



# 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**

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**17 APRIL 2017**

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## 1. IRAQ

- **Foreign Ministry Decides To Summon the Jordanian Charge D'affaires on Abuses against Iraqi Religious and National Figures**

The ministry of foreign affairs decided to call on the Jordanian charge d'affaires in Baghdad against the background of the abuses that took place against Iraqi symbols, religious and national figures. "The ministry decided to summon the Jordanian charge d'affaires in Baghdad against the background of the abuses that have taken place against Iraqi symbols, religious and national figures," a statement from the foreign ministry said.

More Details:

[http://www.ninanews.com/News\\_Details.aspx?YZ1L4s91tmPkP8aK1KCCJg%253d%253d](http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?YZ1L4s91tmPkP8aK1KCCJg%253d%253d)

- **Flooding cuts off aid supplies, escape route from west Mosul**

Flooding has made all bridges across the Tigris in and out of western Mosul impassable, cutting off aid supplies and escape routes for people fleeing the Islamic State-held part of the Iraqi city. With the bridges down, hundreds of civilians crossed the surging river on small wooden boats on Sunday, some carrying babies and all carting suitcases or bags full of clothes.

More Details:

<http://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/flooding-cuts-off-aid-supplies-escape-route-west-mosul/>

- **Pontoon Bridges Over Tigris River in Mosul Unusable**

Mosul's permanent bridges over the Tigris River having been damaged by the international coalition forces, and the two temporary bridges built in their place are now also rendered unusable due to the latest flooding. For those who are fleeing the fighting in western Mosul, crossing the river by boat remains the only option.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/343487>

- **UK attorney general in bid to block case against Tony Blair over Iraq war**

The government's top law officer is going to court to demand the rejection of an attempt to prosecute Tony Blair over the Iraq war, the Guardian has learned. The planned intervention by the attorney general comes after a judge ruled the former Labour prime minister had immunity from the attempt to bring a criminal charge against him and that pursuing a prosecution could "involve details being disclosed under the Official Secrets Act".

More Details:

[http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En\\_NewsReader/84a6dbcb-a410-4264-8b68-037e155c7286/-UK-attorney-general-in-bid-to-block-case-against-Tony-Blair-over-Iraq-war-](http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/84a6dbcb-a410-4264-8b68-037e155c7286/-UK-attorney-general-in-bid-to-block-case-against-Tony-Blair-over-Iraq-war-)

- **Hashd al-Shaabi forces repeals an ISIS attack in Salah al-Deen**

Hashd al-Shaabi forces had repealed today Monday, April 17, 2017, an ISIS attempt to infiltrate into one of Hashd divisions in Makhol mountains- north of Salah al-Deen province, the force's media announced in a statement. The Iraqi forces had bombarded the dens of Islamic State terrorists in the area, the statement added.

More Details:

[http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN\\_Direje.aspx?Jimare=40226](http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=40226)

- **MP says IMIS Iran's arm to control Iraq, Arab neighbors**

Member of the National Alliance, Labid al-Sumaida'i, said that IMIS Shiite militias in Iraq deliberately highlight the role of Iran because it provides money and weapons to these militias and oversees them. In a telephone interview with Rafidain channel, al-Sumaida'i said that Iran considers these militias "its powerful arm in Iraq, which extends to neighboring countries".

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/9400/Video-MP-says-IMIS-Iran-s-arm-to-control-Iraq-Arab-neighbors>

- **Iraqi choppers hunt down ISIL terrorist in western Mosul: video**

The Iraqi Air Force took no prisoners on Saturday while targeting the Islamic State's (ISIL) movements around the western countryside of Mosul. Iraqi choppers were filmed striking down several Islamic State vehicles in western Mosul, obstructing the terrorist group's movements in a new bid to clear the countryside.

More Details:

<https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/iraqi-choppers-hunt-isil-terrorist-western-mosul-video/>

- **Iraq: Federal Police Launches New Attack on Old City**

Iraqi forces launched a new attack on ISIS in Mosul's Old City on Sunday, military officials said, trying to break the stalemate in attempts to seize the militants' last stronghold. The advance has hardly moved for more than a month, though, as the militants are holding out in the densely populated Old

City in western Mosul, where tanks and heavy vehicles are not able to operate because of its narrow streets.

More Details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/d-abdullah/news-middle-east/iraq-federal-police-launches-new-attack-old-city>

- **Iraq says Syrian air force hit IS in Syria based on Iraqi intelligence**

The Syrian aircraft carried out airstrikes on the positions of Islamic State (IS) militants inside Syria based on Iraqi intelligence reports for the first time since the beginning of the Syrian conflict in 2011, the Iraqi military said on Saturday. A statement by the Iraqi Joint Operations Command (JOC) said that the Iraqi intelligence information was shared with the Syrian side through a committee formed in 2015 that includes Russia, Syria, Iran and Iraq.

