



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Procees of Iraq

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

Energy Security

Enerji Güvenliđi

Economy News

Ekonomi Haberleri

Peace Process

Barış Süreci

Ethnic and Secterian Groups

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

Non State Actors

Devlet-dış Aktörler

Relations with the West

Batı'yla İlişkiler

1. IRAQ.....	4
• Iraq’s Federal Court Decides on Election Timing: Parliament Speaker	4
• IHEC calls on political blocs, coalitions to submit their candidates	4
• Iraq's Islamists dump religion for upcoming elections.....	4
• Turan: Oglu will meet Turkmen Coordinating Committee during his visit to Iraq	5
• Iraq: Meeting between Abadi, Barzani.....	5
• In meeting with KRG, President Rouhani says Iran backs unified Iraq.....	5
• Top Security Official: Iran Not to Tolerate Aggression from Iraq's Kurdish Areas	5
• The Still-Born Political Alliance That Casts Doubt on Iraq’s Popular PM.....	6
• UN's Secretary-General to attend Iraq's reconstruction conf. in Kuwait.....	6
• Minister Al-Hajraf talks with senior US military chief issues related to Iraq conference	6
• UNICEF: 1.3 million children displaced by Iraq’s war with Daesh	7
• Iraq, Turkey Mountains need to be cleared of terrorists.....	7
• ISIS still has up to 10,000 loyalists in Syria and Iraq, warn experts.....	7
• Iraq sentences German woman to death for belonging to IS	7
• Jihadist corpses poison life in Iraq's Mosul	8
• PM Abadi: Iraqi Kurdish oil exports should be under Baghdad control	8
• Iraq in dire need of USD 100bln for reconstruction plan, says minister	8
2. SYRIA.....	9
• Turkey launches ‘Olive Branch Operation’ against ‘PKK threat in Syria’	9
• Turkey alerted US before Syria operation, Mattis says.....	9
• Turkey advance in Syria against YPG	9
• Purging PYD/PKK from Syria to help entire Middle East	9
• US Troops Shouldn't Remain in Syria without Damascus' Approval - Moscow	10
• UN Security Council to discuss situation in Syria on January 22 - French top diplomat	10
• US maintaining troops in Syria to spread influence: Analyst	10
• The changing faces of al-Qaeda in Syria.....	11
• Russian military in Syria evacuate civilians from Eastern Ghouta.....	11
• Moscow Slams US Report on Russian Position Concerning Chemical Attacks in Syria	11
• Syria and Lebanon discuss judicial cooperation.....	11
• Syria promotes tourism, despite devastation of civil war	12
3. IRAN.....	12
• Iran Calls for Establishment of Regional Dialogue Forum	12
• Rouhani: Nuclear deal is cornerstone of Iran-Europe ties	12
• Trump, brandishing sanctions against Iran, ditched by experts	13
• Tillerson to Discuss Iran Deal 'Gaps' In London.....	13
• Germany weighs new sanctions against Iran – report	13
• France’s Le Drian Plans March Trip to Iran after Trump Ultimatum.....	13
• Iran Army launch two-day military exercises	14
• Mohammad Rasoulallah wargames launch in south Iran	14

• Iran kicks off annual drill near key Strait of Hormuz	14
4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE.....	14
• Mahmoud Abbas to urge EU to recognise Palestine.....	14
• Paris suburb to recognize 'state of Palestine'	15
• Aid for millions of Palestinians hostage to politics.....	15
• Palestine to take part in the World Economic Forum in Davos	15
• Jordan’s king says East Jerusalem must be capital of Palestinian state.....	16
• Gaza under commercial strike amid worsening conditions	16
• Maliki Calls on ICC Prosecutor to Exercise Her Statutory Authority without Delay.....	16
• Israeli forces detain PLC member, former prisoner during raid.....	16
• Netanyahu: US Must Mediate Between Palestine and Israel	17
5. JORDAN and LEBANON.....	17
• Lebanon: Hezbollah, Amal Finalize Electoral Alliance	17
• Families of Islamist Prisoners in Lebanon Rally for Amnesty	17
• Aoun checks on military units in Tripoli: preserving national stability is our absolute priority	18
• Israeli Intelligence behind Blast Targeted Hamas Commander in Southern Lebanon: Report.	18
• Senate president highlights strong ties between Jordan and Spain	18
• King meets with high-profile Arab, int'l delegations.....	18
• King Abdullah reiterates support for two-state solution	19
• Israel won’t prosecute embassy guard over Jordan shootings	19
6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA.....	19
• Southern Yemen separatists want Saudi-backed government overthrown	19
• Yemen releases budget for first time in three years.....	20
• Saudi Arabia’s foreign minister meets with the Syrian opposition delegation.....	20
• Saudi Arabia shortlists two sites for first nuclear power project.....	20
• UAE-backed group vows to 'overthrow' Yemen's government	20
• Bahraini Minister of Information Denounces Iran-backed Houthi Terrorism	21
• Bahrain Police Detain Tens of People, Charge Hundreds.....	21
• Saudi official defame Kuwaiti minister for his Qatar visit	21
• Oman, US review military cooperation, other common concerns.....	22
7. EGYPT.....	22
• Egypt's Sisi says will stand for re-election	22
• Support Egypt Coalition holds public conference to support Sisi	22
• Former Army Chief of Staff Sami Annan Declares Presidential Bid.....	22
• Pence starts Middle East tour in Egypt, pledges ‘shoulder-to-shoulder’ support	23
• Al-Sisi inaugurates new national projects ahead of election	23
• Egypt is concerned over reports Addis Ababa rejects role for World Bank in stalled dam talks, Shoukry tells Ethiopian FM.....	23
• Min.: Beni Suef’s industrial zone is supported with LE 728M	24
• IMF to announce its second review of Egypt tomorrow	24
8. NORTH AFRICA.....	24
• Moroccans wary depreciation of dirham could raise cost of living, despite benefits	24
• Trump responds to Morocco King’s letter on Jerusalem	24



