



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

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1. IRAQ

- **HRW urges Iraqi government to fence IS notorious Mosul dead dump**

The Iraqi government should mark and cordon the site of a notorious Mosul sinkhole Islamic State militants used to dump dead bodies of their civilian victims, Human Rights Watch said Wednesday.

More details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/features/hrw-urges-iraqi-government-fence-notorious-mosul-dead-dump/>

- **UNAMI Condemns Monday's Terrorist Attack in Baghdad**

The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for Iraq, Ján Kubiš, strongly condemns the “cowardly” terrorist bombing in Baghdad’s southwestern al-Amil district on Monday, 20th of March, in which scores of civilians were reported killed or injured, reads a statement by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI”

More details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/337988>

- **Iraq’s prime minister sees U.S. ‘more engaged’ in terror fight**

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi called on the United States and other allies to “stay focused” in the fight against Islamic State Monday, saying he sees a new willingness in the Trump administration to take a more direct role in the fight not just to contain but to defeat the terror group.

More details:

http://www.shafaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/14c869c5-ff65-48e5-b7f6-6c7df96693a3/Iraq's-prime-minister-sees-U-S--'more-engaged'-in-terror-fight

- **US Lawmakers want Trump commitment to help Iraq post-ISIS**

A bipartisan group of US senators is urging President Donald Trump to continue US support in Iraq following a “forthcoming” ousting of ISIS from the country, the Hill reported on Tuesday. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) and ranking member Ben Cardin (D-Md.), penned a letter Monday asking Trump to “continue working with Iraq’s leaders to preserve their country’s unity and ensure its stability.”

More details:

http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/8435/US-Lawmakers-want-Trump-commitment-to-help-Iraq-post-ISIS#section_235

- **ISIS clams responsibility for Baghdad deadly attack**

The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for a car bombing in Baghdad that killed 27 people the previous day, shattering a relative lull in the Iraqi capital.

More details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=40028

- **Kurds in Iraq ring in the New Year**

Kurds across the world were celebrating Newroz, the first day of their traditional calendar, on Tuesday. Festivities in Iraq's Kurdish region began the previous evening, marking the start of a public holiday that allows families to come together and celebrate.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2017/03/kurds-iraq-ring-year-170321102733301.html>

- **Iran and ISIL 'top priority' for Iraq-US relations**

Iran's role as a regional player will be among the key issues as Abadi meets Trump and other US officials in Washington.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/03/iran-isil-top-priority-iraq-relations-170320090824503.html>

- **Iran, Iraq to lead Middle East oil growth**

Speculations are growing that oil field development plans in Iran and Iraq would drive the largest production growth in the Middle East over the next four years.

More details:

<http://iran-daily.com/News/189688.html?catid=3&title=Iran--Iraq-to-lead-Middle-East-oil-growth>

- **ISIL killed, left hundreds of bodies at site near Mosul in 2014-2015**

ISIL executed possibly hundreds of detainees between 2014 and 2015, leaving the bodies in a sinkhole eight kilometers (about 5 miles) from western Mosul, a city in Iraq, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said Wednesday in its press release.

More details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124363/ISIL-killed-left-hundreds-of-bodies-at-site-near-Mosul-in-2014-2015>

- **Iraqi Interior Ministry Denies Nine Officers Taken Hostage by Daesh in Mosul**

The Iraqi Interior Ministry on Tuesday denied information about the nine officers who had reportedly been taken hostage by militants of the Daesh terror group (outlawed in many countries) in Mosul.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703211051817596-iraq-daesh-hostage/>

- **Trump on Iraq war: U.S. 'should never ever have left**

"Certainly, we shouldn't have left. We should never ever have left," Trump said. "A vacuum was created, and we discussed what happened."

More details:

<http://europe.newsweek.com/trump-iraq-war-us-should-never-ever-have-left-571524?rm=eu>

- **UN concerned over flying Kurdish flag in Iraq's Kirkuk**

The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) expressed concern over the governor of Kirkuk's decision to raise the Kurdish flag over official premises in the Iraqi ethnically-mixed city of Kirkuk.

More details:

<http://ekurd.net/un-kurdish-flag-kirkuk-2017-03-22>

- **Two Iraqi civilians who allege they were captured and mistreated by UK forces during the Iraq War sue the MoD for damages**

Two Iraqi civilians who claim they were captured and subjected to 'deeply humiliating' abuse by UK forces in the Iraq War are suing the Ministry of Defence. The men claim they were working on a cargo ship when it was border by troops in 2003, who then took them, via a series of vessels, to a large military ship.

More details:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4337274/Two-Iraqi-civilians-suing-MoD-mistreatment.html>

- **Dubai Cares floats Iraqi Kurdistan programme**

Dubai Cares, part of Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives, announced on Tuesday at the 14th edition of the Dubai International Humanitarian Aid & Development Conference and Exhibition (DIHAD 2017), the launch of a Dhs3.8 million (\$1,026,375) programme in partnership with Unicef aimed at easing the pressure on the fractured education system in Iraqi Kurdistan.