More Details:

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-04/15/c\\_136211077.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-04/15/c_136211077.htm)

- **Ireland gives a further €6 million in aid to alleviate suffering in Yemen and Iraq**

The Minister for Foreign Affairs has announced €6 million in support for the severe humanitarian crises in Yemen and Iraq. Ireland will provide €4 million to the UN Humanitarian Pooled Fund in Yemen in response to the needs of nearly 19 million Yemeni – two thirds of the population – affected by two years of civil war.

More Details:

<http://www.thejournal.ie/yemen-iraq-aid-3341296-Apr2017/>

- **Qatar denies release of its kidnapped nationals in Iraq**

An official source at the Government Liaison Office on Saturday urged to not pay attention to the rumours transmitted on social networking websites about the release of kidnapped Qatari nationals in Iraq. The Government gives top priority to this issue, he said, stressing its continued quest to securing their safe release as quickly as possible, the source was quoted by Qatar News Agency, QNA, as saying.

More Details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302608682>

- **Iraq forces make Mosul gains, but anti-IS war far from over**

Iraqi forces made major gains in the six months since launching the operation to retake Mosul, but the battle for Iraq's second city and the war against the Islamic State group are far from over. Tough close-quarters fighting in heavily-populated areas of Mosul is still ahead, and IS also holds territory in other parts of Iraq, as well as in neighbouring Syria.

More Details:

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/news/world/iraq-forces-make-mosul-gains-but-anti-is-war-far-from-over/article/490432>

- **Iraq of the imagination**

Hassan Blasim is an Iraqi writer whose collections of short stories, *The Madman of Freedom Square* and *The Iraqi Christ*, have been translated into English, where they met with wide acclaim. Blasim's newest project is another collection of stories, but here he operates as editor as well as contributor. *Iraq+100: Stories from Another Iraq* was conceived as a way to look past the country's troubled present and recent history by focusing instead on the future. Blasim asked Iraqi fiction writers for stories that answered the question: what might Iraq look like in the year 2103, a hundred years after the US-led invasion and its catastrophic consequences?

More Details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1326911/fiction-iraq-of-the-imagination>

- **Jordan FM reassures Iraq after anti-Shiite Muslim protest**

Jordan's foreign minister has assured his Iraqi counterpart that the kingdom seeks to maintain good relations, after Jordanian protesters burned pictures of Shiite Muslim leaders, including a former Iraqi prime minister. The official news agency Petra says Ayman Safadi told Iraq's Ibrahim al-Jaafari that those involved were detained and would face trial.

More Details:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/feeds/canadian-press/world/jordan-fm-reassures-iraq-after-anti-shiite-muslim-protest/article34716758/>

- **Iraq: Fears that ISIL fighters could regroup in Kirkuk**

It has been six months since Iraqi forces launched an offensive to retake the city of Mosul from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, known as ISIS). The army is surrounding the old city, but is having to rethink its tactics because many civilians are still trapped inside.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/video/news/2017/04/iraq-fears-isil-fighters-regroup-kirkuk-170417075456127.html>

- **Iraq's Christians celebrate Easter, dream of returning home**

Hundreds of Iraqi Christians gathered on Sunday in a church damaged by Islamic State north of Mosul, celebrating Easter there for the first time since 2014. 'God willing, the celebration of the resurrection of Christ will also mark the return and rising-up of the Christians in Iraq,' said Kyriacos Isho, 75, who was accompanied by his 12 children and grandchildren at Mar Gewargis (St George) Chaldean Catholic church in Tel Esqof.

More Details:

<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/iraqs.christians.celebrate.easter.dream.of.returning.home/107469.htm>

- **ISIL Launches Chemical Attack in Iraq's Mosul for Second Time in 2 Days**

The ISIL terrorist group carried out another chemical attack in a recently-liberated area in Western part of Mosul in Nineveh province to push back Iraqi government forces in the group's de facto capital. According to reports, at least six Iraqi soldiers suffered inhalation problems following a chemical attack launched by ISIL on Sunday which occurred in a recently-liberated area of Mosul, where the Federal Police and Rapid Response forces are advancing towards the old city.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960128000691>

- **Iraq completes repairs at Basra oil jetty, loading operations resume: sources**

Repair work at a Basra oil jetty damaged by a tanker collision last month were completed on Sunday, two officials at state-run South Oil Company told Reuters on Monday. Crude exports from the Basra terminal were not affected by the collision that happened on March 24, when strong winds caused a very large crude carrier (VLCC) to lurch into berth number 1.

More Details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-oil-shipping-ports-idUSKBN17J0KY>

## 2. SYRIA

- **More Than Half of 126 Killed In Syria Bus Bombing Were Children, Group Says**

A bomb attack on a packed bus convoy near Aleppo killed at least 68 children, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) monitoring group said Sunday. The overall death total from Saturday's attack climbed to at least 126, and the final number killed is expected to rise, SOHR said. It is the deadliest such incident in Syria in nearly a year.

