



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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Ethnic and Secterian Groups

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

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16 OCTOBER 2017

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1. IRAQ

- **Rakan al-Jubouri Governor Of Kirkuk Instead Of Dismissal Governor**

The former MP for the Iraqiya List, Yassin al-Obeidi, announced assigning deputy of governor of Kirkuk, Rakan Jubouri as governor after the dismissal of former governor Najim al-Din Karim.

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?PCJGzjiSHruEkDP3uN%252bgYA%253d%253d

- **Peshmerga withdraws from two regions in Kirkuk, as Iraqi troops advance**

The Kurdish Peshmerga troops have withdrawn from two regions in Kirkuk. Speaking to Alghad Press on Monday, a military source said "Peshmerga withdrew from Maktab Khaled and Tal al-Ward regions, south of Kirkuk," adding that the withdrawal came after agreement with Iraqi army and that Federal Police now control the two regions.

More Details:

<https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/iraqi-army-controls-wide-regions-kirkuk-state-tv/>

- **Basra Threatens to Declare Self-governing Region**

Basra Provincial Council threatened on Saturday to declare a self-governing region if the central government continues to delay the financial entitlements of the province. The deputy head of the provincial council, Walid Qaitan, said "Basra province holds the largest share in the budget of the country, more than 80% of its total budget, through oil exports and sea ports and other resources."

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/385588>

- **Trump Insists, Falsely, That He Opposed Iraq War during Education Speech in Cleveland**

Donald Trump is insisting he opposed the war in Iraq from the beginning, even though fact checkers have repeatedly said that claim is false. "I opposed going in and I did oppose it. Despite the media saying, 'No, yes, no,' I opposed going in," Trump said Thursday before a speech on education while visiting a charter school in Ohio.

More Details:

http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/c61fac4b-57f7-4b87-ad48-b32e6ebc64ab

- **PUK-PDK meeting Aftermath**

Both leading Parties of Kurdistan Region, PUK and KDP, reiterated in today's meeting that they will abide by the result of the September 25 referendum and will not suspend the outcome of the vote. After meeting with Iraqi officials on Sunday, Barzani said his government had rejected Baghdad's demand to cancel outcome of independence vote and pledged to defend the autonomous region in case of an attack.

More Details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=42108

- **Iraq military captures oil fields outside Kirkuk from Kurdish forces**

Iraq's military has seized two major oil fields outside the disputed city of Kirkuk from Kurdish forces. The military said in a statement on Monday that federal forces are now in control of the North Oil Company and Baba Gurgur fields. Iraqi forces advanced on Kirkuk overnight on Monday, clashing with Kurdish forces on the outskirts. The city is outside the Kurdish autonomous region but claimed by the Kurds and the central government.

More Details:

<https://www.energyvoice.com/oilandgas/middle-east/153313/iraq-military-captures-oil-fields-outside-kirkuk-kurdish-forces/>

- **PKK presence in Iraq's Kirkuk leaves Turkmen anxious**

The Turkmen community in northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk feel unsafe as reports emerge that members of the PKK terrorist organization were now freely roaming the streets, an Iraqi Turkmen politician told Anadolu Agency. The Kirkuk province along with parts of the provinces of Nineveh, Saladin (northern Iraq) and Diyala (eastern Iraq) are disputed between Baghdad and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), and are inhabited by a mixture of ethnic Kurds, Arabs, and Turkmen.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/pkk-presence-in-iraqs-kirkuk-leaves-turkmen-anxious/938979>

- **Speaker: Iran Fully Supports Iraq's Territorial Integrity**

Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani reiterated his country's support for Iraq's territorial integrity, blaming Israel for the crisis created by the independence referendum in the Iraqi Kurdistan region. "Iran fully supports Iraq's territorial integrity. Before a complete solution of the ISIL problems in Iraq, another problem was created and the Israelis are behind this crisis," Larijani said in a meeting with his Turkish counterpart Ismail Kahraman in Russia on Sunday.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960724000402>

- **In Kirkuk, the Next Phase of Iraq's Conflict Begins**

Although the Islamic State is on the run in most of Iraq, the fight for power, autonomy and resources among Iraq's ethnic and sectarian groups is only just beginning. This struggle will be most evident in the territories disputed by the Iraqi government Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Arbil, most of which voted in the Kurdish independence referendum last month. The prize of the dispute is the oil-rich province of Kirkuk. After a tense four-day standoff between the Kurdish peshmerga, Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and the pro-Baghdad Shiite-led Popular Mobilization Forces, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi ordered the ISF, the Federal Police and the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service forces to move into the city of Kirkuk early on Oct. 16 to secure federal bases and installations in the area.