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• Flights Resume at Libyan Airport after 5-Day Closure	25
• Activists denounce Italian vote to increase soldier numbers in Libya	25
• Dialogue 5+5: Declaration of Algiers calls for solidarity approach, enhanced cooperation in counterterrorism	25
• Bill of Imported Refined Products Rises to \$2.5 billion in Strikingly Oil-rich Algeria	26
• Protesters demanding jobs clash with police in Tunisian town	26
• Setting-up of regional authorities and offices, completed (ISIE)	26
9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN	27
• 6 Ukrainians, 2 Venezuelans killed in hotel attack	27
• Insurgents Breached Hotel without Being Searched: Source	27
• US in contact with Afghans regarding the Hotel attack probe: Tillerson	27
• Interior minister: UN should help Iran repatriate Afghans	27
• Air Corridor Helps Afghanistan Bypass Pakistan	28
• Resignations should have come following Imran’s announcement: Khursheed Shah.....	28
• No threat of military action from US, says PM Abbasi	28
• Punjab University students protest after getting clashed.....	29
10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST.....	29
• Turkish FM visits Iraq, hoping to mediate between Erbil and Baghdad.....	29
• Turkey, Iraq vow to advance ties in all fields including terror, water issues	29
• Turkey to actively participate in Iraq's rebuilding conf. in Kuwait - FM.....	30
• YPG releases Daesh prisoners to fight against Turkish forces in Syria	30
• 'Turkey not eyeing Syrian territories'	30

1. IRAQ

- **Iraq's Federal Court Decides on Election Timing: Parliament Speaker**

After a series of meetings with the Iraqi political parties, Iraqi Parliament Speaker Salim al-Jabouri revealed that the federal court has decided on the elections. According to a source cited by Iraqi media, Jabouri has met different Iraqi political factions to discuss the issues pertaining to the elections in the state. The same source claimed that the parliament speaker has revealed to the factions that the Federal Court has set the date of the elections.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/409024>

- **IHEC calls on political blocs, coalitions to submit their candidates**

Iraqi Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) has called on political blocs, coalitions, and parties to submit their lists of candidates between 4/1/2018 to 10/2/2018, Riyadh al-Badran, the head of the electoral department at the IHEC, said on Sunday. He added that the IHEC continues receiving the lists to take the appropriate measures according to Iraqi law.

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/22707/IHEC-calls-on-political-blocs-coalitions-to-submit-their-candidates>

- **Iraq's Islamists dump religion for upcoming elections**

With elections scheduled for May, political parties in Iraq are busy forming alliances and gearing up for the campaign. Of note, slogans promoting political Islam are remarkably scarce. For this election cycle, all the political parties, including Islamist parties, have chosen to focus on civic life in their effort to get voters' attention and gain their confidence. Out of more than 200 Islamist parties registered with the Independent Electoral Commission, only some 10 have names explicitly invoking Islam, such as the Islamic Dawa Party, the Islamic Virtue Party, the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, the Iraqi Islamic Party, the Iraqi Organization of Islamic Action and the Kurdistan Islamic Gro

More Details:

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/01/iraq-political-islam-secular-civil-movement.html>

- **Turan: Oglu will meet Turkmen Coordinating Committee during his visit to Iraq**

The Deputy Head of the Iraqi Turkmen Front and a member of the House of Representatives Hassan Turan announced that the Turkish Foreign Minister Mouloud Chaush Oglu will meet with the Turkish Turkmen Higher Coordination Committee during his visit to Iraq tomorrow. Turan said in a statement to the National Iraqi News Agency (NINA) that the Turkish Minister will discuss with the Turkmen coordination body the reconstruction of the Turkmen liberated areas of Daesh gangs and the delivery of basic services in preparation for the return of the displaced people before the parliamentary elections and local May.

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?2zBBhIBdMtYSmxlmmhvbDA%253d%253d

- **Iraq: Meeting between Abadi, Barzani**

In a new sign of ease of the Baghdad-Irbil crisis sparked by the referendum on independence held by the Kurdistan Region last September 25, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi received on Saturday KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani and an accompanying delegation. A statement issued by the Iraqi Prime Minister's office said on Saturday that both sides discussed the latest political and security developments, in addition to solving problems between the Federal Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Region in accordance with the constitution.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1150146/iraq-meeting-between-abadi-barzani>

- **In meeting with KRG, President Rouhani says Iran backs unified Iraq**

President Hassan Rouhani says Iran invariably backs a "united and integrated" Iraq, warning against attempts by certain foreign powers to deal a blow to regional stability and security. At a Sunday meeting with Nechirvan Barzani, the prime minister of Iraq's Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), President Rouhani said "all regional countries and ethnicities are duty-bound to defend a federal administration and help secure border demarcations in the region."

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/01/21/549661/Iran-Kurdistan-Barzani-referendum>

- **Top Security Official: Iran Not to Tolerate Aggression from Iraq's Kurdish Areas**

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani underlined that his country does not bear attacks from the terrorists and anti-revolutionary forces stationed in the Iraqi Kurdistan region. "That certain anti-revolutionary groups assassinate our soldiers and citizens, using the Kurdish territories, and return to the regions under the KRG's control and then flagrantly claim

the responsibility for their acts in interviews with official Kurdish media is not tolerable at all," Shamkhani said in a meeting with Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government Nechirvan Barzani and his accompanying delegation in Tehran on Sunday.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13961101001239>

- **The Still-Born Political Alliance That Casts Doubt on Iraq's Popular PM**

Iraq's popular prime minister had long been critical of the often-controversial Shiite Muslim militias. But last week he formed a short-lived alliance with them to compete in general elections. What went wrong? Over the past days and even weeks, in the run up to the announcement of alliances for upcoming Iraqi elections, there has been much political gamesmanship on display in the country. Different political parties and factions have discussed, and moved in and out of, various alliances and there has been much talk about how political friends and enemies are traded, when the main objective is purely to hang onto power.

More Details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=42574

- **UN's Secretary-General to attend Iraq's reconstruction conf. in Kuwait**

UN's Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Miroslav Jenca said that Secretary General Antonio Guterres would attend Kuwait's conference on the reconstruction of Iraq. Jenca stated during a meeting with Prime Minister Haidar Abadi UN's full support to rebuild Iraq, and bring peace and stability back to the country.

More Details:

<https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2685072&Language=en>

- **Minister Al-Hajraf talks with senior US military chief issues related to Iraq conference**

Kuwait Minister of Finance Nayef Al-Hajraf held talks on Sunday with Brett McGurk, US Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIS (the so-called Islamic State IS), along with accompanying officers, as part of Kuwait's preparations for the planned international conference for reconstructing Iraq.

