



# MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

## GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

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## 1. IRAQ,

- **ISIS judge killed by sniper in al-Golan area north of Fallujah**

A security source in Anbar province said on Monday, that one of the ISIS judges had been killed by a sniper fire in the area of al-Golan north of Fallujah. The source, who requested anonymity, reported for IraqiNews.com, "A judge of what is called the ISIS legitimacy court was killed by a sniper during his presence in al-Golan area north of Fallujah," explaining that, "The sniper was an Iraqi national."

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/isis-court-judge-killed-iraqi-sniper-al-golan-north-fallujah/>

- **Speaker of Parliament held a meeting with the Forces Union and discusses a number of important files**

Parliament Speaker Salim al-Jubouri held, on Sunday night an expanded meeting with the Parliamentary Bloc of the Union of National Forces, to discuss the important legislations and laws required by the current stage, especially with regard to political reforms and the ministerial change. "

More Details:

[http://www.ninanews.com/News\\_Details.aspx?wGLj7l%252fMx4dxYSDz7wPPxQ%253d%253d](http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?wGLj7l%252fMx4dxYSDz7wPPxQ%253d%253d)

- **Military reinforcements arrive in Assad base to participate in liberating Heet City, Anbar**

The president of al-Baghdadi District Council, Mallullah al-Obeidi, announced on Monday the arrival of military reinforcements in Ein al-Assad base to participate in the liberation operation of Heet and Kabisa. Obeidi said in a statement received by IraqiNews.com, "Military reinforcements from the Anti-Terrorism Directorate and Federal Police as well as Anbar Police arrived, today, at Ein al-Assad base in the district of al-Baghdadi (90 km west of Ramadi)," noting that, "Those forces were equipped with machinery, equipment and all kinds of weapons."

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/military-reinforcements-arrive-assad-base-participate-liberating-heet-city-anbar/>

- **Al-Sistani and al-Hakim discuss the General Matters of the country**

Cleric Ali al-Sistani, received in his office in Najaf the Religious Authority, Mohammed Saeed al-Hakim. An official source from the office of al-Sistani said that the two Religious Authorities discussed the public matters of the country.

More Details:

[http://www.ninanews.com/News\\_Details.aspx?NnkvpwPW09wBgWJIUyWVCg%253d%253d](http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?NnkvpwPW09wBgWJIUyWVCg%253d%253d)

- **15 displaced families return to their homes northeast of Baqubah, Diyali**

Diyali Police Command announced on Monday the return of 15 displaced families to their village northeast of Baqubah. Police chief, General Officer Jasim al-Saadi, said in a brief statement obtained by IraqiNews.com, "15 displaced families from the village of Hrepettalh in the vicinity of al-Wajihyah (24 km northeast of Baqubah) had been secured for returning to their houses," adding also that, "The police contacted the United Nations in order to provide assistance to some special families that lost their homes due to acts of terrorism."

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/features/15-displaced-families-return-homes-northeast-baqubah-diyali/>

- **Rasool discusses with the British Ambassador the political situation in Iraq and the region and the developments of the war against Daash**

The First Deputy Secretary General of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan Kusrat Rasool Ali discussed with the British Ambassador to Iraq, Frank Baker, the developments in the political situation in Iraq and the region and the international struggle for the distribution of spheres of influence and the developments of the war against Daash terrorist.

More Details:

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

- **14 ISIS fighters killed, wounded in Iraqi airstrike in Hawija**

A security source in Kirkuk Province announced on Monday, that 14 fighters of the so-called ISIS were either killed or wounded in an aerial bombardment launched by the Iraqi Army Aviation on a fuel station used by ISIS in Hawija southwest of Kirkuk. The source said in a statement received by IraqiNews.com, "Today the Iraqi warplanes shelled a gathering of ISIS members in a fuel station in Riyadh area in Hawija District (45 km south west of Kirkuk), killing five ISIS members and wounding nine others."