More Details:

<https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/kirkuk-next-phase-iraqs-conflict-begins>

- **Ankara ready to help Iraq to eliminate PKK**

Turkish Foreign Ministry says the country is ready to cooperate with Iraqi forces to eliminate PKK terrorists. Ankara is ready to cooperate with Iraqi authorities to eliminate the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in the country, according to a statement from the Turkish Foreign Ministry.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/128691/Ankara-ready-to-help-Iraq-to-eliminate-PKK>

- **Iraq Says PKK Presence in Kirkuk Amounts to 'Declaration of War'**

The government of Iraq said that Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militants were among Kurdish forces in a standoff with the Iraqi army in the disputed oil province of Kirkuk, in what it said amounted to a "declaration of war". The National Security Council said it viewed as a "dangerous escalation" and a "declaration of war" the presence of "fighters not belonging to the regular security forces in Kirkuk", including fighters from the PKK, NRT reported.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960724000423>

- **EU launches mission to support security strategy in Iraq**

The European Union Foreign Affairs Council meeting in Luxembourg Monday launched a new civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) mission in Iraq. The mission will focus on assisting the Iraqi authorities in the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Iraqi national security strategy, said the Council in a statement.

More Details:

<http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2646890&Language=en>

- **Iraq warns Kurdistan of involving PKK in Kirkuk dispute**

Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar Al-Abadi yesterday warned Kurdish leaders of involving militant's from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in the ongoing dispute over the northern oil-rich city of Kirkuk. The country's National Security Council views the presence of fighters which are not linked to the government forces as a declaration of war, Al-Abadi said in a statement.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171016-iraq-warns-kurdistan-of-involving-pkk-in-kirkuk-dispute/>

- **Iraq: 400,000 Children still displaced one year after the start of the Mosul offensive**

As Iraq marks the first anniversary of the start of the offensive to retake Mosul from ISIS, Save the Children is concerned for the estimated 400,000 children who are still displaced by the fighting. A staggering one million people were forced from their homes by the nine-month offensive, one of the largest mass displacements in recent years. Just under a third have returned to start rebuilding their shattered lives. (1)

More Details:

<https://www.savethechildren.net/article/iraq-400000-children-still-displaced-one-year-after-start-mosul-offensive>

- **Suicide attack kills at least seven people in Iraq's Anbar**

At least seven people were killed and 15 others were wounded when an unidentified suicide bomber detonated his explosives vest at a coffee shop in Al-Dawarah region in the city of Hit in Iraq's Anbar province on 11 October, Iraqi News reported. No immediate claim of responsibility for the attack was made.

More Details:

<http://www.janes.com/article/74900/suicide-attack-kills-at-least-seven-people-in-iraq-s-anbar>

- **Iran closes border with Iraq's Kurdish region: Baghdad**

Weeks after the north held an illegitimate referendum, Iran has closed its border gates with the northern Iraqi Kurdish administration at the request of Baghdad, Iraq's Foreign Ministry said Sunday. In a statement, ministry spokesperson Ahmad Mahcub said: "Iran has closed its border gates with the Kurdish Regional Government [KRG] at the request of the central [Iraqi] government."

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/iran-closes-border-with-iraq-s-kurdish-region-baghdad/936410>

2. SYRIA

- **Fall of Raqqa inflames Southeast Asia terror threat**

With the final Islamic State (IS) stronghold of Raqqa, Syria on the brink of falling, counterterrorism officials are still in the dark over how many, if any, Indonesian fighters have survived the caliphate's collapse and are headed back to light a fire under a percolating terrorist movement at home.

More details;

<http://www.atimes.com/article/fall-raqqa-inflames-southeast-asia-terror-threat/>

- **ISIS Militants Cleared from Raqqa... Mystery Surrounds Their Destination**

The Syrian Democratic Forces launched on Sunday their last attack on Raqqa after a convoy of ISIS armed militants left the city following a deal negotiated by local officials and tribesmen. An SDF spokesperson said that 275 Syrian ISIS fighters left Raqqa, leaving behind between 200 and 300 foreign ISIS jihadists. About 3,000 trapped civilians also left the city.

More details;

<https://english.aawsat.com/caroline-akoum/news-middle-east/isis-militants-cleared-raqqa-mystery-surrounds-destination>

- **Lisbon's first Syrian restaurant a welcome sign for refugees**

The queue outside Lisbon's first Syrian restaurant on its opening day showed an appetite not just for Syrian food but for integration in one of the few European countries trying to welcome more refugees.

More Details:

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/news/world/lisbon-s-first-syrian-restaurant-a-welcome-sign-for-refugees/article/505136#ixzz4veOAs01Q>

- **International partners reinforce commitment to Global Concessional Financing Facility**

International partners agreed today that the Global Concessional Financing Facility (GCF) had provided critical assistance to Syrian refugees and their host communities in Jordan and Lebanon, but that continued support is urgently needed. Additional support amounting to \$80 million was pledged by donors to help the GCF deepen its impact on the grant.