More Details:

<https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2684990&Language=en>

- **UNICEF: 1.3 million children displaced by Iraq's war with Daesh**

About half the 2.6 million people displaced in Iraq after a three-year war with Daesh militants are children and persisting violence hampers efforts to ease their suffering, the United Nations said on Friday according to Reuters. While the Baghdad government last month declared victory over Daesh after wresting back almost all the territory Daesh seized in 2014, persistent bombing and shooting attacks make it difficult to rebuild the lives of displaced people, according to UNICEF, the UN children's agency.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180120-unicef-1-3-million-children-displaced-by-iraqs-war-with-daesh/>

- **Iraq, Turkey Mountains need to be cleared of terrorists**

Turkish and Iraqi mountains need to be cleared of terrorists, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Sunday. Speaking at a joint news conference with his Iraqi counterpart Ibrahim al-Jaafari in capital Baghdad, Cavusoglu said it was important that Iraq clears Daesh terrorist group. "But it is equally important to wipe out all terrorist groups from Iraq," he said.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/politics/iraq-turkey-mountains-need-to-be-cleared-of-terrorists/1037709>

- **ISIS still has up to 10,000 loyalists in Syria and Iraq, warn experts**

The Iraqi government has declared victory over ISIS, and President Donald Trump has taken credit for the Islamic caliphate's collapse. "ISIS is now giving up, they are giving up, there are raising their hands, they are walking off. Nobody has ever seen that before," said the president during an October interview on WMAL's "The Chris Plante Show."

More Details:

<https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-uncovered/isis-still-has-10-000-loyalists-syria-iraq-warn-experts-n838051>

- **Iraq sentences German woman to death for belonging to IS**

An Iraqi court on Sunday condemned a German woman to death by hanging after finding her guilty of belonging to the Islamic State group. The German national, who is of Moroccan origin, was sentenced for providing "logistical support and helping the terrorist group to carry out crimes", said Abdel Settar Bayraqdar, a spokesman for the court.

More Details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2018/1/21/iraq-sentences-german-woman-to-death-for-joining-is>

- **Jihadist corpses poison life in Iraq's Mosul**

For three years, jihadists made life in Iraq's Mosul impossible. Now, six months after their defeat, even their corpses are polluting everyone's existence as no one wants to move them. The rare few who dare to venture into Mosul's historic centre do so with their nose and mouth firmly covered with masks or scarves to keep out the stench. Amid the rubble-strewn alleys overlooking the River Tigris, unburied human remains are rotting.

More Details:

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/news/world/jihadist-corpse-poison-life-in-iraq-mosul/article/512730>

- **PM Abadi: Iraqi Kurdish oil exports should be under Baghdad control**

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has called on the country's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region to place back all control over the regional oil exports under the central authority of Baghdad, as the area is after all part of Iraq. Abadi made the comment on Saturday, during a meeting with Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani. The Iraqi premier also reiterated that Baghdad has certain conditions that the Kurds have to meet before the sanctions that were placed on the KRG after September's unconstitutional independence vote, could be lifted.

More Details:

<https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/pm-abadi-iraqi-kurdish-oil-exports-baghdad-control/>

- **Iraq in dire need of USD 100bln for reconstruction plan, says minister**

Iraq is in dire need of USD 100 billion to reconstruct areas recently liberated from Islamic State militants, Iraqi Planning Minister Salman al-Jumaili was quoted as saying Sunday. "During a meeting with a Kuwaiti media delegation, currently on a visit to Baghdad, Jumaili highlighted that a detailed plan was outlined to finalize Iraq's reconstruction by 2027," Jumaili's media office said in a statement, a copy of which was obtained by Baghdad Today.

More Details:

<https://www.iraqinews.com/features/iraq-dire-need-usd-100bln-reconstruction-plan-says-minister/>

2. SYRIA

- **Turkey launches ‘Olive Branch Operation’ against ‘PKK threat in Syria’**

The Turkish military has launched a crossborder land operation into the Syrian province of Afrin to fight the Syrian Kurdish militia the People’s Protection Units (YPG), a group Ankara has deemed a “terror group” for its links to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). The operation, which has been dubbed “Operation Olive Branch,” is being carried out in conjunction with Turkey’s allies in the Syrian civil war the Free Syrian Army (FSA), and began on Jan. 21 shortly after the Turkish air force hit YPG targets to prepare for the advance.

More Details:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-launches-major-land-operation-into-ypg-militants-in-syrias-afirin-126031>

- **Turkey alerted US before Syria operation, Mattis says**

The United States indicated on Sunday that Washington is not seeking an escalation with Turkey over its continuing military action against the US-backed YPG in Afrin, but is in contact with Ankara in tracking the operation. “Turkey was candid. They warned us before they launched the aircraft they were going to do it,” US secretary of defence James Mattis told media on his plane bound for Asia. “We’ll work this out,” he said, acknowledging that Turkey has “legitimate security concerns”.

More Details:

<https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/turkey-alerted-us-before-syria-operation-mattis-says-1.697447>

- **Turkey advance in Syria against YPG**

Turkey is pushing ahead with its incursion into northern Syria, intensifying its battle against Kurdish YPG forces. According to the Turkish army, the country’s warplanes have targeted 45 positions in the Syrian city of Afrin close to the border. Turkish ground forces have also pushed into the area to fight Kurdish militia.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/01/22/549730/Turkey-Syria-Kurdish-YPG-forces>

- **Purging PYD/PKK from Syria to help entire Middle East**

A Syrian Turkmen commander has said the entire Middle East region would benefit if the PYD/PKK terror group is purged from Syria. Speaking with Anadolu Agency, Bayirbucak Turkmen Region's 2nd

Coastal Armed Division Commander Tarik Solak said Syrian Turkmen people "know what PYD/PKK is after in Turkey and Syria." Bayirbucak is a region in northwest Syria, where it has a long border, as well as a rich cultural history with Turkey and Turkish people. It has a dominant Syrian Turkmen population.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/purging-pyd-pkk-from-syria-to-help-entire-middle-east/1036540>

- **US Troops Shouldn't Remain in Syria without Damascus' Approval - Moscow**

US troops should not further stay in Syria without approval from Damascus as this may negatively affect the upcoming Syrian National Dialogue Congress, Russian Special Envoy to Syria Alexander Lavrentyev said Saturday. "Our position is clear, the US troops should not further stay on the territory of a sovereign state without approval from its government. It may negatively affect the congress. Moreover, we expect that the United States, as a permanent member of [UN] Security Council, will send its representative to the Sochi forum in the status of observer," Lavrentyev told reporters.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201801201060918251-us-troops-syria-approval/>

- **UN Security Council to discuss situation in Syria on January 22 - French top diplomat**

The United Nations Security Council will discuss the situation in Syria at its meeting on Monday, January 22, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said on Sunday. "The UN Security Council will hold consultations on the situation in Syria tomorrow. France will stress the necessity of humanitarian assistance," he wrote on his Twitter account.