More Details:

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/04/16/over-half-of-126-killed-in-syria-bus-bombing-were-children-group-says/>

- **Syria Urges UN to Take Action against Terrorism after Attack near Aleppon**

The Syrian Foreign Ministry has sent two identical letters to the United Nations and the UN Security Council (UNSC) on Sunday, urging the organizations and the international community in general to join forces with Damascus in the fight against terrorism following an attack near the Syrian city of Aleppo.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201704161052696007-syria-un-uns-c-terrorism/>

- **U.S. National Security Adviser Arrives In Pakistan**

H.R. McMaster, U.S. President Donald Trump's national security adviser, has arrived in Pakistan, a day after holding talks with Afghan leaders in Kabul. McMaster arrived in Islamabad on April 17 in the first high-level visit by an administration official since Trump took office on January 20.

More Details:

<http://www.rferl.org/a/us-mcmaster-trump-syria-russia-afghanistan/28434249.html>

- **Mass evacuations postponed in Syria after 126 killed**

The evacuation of more than 3,000 Syrians that was scheduled to take place on Sunday as part of a population transfer has been postponed, a day after a deadly blast killed more than 120 people. The United Nations is not overseeing the transfer deal, which involves residents of the pro-government villages of Foua and Kfarya and the opposition-held towns of Madaya and Zabadani.

More Details:

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2017/04/17/mass-evacuations-postponed-syria-after-126-killed>

- **Qatari royals part of Syria evacuation deal: Report**

Twenty-six members of a Qatari royal hunting party, captured in Iraq more than a year ago, were part of the swap agreement recently reached in Syria, a report says. A person briefed about the rescue operation told Middle East Eye online news portal that the royals were a “fundamental part of the swap deal”, refuting claims that Qatar’s role was for “purely humanitarian reasons”.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/04/17/518365/hostage-Qatari-royals-Syria-deal>

- **More Civilians Killed in US-Led Coalition Airstrike in Eastern Syria**

Syrian security sources said on Monday that at least eight civilians were killed in the US-led coalition air raid in Eastern Deir Ezzur. The sources said that the coalition fighter jets targeted residential units of Aleppo's refugees in al-Sukriyeh settlement in Albu Kamal region, killing eight members of a Syrian family.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960128000676>

- **Lavrov says aggressive US steps in Syria hamper search for peaceful solutions**

US missile strike on a military base in Syria has hindered the effort to reach a political settlement, and possibly, this has been done on purpose, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said after talks with his Senegalese counterpart Mankeur Ndiaye on Monday. The sides discussed the growing terrorist threat on the African continent and in the world in general, Lavrov said. "We again stated the need to consolidate efforts of the entire international community in the fight against this universal evil, as Russian President Vladimir Putin said some 18 months ago addressing the UN General Assembly," he said.

More Details:

<http://tass.com/politics/941697>

- **Trump's lack of strategy on Syria is dangerous**

Syria suddenly became high on the White House agenda after the Khan Sheikhoun chemical attack on April 4. In a matter of 48 hours, President Donald Trump's administration switched positions from suggesting it's up to the Syrian people to decide their future to asserting that the reign of President

Bashar al-Assad's family is "coming to an end". That ambivalent approach has led allies and foes to wonder where the US stands on Syria.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/04/trump-lack-strategy-syria-dangerous-170414062643775.html>

- **Khalid: 50 who joined IS in Syria planning to return home**

Some 50 Malaysians who joined the Islamic State in Syria are planning to return home, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar said (pic). He said eight of the militants had returned to Malaysia and 49 more are making plans to find a way home. "Some of them, whose husbands have been killed, married other IS militants. Their children are under the care of other militant families," he told students at a forum in Universiti Malaysia Sabah on Monday.

More Details:

<http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2017/04/17/khalid-50-who-joined-is-in-syria-planning-to-return-home/>

### 3. IRAN

- **Iran: McCain's Meeting with MKO Leaders Indicates US Continued Support for Terrorist Groups**

The Iranian foreign ministry rapped Republican Senator John McCain for his meeting with the ringleaders of Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO, also known as the MEK, PMOI and NCRI) in Albania, saying the move signified Washington's continued support for the terrorist groups. "Such contacts are nothing new and certain US officials have shown that they have failed to learn a thing from the history of the recent decades and rather attempted to further spread terrorism in the region through their measures," Foreign Ministry Spokesman Bahram Qassemi told reporters in his weekly press conference in Tehran on Monday.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960128000848>

- **Iran: US should pay for spreading terror in region**

Iran has censured the United States' role in spreading terror in the Middle East region, saying Washington should pay for its wrongdoings. Speaking at a news briefing on Monday, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Bahram Qassemi said US officials have shown in recent decades that they have not

learned from their previous experiences and have consistently contributed to the escalation of terrorism in the region through their wrongful policies and indecent behavior.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2017/04/17/518369/Iran-US-Middle-East-MKO>

- **Iran plans long-term coop. with Turkmenistan**

Long-term cooperation with Ashgabat in on Tehran's agenda, Foreign Minister Zarif said during Iran-Turkmenistan business conference on Monday. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his accompanying delegation comprising representatives of about 30 businesses from the public and private sectors took part in Iran-Turkmenistan business conference on Monday, following his meeting with Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124841/Iran-plans-long-term-coop-with-Turkmenistan>

- **Iran forges deal with China to redesign Arak reactor**

Iran has hashed out price differences with China to receive counselling on redesigning its only heavy water nuclear reactor, signing a deal on the project with the Chinese side, Iranian Foreign Ministry has said in a written briefing to parliament. "The contract to receive counselling on the redesign was negotiated and signed in Beijing on April 13," read part of the report, the fifth parliamentary briefing on the 2015 international nuclear accord between Iran and six world powers.