More details;

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2017/10/15/continued-urgency-to-support-refugees-and-hosts-in-lebanon-and-jordan-international-partners-reinforce-commitment-to-global-concessional-financing-facility>

- **Turkey launched Idlib operation to prevent another humanitarian crisis**

After days of deployment and preparation, the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) entered Syria last week and initiated the Idlib operation. Daily Sabah spoke with Dr. Murat Yeşiltaş, the director of security studies at Ankara's Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA), to learn the reasons for the operation and to delve deeper into the challenges it poses, as well as Turkey's expectations.

More details;

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2017/10/16/turkey-launched-idlib-operation-to-prevent-another-humanitarian-crisis>

- **Gov't Forces Discover Israel-Made Arms in Terrorists' Positions in Central Syria**

The Syrian Army soldiers found a large volume of Israel-made arms and ammunition in terrorists' positions in the newly-liberated regions in the Central part of the country, field sources confirmed on Monday. The sources said that a large volume of arms and munitions was seized by the army men while carrying out mop-up operation across regions that were previously under terrorists' occupation in the provinces of Hama and Homs. The sources said that the seized arms and ammunitions were mainly made in Israel.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960724000847>

- **Israeli Defense Forces: Russia was notified in real-time about airstrike on Syria**

Israel notified Russia "in real time" about a strike on Syria's troops near Damascus, a spokesperson for the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) told TASS on Monday. "Israel notified Russia in real-time mode about an airstrike in Syria," he said. An Israeli army spokesperson told a briefing earlier in the day that Russia had been notified in real time or immediately before the strike. The incident occurred ahead of Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu's visit to Israel scheduled for Monday. The spokesman affirmed that the Russian minister would be informed on the matter in detail.

More Details:

<http://tass.com/defense/970914>

- **Israel strikes Syria after missile attack**

Israel struck a Syrian anti-aircraft battery near Damascus on Monday after missiles were fired at Israeli reconnaissance planes earlier, the military said. "Earlier today, an anti-aircraft missile was launched from Syria towards IDF aircraft during a routine flight over Lebanon. No hits confirmed," the army tweeted.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israel-strikes-syria-after-missile-attack/938971>

- **Senior Iranian military leader killed in Syria**

Iranian General Abdullah Khesrawi, the chief of Al-Fatahin Brigade in the Revolutionary Guards, was killed in Syria, Arabi21 reported Iranian mass media saying yesterday. According to the Iranian news website Jame Jam, Khesrawi was one of the leaders of the Revolutionary Guards in the Iranian city of Arak. He was dispatched to Syria to take part in the war.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171016-senior-iranian-military-leader-killed-in-syria-3/>

- **ISIS faces last stand in Syria's Raqqa, its self-declared capital city**

American-backed forces began a final assault against the Islamic State in Syria's Raqqa on Sunday, as the terrorist group loses its grip on its self-declared capital city. The Syrian Democratic Forces, an American-backed alliance of Kurdish and Arab fighters, allowed a convoy of ISIS fighters to surrender and leave the city, leaving around 100 militants left inside a small part of Raqqa.

More Details:

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/isis-faces-last-stand-in-syrias-raqqa-its-self-declared-capital-city/article/2637590>

3. IRAN

- **US hopes to stay in Iran nuclear deal, Haley says**

US Ambassador to the United Nations on Sunday said the Trump administration hopes to remain in the nuclear deal with Iran but strengthen it so the “American people feel safer.”

More details;

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2017/10/16/us-hopes-to-stay-in-iran-nuclear-deal-haley-says.html>

- **US sympathy for Iran shocking: Iran's Larijani**

Larijani made the remarks addressing the general session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in St. Petersburg on Sunday. The 137th inter-Parliamentary Union meeting kicked off on Saturday evening with participation of parliamentary delegation from 171 states, including Iran, in the city of Saint Petersburg.

More details;

http://en.abna24.com/news/europe/us-sympathy-for-iran-shocking-irans-larijani_860630.html

- **Danish envoy to Tehran reaffirms EU's support for N-deal**

The ambassador of Denmark to Tehran said that Europeans were taken aback by Trump's decertification of Iran's compliance with the JCPOA, while it had already been attested eight times by the IAEA.

More details;

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/128655/Danish-envoy-to-Tehran-reaffirms-EU-s-support-for-N-deal>

- **Russia Warns US against Amending JCPOA Terms**

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov cautioned Washington against seeking to amend the terms of the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers, noting that the US should instead honor its obligations under the international agreement.

More details;

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/10/16/1547033/russia-warns-us-against-amending-jcpoa-terms>

- **King Salman Praises US Strategy on Iran**

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz has affirmed his country's support to the US strategy towards Iran. During a telephone conversation with US President Donald Trump on Saturday, King Salman welcomed the firm strategy announced by the president towards Iran, its aggressive activities and support for terrorism in the region and the world. The White House said Sunday King Salman lauded Trump's decision to decertify the Iran nuclear deal in a call.