More Details:

<http://tass.com/world/986170>

- **US maintaining troops in Syria to spread influence: Analyst**

The United States military presence around the globe and in particular in Syria is not for security and stability, rather it is part of a scheme to spread American influence, says a commentator. The United States' interest is in maintaining a presence of American troops in any spots around the globe, at a time when the US is facing a "decompensation of a dying empire," David Yaghoubian, professor at the California State University, told Press TV on Saturday.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/01/20/549522/US-Military-Presence-Syria>

- **The changing faces of al-Qaeda in Syria**

As the Syrian regime continues its brutal assault into Idlib in northern Syria, much of what remains of the Syrian re-bel forces are fighting a desperate rearguard action against Damascus's inexorable advance. Within the province, one of the region's dominant jihadist groups, the Turkish-funded Ahrar al-Sham, and its allies resist the regime's advance. To their side stands another Syrian jihadist group, one that played a defining role not just in the history of Syria but within the world.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86868>

- **Russian military in Syria evacuate civilians from Eastern Ghouta**

Russia's military of the Center for reconciliation of the warring parties in the Syrian Arab Republic continue a humanitarian evacuation from Eastern Ghouta. At night to Saturday, jointly with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent they helped another ten people to flee opposition-controlled Duma. Among the evacuated were three children, who were immediately taken to hospital, TASS correspondent reported from the site.

More Details:

<http://tass.com/defense/986023>

- **Moscow Slams US Report on Russian Position Concerning Chemical Attacks in Syria**

The Russian Foreign Ministry sharply criticized on Friday an unofficial US report containing the assessment of Russia's position regarding the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The report was disseminated by the US delegation at the United Nations on January 9. "After a thorough study of this document, we have to state that the content of this material has nothing to do with reality and completely distorts our country's approaches to investigating such incidents," the ministry said in a commentary.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201801201060906664-usa-syria-russia-report-chemical-attacks/>

- **Syria and Lebanon discuss judicial cooperation**

Justice Minister Hisham al-Sha'ar discussed Thursday with Lebanese Ambassador in Damascus Saad Zakhia cooperation relations between Syria and Lebanon in Judicial field and mechanisms of implementing joint judicial agreements. Al-Sha'ar said that the ministry has prepared three draft judicial agreements related to civil and commercial matters, personal status, extradition and criminal matters.

More Details:

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=124826>

- **Syria promotes tourism, despite devastation of civil war**

Across Syria, buildings lie in ruin. Millions have fled their homes. And historic sites have been shattered, either by military bombardment or at the hands of the Islamic State group. But Syrian officials were hoping that foreign visitors would look past that devastation, as they promoted the country at an international tourism fair in Spain on Saturday.

More Details:

<http://www.watoday.com.au/world/syria-promotes-tourism-despite-devastation-of-civil-war-20180121-h0lmmz.html>

3. IRAN

- **Iran Calls for Establishment of Regional Dialogue Forum**

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says a Regional Dialogue Forum needs to be established in the Persian Gulf to make clear that we all have similar concerns, fears, aspirations and hopes. In an opinion piece published by the Financial Times on Sunday, Zarif said at all levels we are facing a dialogue deficit in west Asia, and “to move from turmoil to stability, we must first and foremost turn to dialogue and other confidence-building measures.”

More Details:

<http://ifpnews.com/exclusive/iran-calls-establishment-regional-dialogue-forum/>

- **Rouhani: Nuclear deal is cornerstone of Iran-Europe ties**

President Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday that the 2015 nuclear deal can serve as a “cornerstone” for Iran and European countries to expand ties. In a meeting during which Rouhani received credentials of Jaroslaw Marcin Domanski, the new Polish ambassador to Tehran, the president said Iran will abide by the nuclear deal as long as the other signatories remain committed to it.

More Details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/420559/Rouhani-Nuclear-deal-is-cornerstone-of-Iran-Europe-ties>

- **Trump, brandishing sanctions against Iran, ditched by experts**

The departure of Joshua Black, the US State Department's most experienced sanctions negotiator, has raised questions whether a "brain of drain" of experts could hamstring the Trump administration's ability to enforce its aggressive sanctions policy against Iran. In an article published on Friday, Foreign Policy, an American magazine, warned that an exodus of sanctions experts from both the State and Treasury departments could cripple the US government's ability to effectively craft sanctions in the future.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/01/20/549547/Donald-Trump-Joshua-Black-Iran>

- **Tillerson to Discuss Iran Deal 'Gaps' In London**

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is due to meet on January 22 with top British officials in London, the first leg of a nearly week-long trip to Europe that will also take him to Paris, Warsaw, and the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. An official has said that Iran would dominate Tillerson's meetings with U.S. allies.

More Details:

<https://www.rferl.org/a/tillerson-europe-trip-iran-davos/28989000.html>

- **Germany weighs new sanctions against Iran – report**

Germany is lobbying among European allies to agree new sanctions against Iran in an attempt to prevent US President Donald Trump from terminating an international deal curbing Tehran's nuclear programme, Der Spiegel magazine reported on Saturday. The report cited diplomats in Brussels as saying that Germany was pushing for new sanctions together with Britain and France to show the United States that European allies were taking Trump's criticism against Iran seriously.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180120-germany-weighs-new-sanctions-against-iran-report/>

- **France's Le Drian Plans March Trip to Iran after Trump Ultimatum**

France's foreign minister said on Sunday he would visit Iran on March 5 to discuss its ballistic missile program and the nuclear deal agreed with world powers in 2015, as tensions between the two countries rise. In an interview with daily Le Figaro to be published on Monday, Jean-Yves Le Drian said he would discuss the landmark nuclear deal after U.S. President Donald Trump's January 12 ultimatum to Britain, France and Germany to "fix" the deal or he would withdraw.

More Details:

<https://en.radiofarda.com/a/france-foreign-minister-trip-to-iran-nuclear-deal/28989053.html>

- **Iran Army launch two-day military exercises**

The Iranian Army has launched two-day military exercises involving the ground, naval, and aerial forces under its command. The military drills, codenamed Mohammad Rasoulallah (Muhammad, the Prophet of God), kicked off early on Monday on an order by Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, the Army's deputy commander for coordination.

More Details:

http://en.abna24.com/news/iran/iran-army-launch-two-day-military-exercises_878590.html

- **Mohammad Rasoulallah wargames launch in south Iran**

The military exercises code-named Mohammad Rasoulallah (PBUH) started Monday in the country's south, southeast, and southern Makran regions and northern coastline of the Sea of Oman. The drills were launched by the order of Iran's Deputy Army Commander for Coordination Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82803811>

- **Iran kicks off annual drill near key Strait of Hormuz**

Iran's armed forces kicked off an annual two-day drill near the strategic Strait of Hormuz Monday morning, the country's state-run media reported. The strait is a key waterway through which a third of all oil traded by sea passes and it has been the scene of previous confrontations between the United States and Iran.