More details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/0a5c367b-5e8b-478a-a9a2-93046f4a9491.aspx>

- **Iraqi Sunni militia recruits Kurds in disputed city: PUK official**

The Sunni backed militia group known as the Hashd al-Watani has recruited around 250 Kurdish members in the volatile Tuz Khurmatu city where tensions between Kurds and Arab Shiites and Sunni communities led to deadly confrontations last year.

More details:

<http://ekurd.net/sunni-militia-recruits-kurds-2017-03-21>

- **Inherent Resolve Strikes Target ISIS in Syria, Iraq**

U.S. and coalition military forces continued to attack the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria yesterday, Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve officials reported today.

More details:

<http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/2017/03/21/inherent-resolve-strikes-target-isis-in-syria-iraq-2/>

- **Power, corruption and lies: Iraqi women battle for recognition**

Women refugees are ignored, female MPs are hounded out of office - Saddam's fall brought a new system, but patriarchy still grips Iraq.

More details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/iraq-women-mps-663734659>

2. SYRIA

- **Rebels launch second Damascus attack in three days**

Government forces and rebels engaged in fresh fighting as rebel offensive near Jobar neighbourhood enters third day.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/rebels-launch-damascus-attack-days-170321091435374.html>

- **EU sanctions four senior Syrian military officials over chemical weapons use**

The European Union imposed sanctions on Monday against four senior Syrian military officials accused of using chemical weapons on civilians, after Russia and China blocked similar measures at the United Nations.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/eu-sanctions-four-senior-syrian-military-officials-over-chemical-weapons-use-953032>

- **Australia close to Resettling 12,000 Syrian Refugees**

Australia is close to resettling the 12,000 refugees from the war in Syria and Iraq it promised to urgently take over a year ago.

More details:

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/A/AS_AUSTRALIA_SYRIA?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-03-22-01-27-29

- **Syrian rebels report fresh Israeli airstrikes near Damascus**

Raids reportedly target regime posts in Mount Qasioun region; no immediate reports of casualties, damage. Israeli jets were reported to have carried out airstrikes near the Syrian capital early Wednesday, hours after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to continue hitting weapons convoys and rebuffed claims Russia had ordered the strikes halted.

More details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/syrian-rebels-report-fresh-israeli-airstrikes-near-damascus/>

- **Syrian defector urges Trump to stop machinery of death**

The Syrian defector who smuggled out tens of thousands of photos of people allegedly tortured to death in Assad regime jails has urged U.S. President Donald Trump to stop the machinery of death.

More details:

<http://www.aninews.in/newsdetail-NA/MzA1MjQx/syrian-defector-urges-trump-to-stop-machinery-of-death.html>

- **Turkey still determined to play role in final Raqqa assault**

The leaders of 50 Syrian Arab tribes met in Sanliurfa, Turkey, and announced they would set up the Army of Al-Jazirah and Euphrates Tribes to end Russian and Iranian occupation of Syria and cleanse the Euphrates and Al Jazeera areas of the Islamic State (IS), the Kurdish nationalist Democratic Union Party/Kurdistan Workers Party (PYD/PKK), Hezbollah and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad

More details:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/turkey-syria-ankara-promotes-arab-tribes-raqqa-operation.html#ixzz4c2FV0jR8>

- **UN: All Syrian parties who already attended previous round of talks confirmed participation in 5th round of Geneva**

The United Nations announced on Tuesday that all the Syrian parties that took part in the previous Syrian-Syrian talks confirmed their attendance in the fifth round of Geneva talks in Geneva.

More details:

<http://sana.sy/en/?p=102616>

- **After six years, Assad now secure but country is carved up as war thunders on**

More than six years since the start of the uprising against President Bashar Assad, he is winning on the battlefield but Syria's civil war is far from over, with his once stable country broken into fiefdoms ruled by rebels and warlords.

More details:

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/03/22/world/six-years-assad-now-secure-country-carved-war-thunders/#.WNlpGW-LTIU>

- **Premier Khamis pays tribute to Syrian mothers**

On Mother's Day, Prime Minister Imad Khamis paid tribute to the martyr's mothers who brought up their sons on the love of the homeland and gave birth to those heroes who sacrificed their lives to defend the country.

More details:

<http://sana.sy/en/?p=102628>

3. IRAN

- **US will honor Iran nuclear deal: Trump's advisor**

US President Donald Trump's nuclear advisor says Washington will honor the 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and six major world powers, including the United States.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/03/22/515206/US-will-honor-Iran-nuclear-deal-Trumps-advisor>

- **Iran's Khamenei warns he will confront any interference in May election**

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned on Tuesday he would confront anyone trying to interfere in Iran's May presidential election, in which conservative hardliners will seek to defeat moderate President Hassan Rouhani.