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/14-isis-fighters-killed-wounded-in-iraqi-airstrike-in-hawija/>

- **Ala Talabani: The political blocs refuse to authorize Al-Abadi, and we will support the cabinet reshuffle in coordination with Parliament**

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan bloc confirmed that all the political blocs will support a change of government in coordination with the House of Representatives and the blocks themselves. Head of the Bloc MP Ala Talabani told the National Iraqi News Agency / Nina / that "the Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi asked for a mandate from the House of Representatives to hold the new cabinet reshuffle, but all the blocks were clear not to give him such authorization."

More Details:

[http://www.ninanews.com/News\\_Details.aspx?4aeRjtjX3gnrlsSGir0uhQ%253d%253d](http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?4aeRjtjX3gnrlsSGir0uhQ%253d%253d)

- **ISIS executes 36 militants for refusing to join confrontations lines in southern Mosul**

A source in Nineveh Province announced on Monday, that the so-called ISIS executed 36 of its fighters by firing squad for refusing to join the confrontations axes against the security forces in southern Mosul (405 north of Baghdad). The source said in a statement received by IraqiNews.com, "Today, ISIS executed 36 of its members after refusing to join the combat axes in southern Mosul."

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/isis-executes-36-of-its-members-for-refusing-to-join-fighting-axis-south-of-mosul/>

- **102 ISIS fighters escaped from Mosul for not receiving their salaries for 3 months**

The Kurdistan Democratic Party announced on Monday, that more than 100 members of the so-called ISIS escaped from Mosul for not receiving their salaries for more than three months. The Kurdistan Democratic Party spokesman in Mosul, Saeed Mamousini, said in a statement obtained by IraqiNews.com, "102 members belonging to ISIS fled from the city of Mosul, right before the beginning of the liberation operations of the city."

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/102-isis-fighters-escaped-from-mosul-for-non-payment-of-their-salaries-for-3-months/>

- **Missing radioactive material found dumped in south Iraq**

Radioactive material that went missing in Iraq has been found dumped near a petrol station in the southern town of Zubair, officials said on Sunday, ending speculation it could be acquired by Islamic State and used as a weapon. The officials told Reuters the material, stored in a protective case the size of a laptop computer, was undamaged and there were no concerns about radiation.

More Details:

<http://english.shafaaq.com/politics/17434-missing-radioactive-material-found-dumped-in-south-iraq.html>

- **21 ISIS fighters killed in cleansing operations north of Ramadi**

A security source in Anbar Province announced on Monday, that 21 fighters of the so-called ISIS were killed in the cleansing operations north of Ramadi (110 km west of Baghdad), while pointed out that the security forces were able to detonate 13 explosive devices planted by ISIS east of the city. The source said in a press statement obtained by IraqiNews.com, "The security forces in Anbar Operations Command managed to kill 21 ISIS elements, including two snipers in al-Hamidiya region north of Ramadi," noting that, "The security forces also found four containers containing explosive material."

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/21-isis-fighters-killed-in-cleansing-operations-north-of-ramadi/>

- **How ISIS recruits children, then kills them**

Eleven-year-old Abu Imara al Omri kneels down to kiss his father's hand; a final blessing before the boy blows himself up in a truck full of explosives. The disturbing goodbye was captured in a series of ISIS propaganda photos last month. Supporters of the terror group claim the boy was used to help take the village of Ghazl near Aleppo, Syria. CNN cannot verify either the authenticity of the video nor the fate of the boy.

More Details:

<http://english.shafaaq.com/politics/17436-how-isis-recruits-children,-then-kills-them.html>

- **IS left-over bombs in Ramadi delay return of IDPs**

Left over bombs by the Islamic State militants following almost 2 months after the liberation of Ramadi by Iraqi forces aided by coalition strikes and Sunni fighter are hindering the return of internally displaced families, the U.N mission in Iraq stated on Monday, February 22, 2016. Eight people died in the past two weeks due to these unexploded bombs while surveying their homes or attempting to diffuse bombs inside the city, U.N. developmental official Lise Grande stated.

More Details:

[http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN\\_Direje.aspx?Jimare=37724](http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=37724)

- **Nineveh Police Command: 26000 elements of Nineveh police ready to liberate Mosul**

The Leadership of Nineveh Police announced, that 26 thousand of its members are ready to participate in the liberalization operations of Mosul from the so-called ISIS control. Nineveh Police Chief Maj. Gen. Bahaa al-Azzawi said in a press statement obtained IraqiNews.com, "26 thousand elements of the local police are ready to participate in liberalization operations of Nineveh Province, after receiving intensive training."