More Details:

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-kicks-off-annual-drill-near-key-strait-of-hormuz/>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Mahmoud Abbas to urge EU to recognise Palestine**

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) is to ask the European Union to officially recognise the state of Palestine during his visit to Brussels on Monday. "(Mahmoud Abbas) expects the European foreign ministers to come forward and collectively recognise the state of Palestine as a

way to respond back to Trump's decision" to recognise Jerusalem as the Israeli capital, the Foreign Affairs Minister of the Palestinian National Authority Riyad Al-Maliki said in an interview with AFP on Sunday.

More Details:

http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/politics/2018/01/22/mahmoud-abbas-to-urge-eu-to-recognise-palestine_60635ca9-e150-4502-af75-54aa979f39dd.html

- **Paris suburb to recognize 'state of Palestine'**

The city council of a suburb of Paris said it would recognize what it called "the state of Palestine." The office of Gennevilliers Mayor Patrice Leclerc, a Communist Party of France politician, announced on Friday the move, which is symbolic and has no bearing on French foreign policy, Le Figaro reported.

More Details:

<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/241010>

- **Aid for millions of Palestinians hostage to politics**

The head of the United Nations agency for Palestinians said Friday the US decision to freeze of tens of millions of dollars in aid resulted from diplomatic disputes rather than the agency's performance. The US State Department this week froze two planned payments worth more than \$100 million to the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA), with a spokeswoman saying it was linked to necessary "reform" of the agency.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86857>

- **Palestine to take part in the World Economic Forum in Davos**

Palestine is going to participate in the upcoming World Economic Forum in Davos, which will launch its four-day meetings on Tuesday, Minister of Economy Abeer Odeh, who will represent Palestine in the meeting, announced on Monday. She said that the Palestinian participation in this forum is an important opportunity to explain to over 3000 participants from all over the world attending the conference the current economic situation and the future challenges facing the Palestinian economy in light of Israeli policies that obstruct development of the national economy.

More Details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=E5JxeXa96152750331aE5JxeX>

- **Jordan's king says East Jerusalem must be capital of Palestinian state**

Jordan's King Abdullah expressed concern on Sunday over a decision by Washington to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital, saying East Jerusalem had to be the capital of a future Palestinian state. In remarks during talks with US Vice Mike Pence in Amman, the king said the only solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was a two-state one.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180121-jordans-king-says-east-jerusalem-must-be-capital-of-palestinian-state/>

- **Gaza under commercial strike amid worsening conditions**

A general strike has been called for by the private sector in the Gaza Strip to protest worsening living conditions amid the ongoing blockade, which is threatening to collapse the enclave's economy. In a statement published last week, the Gaza Businessmen Association (Arabic) announced that the strike in commercial and economic institutions would start from 8am (06:00 GMT) and last for six hours on Monday.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/gaza-commercial-strike-worsening-conditions-180122080213978.html>

- **Maliki Calls on ICC Prosecutor to Exercise Her Statutory Authority without Delay**

Palestinian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Riyad Malki Friday called on the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouda, to exercise her statutory authority, without delay, to prevent the continuation and perpetuation of crimes against the Palestinian people. On the three-year anniversary of the opening of the preliminary examination in the situation in Palestine, Malki dispatched a letter to Bensouda pointing her attention to the recent escalation of violence by Israeli occupation forces in their implementation of unlawful colonial policies and practices in the past month, including the unlawful killing of 16 Palestinians and the injury of approximately 3000 and detention of 720, including 184 children.

More Details:

<http://www.palestinechronicle.com/maliki-calls-icc-prosecutor-exercise-statutory-authority-without-delay/>

- **Israeli forces detain PLC member, former prisoner during raid**

Israeli forces detained a Palestinian lawmaker from his home during a predawn raid on Monday in the central occupied West Bank district of Salfit, according to the official Palestinian Authority (PA)-

owned Wafa news agency. Wafa reported that Israeli forces raided the city of Salfit and detained Omar Abdul-Razeq, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PL) from the Hamas-affiliated Reform and Change list.

More Details:

<http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=779771>

- **Netanyahu: US Must Mediate Between Palestine and Israel**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday that he would not agree with attempts to deprive the United States of its role as the main mediator in the Israeli-Palestine settlement talks. "I have a message to Abu Mazen [Abbas' pseudonym]. There cannot be a replacement of the leading role of the United States in the political process. The one, who does not want to discuss peace with the US side, does not want peace," Netanyahu said at the meeting with Israeli ambassadors.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201801211060944299-israel-usa-palestine-netanyahu-mediator/>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Lebanon: Hezbollah, Amal Finalize Electoral Alliance**

Active negotiations between Hezbollah and Amal Movement have neared completion after the so-called "Shi'ite duo" agreed that the sect's parliamentary seats would be shared consensually. Such a deal means the two sides would run in the elections in May under the framework of an alliance that would be open to electoral understandings with other parties.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1151121/lebanon-hezbollah-amal-finalize-electoral-alliance>

- **Families of Islamist Prisoners in Lebanon Rally for Amnesty**

Hundreds of protesters have rallied in the Lebanese capital demanding that Islamist prisoners be part of a discussed general amnesty. The rally in central Beirut Sunday was attended by hundreds of families of Islamist prisoners. They were pressing the government to include their relatives in a general amnesty expected to come ahead of the country's first election in ten years.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/241168-families-of-islamist-prisoners-in-lebanon-rally-for-amnesty>

- **Aoun checks on military units in Tripoli: preserving national stability is our absolute priority**

Army Chief, General Joseph Aoun, inspected Saturday a number of military units deployed in the city of Tripoli, stressing that the country's security and stability are well-preserved. "Protecting national security and stability is our utmost priority," Aoun said reassuringly, as he was briefed on the work of various military units stationed in the region and the tasks carried out to maintain security and stability in the city.

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/87409/Aoun-checks-on-military-units-in-Tripoli-Preserving-national-stability-is-our-absolute-priority>

- **Israeli Intelligence behind Blast Targeted Hamas Commander in Southern Lebanon: Report**

The Israeli intelligence was behind the blast which targeted one of Hamas commanders Mohammad Hamdan in Sidon in southern Lebanon on January 14, according to a report published by al-Akhbar newspaper on Saturday. The report mentioned that the Lebanese army intelligence and the ISF Information Branch managed to identify the head of the cell which carried out the operation, adding that he is the Lebanese, Ahmad Baytiyah, who descends from Tripoli and lives in Amsterdam.

More Details:

<http://english.almanar.com.lb/429823>

- **Senate president highlights strong ties between Jordan and Spain**

Senate President Faisal Al Fayez highlighted the strong political, economic and cultural ties between Jordan and Spain. At a meeting with a Spanish Senate delegation, Al Fayez said that Jordan, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah II, is keen to forge closer ties with Spain and build on these ties to serve the interest of both countries as well as issues of common interest.