More details;

<https://english.aawsat.com/theaawsat/news-middle-east/saudi-arabia/king-salman-praises-us-strategy-iran>

- **Iran Police relations with INTERPOL 'excellent': Senior officer**

A senior Iranian police officer described the interaction between Iran International Police (Interpol) and international bodies, including International Police Organization (INTERPOL), as 'good' and 'desirable'.

More details;

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82697441>

- **Iranian-backed PMF Using US Military Equipment against Peshmerga: KRSC**

The Iraqi forces and Iranian-backed Hashd al-Shaabi militia (PMF) on Sunday night launched an attack on Kirkuk from two front lines, said Kurdistan Region Security Council (KRSC) on Monday morning. The two forces at 23:30 advanced from Taza Khurmatu in south Kirkuk intending to enter the city and control K1 (Kaywan) military base and oil fields, KRSC stated.

More details;

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/kurdistan/385818>

- **Uzbek delegation due in Iran**

The Uzbek government delegation headed by the country's Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov will pay an official visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran on October 16-18, the Uzbek Foreign Ministry said in a message.

More details;

<https://en.trend.az/casia/uzbekistan/2808359.html>

- **Can the US change the Iran deal?**

ILTV speaks to Dr. Mordechai Kedar of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies at Bar Ilan University.

More details;

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/236728>

- **Delo reflects on risks of Trump's action on Iran nuclear deal**

Ljubljana, 16 October - In a commentary headlined Politics of Insanity, Delo looks at what are the stakes if US President Donald Trump should go ahead with his threat to pull out of the Iran nuclear deal.

More details;

<https://english.sta.si/2439631/delo-reflects-on-risks-of-trumps-action-on-iran-nuclear-deal>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Israeli-Arab indicted for supporting terror via social media**

An indictment was filed Sunday against a 25-year-old Israeli-Arab college student for supporting a terrorist organization and inciting others to violence via social media. The suspect, Mohammed Khalaf, lives in the Israeli-Arab city of Tamra, in the Lower Galilee. He is being charged with support of a terror organization, inciting to terror, and identification with a terror organization.

More details;

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/236748>

- **Israel improves slightly in global bribery-risk ranking**

Israel is in 32nd place in the current TRACE International Bribery Risk Matrix, which is topped by Sweden. In the latest edition of the Bribery Risk Matrix published TRACE International, an anti-bribery business organization, Israel is ranked in 32nd place out of 200 countries, one place higher than its ranking in the previous edition (the higher the ranking, the lower the risk of bribery in the country concerned).

More details;

<http://www.globes.co.il/en/article-israel-improves-slightly-in-global-bribery-risk-ranking-1001207915>

- **Yes, Israel Can Accept the Right of Return**

Ze'ev Begin, the son of Menachem Begin, is a very nice human being. It is impossible not to like him. He is well brought up, polite and modest, the kind of person one would like to have as a friend. Unfortunately, his political views are far less likable. They are much more extreme than even the acts of his father. The father, after leading the Irgun, sat down and made peace with Anwar al-Sadat of Egypt. Ze'ev is closer to Golda Me'ir, who ignored Sadat's peace overtures and led us into the disastrous Yom Kippur war.

More details;

<http://original.antiwar.com/avner/2017/10/15/yes-israel-can-accept-right-return/>

- **Olive harvest begins in Gaza under tight Israeli blockade**

Farmers in the besieged Gaza Strip have started harvesting their olives, a produce Palestinians heavily depend on to make a living. They say the enclave's agriculture, particularly its olive industry, has suffered dramatically due to Israel's blockade and wars. Ashraf Shannon has this report.

More details;

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/10/16/538737/Olive-harvest-Gaza-tight-Israeli-blockade->

- **Israeli Soldiers Abduct Six Palestinians In Jenin, Invade Farmlands In Gaza**

Several Israeli military jeeps invaded, on Monday at dawn, the Jenin refugee camp, in the northern West Bank city of Jenin, and abducted three Palestinians, including two siblings. Many army vehicles also invaded Palestinian farmlands in northern Gaza.

More details;

<http://imemc.org/article/israeli-soldiers-abduct-six-palestinians-in-jenin-invade-farmlands-in-gaza/>

- **KRG's Zionist-backed approach detrimental to region**

Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani, emphasizing Iran's decisive support for integrated Iraq, said KRG's approach is damaging to the region due to Israel's behind-the-scenes plans. Larijani met with Iraqi Parliament Speaker Salim al-Jabouri, on the sidelines of the 137th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly on Sunday underway in St Petersburg from 14 to 18 October.

More details;

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/128669/KRG-s-Zionist-backed-approach-detrimental-to-region>

- **Report: Fatah, Hamas Agreed to Make Joint Decisions on Violence against Israel**

The Jerusalem Post reports: Fatah and Hamas agreed in talks in Cairo last week to make joint decisions on matters related to escalating violent conflict with Israel as well as making peace, the London-based Arabic daily Asharq al-Awsat reported on Sunday, citing well-informed Palestinian sources.