More details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-election-khamenei-idUSKBN16S2GD>

- **Ahmadinejad formally endorses protege for president**

Former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad formally endorsed Hamid Baghaei for president on Monday, underlining that he felt called upon to announce support for the "revolutionary, righteous" candidate.

More details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/412109/Ahmadinejad-formally-endorses-protege-for-president>

- **IRNA chief: Media bridge between religions**

The media can adopt role of 'information bridge' to find and publish the common grounds among people of different faiths and religions, says Managing Director of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA).

More details:

<http://www.iran-daily.com/News/189649.html>

- **Trade with Iran to start next month**

Pakistan and Iran will resume banking channels from next month which pave way for official trade between the two countries, ZubairTufail, President, Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) said on Tuesday.

More details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/193723-Trade-with-Iran-to-start-next-month>

- **Conditions ready for expanding job-creating investment**

In a letter to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iranian President assured the Leader that the current stability and prosperity in the country's economy has provided the best condition for expansion of job-creating investment. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani addressed Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a letter on Wednesday, following the Leader's special emphasis on 'domestic production' and 'creation of more job opportunities' in the new Iranian year.

More details:

<http://www.iran-daily.com/News/189703.html>

- **Enemies Using Economic Pressure to Achieve Goals: Iran Leader**

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says the issue of economy is a priority for Iran, adding that the enemies seek to undermine the trust of the Iranian nation in the Islamic establishment through mounting economic pressure.

More details:

<http://ifpnews.com/wired/2017/03/ayatollah-khamenei-speech/>

- **Iran's Supreme Leader claims gender equality is 'Zionist plot' aiming to corrupt role of women in society**

Iran's Supreme Leader has claimed gender equality is a "Zionist plot" aiming to corrupt the role of women in society.

More details:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iran-supreme-leader-ayatollah-khamenei-gender-equality-women-zionist-plot-society-role-islamic-a7641041.html>

- **Iran to export gas oil soon**

The First Vice-President Eshaq Jahangiri said that Iran will soon turn into an exporter of gas oil. Speaking to a group of officials in Kerman Province, cwnreal Iran, Jahangiri said that once used to be an importer of diesel fuel, Iran has now become a major exporter of the product and will soon turn into an exporter of gas oil, too.

More details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82470590/>

- **Intelligence official says Russia must contain Iran in Syria**

Chagai Tzuriel says Moscow has interest in preserving regional stability, warns that Iran is seeking to expand its military presence in Syria

More details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/intelligence-official-says-russia-must-contain-iran-in-syria/>

- **Nowruz Harbinger of Hope, Peace for All: Iran's UN Envoy**

Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations Gholam Ali Khoshroo described Nowruz or the Persian New Year as a 'cultural perception' that brings 'hope, peace and prosperity' to millions of peoples around the globe regardless of their ethnicity and political views.

More details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/03/22/1362238/nowruz-harbinger-of-hope-peace-for-all-iran-s-un-envoy>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Israel Army Invades Palestinian Lands in Southern Gaza**

Several Israeli army vehicles, and armored bulldozers, invaded, Wednesday, Palestinian agricultural lands, east of Khan Younis, in the southern part of the Gaza Strip, and bulldozed them, while war jets hovered over various areas on the besieged coastal region.

More details:

<http://imemc.org/article/israeli-army-invades-palestinian-lands-in-southern-gaza/>

- **PA Claims Gazan Killed Israeli Gunfire**

Palestinian Authority officials said that an 18-year-old Gazan was killed and two others injured before dawn on Wednesday by Israeli artillery fire in Gaza. A spokesperson for the IDF told AFP that the soldiers had spotted three men "close to the security fence and opened fire in their direction," without giving further details.

More details:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/227096>

- **Israeli Artillery Kills Palestinian Teeneger in Gaza**

A Palestinian teenager has been killed and two others injured after the Israeli military fired artillery shells into the blockaded Gaza Strip, local officials say. Achraf al-Qodra, the spokesman for the Ministry of Health in Gaza, said the artillery shells hit a gathering of Palestinian youths in Nahdha neighborhood to the east of Rafah City in southern Gaza before dawn.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/03/22/515193/Palestine-Israel-Security-artillery-fire>

- **Israel Plans to Evacuate 250.000 from Border Areas If Hamas, Hezbollah Gain Wage War**

If Islamic militants in Gaza or Lebanon go to war with Israel, they could find their usual targets empty. Israel is drawing up contingency plans to evacuate up to a quarter-million civilians from border communities to protect them from attacks from Hamas, Hezbollah or other Islamic militant groups. The mass evacuations would be the biggest in Israel's history, part of a bigger plan where the army works with municipalities to keep civilians safe.