More Details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/412661/Iran-forges-deal-with-China-to-redesign-Arak-reactor>

- **Foreign media's propaganda against Iran election, 'futile':Spokesman**

Spokesman for the Foreign Ministry Bahram Qasemi says that certain foreign media's propaganda against the upcoming presidential election in the country is 'fruitless'. The Iranian nation have proved in recent decades that they follow what they think is of benefit to the country, Qasemi said on Monday at his weekly press briefing while answering a question whether the foreign media' attempt to show polarization in Iran election will have any impact on the upcoming event or not.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82496219/>

- **Iran-Pakistan trade volume expandable to \$5bn**

Tehran is hosting the 20th session of the Iran-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission on 17-18 April, chaired by Interior Min. Rahmani Fazli and Pakistani Min. for States and Frontier Regions. Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, the Iranian chairman of the 20th session of the Iran-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission which kicked off in Tehran this morning, said the volume of transactions between the two countries has the capacity to increase up to 5 billion dollars in various economic, trade, tourism and energy fields.

More Details:

<http://www.iran-daily.com/News/190997.html>

- **Senior Iran army commander on dealing with IS**

Iranian army's strategy to confront the so-called Islamic State terrorist group (IS aka ISIS/ISIL) is eliminating the terrorist group beyond the country's borders, a senior Iranian commander said. Brigadier General Ahmad Reza Pourdastan, the second-in-command of the Iranian army, described the terrorist group as a threat to the regional security and said Iranian armed forces collaborate together to neutralize the threats, ISNA news agency reported.

More Details:

<http://en.trend.az/iran/politics/2743185.html>

- **Iran's FM Arrives in Ashgabat as First Leg of Central Asian Tour**

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has started touring Central Asia and the Caucasus to boost Iran's ties with three major countries in the region, especially in the field of economy. The three-day tour spans Turkmenistan, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan. A 20-member delegation of businessmen and company representatives is accompanying Zarif who cited transit cooperation among the objectives of the visit.

More Details:

<http://ifpnews.com/wired/2017/04/irans-fm-arrives-ashgabat-first-leg-central-asian-tour/>

- **Iran Eyes Rise in Non-Oil Exports to Neighbors: Zarif**

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif described a growth in the country's export of non-oil products, including technical and engineering services, as a main purpose of his tour of regional countries, which has taken him to Turkmenistan. Speaking to reporters upon his arrival in Ashgabat on Sunday night, Zarif said plans have been formulated to boost non-oil exports to the neighboring countries, pointing to a delegation of business people from Iran's private and state-run sectors accompanying him in the trip.

More Details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/04/17/1381607/iran-eyes-rise-in-non-oil-exports-to-neighbors-zarif>

#### 4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Gaza crisis deepens as its only power plant goes dark**

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza deepened Sunday when the only power plant in the the Hamas-governed Palestinian territory shut down.

More detail:

[http://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/World-News/2017/04/16/Gaza-crisis-deepens-as-its-only-power-plant-goes-dark/6511492396914/?utm\\_source=sec&utm\\_campaign=sl&utm\\_medium=1](http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2017/04/16/Gaza-crisis-deepens-as-its-only-power-plant-goes-dark/6511492396914/?utm_source=sec&utm_campaign=sl&utm_medium=1)

- **The electronic intifada**

Launched in February 2001 as a project of the Middle East Cultural and Charitable Society, the Electronic Intifada (EI) is a nonprofit independent website that publishes news articles and commentary focusing on “the question of Palestine, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the economic, political, legal, and human dimensions of Israel's ... occupation of Palestinian territories.” Specifically, EI seeks to provide an alternative to what it calls “the prevailing pro-Israeli slant in U.S. media coverage by offering information from a Palestinian perspective.”

More detail:

<http://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/266429/electronic-intifada-discover-networks>

- **Qassam Fighter Killed In Tunnel Accident In Gaza**

The Al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) issued a statement revealing that one of its fighters was killed, on Monday morning, when a tunnel collapsed on him in Gaza.

More detail:

<http://imemc.org/article/qassam-fighter-killed-in-tunnel-accident-in-gaza-2/>

- **Hundreds of Palestinian prisoners in Israel go on hunger strike**

Hundreds of Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails have gone on hunger strike over conditions of captivity, with more expected to join on Monday, in one of the biggest protests in recent years.

