/terrorism-fundamentalism/22535-president-of-yemen-the-houthis-have-sold-themselves-to-iran-regime>

- **Saudi Arabia raises \$9bln in first global Islamic bond**

Saudi Arabia raised \$9 billion in its first global Islamic bond issue, the government announced on Thursday, a move analysts say could ease pressure on foreign reserves. The sale of Islamic bonds, known as sukuks, comes after the kingdom in October turned to the conventional global debt market for the first time, raising \$17.5 billion in a bond issue.

More details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/198371-Saudi-Arabia-raises-9bln-in-first-global-Islamic-bond>

- **Asylum seeker returned to Saudi Arabia**

A Saudi woman claiming she sought asylum in Australia was stopped on a layover in the Philippines and returned to Riyadh on Wednesday. Dina Ali Lasloom said in self-recorded videos the Philippine authorities had held her at the Manila airport and confiscated her passport. The videos circulated widely on social media over the past two days.

More details:

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=396655>

- **Britain sells arms to Saudi Arabia - then gives aid to its targets in Yemen**

An airstrike by the Saudi-led coalition has left shrapnel embedded in his head. In the next hospital room Mohammed stands looking dazed at his injured family. Two of his children were killed in the attack which destroyed two houses. Civilians continue to pay a high price as Yemen's war enters its third year.

More details:

<http://www.itv.com/news/2017-04-13/britain-arms-saudia-arabia-aid-to-yemen-neil-connery/>

7. EGYPT

- **Egypt says second church bomber identified**

The authorities in Egypt said late Thursday they had identified the second of two jihadist bombers who targeted Coptic Christian Palm Sunday services last week. The interior ministry made the announcement after President Abdel Fattah al-Sissi pledged as he visited Coptic Pope Tawadros II to hunt down the perpetrators of the bombings.

More details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/egypt-says-second-church-bomber-identified/>

- **Egypt called to maintain UN sanctions on Sudan: Ghandour**

Sudan Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour has asked Cairo to explain the position of an Egyptian diplomat at the United Nations calling to maintain UN arms embargo on Darfur and other sanctions provided in UN resolution 1591 (2005).

More details:

<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article62184>

- **Egypt, Saudi Ulema Council speak out against terrorism**

India has found key allies in the Arab World which have been traditionally close to Pakistan but have lent their support to India's stand against the neighbour's selective approach in fighting terror. Egypt has joined ranks with India and called for a united approach in fighting terror after Sunday's terror attacks killed 45 people.

More details:

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/egypt-saudi-ulema-council-speak-out-against-terrorism/articleshow/58173213.cms>

- **National Bank of Egypt collects \$6.5 billion since pound float: official**

Egypt's biggest lender, the state-owned National Bank of Egypt has collected \$6.5 billion since the liberalisation of the Egyptian pound exchange rate on Nov 3, deputy chairman said on Thursday. "The NBE has provided more than \$7.5 billion to cover import payments since November 3rd," Yehia Aboul Fotouh further told Amwal Al Ghad.

More details:

<http://en.amwalalghad.com/business/banks/56287-national-bank-of-egypt-collects-65-billion-since-pound-float-official.html>

- **HRW calls on Egypt for information on 4 Palestinians missing for 20 months**

Human Rights Watch (HRW) called on Egyptian authorities, in a statement posted on Thursday, to immediately disclose information pertaining to the whereabouts and conditions of four Palestinian men from Gaza who went missing after crossing the border into North Sinai in August 2015.

More details:

<http://www.madamasr.com/en/2017/04/13/news/u/hrw-calls-on-egypt-for-information-on-4-palestinians-missing-for-20-months/>

- **Bishop says state of emergency not enough to protect Egypt's Copts**

The Egyptian government needs to do more to protect the country's Coptic Christians from a "wave of persecution" following bombings that killed dozens during the church's most solemn week of the year, a senior bishop said. Bishop Macarius, head of the Coptic diocese in Minya, south of Cairo, was skeptical that a state of emergency imposed after the Islamist attacks on Palm Sunday was adequate security and said the church wanted further guarantees.

More details:

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-violence-christians-idUKKBN17F1YG>

- **Egypt court bans defendant from using internet over terrorism-related conviction**

An Alexandria criminal court sentenced on Wednesday lawyer and labour rights activist Mohamed Ramadan to 10 years in prison and banned him from using the internet for five years, the first-ever such ban in Egypt, after he was convicted of inciting terrorism.