More Details:

http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=37026#.WmW_2K5l_cs

- **King meets with high-profile Arab, int'l delegations**

His Majesty King Abdullah on Sunday discussed regional developments, especially those related to the Palestinian cause and Jerusalem, with a delegation from the Arab and International Relations

Council (AIRC), a Royal Court statement said. The delegation, headed by AIRC Chairperson Mohammad Saqir, comprised Iyad Allawi, Tahir Al Masri, Fouad Siniora, Amr Moussa and Mohammed Al Salal.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/king-meets-high-profile-arab-intl-delegations>

- **King Abdullah reiterates support for two-state solution**

A two-state solution is the only possible answer to the Israel-Palestine conflict, Jordan's King Abdullah II has told US Vice President Mike Pence in a meeting in Amman. The king said on Sunday he hoped Pence's visit, the second leg of his regional visit, would "rebuild trust and confidence" after the US decision last month to name Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/king-abdullah-reiterates-support-state-solution-180121151528472.html>

- **Israel won't prosecute embassy guard over Jordan shootings**

Israel will not prosecute a guard from its embassy in Amman who killed two Jordanians in July, as had long been demanded by the kingdom, two Israeli sources said to Reuters on Sunday. Instead, the Foreign Ministry and Shin Bet security agency will review protocols surrounding the actions taken by the guard, Ze'ev Moyal, and his conduct, "and share the results with the Jordanians", a diplomatic source said.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180121-israel-wont-prosecute-embassy-guard-over-jordan-shootings/>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Southern Yemen separatists want Saudi-backed government overthrown**

Reuters reports Southern Yemeni separatists declared a state of emergency in the port city of Aden on Sunday and vowed to overthrow the internationally recognised government, the group said, in a move that puts the two allies on a collision course. The announcement underscores rising tensions between southern separatists, who are allied with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi's government over control of the southern half of Yemen.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180121-southern-yemen-separatists-want-saudi-backed-government-overthrown/>

- **Yemen releases budget for first time in three years**

Yemen's cash-strapped government on Sunday released its first official budget since the Huthi rebels overran the capital Sanaa in 2014 and following a bailout from ally Saudi Arabia. Prime Minister Ahmed bin Dagher said spending in the 2018 budget is projected at 1.5 trillion Yemeni riyals (\$3.9 billion), with revenues estimated at 978 billion riyals (\$2.6 billion).

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86872>

- **Saudi Arabia's foreign minister meets with the Syrian opposition delegation**

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir met with a delegation of the Syrian opposition headed by Dr. Nasr Hariri at the ministry's headquarters on Sunday, Saudi state-run news agency (SPA) reported. During the meeting they discussed developments in Syria and related issues.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1230276/saudi-arabia>

- **Saudi Arabia shortlists two sites for first nuclear power project**

Saudi Arabia is assessing two potential sites for its first nuclear power plant (NPP) project, for which it is planning to begin the tendering process in 2018. According to details garnered by MEED projects and corroborated by sources close to the programme, the kingdom has shortlisted two sites for its first atomic energy project, and has invited consultants to submit proposals for the contract to conduct a site characterisation study, environmental impact assessment (EIA) and preliminary safety analysis report (PSRA) to assist with the selection of the preferred site.

More Details:

<https://www.meed.com/exclusive-saudi-arabia-shortlists-two-sites-first-nuclear-power-project/>

- **UAE-backed group vows to 'overthrow' Yemen's government**

A group of separatists in southern Yemen, backed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), have declared a state of emergency in the port city of Aden and vowed to overthrow the country's internationally recognised government within the next week. Aidarous al-Zubaidi, the leader of the Southern Transitional Council (STC), said Yemen's parliament would be barred from convening in Aden or

anywhere else in southern Yemen unless President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi replaced Prime Minister Ahmed bin Daghr and his entire cabinet.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/uae-backed-group-vows-overthrow-yemen-government-180122051136241.html>

- **Bahraini Minister of Information Denounces Iran-backed Houthi Terrorism**

Bahraini Information Affairs Minister Ali al-Romaihi denounced recurrent Houthi attacks targeting cities in Saudi Arabia with tens of Iran-made ballistic missiles in a dangerous escalation aimed to undermine the security of the kingdom, the Gulf and the Arab countries. He indicated that the Houthi attacks were a flagrant violation of all international and humanitarian conventions.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1150301/bahraini-minister-information-denounces-iran-backed-houthi-terrorism>

- **Bahrain Police Detain Tens of People, Charge Hundreds**

Bahraini police arrested 49 people over allegations of links to terrorism and filed charges against another 290, as the ruling Al-Khalifah regime presses ahead with its heavy-handed clampdown on political dissidents. In a statement released on Sunday, the interior ministry said law enforcement had detained 49 "terrorist agents" and foiled attacks across the country, including planned killings of "officials and public figures", Bahrain News reported.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13961102000637>

- **Saudi official defame Kuwaiti minister for his Qatar visit**

A Saudi official has launched a scathing and defamatory attack on a Kuwait Minister after he visited Qatar and met with the Emir. Turki Al-Sheikh, Chairman of the General Sports Authority and Advisor in the Saudi Royal Court, used Twitter to vent his frustration against Kuwait Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khalid Nasser Al-Roudan after his meeting with the Emir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in Doha yesterday.

More Details:

<https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/22/01/2018/Saudi-official-defame-Kuwaiti-minister-for-his-Qatar-visit>

- **Oman, US review military cooperation, other common concerns**

Sayyid Badr bin Saud bin Harib Al Busaidi, Minister Responsible for Defence Affairs received in his office at Mu'askar Bait Al Falaj on Sunday Lt. Gen Michael X. Garrett, Commanding General of the US Army Central Command, currently visiting the Sultanate. The two sides reviewed fields of the existing military cooperation between the Sultanate and United State of America (USA) and discussed several matters of common concern.

More Details:

<http://timesofoman.com/article/126550/Oman/Government/Oman-US-review-military-cooperation-other-common-concerns-as-Busaidi-receives-Lt-Gen-Michael-X-Garre>

7. EGYPT

- **Egypt's Sisi says will stand for re-election**

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said Friday he would stand in a presidential election due to take place in March. "I announce to you in the honesty and transparency which we are used to... my candidacy for the post of president of the republic," Sisi said at a conference in Cairo, broadcast live on state television.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86859>

- **Support Egypt Coalition holds public conference to support Sisi**

Support Egypt Coalition headed by Mohamed Zaki El Sewedy held a public conference in Kafr El Sheikh Governorate to support President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi in the upcoming presidential elections. El Sewedy said in an official statement from the coalition that Sisi is the only president who took responsibility for giving subsidies to those who deserve it; confirming that the coalition is supporting the president for another period to continue with the projects that are underway and building the country.