More detail:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/17/palestinian-prisoners-israel-hunger-strike>

- **Jailed Fatah leader urges solidarity with hunger striking Palestine prisoners**

Former Fatah Movement leader Marwan Bargouthi has called for solidarity with Palestinian prisoners ahead of a mass hunger strike.

More detail:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/04/17/518330/palestine-hunger-strike-israeli-jails>

- **Amnesty International: Israel Must End 'Unlawful and Cruel' Policies towards Palestinian Prisoners**

Israel's decades-long policy of detaining Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and Gaza, in prisons inside Israel, and depriving them of regular family visits is not only cruel but also a blatant violation of international law, said Amnesty International, ahead of a mass prisoner's hunger strike which begins next week, to mark Palestinian Prisoner's Day on 17 April.

More detail:

<http://imemc.org/article/amnesty-international-israel-must-end-unlawful-and-cruel-policies-towards-palestinian-prisoners/>

- **Rights Groups: 1 Million Palestinians Detained by Israel since 1948**

Israeli authorities detained approximately one million Palestinians since the creation of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent occupation of the West Bank, including Eastern Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip in 1967, according to a joint statement released by the Palestinian rights groups.

More detail:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960127000697>

- **US defense secretary to visit Israel as part of Mideast trip**

James Mattis embarks on first regional tour since taking office, will visit Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Djibouti to discuss efforts to defeat terrorism • Mattis to meet with PM Netanyahu, Defense Minister Lieberman and President Rivlin.

More detail:

[http://www.israelhayom.com/site/newsletter\\_article.php?id=41791](http://www.israelhayom.com/site/newsletter_article.php?id=41791)

- **Israeli police use stun gun on ranting US citizen ahead of Good Friday**

Israeli police used a stun gun on an American citizen after he attacked a security guard at the entrance to a moshav in northern Israel. The unidentified man, 31, who police described as being “detached from reality,” reportedly had been in Israel for two weeks with his wife and son. He was arrested and held by police after the incident late on Thursday night, which was first reported by Israel media on Sunday.

More detail:

<http://www.jta.org/2017/04/16/news-opinion/israel-middle-east/israel-police-taser-deranged-us-citizen>

- **Azerbaijan backs US-led regional summit with Israel: Envoy**

Azerbaijan says it fully supports a US-led summit to be held between the Israeli regime and the Arab monarchies of the Persian Gulf as well as leaders from Levant countries, claiming that such a conference would benefit the region and likely accelerate the so-called peace process between Tel Aviv and the Palestinian Authority

More detail:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/04/16/518279/Azerbaijan-US-Israel-summit-Palestine-Suleymanov-Iran-Trump>

## 5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Muslim Youth Protect Jordan’s Churches on Easter in Solidarity**

The solidarity initiative brought together people from around the country. Following the bomb attacks on two churches in Egypt last week, Muslim youth activists in Jordan vowed to protect Christian places of worship on Easter Sunday.

More detail:

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Muslim-Youth-Protect-Jordans-Churches-on-Easter-in-Solidarity-20170416-0010.html>

- **Jordan arrests persons mocking Iraq, sends them to court – FM**

Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said Sunday authorities have arrested persons who mocked Iraqi official figures, and would be tried for their deeds.

More detail:

<http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2602739&Language=en>

- **Saudi Campaign distributes utensils to Syrians in Al-Zaatari camp, Jordan**

Saudi National Campaign for Supporting Brothers in Syria has completed the second phase of distributing household utensils and personal health care bags to Syrian refugees in Al-Zaatari camp in Jordan benefiting 74,943 persons.

More detail:

<http://sites.alriyadh.com/en/article/1158092/Saudi-Campaign-distributes-utensils-to-Syrians-in-Al-Zaatari-camp-Jordan>

- **Clashes in Lebanon's Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp leave homes 'beyond repair'**

Fierce clashes in Lebanon's Palestinian refugee camp Ain al-Hilweh have left scores of buildings riddled with bullet holes and rendered numerous homes completely uninhabitable, residents said, as photos depicting the breadth of destruction have begun to circulate on social media.

More detail:

<http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?ID=776463>

- **Lebanon Raised Churches Security during Easter Sunday**

Churches and other places of Christian worship have been today the most watched over ghhgin Lebanon with a large deployment of military and security forces that, according to the government, will prevent attacks like the recent ones in Egypt.

More detail:

<http://www.plenglish.com/index.php?o=rn&id=11757&SEO=lebanon-raised-churches-security-during-easter-Sunday>

- **Aoun Sees Lebanon Center for Religious Dialogue, Notes Bids to Devoid Levant of Christians**

President Michel Aoun stressed on Saturday that Lebanon will be a global center for religious and civilizations dialogue, as he noted that the region is witnessing a plan to devoid the Levant of Christians.

More detail:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/228513-aoun-sees-lebanon-center-for-religious-dialogue-notes-bids-to-devoid-levant-of-christians>

- **Bishop Audi calls for equal job opportunity for the orthodox community**

- Metropolitan bishop of the Greek Orthodox Church for the Archdiocese of Beirut, Elias Audi, held Easter Mass at Saint George Cathedral on Sunday, and called for fair and equal opportunity in all of the State's institutions for the members of his community, who have been unjustly excluded from governmental and public posts.