More details:

[http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/03/22/world/israel-plans-evacuate-250000-border-areas-
hamas-hezbollah-wage-war/#.WNI6fNSLRkg](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/03/22/world/israel-plans-evacuate-250000-border-areas-hamas-hezbollah-wage-war/#.WNI6fNSLRkg)

- **Israel Plans Mass Evacuations if Islamic Militants Go To War with Them**

If Islamic militants in Gaza or Lebanon go to war with Israel, they could find their usual targets empty. Israel is drawing up contingency plans to evacuate up to a quarter-million civilians from border communities to protect them from attacks from Hamas, Hezbollah or other Islamic militant groups. The mass evacuations would be the biggest in Israel's history, part of a bigger plan where the army works with municipalities to keep civilians safe.

More details:

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/nationworld/ct-israel-evacuation-war-20170321-story.html>

- **We Won't Stop Construction in Jerusalem Al-Quds Settlements, Netanyahu Says**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to press ahead with building new settler units, stressing that the Tel Aviv regime has no plan to limit settlement construction in occupied East Jerusalem al-Quds. Netanyahu told Israeli reporters during his visit to the Chinese capital city of Beijing on Tuesday that talks between Israeli and American negotiators in the White House over limiting settlement constructions are off the table.

More details:

[http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/03/22/515192/Israel-Benjamin-Netanyahu-construction-
settlements-East-Jerusalem-alQuds-nonnegotiable](http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/03/22/515192/Israel-Benjamin-Netanyahu-construction-settlements-East-Jerusalem-alQuds-nonnegotiable)

- **Is Palestinian Frustration Playing into Netanyahu's Strategy?**

Ahead of his second meeting March 16 with US President Donald Trump's envoy Jason Greenblatt, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu posted a video clip on his Facebook page. "We're in a process of dialogue with the White House," he said. And what is this dialogue about? "About an agreed policy on construction in the settlements." Indeed, Netanyahu did not forget his promise to the residents of the illegally built West Bank outpost of Amona that he would build a new settlement for them after they were evicted in January under a court order.

More details:

[http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/israel-palestinian-authority-benjamin-
netanyahu-gaza-strip.html](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/israel-palestinian-authority-benjamin-netanyahu-gaza-strip.html)

- **Egypt leader to raise Palestine issue with US president**

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on Monday promised to raise the issue of Palestinian statehood with U.S. President Donald Trump when he makes a scheduled visit to Washington next month. Al-Sisi made the assertion at a meeting in Cairo with Palestinian counterpart Mahmoud Abbas, during which the two men discussed means of restarting stalled Palestine-Israel peace talks and promoting inter- Palestinian reconciliation.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/egypt-leader-to-raise-palestine-issue-with-us-president/775840>

- **UN rights expert raps Israel for anti-Palestine policy**

A UN rights expert issued a blistering criticism of Israel's policies on Monday, deepening a row over alleged anti-Israel bias within the UN following US pressure. In a report, Michael Lynk, UN special rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories, charged Israel with "the subjugation of (Palestinians') humanity" and intensifying a crackdown on human rights campaigners.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1071551/middle-east>

- **China calls for two-state solution to Israel-Palestine conflict**

Chinese President Xi Jinping has called for a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict "as soon as possible". During his talks with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Beijing, he emphasised the need for a peaceful Middle East in the interest of the international community. "The conflict between Israel and Palestine has had a long lasting impact on the Middle East," said Xi in his talks, aimed at boosting trade cooperation with the visiting Israeli leader. "China appreciates that the Israeli side will continue to tackle the Israeli-Palestinian issue on the basis of the 'two-state solution'."

More Details:

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/china-calls-two-state-solution-israel-palestine-conflict-1612963>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Jordan Rejects 'Most-Wanted' Woman's Extradition to US**

Jordan's Supreme Court on Monday rejected an appeal to extradite Ahlam Al-Tamimi, who was placed on the FBI's "Most Wanted Terrorist" list, as her family urged Jordan's government to ensure Al-Tamimi's safety.

The court upheld a ruling issued by an appeals court, the official Petra news agency reported. Petra, quoting a judicial source, said the extradition cannot go through because Jordan's Parliament has never ratified an extradition agreement with the US signed in March 1995.

More details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1071566/middle-east>

- **Berri Warns of New Conflict with Israel over Maritime Borders**

Speaker Nabih Berri warned on Wednesday of an Israeli pretext to trigger a new war against Lebanon after the latest reports about decisions made by the Israeli government and the Knesset to approve the demarcation of the maritime-economic border with Lebanon, al-Joumhouria daily reported on Wednesday. Berri voiced warnings of the "new Israeli assault against Lebanon's sovereignty," and said "what has been revealed by Israeli media was not arbitrary, but rather reveals a path taken by Israel in a bid to control Lebanon's gas and oil wealth within Lebanese economic borders."

More details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/227316-berri-warns-of-new-conflict-with-israel-over-maritime-borders>

- **Hariri: Circumstances Inadequate to Meet With Nasrallah**

Prime Minister Saad Hariri maintained that Lebanon and Egypt have strong political ties, highlighting the necessity to bolster the bilateral economic relations between the two countries. He also considered that security of the Arab countries is correlated, refusing that Lebanon be used as a platform to target a brotherly state. Hariri was interviewed by Egypt's al-Ahram newspaper, on the sidelines of his official visit to Cairo on top of a ministerial delegation.