More Details:

<https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/2/40740/Support-Egypt-Coalition-holds-public-conference-to-support-Sisi>

- **Former Army Chief of Staff Sami Annan Declares Presidential Bid**

Hours after President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's announcement that he is running for a second term in office in the presidential poll scheduled for March 26-28, Egypt's former military Chief of Staff Sami

Annan declared his own bid for the presidency. In a video statement published on his official Facebook page, Annan said, “I am determined to submit my candidacy for the post of President of the Republic once I have completed the necessary procedures [pertaining to my position as] former Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Armed Forces, in accordance with military laws and regulations.”

More Details:

<https://egyptianstreets.com/2018/01/20/former-army-chief-of-staff-sami-annan-declares-presidential-bid/>

- **Pence starts Middle East tour in Egypt, pledges ‘shoulder-to-shoulder’ support**

US Vice President Mike Pence kicked off a trip to the Middle East on Saturday with a visit to Egypt, where he pledged firm US backing to President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in the nation’s fight against militants. Pence said ties between the two countries had never been stronger after a period of “drifting apart” and that President Donald Trump sent his gratitude to Sisi for implementing economic reforms.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180121-pence-starts-middle-east-tour-in-egypt-pledges-shoulder-to-shoulder-support/>

- **Al-Sisi inaugurates new national projects ahead of election**

President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi inaugurated on Sunday a number of projects in the city of Beni Suef and vowed in a speech that the state will inaugurate 3,000 factories in Upper Egypt by the end of 2018. The inauguration took place two days after Al-Sisi announced he will run for the coming presidential election. On Sunday, he was accompanied by acting Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly, Minister of Defence Sedki Sobhi, as well as other civilian and military state officials.

More Details:

<https://dailynewsegypt.com/2018/01/21/al-sisi-inaugurates-new-national-projects-ahead-election/>

- **Egypt is concerned over reports Addis Ababa rejects role for World Bank in stalled dam talks, Shoukry tells Ethiopian FM**

Egypt’s Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry has telephoned Ethiopian counterpart Workneh Gebeyehu to express Cairo's concerns over reports that Addis Ababa rejects Egypt's proposal to involve the World Bank in the stalled technical negotiations over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/288574/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-is-concerned-over-reports-Addis-Ababa-reject.aspx>

- **Min.: Beni Suef's industrial zone is supported with LE 728M**

Minister of Industry and Foreign Trade, Tarek Kabil, announced that Beni Suef Governorate witnessed a huge spurt in Industry during the last period, adding that the government supported its industrial zone with LE 723 million. Kabil added during the opening of the developmental projects on Sunday that the industrial percentage in Upper Egypt is lower than the target by 37 percent and that the government focuses on huge industries.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptdailynews.com/detail/min-beni-suefs-industrial-zone-is-supported-with-le-m>

- **IMF to announce its second review of Egypt tomorrow**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) will announce the second review report and expert opinion on Egypt's economic reform programme on Tuesday. Concurrent with the launching of the IMF report, IMF Mission Chief for Egypt Subir Lall will also hold a press conference.

More Details:

<http://en.amwalalghad.com/business/banks/62303-imf-to-announce-its-second-review-of-egypt-tomorrow.html>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Moroccans wary depreciation of dirham could raise cost of living, despite benefits**

Morocco's dirham has been stable against major currencies since the central bank introduced a more flexible exchange rate in reforms recommended by the International Monetary Fund to liberalise the country's economy. Bank Al-Maghrib — Morocco's central bank — widened the band in which the dirham can be ex-changed against hard currencies to 2.5% on both sides of a reference price, against 0.3% previously.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86866>

- **Trump responds to Morocco King's letter on Jerusalem**

Official Moroccan sources have revealed that "Morocco's King Mohammed VI has received a letter from US President Donald Trump, as a response to the letter he sent him about his decision to

recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and to transfer his country's embassy there". The official Maghreb Arabe Press (MAP) News Agency, which published the news yesterday, mentioned that the US President affirmed to King Mohammed VI as chairman of the Jerusalem Committee that he "agrees with him on the importance of the city of Jerusalem to followers of Judaism, Christianity and Islam".

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180122-trump-responds-to-morocco-kings-letter-on-jerusalem/>

- **Flights Resume at Libyan Airport after 5-Day Closure**

Flights resumed at Libya's Mitiga airport five days after clashes forced its closure. The airport, located just east of Tripoli city center, appeared to be operating normally, with both departures and arrivals areas busy with passengers. "All domestic and international flights have ...resumed," said an airport official who asked not to be named for security reasons. "No technical problems have been reported and security is under control."

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1149481/flights-resume-libyan-airport-after-5-day-closure>

- **Activists denounce Italian vote to increase soldier numbers in Libya**

A group of Libyan diplomats, political activists and media specialists have condemned the Italian decision to send more troops to Misrata. They denounced any presence of Italian troops on Libyan soil and said Italy's government had exploited Libya's "institutional chaos" and the UN's lack of authority over the country.

More Details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2018/01/21/activists-denounce-italian-vote-to-increase-soldier-numbers-in-libya/>

- **Dialogue 5+5: Declaration of Algiers calls for solidarity approach, enhanced cooperation in counterterrorism**

The Foreign ministers of the 5+5 Dialogue countries agreed Sunday to promote a "solidarity approach" and an "enhanced cooperation" in the fight against terrorism, its financing and connection with cross-border organized crime.

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/22401-dialogue-5-5-declaration-of-algiers-calls-for-solidarity-approach-enhanced-cooperation-in-counterterrorism>

- **Bill of Imported Refined Products Rises to \$2.5 billion in Strikingly Oil-rich Algeria**

Algerian authorities are alarmed by the rising bill of refined products, which hit \$2.5 billion in 2017 up from 800 million in 2016 due to a surge in domestic demand and lack of national refining industry. As Algeria feels the heat of an economic and financial crisis propelled by the oil price plunge, the country seeks to reduce its import bill through time-buying measures, including tax hikes, money printing and recently trading crude oil for refined products.

More Details:

<http://northafricapost.com/21839-bill-imported-refined-products-rises-2-5-billion-strikingly-oil-rich-algeria.html>

- **Protesters demanding jobs clash with police in Tunisian town**

Tunisia police fired tear gas to disperse demonstrators demanding jobs in the southern town of Metlaoui on Sunday, witnesses said, days after violent protests across the country against price hikes subsided. The protesters closed roads and burned tires to demand jobs after the state-owned phosphate company Gafsa (CPG) released the results of a recruitment campaign.