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/nineveh-police-command-26000-elements-nineveh-police-ready-liberate-mosul/>

- **Iraqi artist walks down Baghdad Street with mock bomb suit**

The man in the bulky bomb disposal suit waved at a gaggle of awed children as he walked down a Baghdad street and sat outside a small cafe to drink tea. But there was no bomb to defuse on Rasheed Street that day, and no armour inside the black suit to protect him from explosives. Iraqi artist Hussein Adil designed the mock bomb suit -- complete with huge helmet and visor -- himself for this performance.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=75361>

## 2. SYRIA

- **US, Russia says Syria truce to take effect on Saturday**

A landmark truce is to take effect in Syria on Saturday, the United States and Russia announced, but the "cessation of hostilities" does not include the Islamic State and Al-Nusra Front, the main jihadist factions. The leading opposition group in the five-year conflict gave its conditional acceptance to Monday's announcement, but Israel said it was sceptical the deal would hold, and analysts warned any pause in the fighting would be dependent on Russia, Iran and President Bashar al-Assad.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=75388>

- **Syrian opposition accepts truce with some conditions**

The main umbrella for Syrian opposition and rebel groups says it "agrees to a temporary truce" as long as the main opposition's demands are met. The High Negotiations Committee says in a

statement issued after its meeting in Saudi Arabia late Monday that it “has given its acceptance of international efforts for a cessation of hostilities in Syria.”

More Details:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/02/23/Syrian-opposition-accepts-truce-with-some-conditions.html>

- **Jihadists cut army's supply route to Aleppo**

The Islamic State group and other jihadists on Monday cut a vital supply route linking the west of Syria's second city Aleppo with other government-held territory, a monitoring group said. The road between Aleppo and the town of Khanasser to the southeast was the only way regime forces and civilians living in government-controlled neighbourhoods of the city could travel to surrounding provinces.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=75364>

- **U.N. on Syria: War crimes are now ‘rampant’**

War crimes are "rampant" in Syria, and the conflict has become "a multisided proxy war steered from abroad by an intricate network of alliances," U.N. investigators said in a new report Monday. In a swipe at the U.S., Russia and their allies, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria said the international powers and regional countries ostensibly pushing for a peaceful solution are the same nations that "continue to feed the military escalation."

More Details:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/02/23/UN-on-Syria-War-crimes-are-now-rampant-.html>

- **Islamic State attack shuts Syrian govt supply route for second day**

An important Syrian government supply route to Aleppo was shut for a second day on Tuesday because of an Islamic State attack, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. A rebel fighter told Reuters the Islamic State assault on the road linking Aleppo to government-held cities further south had relieved pressure on insurgents confronting Syrian government forces backed by Russian air strikes in Aleppo.

More Details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/news/middle-east/371633/islamic-state-attack-shuts-syrian-govt-supply-route-for-second-day>

- **Syrian Army Purges Darayya in Southwest Damascus of Militants**

The Syrian Army troops backed by the National Defense Forces (NDF) stormed the militant groups' positions in the Southern side of one of the strategic cities in Western Ghouta and pushed the terrorists back from more lands. The Syrian army's Special Forces launched a new assault on the besieged city of Darayya from the city's southern side, marking the first time this year that the government forces have made a push from the nearby city of Sahnaya.

More Details:

<http://en.alalam.ir/news/1792343>

- **Assad announces for parliamentary elections on April 13 in Syria**

Bashar Assad, the embattled president of Syria, has called for parliamentary elections to be held in April. A UN Security Council resolution adopted in December stipulates parliamentary and presidential elections are to be held over an 18-month period of transition that would result in the termination of the protracted conflict in Syria.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/assad-announces-parliamentary-elections-april-13-syria-808802>

- **Syrian civilians face 'rampant and ever present' war crimes: UN**

Civilians are the primary victims of "rampant, pervasive and ever-present" war crimes in the Syrian war, a new UN report said on Monday. The report, issued by an independent UN commission of inquiry into Syria, calls for accountability for horrific crimes committed during the war to be included in the peace process.