More details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/262892/-.aspx>

- **Egypt: 10-year prison term for insulting President an outrageous assault on freedom of expression**

The sentencing of a lawyer to 10 years in prison for a Facebook post exposes the abuse of Egypt's new counterterrorism law to silence government critics, said Amnesty International.

More details:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/04/egypt-10-year-prison-term-for-insulting-president-an-outrageous-assault-on-freedom-of-expression/>

- **Egypt imposes sugar export tariff of 3,000 pounds per tonne**

Egypt will impose a sugar export tariff of 3,000 Egyptian pounds (\$165.47) per tonne, the state's official gazette said on Thursday.

More details:

<http://www.nasdaq.com/article/egypt-imposes-sugar-export-tariff-of-3000-pounds-per-tonne-20170413-00131>

- **Egypt's Easter celebrations cut after bombings**

Egypt's Coptic Church has announced that it will scale back Easter celebrations to a single Mass in each church after twin bombings killed 45 worshippers last weekend. The attacks - the deadliest in recent years against Christians in the country - shook the community and provoked rare public anger at the government for failing to protect the minority.

More details:

<http://www.independent.ie/world-news/middle-east/egypts-easter-celebrations-cut-after-bombings-35618904.html>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Morocco dismantles IS-linked cell**

An alleged "terrorist cell" that was recruiting volunteers for the Islamic State group was dismantled by Moroccan authorities, officials said on Wednesday.

More details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/4/13/morocco-dismantles-is-linked-cell>

- **Morocco Could "Support" The UK as Its Ally after Brexit**

"Morocco has a very old relationship with the UK and Brexit is a way for us to renew that relationship." Moroccan newspapers, bankers, and senior private sector figures have spoken out about wanting their country to get closer to the UK post-Brexit, as the lord mayor of London visited Casablanca as part of a tour of North Africa

More details:

https://www.buzzfeed.com/marieleconte/morocco-wants-to-be-the-uks-trading-partner-in-africa-after?utm_term=.tj1KmNveA#.bxGXDYLPd

- **NOC scorns allegations LNA using its airstrips; Al-Wafa pipeline reopened**

The National Oil Corporation (NOC) has rejected accusations it allowed Libyan National Army (LNA) planes to launch and then attack its targets in the south from the Al-Feel oilfield airstrips.

More details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/04/13/noc-scorns-allegations-lna-using-its-airstrips-al-wafa-pipeline-reopened/>

- **Some 100 refugees missing as inflatable boat sinks off Libyan shoreline**

Nearly 100 asylum seekers have been reported missing following the sinking of their inflatable boat off the Libyan coastline

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/04/14/517953/Libya-refugee-boat-Ayoub-Qassem>

- **LNA resumes airstrikes on Tamenhint as Misratans target Brak Al-Shatti: report**

The Libyan National Army (LNA) has resumed its aerial assault of the Third Force-held Tamenhint airbase, north-east of Sebha. There was an attack yesterday and locals in Sebha today told the Libya Herald that they again heard aircraft over the town heading toward the base.

More details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/04/13/lina-resumes-airstrikes-on-tamenhint-as-misratans-target-brak-al-shatti-report/>

- **Qaddafi's People's Hall again set on fire**

The former People's Hall between Tripoli's Suq Al-Thalath roundabout and Hay Al-Andalus was again set on fire today. It is the fourth time since 2011 it has happened, the last time being just eight weeks ago.

More details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/04/13/qaddafis-peoples-hall-again-set-on-fire/>

- **Russia's Military Base in Libya Not under Discussion- Libyan Commander**

According to the Libyan National Army Commander, the issue of establishment of the Russian military base in Libya is not being discussed.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201704131052599765-russia-base-military-libya/>

- **Algeria, Ethiopia to take economic cooperation to "level of excellence"**

Algeria and Ethiopia were working to take the economic cooperation to the "level of excellence," Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Ramtane Lamamra said Wednesday in Algiers.

More details:

<http://en.aps.dz/economy/17757-algeria,-ethiopia-to-take-economic-cooperation-to-level-of-excellence%E2%80%9D>

- **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>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **The U.S. Just Dropped Its Biggest Non-Nuclear Bomb on ISIS**

The Massive Ordnance Air Blast bomb, AKA the MOAB, AKA the “Mother Of All Bombs,” is a 22,600 pound American bomb. It is so huge it can’t be dropped out of a normal bomber or fighter jet, it needs to be tossed out the back of a cargo plane. And the U.S. just dropped it on ISIS in Afghanistan, according to a report from CNN.