More details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/76881/Hariri-Circumstances-inadequate-to-meet-with-Nasrallah>

- **GAM, IEC discuss preparations for local elections**

President of the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) committee Yousef Shawarbeh on Monday met with the Independent Election Commission (IEC) President Khaled Kalaldehy to discuss preparations for GAM's council elections, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported. Shawarbeh stressed the municipality's support for the IEC to hold the elections.

More Details:

<http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=34537#.WNJ512-LTcs>

- **King attends ceremony on 49th anniversary of Karamah battle**

His Majesty King Abdullah II, the Supreme Commander of the Jordan Armed Forces, on Tuesday attended a ceremony held by the Armed Forces at the Unknown Soldier Monument in the Jordan Valley, marking the 49th anniversary of the Karamah Battle. Upon arrival, the King reviewed the guard of honour in the presence of the prime minister and defence minister and the army chief, and laid a wreath at the monument.

More Details:

http://petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=294300&CatID=13

- **Lebanese TV reporter Maria Maalouf being sued over Hezbollah murder incitement**

Maria MaaloufA number of Lebanese lawyers filed lawsuits Monday against television reporter Maria Maalouf accusing her of inciting murder against Hezbollah's Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah by Israel via airstrike.

More Details:

<http://yalibnan.com/2017/03/21/lebanese-1tv-reporter-maria-maalouf-being-sued-over-hezbollah-murder-incitement/>

- **China's state news agency to strengthen cooperation with Lebanon's NNA**

China's state news agency Xinhua said here on Tuesday that it attaches great importance to cross-border cooperation, including further exchange and cooperation with Lebanon's National News Agency (NNA). Representing President of Xinhua News Agency Cai Mingzhao, Xinhua's Middle East Regional Bureau Chief Zeng Hu made the remarks at the international conference entitled "Media Spreading Civilizations and Connecting Dialogues" which kicked off in Lebanon's capital Beirut on Monday.

More Details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/22/c_136146625.htm

- **Marco Rubio, in Lebanon, tells PM Hariri to combat Hezbollah**

Florida Senator Marco Rubio and several other Republican lawmakers visited the Middle East over the weekend, to look at America's role in combating the threat of Hezbollah and Islamic State. Rubio along with other members of the Senate's Select Committee on Intelligence, senators Richard Burr of North Carolina, John Cornyn of Texas, Tom Cotton of Arkansas and James Lankford of Oklahoma, visited Lebanon and Jordan before a brief, low-key stop in Israel.

More Details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/marco-rubio-in-lebanon-tells-pm-hariri-to-combat-hezbollah/>

- **Lebanon develops strategy to deal with repercussions of Syrian crisis**

Lebanon's Prime Minister Saad Hariri stressed on Monday that Lebanon "developed a strategy to deal with the Syrian crisis's severe repercussions." Hariri added "the strategy also aims to reposition Lebanon back on a sustainable stabilization and development path."

More Details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/21/c_136143655.htm

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Saudi Aramco's US\$7bil investment proves Malaysia not on verge of bankruptcy, says Najib**

Saudi Aramco's US\$7bil investment in the Petronas Pengerang Integrated Complex in Johor, is a major testament that Malaysia is not on the verge of bankruptcy.

More Details:

<http://www.thestar.com.my/business/business-news/2017/03/22/saudi-aramcos-usd7bil-investment-proves-malaysia-not-on-verge-of-bankruptcy-says-najib/>

- **Iraq PM seeks to 'normalize relations' with Saudi Arabia**

Iraq's prime minister, speaking on a high-level meeting to the US capital, has indicated that Baghdad seeks to "normalize" relations with Saudi Arabia.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1072101/middle-east>

- **Iran Regime Supports Houthi Terrorists in Yemen's War**

Iran is sending advanced weapons and military advisers to Yemen's rebel Houthi movement, stepping up support for its Shi'ite ally in a civil war whose outcome could sway the balance of power in the Middle East, regional and Western sources say.

More Details:

<http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/terrorism-fundamentalism/22399-iran-regime-supports-houthi-terrorists-in-yemen-s-war>

- **France condemns Yemen's Houthis**

The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs has today condemned the Houthi rebels for their attacks on civilians.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170321-france-condemns-yemens-houthis/>

- **Qatar: Israeli crimes an obstacle to peace process in the region**

Qatar has accused the Israeli government of being a state "above the law," with policies that continue to be major obstacles to the peace process in the region.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170321-qatar-israel-crimes-an-obstacle-to-peace-process-in-the-region/>

- **UAE Minister of Infrastructure and Omani Ambassador discuss cooperation**

Dr. Abdullah bin Mohammed Belhaif Al Nuaimi, UAE Minister of Infrastructure Development and Chairman of Federal Transport Authority, Land and Maritime, has met with Khalid bin Said bin Salim al Jaradi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the UAE, and discussed ways of enhancing brotherly relations between the two Gulf states.