More Details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/Syria%20war%20crimes%20UN%20report>

- **US Department of State to Asharq Al-Awsat: The Syrian Truce is a Step Towards Political Transition**

While the US Secretary of State John Kerry announced yesterday that Washington and Moscow have agreed on a plan for a ceasefire in Syria starting at midnight on Friday with the exception of bombing ISIS and the Al-Nusra Front, an official at the US State Department told Asharq Al-Awsat that in the case that all parties committed to the temporary truce for a period of two weeks, it would lead to an official and complete ceasefire. Commitment to the ceasefire would also lead to positive progress in building confidence between the parties and the resumption of negotiations and the political transition process in Syria.

More Details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/2016/02/article55347825/us-department-of-state-to-asharq-al-awsat-the-syrian-truce-is-a-step-towards-political-transition>

- **China welcomes Russia-U.S. agreement on Syria ceasefire plan**

China on Tuesday welcomed a plan for a cessation of hostilities in Syria that the United States and Russia announced on Monday. The U.S. and Russia said in a joint statement that any party engaged in conflict in Syria will indicate to Russia or the U.S. their commitment to the ceasefire by no later than 12:00 (Damascus time) on Saturday. "The agreement indicates a willingness to convert consensus into action," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying told a daily news briefing.

More Details:

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-02/23/c\\_135123967.htm?](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-02/23/c_135123967.htm?)

### 3. IRAN

- **Italian PM Due in Iran in April**

Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi announced on Monday that he will visit Tehran in coming months at the invitation of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

More details:

<http://iranfrontpage.com/news/politics/foreign-policies/2016/02/italian-pm-due-in-iran-in-april/?>

- **Ayatollah Rafsanjani dismisses charges of British list of candidates**

Expediency Council Chairman Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani on Monday lashed out at allegations that certain candidates on the list of February 26 parliamentary elections were dictated by the UK.

More details:

<http://iranfrontpage.com/news/politics/local/2016/02/ayatollah-rafsanjani-dismisses-charges-of-british-list-of-candidates/?>

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina calls for expansion of bilateral ties with Iran**

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina Igor Crnadak has called on Iran to expand bilateral ties, particularly in the energy sector.

More details:

<http://en.trend.az/iran/politics/2498067.html?>

- **Iran, Russia Enjoy 'Highest Level' of Political Cooperation**

The political cooperation between Russia and Iran reached "the highest level," Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Hossein Jaber Ansari said Monday, commenting on the results of the Sunday's meeting between President Hassan Rouhani and Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu in Tehran.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13941203001399>

- **Azeri President arrives in Tehran for bilateral talks**

Azeri President Ilham Aliyev who is visiting Iran at the official invitation of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani was welcomed by ICT Minister Mahmoud Vaezi at Mehrabad Airport in Tehran on Tuesday morning.

More details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/114681/Azeri-President-arrives-in-Tehran-for-bilateral-talks?>

- **5 Oil Megaprojects to Be Developed**

Iran's Oil Ministry plans to implement five megaprojects to form a knowledge-based oil industry under the sixth five-year development plan (2016-21), a senior official at the ministry said.

More details:

<http://financialtribune.com/articles/energy/36924/5-oil-megaprojects-be-developed?>

- **Iran's supreme leader involved in espionage against Kingdom**

The 32 people on trial for spying for Iran revealed in their first appearance before the criminal court in Riyadh that the country's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei himself was involved in espionage against the Kingdom by backing them and meeting them in Tehran.

More details:

<http://saudigazette.com.sa/saudi-arabia/irans-supreme-leader-involved-in-espionage-against-kingdom/?>

- **Iranian elections to test enthusiasm for Hassan Rouhani's reformist agenda**

Iran's voters go to the polls Friday in the first major test of public opinion in the Islamic republic since last summer's nuclear accord, a vote that may well determine whether President Hassan Rouhani has a green light to forge ahead with long-promised political and economic reforms in the nation.

More details:

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/feb/22/iran-elections-to-test-enthusiasm-for-hassan-rouha/>?