More details;

<http://www.breitbart.com/jerusalem/2017/10/16/report-fatah-hamas-agreed-make-joint-decisions-violence-israel/>

- **Proposed deal proves Hamas rule was a disaster for Palestinians**

In a brief ceremony held in Cairo last Thursday, Palestinian negotiators signed an agreement meant to bring an end to the bitter feud that has divided Hamas from the main Palestinian leadership.

More details;

<http://us.cnn.com/2017/10/15/opinions/hamas-fatah-agreement-ghitis-opinion/index.html>

- **Will Hamas-Fatah Reconciliation Deal Succeed?**

The announcement of an Egypt-brokered reconciliation agreement between Fatah and Hamas on Thursday raised hopes that a decade of bitter feuding between the rival Palestinian factions may finally come to an end.

More details;

<https://dissidentvoice.org/2017/10/will-hamas-fatah-reconciliation-deal-succeed/>

- **Israeli police detained 12 in alleged IDF Fraud scheme**

The Israeli police detained 12 suspects Monday morning in suspicion of bribery and fraud, including two IDF officers, according to the Police Spokesperson's Unit. The arrests come as a result of a covert police operation, in which 10 civil servants and two army officers who work together to provide infrastructure for IDF bases are suspected of fraudulently taking funds from the Israeli army for years by demanding payment for works that were not carried out.

More details;

<http://www.jpost.com/Breaking-News/Israeli-police-detained-12-in-alleged-IDF-fraud-scheme-507533>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Jordanian king welcomes Palestinian reconciliation deal**

Jordanian King Abdullah II on Friday congratulated Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on a landmark reconciliation agreement signed this week in Cairo between Palestinian factions Fatah and Hamas.

More details;

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/jordanian-king-welcomes-palestinian-reconciliation-deal/935099>

- **'How we see our economy'**

Pessimists among us believe that the economic situation in Jordan is bad and on its way to becoming worse. Optimists, on the other hand, see the economic situation as acceptable and on its way to become better. Neither group is able to present solid facts to prove its point of view; they depend on their own personal state. They pass judgements on the economy based on their own experience.

More details;

<http://jordantimes.com/opinion/fahed-fanek/how-we-see-our-economy%E2%80%99>

- **Egypt's FM Shoukry discusses Palestinian reconciliation with Jordanian counterpart**

Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry spoke early on Sunday by telephone with his Jordanian counterpart Ayman Al-Safadi about the latest developments concerning last week's Palestinian reconciliation agreement, the Egyptian Foreign Ministry announced.

More details;

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/278846/-.aspx>

- **Jordanian Minister of Social Development and UAE Ambassador discuss cooperation**

Jordanian Minister of Social Development, Hala Lattouf, has met with Matar Saif Al-Shamsi, UAE Ambassador to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, to discuss mutual cooperation.

More details;

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302638769>

- **Geagea from Sydney: Assad authority's return to Lebanon red line**

Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea announced on Monday said that Bashar al-Assad's regime's regaining power in Lebanon was a red line, adding that Iran and Hezbollah will do everything possible to make sure Assad stays in power, under the pretext of the refugee case.

More details;

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/84367/Geagea-from-Sydney-Assad-authority-39-return-to-Lebanon-red-line>

- **Refugee Crisis Tops Aoun's Talks with UNSC Permanent Members**

Ambassadors of the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) are expected at the Presidential Palace in Baabda on Monday at the invitation of President Michel Aoun to consult on developments at the Lebanese and regional arenas mainly the issue of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, al-Joumhouria daily reported on Monday.

More details;

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/236775-refugee-crisis-tops-aoun-s-talks-with-uns Permanent-members-in-baabda>

- **B&R Initiative offers unique opportunity for development: Lebanese expert**

The China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative is a hope for many peoples nowadays as it offers a unique opportunity for development and social progress, said a Lebanese expert on China.

More details;

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-10/15/c_136681469.htm

- **Syrian Refugees Return from Lebanon Only To Flee War Yet Again**

In mid-August, Tayseer al-Qusayrawi* along with his wife and infant son, boarded a bus from the outskirts of the Lebanese border town of Arsal that would take them back to Syria – but not to the home they fled in the al-Qusayr area of Homs, and not entirely by choice.

More details;

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/syrian-refugees-return-from-lebanon-only-to-flee-war-yet-again_us_59e263d6e4b03a7be580fff6?section=us_theworldpost

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Saudi King praises Trump's Iran strategy**

The White House said on Sunday that Saudi Arabia's King Salman praised President Donald Trump for his “visionary new strategy” towards Iran. “King Salman praised President Trump for his visionary new Iran strategy and pledged to support American leadership,” the White House said in a readout of a call between Trump and the Saudi monarch, according to The Hill.