More Details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302604201>

- **Dubai realty to attract Chinese investments**

Dubai developers are all geared to showcase the best of Dubai real estate opportunities to the Chinese investors at the upcoming Dubai Property Show that will be held in Shanghai, China from March 24 to 26, 2017 at Shanghai World Expo Exhibition & Convention Centre. This will be the 6th global edition of the popular exhibition, which has been instrumental in promoting Dubai real estate to key investor markets which include London, Mumbai, Hongkong and now Shanghai. The exhibition is being organised by Sumansa Exhibitions in association with Dubai Land Department and will be attended by around 25 real estate companies from Dubai.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/22b5604a-44d7-471b-aabf-9b9c45cd53bf.aspx>

- **UAE Authorities Arrest One Rights Activist and Extend the Detention of Another**

Authorities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have detained prominent human rights defender Ahmed Mansoor, and extended the detention of activist Osama al-Najjar despite him having completed his sentence.

More Details:

<https://globalvoices.org/2017/03/21/uae-authorities-arrest-one-rights-activist-and-extend-the-detention-of-another/>

- **Oman, Bahrain sign MoU**

Oman and Bahrain signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the mutual recognition of Certificate of Competency (CoC) issued by both countries to seafarers and workers aboard ships.

More Details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302604310>

- **Bahrain confirms 3 wanted nationals terror fugitives**

Bahraini authorities confirmed on Monday that the two Bahrainis the United States listed as terrorists last week and another one arrested days back in Germany are all terror fugitives, Bahrain News Agency reported.

More Details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/21/c_136143638.htm

- **Belarus, Oman discuss priority areas in economic cooperation**

Priority areas of trade and economic cooperation between Belarus and Oman were discussed during the visit of Belarus' Minister of Foreign Affairs Vladimir Makei to Oman on 20-21 March, BelTA learned from the press service of the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

More Details:

<http://eng.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-oman-discuss-priority-areas-in-economic-cooperation-99672-2017/>

7. EGYPT

- **Egypt aims to raise 6bn pounds from sale of stakes in state firms: Minister**

Egypt aims to raise 6 billion pounds (\$329 million) from the sale of stakes in state companies in the 2017/18 financial year, Finance Minister Amr El-Garhy told Reuters, part of government efforts to generate revenue and attract investors.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1071951/business-economy>

- **Sudan, Egypt FMs to meet in April to contain “muffled crisis”**

Sudan’s Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour and his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shukry will meet in Khartoum in the first half of April in an attempt to contain a muffled crisis between the two countries.

More Details:

<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article61957>

- **Egypt’s parliament may pass new investment law in 10 days: MP**

The Egyptian parliament is expected to approve the long-awaited new investment law between one week and ten days, said head of the economic committee Aly El-Gohary said Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://en.amwalalghad.com/investment-news/industry-trade/55813-egypts-parliament-may-pass-new-investment-law-in-10-days-mp.html>

- **Inflation rate in Egypt hits highest level in 30 years**

The inflation rate, one of the main problems in the everyday lives of millions since last year’s flotation of the pound, hit its highest level in 30 years in February, according to the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS).

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/inflation-rate-egypt-hits-highest-level-30-years-952968>

- **Hariri Arrives in Cairo on official Visit**

Prime Minister, Saad Hariri, arrived on Tuesday at 5.p.m. in Cairo on a two-day official visit to meet with Egypt's President, Abdel Fattah Sisi, Prime Minister, Sharif Ismail and senior Egyptian officials.

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/76905/Hariri-arrives-in-Cairo-on-official-visit>

- **Egypt, EU complete 35 institutional twinning projects**

Egypt and the European Union implemented around 35 projects worth €70 million (\$75.7 million) for institutional twinning over the past 10 years, said an official in the Egyptian Ministry of International Cooperation on Monday.

More Details:

<http://en.amwalalghad.com/business/financial-institutions/55808-egypt-eu-complete-35-institutional-twinning-projects.html>

- **Muslim Brotherhood spending millions to fight terror designation**

The Muslim Brotherhood is spending millions of dollars to lobby Washington to avoid being designated a terror organization, reports Joseph Farah's G2 Bulletin.

More Details:

<http://www.wnd.com/2017/03/muslim-brotherhood-spending-millions-to-fight-terror-designation/>

- **Egypt's parliament speaker nominated for position in IPU**

Heads of Arab parliaments nominated the Egyptian parliament speaker, Ali Abdul Aal, for a position in the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), state-media reported Monday.