- **Afghanistan Seeks Joint Investment**

Afghan Commercial Counselor in Iran Abdulhamid Farhang has invited Iranian economic players to embark on joint investments in Afghanistan, saying the country is in dire need of infrastructure.

More details:

<http://financialtribune.com/articles/economy-domestic-economy/36902/afghanistan-seeks-joint-investment/>?

- **Azerbaijan can turn into a good market for Iran: MP**

Azerbaijan can turn into a good market for Iranian-made goods, Ruhollah Abbaspour, spokesman of the Iranian Parliament's Industries and Mines told Trend.

More details:

<http://en.trend.az/business/economy/2498181.html?>

## 4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Israeli who burned Palestinian alive ruled sane: lawyer**

A psychiatrist has ruled that an Israeli found to have led the burning alive of a Palestinian teenager in 2014 was responsible for his actions, the lawyer for the victim's family said Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Feb-23/338732-israeli-who-burned-palestinian-alive-ruled-sane-lawyer.ashx>

- **Israeli military demolishes homes of 2 Palestinians**

Israel has destroyed the homes of two Palestinians accused of separate attacks that left five people dead, the army said Tuesday, the latest in a series of punitive demolitions that have drawn criticism from rights groups.

More Details:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Feb-23/338728-israeli-military-demolishes-homes-of-2-palestinians.ashx>

- **Two terrorists' houses destroyed**

Israeli security forces demolished the house of Raed Khalil who stabbed two people to death in the Panorama building in Tel Aviv, and the house of Mohammad Harub who shot and killed an Israeli, an American, and a Palestinian at Alon Shvut Junction.

More Details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4769686,00.html>

- **Netanyahu asked Italy for help healing Obama rift, cable shows**

US listened in as Israeli PM turned to Silvio Berlusconi after ties were strained following East Jerusalem housing announcement during 2010 Biden visit, according to WikiLeaks release.

More Details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-asked-italy-for-help-healing-obama-rift-cable-shows/>

- **Palestinians confront dilemma of working in the settlements**

Israeli companies in the West Bank are pressured by the international community to move out of the disputed territories, but that would leave tens of thousands of Palestinian workers without a job they depend on to make ends meet.

More Details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4769525,00.html>

- **US giant Oracle acquires Israeli company Ravello Systems for \$500 million**

US software giant Oracle Corp. (NYSE: ORCL) has acquired Israeli cloud software company Ravello Systems for \$500 million.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Business-and-Innovation/Tech/US-giant-Oracle-acquires-Israeli-company-Ravello-Systems-for-500-million-445796>

- **IDF arrests 19 Palestinian suspects in raids across West Bank**

Security forces arrested 19 Palestinian suspects in West Bank raids overnight between Monday and Tuesday, seven of who are suspected of taking part in disturbances and unorganized terrorism, the IDF said.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Breaking-News/IDF-arrests-19-Palestinian-suspects-in-raids-across-West-Bank-445800>

- **Rash of Gaza suicides points to rising poverty, despair**

In contrast to the West Bank, life in the Strip just keeps on getting worse. And yet Hamas rule is under no threat

More Details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/rash-of-gaza-suicides-points-to-rising-poverty-despair/>

- **Israel returns bodies of 3 Palestinians**

Israeli authorities on Monday returned the bodies of three Palestinians who were shot dead by Israeli forces last week -- two after carrying out an attack on Israelis and one during clashes.

More Details:

<http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=770398>

- **Exports Down, Imports Up during December 2015, says Statistics Bureau**

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) Tuesday released its 'External Trade in Goods' report for December 2015, revealing that exports have decreased by 4.6%, compared to November 2015.

More Details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=r1Pskea30247662093ar1Pske>

- **Abbas Calls on US Kerry to Intervene to Free Hunger Striker al-Qiq**

President Mahmoud Abbas on Sunday called on the United States Secretary of State, John Kerry, to promptly intervene to free hunger striking Palestinian detainee in Israeli jails, journalist Mohammad al-Qiq.