More details,

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/236726>

- **Yemenis stage rally to condemn Saudi war crimes**

Thousands of Yemenis have taken part in a ceremony to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of Zaid bin Ali, Prophet Mohammad’s great grandson. The mourners used the occasion to voice their anger at Saudi Arabia’s brutal war on their country. Mohammad al-Attab reports from Sana’a.

More details,

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/10/16/538739/Yemenis-rally-Saudi-war-crimes->

- **Trump’s Anti-Iran Speech Influenced by Israeli-Saudi Lobbying: Larijani**

Iran’s Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani says US President Donald Trump’s recent anti-Iran speech showed strong traces of lobbying by the Israeli regime and Saudi Arabia.

More details,

<http://ifpnews.com/wired/trumps-anti-iran-speech-israeli/>

- **Labor minister: KSA spends more on education than most OECD countries**

“Human capital is the main focus of development in every society, and giving it sufficient attention is necessary for success and progress. Thus, Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 seeks to improve all aspects of the Saudi economy, with human capital development at the forefront,” Minister of Labor and Social Development Ali bin Nasser Al-Ghafis said during the opening ceremony of Saudi Basic Industries Corp. (SABIC) first HR forum, “Transforming HR: Enabling Vision 2030.”

More details,

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1178286/saudi-arabia>

- **Saudi Arabia condemns bombings in Somali capital**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia strongly condemns the twin bombing blast in the heart of Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, killing and wounding tens of people.

More details,

<http://alriyadhdaily.com/article/711948f45e6d4b808184d2cbb24ab646>

- **UAE adopts '17-21 communication plan**

The UAE Cabinet, chaired by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, has adopted the Government Communication Strategy 2017-2021. It includes a set of strategic objectives and national priorities to achieve optimal communication mechanisms and promote an integrated government communication system for federal entities.

More details,

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/fe41a5ae-c426-4dc6-9cc6-1a682aefcefb.aspx>

- **China-Qatar ties on the upswing**

Li Chen, the Chinese Ambassador to Qatar, speaks during a press meet yesterday to throw light on the process for choosing the CPC Central Committee that is elected every five years.

More details,

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/16/10/2017/China-Qatar-ties-on-the-upswing>

- **Qatar Freezes Sheikh Abdullah bin Ali al-Thani's Bank Accounts**

Qatar has reportedly frozen all assets belonging to Sheikh Abdullah bin Ali Al Thani, one of the most Qatari prominent figures to speak out against the government in the ongoing crisis involving Doha.

More details,

<https://english.aawsat.com/theaawsat/news-middle-east/qatar-freezes-sheikh-abdullah-bin-ali-al-thanis-bank-accounts>

- **Bahrain, UK for greater ties**

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister yesterday said that Bahrain is committed to further enhancing its relations with the United Kingdom to protect security and stability across the region and globally.

More details,

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppld=38700&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=1>

- **Oman hosting Quadrilateral Group meeting on Afghanistan**

The sixth meeting of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group comprising of Afghanistan, China, Pakistan" >Pakistan and the United States on the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan is being held in Muscat, Oman, today.

More details,

<https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/oman-hosting-quadrilateral-group-meeting-on-afghanistan201710161240280003/>

7. EGYPT

- **Militants attack unused church in Egypt's Sinai**

Militants have attacked an unused church in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula a day after an Islamic State affiliate killed nine soldiers in an attack on checkpoints in the volatile region.

More details,

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/affiliate-claims-attacks-egypts-sinai-50502910>

- **-Islamic State Group Attacks Egyptian Army, Leaving 30 Dead**

Twenty-four Islamic State group members and six Egyptian military members were killed. Nearly 100 members of the Islamic State group have attacked Egyptian army officers at a security checkpoint in the North Sinai governorate, Reuters reported.

More details,

<https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Islamic-State-Group-Attacks-Egyptian-Army-Leaving-30-Dead-20171015-0022.html>

- **Egypt: U.S. President's Statement in Accordance With Concerns towards Iran Regime**

Egypt said Saturday it is following with concern the announcement of the new US strategy towards Iran. According to a statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the US announcement comes in accordance with Egypt's concerns towards Iran's policies.

More details,

<https://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/iran-world/23695-egypt-u-s-president-s-statement-in-accordance-with-concerns-towards-iran-regime>

- **Egypt discusses Syrian resettlement in Russia**

Egypt's Parliament Speaker Ali Abdul Aal presented a report on the resettlement of Syrians due to the ongoing crisis during the opening plenary of the 137th meeting of the International Parliament Union held in St. Petersburg in Russia on Sunday.

More details,

<https://dailynewsegypt.com/2017/10/15/egypt-discusses-syrian-resettlement-russia/>

- **EU raises 213 mln Egyptian pounds for Nile Delta clean-up plan**

The European Union has disbursed 213 million Egyptian pounds (\$12.1 million) in financing to back a huge Nile Delta clean-up plan in Egypt, an Egyptian government official said Sunday.