More detail:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/78172/Bishop-Audi-calls-for-equal-job-opportunity-for-the-Orthodox-community>

- **Aoun from Bkirki: There Will Be a New Electoral Law**

President Michel Aoun on Sunday reassured the Lebanese “there will be a new electoral law” for the country

More detail:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/228526-aoun-from-bkirki-there-will-be-a-new-electoral-law>

- **Hariri: ‘Hezbollah has taken Israel’s role in Syria’**

Taking time out of a political visit to Turkey during the country’s intense referendum campaign, Ahmad El Hariri, the general-secretary of the Future Movement Party of Lebanon, spoke to MEMO about the political crises facing his country, the turbulence buffeting Lebanese politics and security emanating from neighbouring war-torn Syria, and the issue of Shia jihadist Hezbollah’s armaments.

More detail:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170416-hariri-hezbollah-has-taken-israels-role-in-syria/>

## 6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Saudi Arabia: Shoura Member In Favor Of Women Driving**

Abdulrahman Al-Rashed, head of Shoura Council’s committee on economy and energy, said he is in favor of women driving “as long as there is a clear system to enable them to drive.”

More detail:

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/17042017-saudi-arabia-shoura-member-in-favor-of-women-driving/>

- **Gen. Asiri exposes Iranian plot to strike Saudi Arabia from Yemen**

In an interview with Al Arabiya General Manager Turki Aldakhil this week, Gen. Ahmed Asiri, the spokesman for Arab coalition forces fighting in support of the legitimate government in Yemen, revealed the existence of an “Iranian plot to strike the security and stability of Saudi Arabia.”

More detail:

<http://saudigazette.com.sa/saudi-arabia/gen-asiri-exposes-iranian-plot-strike-saudi-arabia-yemen/>

- **Saudi Arabia Believes Yemeni Crisis Has No Military Solution- Russian Law Maker**

Saudi Arabia shares Russia's stance on situation in Yemen, speaker of the upper house of Russia's parliament Valentina Matvienko said Sunday.

More detail:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201704161052695634-russia-saudi-arabia-yemen/>

- **Sudanese Troops Killed in Saudi Airstrike on Yemen**

Yemen's defense ministry said Saudi-led coalition's fighter jets mistakenly targeted Sudanese troops and mercenaries of fugitive former President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi in Yemen, killing a large number of them.

More detail:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/04/16/1381134/sudanese-troops-killed-in-saudi-airstrike-on-yemen>

- **Yemen calls for militias to be listed as terror group**

Yemen's Deputy Human Rights Minister Mohammed Askar has called on the international community to include Houthi militias and forces loyal to ousted President Ali Abdullah Saleh on the list of terrorist groups.

More detail:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1085241/middle-east>

- **US Major Funder of Saudi War on Yemen: American Activist**

A prominent anti-war activist based in California highlighted the US support for the war crimes committed by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen and said Washington is “the major funder” of Riyadh's bombardment of civilians in the Arabian Peninsula country.

More detail:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/04/16/1379777/us-major-funder-of-saudi-war-on-yemen-american-activist>

- **Iran Equals Qatar in Natural Gas Output from South Pars**

The phases 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 of the supergiant South Pars Gas Field in southern Iran were officially inaugurated by Iranian president on Sunday, increasing the country's output from the joint gas field to Qatar's level.

More detail:

<http://ifpnews.com/exclusive/2017/04/iran-equals-qatar-natural-gas-output/>

- **Bahrain backs Iran-Arab dialog mediated by Kuwait**

Bahrain says talks between Iran and Persian Gulf Arab countries mediated by Kuwait are to continue, hoping they would bring about positive results.

More detail:

<http://iran-daily.com/News/190998.html?catid=3&title=Bahrain-backs-Iran-Arab-dialog-mediated-by-Kuwait>

- **Kazakhstan Ambassador hails ties with Oman**

Kazakhstan Ambassador Yerzhan Mukesh hailed the bilateral relations with the Sultanate

More detail:

<http://timesofoman.com/article/107140/Oman/Government/Kazakhstan-Ambassador-hails-ties-with-Oman>

## 7. EGYPT

- **Egypt Acquits U.S. Woman Detained for Three Years on Child Abuse Charges Widely Seen as Bogus**

An Egyptian court on Sunday acquitted Aya Hijazi, a dual U.S.-Egyptian citizen who had been held in detention for nearly three years over accusations related to a non-governmental organization she founded to aid street children.

More details:

<http://time.com/4741942/belady-aya-hijazi-egypt-child-abuse-acquitted/>

- **Copts gather at bombed church to mourn dead as Egypt arrests '13 terrorist elements'**

Hundreds of members of Egypt's Christian minority Copt community gathered at a church in the city of Tanta on Easter Sunday to mourn those killed in a suicide bombing there a week earlier.