More Details:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/03/21/egypts-parliament-speaker-nominated-position-ipu/>

- **Egypt's Ex-President Mubarak Released, Returns Home After Acquittal**

Egypt's ex-President Hosni Mubarak has been released from military hospital and returned to his home three weeks after being acquitted on charges of complicity in protesters deaths during the 2011 unrest, Egyptian media reported Tuesday.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703211051803235-mubarak-released-egypt/>

- **Egypt to comply with US ban on laptops in cabins starting Friday**

Egyptian authorities will apply a coming American ban on electronic devices in carry-on baggage on flights from Cairo to the US starting on Friday, sources at Cairo airport told Ahram Online.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/261388/-.aspx>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Morocco arrests suspected Hizbollah financier: Source**

Moroccan authorities have arrested Kassim Tajideen, deemed by Washington a top financier of the Lebanese Hizbollah movement, and plan to extradite him to the United States, a Moroccan security source close to the case said on Tuesday.

More Details

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/c5290238-6f13-464a-8671-add27ee17b47.aspx>

- **Reception hosted to mark 61st anniversary of Independence of Tunisia**

On the occasion of the 61st anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Tunisia, Ambassador of the Republic of Tunisia and Mrs. Adel Elarbi hosted a reception to celebrate.

More Details

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/193837-Reception-hosted-to-mark-61st-anniversary-of-Independence-of-Tunisia>

- **Tunisian minister of education visits WISE**

The Minister of Education of Tunisia, Neji Jalloul, met with officials from the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) during his recent visit to Education City, followed by a public lecture at Georgetown University in Qatar. The minister was accompanied by Tunisian ambassador Salah al-Salhi, and officials from both Qatar and Tunisia.

More Details

<http://www.gulf-times.com/story/539472/Tunisian-minister-of-education-visits-WISE>

- **Europe to help Libya as migrant crisis worsens**

Italian and EU officials are to send equipment and economic aid to Libya to help in the campaign against people smuggling in North Africa, it was revealed yesterday. The decision comes as the leader of Tripoli's UN-backed government asked for more resources to help in the crisis. Italy has hosted a meeting of interior ministers from eight EU countries to strengthen support for last month's agreement to help Libya fight human trafficking. The Head of the Presidency Council, Fayeze Al-Sarraj, requested "more money and equipment," according to a source present at the meeting.

More Details

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170321-europe-to-help-libya-as-migrant-crisis-worsens/>

- **EU preparing a road map to tackle immigrants influx from Libya**

Ongoing consultations between the UN-backed government in Tripoli, representatives of the interior ministers of Italy and other eight European countries aim at bolstering an agreement signed in February, when Libya agreed to tackle the smuggling of migrants into Europe.

More Details

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/eu-preparing-a-road-map-to-tackle-immigrants-influx-from-libya/>

- **British MP urges London's support for the LNA and HoR**

Britain must "urgently engage" with Khalifa Haftar and the Libyan National Army (LNA) a report has recommended, following the visit of a delegation led by a British MP to east Libya earlier this month. London should also reconsider its view of the Presidency Council's (PC) Government of National Accord (GNA) "and acknowledge its limited capacity to deliver any kind of governance or security for Libya."

More Details

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/03/21/british-mp-urges-londons-support-for-the-lna-and-hor/>

- **IMF urges Algerian monetary, subsidy reforms to ease oil price impact**

The International Monetary Fund is urging Algeria to tighten its monetary policy, open up further to foreign investment and reform its subsidy system to help cope with a decline in energy revenue, an IMF official said.

More Details

http://af.reuters.com/article/algeriaNews/idAFL5N1GY2VR?feedType=RSS&feedName=algeriaNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+reuters%2FAfricaAlgeriaNews+%28News+%2F+Africa+%2F+Algeria+News%29&&rpc=401

- **WB willing to contribute to different projects in Algiers**

Vice President of the World Bank for the Middle East and North Africa Hafez Ghanem on Tuesday hailed Algeria's experience in the eradication of flimsy dwellings, and expressed readiness of his institution to contribute to projects aiming at improving the living environment of citizens in the province of Algiers.

More Details

<http://en.aps.dz/regions/17397-wb-willing-to-contribute-to-different-projects-in-algiers>

- **'Algeria, where are your Jews?' — UNHRC's Israel 'apartheid' debate**

When the UN Human Rights Council met on Monday under its permanent targeting Israel, Arab states echoed the now-deleted UN report by Richard Falk which accused Israel of "apartheid." After the PLO, Qatar, Syria, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and other Arab regimes accused the Jewish state of racism, I took the floor: "Algeria, where are your Jews?"

More Details

<http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/algeria-where-are-your-jews-unhracs-israel-apartheid-debate/>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Swaraj comes to rescue of Telangana woman 'held captive' by husband in Pak**

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj has come to the rescue of an Indian woman, who has been "illegally detained" by her husband in Pakistan, after an appeal by her father. According to reports, the woman, identified as Mohammadi Begum, hails from Telangana. Begum lives with her husband Mohammed Younus in Sialkot, Pakistan.

More Details

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/current-affairs/220317/swaraj-comes-to-rescue-of-telangana-woman-held-captive-by-husband-in-pak.html>

- **Nisar says Altaf issue a 'roadblock' in ties with UK**

Pakistani Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan has said the issue of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement founder Altaf Hussain has become a roadblock in relations with the United Kingdom. The minister made the remark while speaking at a press conference with visiting British Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, after holding a meeting with her on Tuesday, reports the Dawn.