More details,

<http://en.amwalalghad.com/business/financial-institutions/59953-eu-raises-213-mln-egyptian-pounds-for-nile-delta-clean-up-plan.html>

- **Finance Minister: Egypt more stable, foreign currency crisis over**

Finance Minister Amr al-Garhy said that the preliminary results of the economic reform program implementation in Egypt are very promising, and the government intends to continue reform steps to achieve high growth rates and sustainable development.

More details,

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/finance-minister-egypt-stable-foreign-currency-crisis/>

- **Egypt's FM Shoukry discusses Palestinian reconciliation with Jordanian counterpart**

Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry spoke early on Sunday by telephone with his Jordanian counterpart Ayman Al-Safadi about the latest developments concerning last week's Palestinian reconciliation agreement, the Egyptian Foreign Ministry announced.

More details,

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/278846/-.aspx>

- **-Egypt plans \$2bn repurchase transaction**

Egypt plans to renew a US\$2 billion financing deal with international banks while also developing alternative sources of funding such as issuing dollar-denominated Eurobonds, said the finance minister Amr El Garhy said.

More details,

<https://www.thenational.ae/business/egypt-plans-2bn-repurchase-transaction-1.667274>

- **Coptic priest stabbed to death by Islamist terrorist**

The brutal Jihadist murder of Coptic priest Monsignor Samaan on a busy Cairo street has so far elicited no response from Egypt's government

More details,

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/21132>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Libya: Tripoli-Tobruk dialogue on agreement changes**

The second round of talks between the dialogue committees of the House of Representatives of Tobruk (HoR) and the High Council of State of Tripoli began on Sunday in Tunis to define draft changes to the Libyan political agreement forged in Skhirat, Morocco, in December 2015.

More details,

http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/politics/2017/10/16/libya-tripoli-tobruk-dialogue-on-agreement-changes_8ef721bc-adb3-4135-a521-f8025b34801e.html

- **Islamic States to Meet In Morocco on Green, Sustainable Development**

The seventh session of the Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers will be held from Oct 25 to 26 at the headquarters of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) in the Moroccan capital Rabat, China's Xinhua news agency reported.

More details,

<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/wn/newsworld.php?id=1400787>

- **Morocco ready to become non-traditional market for Indonesia**

The Government of the Kingdom of Morocco has expressed readiness to support Indonesias efforts to enter the non-traditional markets in Africa by sending a delegation to attend the 32nd Trade Expo Indonesia from Oct 11 to 15, 2017, in Banten.

More details,

<http://www.antaranews.com/en/news/113066/morocco-ready-to-become-non-traditional-market-for-indonesia>

- **Joint operations room to be set up in Sebha**

Local complaints that army and police are not being deployed to halt deteriorating security in Sebha have led to agreement today to form a joint operations room in the town.

More details,

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/10/15/joint-operations-room-to-be-set-up-in-sebha/>

- **Fatah member Dahlan involved in crimes alongside Saif Gaddafi, ICC says**

Palestinian Fatah member, Mohammed Dahlan, was a subject for an investigation by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for his involvement with Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi and Gaddafi's Intelligence Chief, Abdullah Al-Sanousi, in different crimes in Libya, the Middle East Eye unveiled.

More details,

<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/fatah-member-dahlan-involved-crimes-alongside-saif-gaddafi-icc-says>

- **Illegal crossing foiled off Zarzis coasts, 25 rescued**

Twenty-five Tunisian illegal immigrants on board two broken down boats 70 km off the coasts of Zarzis (governorate of Medenine) were rescued on Saturday night by navy units.

More details,

<https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/9466224-illegal-crossing>

- **Libyan Army Prepares To Take Over Western City Of Zawiya**

Libyan eastern-based army is preparing to launch a large-scale military operation aimed at controlling the city of Zawiya, some 45 km west of Tripoli, China's Xinhua news agency reported a military source as saying on late Sunday.

More Details:

<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/wn/newsworld.php?id=1400928>

- **Tunisian leader says economic success critical to survival**

The tiny North African nation of Tunisia has overcome tremendous security odds to uphold a fragile democracy since 2011, but it now needs serious economic growth to thrive as the lone success story of the otherwise ill-fated Arab Spring.

More details,

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/oct/15/zied-ladhairi-says-tunisias-economic-success-criti/>

- **Tunisian navy recovers 10 more bodies after boat collision**

Tunisia's navy said on Sunday it recovered 10 more bodies of Tunisian migrants who drowned when their boat sank last week in a collision with a navy vessel off the country's coast, bringing the death toll from the incident to 18.

More details,

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-tunisia-migrants/tunisian-navy-recovers-10-more-bodies-after-boat-collision-idUKKBN1CK0YL?rpc=401&>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Russia Funding Taliban in War against NATO Troops**

The British newspaper The Times has reported that Taliban confirmed to them that Russia is funding the Taliban in Afghanistan

More details,

<http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/russia-funding-taliban-war-against-nato-troops>

- **New deadly clash erupt among Taliban-ISIS after Akhundzada's call for ceasefire**

A new wave of deadly clash has erupted among the Taliban and ISIS militants days after the leader of the Taliban group Mullah Hebatullah Akhundzada called for a ceasefire between the two groups, believing that the motive of the two are the same in the ongoing insurgency in Afghanistan.