More details:

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/04/17/world/copts-gather-bombed-church-mourn-dead-egypt-arrests-13-terrorist-elements/#.WPR3khi5L-Y>

- **Egypt's State Council presents parliament with report rejecting judicial councils law**

The Egyptian State Council's legislative department has issued a formal report to parliament rejecting proposed amendments to the judicial authority law that would give the president more powers in picking the heads of the country's top judicial councils, a judicial source told Arabic Ahram website on Sunday.

More details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/263003/-.aspx>

- **Salaam's statement came after a delegation of 16 Egyptian MPs visited a giant nuclear power reactor in Russia last week.**

Alaa Salaam, the secretary-general of the Egyptian parliament's Environment and Energy Committee, said in a statement on Saturday that Egypt and Russia are close to signing the final contract on the construction of Dabaa nuclear power plant northwest of Cairo.

More details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/263003/-.aspx>

- **Egypt court sentences Mubarak-era minister Habib el-Adly for graft**

An Egyptian court has sentenced former interior minister Habib el-Adly, who served under ousted president Hosni Mubarak, to seven years in jail for corruption.

More details:

<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2017-04-16/210773/>

- **UAE Christians pray for peace on Good Friday after Egypt attacks**

Tens of thousands of worshippers around the country gathered today on Good Friday to pray for peace and welfare in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on churches in Egypt.

More details:

<http://www.thenational.ae/uae/heritage/uae-christians-pray-for-peace-on-good-friday-after-egypt-attacks>

- **Founders of Street Children NGO Found Not Guilty After Three Years in Prison**

An Egyptian Court dropped all charges against American Aya Hijazi and her husband Mohamed Hassanein over the “Belady” NGO case after years behind bars.

More details:

<https://egyptianstreets.com/2017/04/16/founders-of-street-children-ngo-found-not-guilty-after-3-years-in-prison/>

- **Egypt’s prosecution detains 3 suspects in church bombing investigation**

Egypt’s prosecution detained three alleged members of a terrorist cell on Sunday as part of investigations into the bombing of two churches on Palm Sunday that left dozens killed and injured.

More details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/263040/-.aspx>

- **Tight Security for Easter at Egypt’s Christian Churches**

Easter means tight security for the Christian minority in Egypt, who are marking the occasion in sombre mood after last week’s murderous attacks on Coptic churches.

More details:

[http://www.euronews.com/2017/04/16/tight-security-for-easter-at-egypt-s-christian-churches?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+euronews%2Fen%2Fnews+%28euronews+-+news+-+en%29](http://www.euronews.com/2017/04/16/tight-security-for-easter-at-egypt-s-christian-churches?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+euronews%2Fen%2Fnews+%28euronews+-+news+-+en%29)

## 8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Algeria, Azerbaijan sign MoU on legal and judicial cooperation**

Algeria and Azerbaijan on Sunday have signed the first Memorandum of Understanding on the legal and judicial co-operation. It has been inked in Algiers by Minister of Justice Tayeb Louh and Azerbaijani Justice Minister Fikret Mammadov.

More details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/17807-algeria-azerbaijan-sign-mou-on-legal-and-judicial-co-operation>

- **Algerian campaign haunted by money scandals, low oil prices**

Algerian politicians have kicked off their campaign for parliamentary elections next month — and the biggest campaign issue is voter apathy.

More details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/4/15/algerian-campaign-haunted-by-money-scandals-low-oil-prices>

- **Rwanda: Local Firms Look to Morocco for New Markets and Business Partnerships**

Fifty local private sector members will next month head to Casablanca in Morocco to explore trade and investment opportunities in the North African country.

More details:

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201704170040.html>

- **Saad Eddine Othmani to Chair First Governmental Council Wednesday**

Head of Government, Saad Eddine Othmani, will chair, this Wednesday, his very first governmental council, convened to discuss the socio-economic program of the new government over the next five years.

More details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/04/214227/saad-eddine-othmani-to-chair-first-governmental-council-wednesday/>

- **Rivals reach 3-day ceasefire in south Libya**

A three-day ceasefire has been reached between forces loyal to Libya's UN-backed unity government and East Libya-based military commander Khalifa Haftar in south Libya.

More details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/rivals-reach-3-day-ceasefire-in-south-libya/797953>

- **PC forms committee to coordinate communication among fight parties in southern Libya**

The Presidential Council has formed a committee to coordinate communication channels between the fighting parties in southern Libya after the ceasefire in the region did not hold long.

More details:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/pc-forms-committee-to-coordinate-communication-among-fight-parties-in-southern-libya/>

- **Libyan Prime Minister reprimands intl community for allowing military violence in Libya's south**

Fayez Al-Serraj, the Head of the Presidential Council and Prime Minister of the Government of National Accord (GNA) has sent an open letter to the UN Secretary General, Arab League Secretary General, EU High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and others asking them to end the current military violence in southern Libya.