More Details

<http://www.aninews.in/newsdetail-NA/MzA1MjY4/nisar-says-altaf-issue-a-039-roadblock-039-inties-with-uk.html>

- **Navjot Singh Sidhu on continuing with Kapil Sharma's show: What I do at night is no one's concern**

After cricketer-turned-politician and newly-appointed Punjab minister Navjot Singh Sidhu landed himself into a controversy by announcing that he will continue to appear in the popular show Comedy Nights with Kapil, he defended himself by saying that what he does at night should be no one's concern.

More Details

<http://www.firstpost.com/politics/navjot-singh-sidhu-on-continuing-with-kapil-sharmas-show-what-i-do-at-night-is-no-ones-concern-3346702.html>

- **New CMs of Punjab, Uttarakhand in Delhi; to Meet PM**

Newly-elected Chief Ministers of Punjab and Uttarakhand, Amarinder Singh and Trivendra Singh Rawat, will hold a series of meetings with the government's top brass including Prime Minister Narendra Modi here today.

More Details

<http://www.outlookindia.com/newswire/story/new-cms-of-punjab-uttarakhand-in-delhi-to-meet-pm/967134>

- **Pakistan to raise Altaf Hussain matter with British authorities: Chaudhry Nisar**

Interior minister Chaudhry Nisar has said that Pakistan is in the process of raising Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) founder Altaf Hussain's matter with the British authorities, saying there was a complete consensus to deal with the issue.

More Details

<http://paktribune.com/news/Pakistan-to-raise-Altaf-Hussain-matter-with-British-authorities-Chaudhry-Nisar-278489.html>

- **Govt must remove trust deficit with Afghanistan, says Liaqat Baloch**

Welcoming the decision of reopening Pakistan-Afghanistan border, acting chief of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Liaqat Baloch on Tuesday asked the federal government to persuade the Afghan government to stop the use of its land for terror acts in Pakistan.

More Details

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/193864-Govt-must-remove-trust-deficit-with-Afghanistan-says-Liaqat-Baloch>

- **Afghan peace**

THE reopening of the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan is a welcome and sensible move. The closure for over a month, after Pakistan accused Afghanistan of not doing enough to act against anti-Pakistan militant sanctuaries in eastern Afghanistan, had serious socioeconomic implications for the populations on either side and caused bilateral ties to plunge to yet another low.

More Details

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1321983/afghan-peace>

- **Lawmakers demand inquiry into Afghan deaths in New Zealand military raid**

New Zealand lawmakers on Wednesday called for an independent probe into allegations that New Zealand special forces troops killed unarmed civilians in a botched raid in Afghanistan in 2010. Investigative journalists Nicky Hager and John Stephenson alleged in their book, "Hit and Run," released Tuesday, that the Special Air Service and U.S. forces killed six civilians including a 3-year-old girl in a New Zealand-led raid on two villages.

More Details

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/22/c_136148150.htm

- **War in Afghanistan: Kabul Calls For Additional US Troops To Combat Taliban, ISIS**

Afghanistan called for an increased presence of U.S. troops in the country to help the government tackle security threats posed by the Taliban and the Islamic State group (ISIS). Afghan Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani said Tuesday additional forces will help combat "military shortfalls."

More Details

<http://www.ibtimes.com/war-afghanistan-kabul-calls-additional-us-troops-combat-taliban-isis-2512765>

- **Fleet teen 'will be killed' if government sends him back to Afghanistan**

A teenager living in Fleet has revealed how he faces death if the government follows through with plans to send him back to his home country, Afghanistan. Walid Durani was just 14 years old when he fled to England after his grandfather, who worked with Americans on oil contracts, was beheaded by the Taliban.

More Details

<https://www.964eagle.co.uk/news/local-news/2250809/fleet-teen-will-be-killed-if-government-sends-him-back-to-afghanistan/>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkish Red Crescent joins Syria's Al-Waer evacuation**

Around 1,500 people, mainly women and children, have so far left the Syrian city of Homs under a Russian-backed deal between the opposition and Syrian regime, Turkish Red Crescent President Kerem Kinik told Anadolu Agency on Tuesday.

More details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkish-red-crescent-joins-syrias-al-waer-evacuation/776458>

- **US should refrain from relying on PYD/YPG: Turkish FM**

The U.S. must not rely on the YPG to defeat ISIL in Syria, Turkey's Foreign Minister warned Tuesday. "The PKK terrorists who are responsible for the last terrorist attacks, suicide bomb attacks in Ankara, Istanbul, all came from YPG camps in Syria," Mevlut Cavusoglu said while speaking in Washington, warning that the YPG is "just an extension" of the PKK.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/186632/us-should-refrain-from-relying-on-pyd-ypg-turkish-fm>

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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