More Details:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-tunisia-protests/protesters-demanding-jobs-clash-with-police-in-tunisian-town-idUSKBN1FA15D?rpc=401&>

- **Setting-up of regional authorities and offices, completed (ISIE)**

The Independent High Authority for Elections (ISIE) completed setting-up regional authorities and offices and devising a programme for further training a large number of its members and staff, ahead of the forthcoming municipal elections, said Spokesperson for the ISIE Council Anis Jarbouï on Monday.

More Details:

<https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/9780470-setting-up-of>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **6 Ukrainians, 2 Venezuelans killed in hotel attack**

Six Ukrainians were killed in Saturday's attack on Kabul's Intercontinental Hotel, the country's foreign minister Pavlo Klimkin said on Sunday. "Reported to the President about the death of six Ukrainians as a result of an attack on a hotel in Kabul," he said on the ministry's Twitter account.

More Details:

<https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2018/01/22/6-ukrainians-2-venezuelans-killed-hotel-attack>

- **Insurgents Breached Hotel without Being Searched: Source**

According to survivors some of the hotel attackers had been checked in as guests and had their weapons delivered to their rooms. A security source told TOLONews on condition of anonymity on Monday that the heavily-armed insurgents who stormed the Intercontinental Hotel, with a vehicle full of explosives, managed to access the facility without being searched at the main gate.

More Details:

<http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/insurgents-breached-hotel-without-being-searched-source>

- **US in contact with Afghans regarding the Hotel attack probe: Tillerson**

The US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has said the United States is contact with the Afghan authorities regarding the investigations into the attack on Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul as he strongly condemned the killing of the innocent civilians in the attack. "The United States strongly condemns yesterday's attack at the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul. We mourn all those who lost their lives in the attack, whether Afghans or citizens of other countries. We offer our deepest condolences to the families and friends of those who were killed and wish for the speedy recovery of those wounded," he said.

More Details:

<https://www.khaama.com/us-in-contact-with-afghans-regarding-the-hotel-attack-probe-tillerson-04318>

- **Interior minister: UN should help Iran repatriate Afghans**

The United Nations should offer greater cooperation to Iran in returning Afghans to their country, said the Iranian interior minister. Speaking in a meeting of the committee of organizing foreign nationals in Iran, Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli described the assistance which the UN provides refugees in Iran as insufficient, IRNA reported.

More Details:

<http://iran-daily.com/News/208507.html>

- **Air Corridor Helps Afghanistan Bypass Pakistan**

The National Unity Government NUG has been focusing on one of the most important sections, the economic infrastructure, in the last three years. Creation of air corridor between India and Afghanistan was an exceptional initiative of the NUG. The first corridor was opened in 16 June 2017 and since opening, 52 flights have taken place worth multi-million dollars. Now we have been fortunately witnessing opening of the second air corridor through which 40 tones apples were exported to Mumbai which is one of the big cities and a good market for exports of Afghanistan.

More Details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/politics.html>

- **Resignations should have come following Imran's announcement: Khursheed Shah**

Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Khursheed Shah said on Monday that after Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan's statements denouncing the parliament, the resignations of the party's lawmakers should have come immediately. The Opposition leader was speaking in his chambers, where he said that after the announcement the PTI leaders should not have waited or held consultations.

More Details:

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/178127-resignations-should-have-come-following-imrans-announcement-khursheed-shah>

- **No threat of military action from US, says PM Abbasi**

Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on Monday said that there is no threat of Washington undertaking military action against Pakistan. His comments come in the wake of growing tense relations between Pakistan and the United States following Trump's New Year's Day tweet in which he accused Pakistan of taking \$33 billion in aid and giving only "deceit and lies" in return while harboring Afghan insurgents. Days later, the US had suspended military aid to Pakistan.

More Details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1384548/no-threat-of-military-action-from-us-says-pm-abbasi>

- **Punjab University students protest after getting clashed**

Two groups of students at Punjab University clashed amongst each other at a cultural event only to protest and surround a police vehicle afterwards. According to sources, members of Islamic Jamiat Talba and Baloch Students Organization pelted stones on security officials while the police tried to disperse them, opening tear gas and shelling. As a result, many cars got damaged too.

More Details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/271632-punjab-university-students-protest-after-getting-clashed>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkish FM visits Iraq, hoping to mediate between Erbil and Baghdad**

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu will travel to Baghdad on Sunday in his first official visit to the country following a non-binding independence referendum held by the semi-autonomous Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in September. The KRG, which declared autonomy in 2003 in northern Iraq, held what was widely seen as an illegal referendum, to break up with Iraq in September 25. The vote took place despite warnings from the central government in Baghdad, as well as neighbouring countries.

More Details:

<https://www.trtworld.com/middle-east/turkish-fm-visits-iraq-hoping-to-mediate-between-erbil-and-baghdad-14407>

- **Turkey, Iraq vow to advance ties in all fields including terror, water issues**

Turkey and Iraq have vowed to improve bilateral relations in all fields, including the economy, energy and security matters, two foreign ministers announced, despite ongoing problems regarding water sharing and the presence of Turkish troops and outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Iraq. Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu on Jan. 21 paid a one-day visit to Baghdad, where he held talks with Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi, Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari and Parliament Speaker Selim al-Juburi.

More Details:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-iraq-vow-to-advance-ties-in-all-fields-including-terror-water-issues-126060>

- **Turkey to actively participate in Iraq's rebuilding conf. in Kuwait - FM**

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Sunday Ankara would participate actively in an international conference for the reconstruction of Iraq, due in Kuwait next month. Turkey will participate in Kuwait's conference and will have an active role, Cavusoglu was quoted by a statement from Iraq's foreign ministry during his meeting with his counterpart Ibrahim Jaafari.

More Details:

<https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2685067&Language=en>

- **YPG releases Daesh prisoners to fight against Turkish forces in Syria**

The PKK-linked People's Protection Forces (YPG) has released all Daesh prisoners in Syria's Afrin on the condition that they fight against the Turkish military and the moderate opposition Free Syrian Army (FSA), local sources said Monday. According to a report by Anadolu Agency (AA) citing reliable local sources, the YPG struck a deal with Daesh terrorists to help their fight against Turkey-backed forces.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2018/01/22/ypg-releases-daesh-prisoners-to-fight-against-turkish-forces-in-syria>

- **'Turkey not eyeing Syrian territories'**

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Monday Turkey was not eyeing Syrian territories and clarified that the ongoing operation in Afrin would end as soon as its objective was met. Speaking at an awards ceremony of the Ankara Chamber of Industry at the Bestepe National Congress and Culture Center in capital Ankara, Erdogan said: "Turkey has no design on the territories of another country.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkey-not-eyeing-syrian-territories/1038731>

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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