More details,

<http://www.khaama.com/new-deadly-clash-erupt-among-taliban-isis-after-akhundzadas-call-for-ceasefire-03654>

- **Profiting from America's Longest War: Trump Seeks to Exploit Mineral Wealth of Afghanistan**

October 7th marked sixteen years since the start of the US War in Afghanistan – America's longest war. In an effort to justify the continued and expanded presence of US troops in the country, President Trump is seeking a plan to have US companies extract minerals from resource-rich Afghanistan.

More details,

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2017/10/16/profitting-from-americas-longest-war-trump-seeks-to-exploit-mineral-wealth-of-afghanistan/>

- **TTP abducted Pakistani diplomats, Afghanistan tells Pakistan**

Afghanistan government has officially shared with Pakistan that two Pakistani diplomatic officials who were abducted from near Jalalabad, Afghanistan, around three months back, were actually abducted by Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) on Mullah Fazlullah's orders, Pakistan Today has learnt reliably.

More details,

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/10/16/ttp-abducted-pakistani-diplomats-afghanistan-tells-pakistan/>

- **Come home: Jammu and Kashmir cops want to rehabilitate militants, not kill**

Earlier, Chief Minister Mehbooba mufti had also directed the police and security agencies to ensure that local militants are given a chance to return home.

More details,

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/kashmir-unrest-local-boys-militants-jammu-and-kashmir-police/1/1069614.html>

- **Terrorist Module Unearthed In Jammu And Kashmir, Three Arrested**

Three terrorists -- two from the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) and one from the Hizbul Mujahideen -- were arrested over the past three days from south Kashmir.

More details,

<https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/terrorist-module-unearthed-in-jammu-and-kashmir-three-arrested-1763577>

- **Pakistan's Foreign Secretary to visit Sri Lanka**

Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Ms. Tehmina Janjua would visit Sri Lanka from October 17 to 18, 2017 to take part in the 5th Round of Bilateral Political Consultations between Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

More details,

<http://www.dailymirror.lk/article/Pakistan-s-Foreign-Secretary-to-visit-Sri-Lanka-138542.html>

- **Dropping terror charges against Hafiz Saeed exposes Pakistan's real face: Kashmiri activists**

London [United Kingdom]/ Geneva [Switzerland], Oct.16 (ANI): Pakistan's move to withdraw terrorism charges against Hafiz Saeed has drawn widespread criticism from exiled Kashmiri leaders who say that this is nothing more than a reflection of Pakistan's terror-supporting policies.

More details,

<https://www.aninews.in/news/world/europe/dropping-terror-charges-against-hafiz-saeed-exposes-pakistans-real-face-kashmiri-activists201710161353010002/>

- **Over 200 Afghan diplomats fail to return home after end of duty tour**

As many as 203 Afghan diplomats who travelled abroad for duty tour have failed to return to their home country despite end of their mission.

More details,

<http://1tvnews.af/en/news/afghanistan/31684-over-200-afghan-diplomats-fail-to-return-home-after-end-of-duty-tour>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkey supports Iraq's moves to restore peace, order in Kirkuk, MFA says**

Turkey supports the Iraqi government's moves to restore peace and stability in the country, including Kirkuk and warns the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) that it would be held responsible for allowing PKK to penetrate the city, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement Monday. In the statement, the ministry said that Turkey closely monitors Iraq's steps to restore its constitutional sovereignty over Kirkuk, a homeland for Turkmens for centuries, after the illegitimate referendum conducted by the KRG.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2017/10/16/turkey-supports-iraqs-moves-to-restore-peace-order-in-kirkuk-mfa-says>

- **Turkey welcomes Hamas-Fatah reconciliation**

Presidential Spokesman Ibrahim Kalin on Saturday welcomed the reconciliation agreement signed between rival Palestinian groups Hamas and Fatah. "This reconciliation agreement concludes the conflict among our Palestinian brothers," Kalin said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/194998/turkey-welcomes-hamas-fatah-reconciliation>

- **Turkish main opposition urges special status for Kirkuk**

The deputy chairman of Turkey's main opposition Republican People's Party's (CHP) called for giving Iraq's Kirkuk a special status where Turkmen, Arabs and Kurds get equal representation. The northern Kirkuk province along with parts of the provinces of Nineveh, Saladin (northern Iraq) and Diyala (eastern Iraq) are disputed between Baghdad and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), and are inhabited by a mixture of ethnic Kurds, Arabs, and Turkmen.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/todays-headlines/turkish-main-opposition-urges-special-status-for-kirkuk/939009>

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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