More details:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/libyan-prime-minister-reprimands-intl-community-for-allowing-military-violence-in-libyas-south/>

- **Libyan businesspersons urge for severing economic ties with Tunisia**

The Chairman of the Commerce and Industry Chamber in Tobruk, Ibrahim Al-Jarari, has urged the Libyan Commerce Chamber and the Libyan Businesspersons Council to hold an emergency meeting over the seizing of Libyan ships by Tunisian Customs Department.

More details:

<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/economy/libyan-businesspersons-urge-severing-economic-ties-tunisia>

- **Tunisia suffers worsening trade deficit in Q1, 2017**

Tunisia suffers a trade deficit of 3.88 billion dinars (1.67 billion U.S. dollars) in the first quarter of 2017, the National Institute of Statistics (INS) of Tunisia announced on Saturday.

More details:

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-04/16/c\\_136211405.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-04/16/c_136211405.htm)

## 9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Taliban Kill Child, 3 Women over Alleged Cooperation with Govt in Northern Afghanistan**

Taliban insurgents executed a child and three women after charging them with the alleged cooperation with the government in Northern Sar-e-Pul province, local reports said.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960128000951>

- **Afghans protest US dropping of massive bomb**

Afghan people have staged a demonstration in the capital, Kabul, to protest the recent move by the United States to drop its largest bomb, known as the mother of all bombs, in the country.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/04/17/518373/Afghanistan-Kabul-rally-US-MOAB>

- **Protesters slam 'mother of all bombs' during Washington rally**

US protesters have staged a demonstration in the capital Washington to denounce last week's use of the largest non-nuclear bomb in Afghanistan and other US military interventions around the world.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/04/17/518355/US-MOAB-Afghanistan-protest>

- **Terrorism remains serious threat to global stability, President Ghani**

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani met US National Security Adviser Lt. Gen HR McMaster, who arrived in Kabul on Sunday, leading a high ranking delegation, a presidential statement said.

More details:

<http://thekabultimes.gov.af/index.php/newsnational/13683-terrorism-remains-serious-threat-to-global-stability-president-ghani.html>

- **Afghanistan, Pakistan seeking ways to normalize relations**

Efforts have been started to normalize relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pakistan media has reported that President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani had written letter to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in which parliamentary talks between both countries have been suggested.

More details:

<http://thekabultimes.gov.af/index.php/opinions/politics/13690-afghanistan-pakistan-seeking-ways-to-normalize-relations.html>

- **Pakistan police arrest 22 in 'blasphemy' mob killing**

Pakistan police have arrested 22 people after the lynching of a university student accused of blasphemy, but observers said there was little hope authorities would secure convictions.

More details:

<http://www.thenational.ae/world/south-asia/pakistan-police-arrest-22-in-blasphemy-mob-killing>

- **Top US official in Pakistan after hints at tougher stance**

US National Security Advisor Lieutenant General H.R. McMaster arrived in Islamabad on Monday on an unannounced visit, a day after he hinted the US could take a tougher stance on Pakistan.

More details:

<http://www.thestar.com.my/news/regional/2017/04/17/top-us-official-in-pakistan-after-hints-at-tougher-stance/>

- **Pakistani Nationals Arrested for Holding Migrants Hostage**

Police in Greece have arrested three Pakistani nationals for holding hostage 16 migrants without authorization to be in the country and demanding money for their release.

More details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/london/2017/04/17/pakistani-nationals-arrested-holding-migrants-hostage/>

- **Violence spikes in held Kashmir after videos inflame tension**

Demonstrators have stepped up attacks in Indian-held Kashmir and police warned officers not to go home, amid a spike in violence in the valley, after the army tied a man to the front of a jeep as a human shield.

More details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/199121-Violence-spikes-in-held-Kashmir-after-videos-inflame-tension>

- **US National Security Adviser calls on the PM**

The US National Security Adviser Lieutenant General H.R. McMaster paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Monday, marking the first high-level interaction between Pakistan and the US since the Trump administration arrived in the Oval Office.

More details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1327560/us-national-security-adviser-calls-on-the-pm>

## 10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkey condemns deadly attack in Aleppo**

Turkish Foreign Ministry condemned a deadly attack in southern Aleppo in Syria, according to a statement issued on Monday. "We condemn the treacherous attack in Aleppo's Rashidin area which resulted with death of tens of people, mostly civilians," the statement said. It stressed that the attack has once again showed the importance of empowering ceasefire announced on Dec. 30, 2016 and expansion of the ceasefire to the whole country.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/188069/turkey-condemns-deadly-attack-in-aleppo>

- **Turkish foundation sends over 1,000 aid trucks to Syria**

Turkey's Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) has announced it dispatched over 1,000 trucks loaded with humanitarian aid to Syrians in the first three months of the year. "We've sent 1,518 trucks loaded with humanitarian aid, including basic foodstuff to Hama, Homs, Aleppo countryside, Idlib and its countryside," Selim Tosun, a media adviser of the foundation's Hatay branch, told Anadolu Agency Monday.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkish-foundation-sends-over-1-000-aid-trucks-to-syria/798769>

*\*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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