More details:

http://foxtrotalpha.jalopnik.com/the-u-s-just-dropped-its-biggest-non-nuclear-bomb-on-i-1794300325?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+jalopnik%2Fnull+%28Jalopnik%29

- **'Afghanistan is testing ground for US bombs', former President Hamid Karzai says while condemning US strike**

The US dropping its heaviest bomb+ ever on Afghanistan is "not (about) the war on terror", it's about using the mountainous country "as (a) testing ground for new and dangerous weapons", said former President Hamid Karzai

More details:

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/afghanistan-is-testing-ground-for-us-bombs-former-president-hamid-karzai-says-while-condemning-us-strike/articleshow/58177150.cms>

- **Tokyo shares drop by noon after US strike on Afghanistan**

Tokyo shares drifted lower Friday morning on rising geopolitical fears after the US military dropped a massive bomb in Afghanistan, adding to global tensions over the Middle East and the Korean peninsula.

More details:

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/aec/30312264>

- **132 ISIS terrorists killed in Afghanistan in past 6 days: MoD**

At least 132 loyalists of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group were killed during the ongoing counter-terrorism operations in East of Afghanistan

More details:

<http://www.khaama.com/132-isis-terrorists-killed-in-afghanistan-in-past-6-days-mod-02561>

- **Russian senator warns of new arms race after US uses MOAB in Afghanistan**

Igor Morozov said that Russia should start a discussion about the recent US test at the UN Security Council. A Russian senator has threatened of a commencement of a new round of arms race after the US used the largest non-nuclear bomb in Afghanistan.

More details:

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/mother-of-all-bombs-afghanistan-us-moab-donald-trump-russia/1/928896.html>

- **To fight corruption, Afghanistan must strengthen and reform its anti-corruption agencies**

The nine agencies currently tasked with anti-corruption work must be consolidated, according to new research by Transparency International

More details:

http://www.transparency.org/news/pressrelease/to_fight_corruption_afghanistan_must_strengthen_and_reform_its_anti-corrupt

- **China delivers third maritime patrol ship to Pakistan**

On April 11, China officially handed a 600-ton patrol ship over to Pakistan's maritime safety authority in Guangzhou, Guangdong province. Among other things, the ship will be used to safeguard Pakistan's maritime interests.

More details:

<http://en.people.cn/n3/2017/0414/c90000-9203058.html>

- **Pakistan's exports to India grew despite tension across border: report**

Islamabad: Pakistan's exports to India have grown despite border tensions and war of words between the two neighbours, according to a media report.

More details:

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/bf3biVBykaGbSNyeb8OrCO/Pakistans-exports-to-India-grew-despite-tension-across-bord.html>

- **Bilateral ties: CPEC will help strengthen Pakistan, says CM**

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project is not only strengthening the country economically but also improving relations between the two countries, said Punjab Chief Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

More details:

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1383079/bilateral-ties-cpec-will-help-strengthen-pakistan-says-cm/>

- **Australia announces another \$1m to improve nutrition in Pakistan**

The Australian government Thursday announced additional support worth US \$1 million to Pakistan and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) Pakistan to improve nutrition, eliminate hunger, and attain food security through food fortification.

More details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/198428-Australia-announces-another-1m-to-improve-nutrition-in-Pakistan>

10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Erdogan, Putin discuss latest developments in Syria**

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin discussed the latest developments in Syria by phone on Thursday, according to the Turkish presidency, Anadolu reported.

More details:

<http://en.trend.az/world/turkey/2742252.html>

- **Turkish jets strike PKK targets in northern Iraq**

Turkish jets launched an air operation against the terrorist PKK in northern Iraq late Thursday, the military said. According to a General Staff statement, Turkish jets destroyed seven shelters and several weapons storage bunkers used by the terrorist PKK organization in northern Iraq's Zap region late Thursday. The PKK is listed as a terrorist organization by Turkey, the U.S., and the EU. During its over 30-year terror campaign against Turkey, more than 40,000 people have lost their lives.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/187922/turkish-jets-strike-pkk-targets-in-northern-iraq>

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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