More Details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=Qd9Gkqa30237192810aQd9Gkq>

- **Netanyahu Asks Britain to Remove anti-Israel Posters Hung in Underground Trains**

As many as 500 posters may have been placed in London's underground trains by pro-Palestinian activists group as part of Israeli Apartheid Week campaign.

More Details:

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.704788>

## 5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Lebanon government reacts to Saudi aid cut**

The extraordinary session came on the heels of Justice Minister Ashraf Rifi's dramatic resignation Sunday.

More Details:

<https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/NewsReports/566640-lebanon-cabinet-set-for-crunch-meeting>

- **Obama signs law to increase military support to Jordan**

The US has finalised a law that will allow the administration to increase military support to Jordan to \$450 million this year, officials announced Sunday.

More Details:

<http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/obama-signs-law-increase-military-support-jordan>

- **Border guards receive 74 Syrian refugees**

A total of 74 new Syrian refugees from various age groups, entered into the Kingdom through various crossing points during the last 24 hours, a military source said on Monday.

More Details:

[http://www.petra.gov.jo/Public\\_News/Nws\\_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site\\_id=1&NewsID=239190&Type=P](http://www.petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=239190&Type=P)

- **Population grew by 87% over a decade**

Jordan's population increased by nearly 87 per cent over a decade, with the number of the capital's residents more than doubling, according to official data released Monday.

More Details:

<http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/population-grew-87-over-decade-%E2%80%94-census>

- **Obama signed on a law about supporting defense cooperation with Jordan**

The us president, Barak Obama signed at today's dawn -on the timing of the city of Amman-on the law about supporting defense cooperation with Jordan: to be access.

More Details:

<http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=30432#.VswjX2LRkg>

- **Jordan, EU Agree to Boost Anti-Extremism Cooperation**

The Jordanian government and the European Union signed on Monday a Memorandum of Understanding to enhance "partnership in the protection against extremism" and promote dialogue and religious tolerance.

More Details:

<http://www.laht.com/article.asp?ArticleId=2406192&CategoryId=12395>

- **Prime Minister meets Qatari justice minister**

Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour, on Sunday, received Qatar's Minister of Justice, Hassan Al Mohammadi, in the presence of Minister of Justice Bassam Talhouni and Qatari Ambassador to Jordan Bandar bin Mohammed Al-Attayah.

More Details:

[http://www.petra.gov.jo/Public\\_News/Nws\\_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site\\_id=1&NewsID=239124&Type=P](http://www.petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=239124&Type=P)

- **Lebanon's Hariri urges Saudi king not to abandon country**

Lebanese Sunni politician Saad al-Hariri on Monday urged Saudi Arabia not to abandon Lebanon after it halted aid to the army, reflecting concerns that Riyadh is reducing support for a country that has been an arena for its struggle with Iran.

More Details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-lebanon-saudi-idUSKCN0VV1NC>

- **Army Arrests IS Official in Arsal amid Clashes with Armed Groups**

The army succeeded on Monday in arresting an official from the extremist Islamic State group in the northeastern border town of Arsal, reported the National News Agency.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/202808-army-arrests-is-official-in-arsal-amid-clashes-with-armed-groups>

- **Salam after Cabinet session: We confirm our steady support to Arab brothers, commitment to Arab consensus**

Prime Minister Tammam Salam confirmed Lebanon's permanent stand beside the Arab brothers and adherence to the Arab consensus on common affairs, based on the content of the Constitution which stipulates Lebanon's Arab identity and belonging to the Arab League.

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/57256/Salam-after-Cabinet-session-We-confirm-our-steady-support-to-Arab-brothers-commitment-to-Arab-consensus>

## 6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Top military commanders discuss ways to defeat jihadists in Kuwait**

Top military commanders from 30 nations fighting the Islamic State group gathered Monday in Kuwait to discuss ways to defeat the jihadists who occupy large areas in Syria and Iraq. Chief of staff of host country Kuwait, General Mohammad al-Khader, urged increased efforts to defeat extremists worldwide.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=75368>

- **Saudi puts 26 women on trial for 'terror activities'**

As many as 26 women accused of "terror activities" are being tried by the Specialized Criminal Court in Riyadh and no special privileges have been given to them, Mansoor Al-Qaffari, spokesman of the Ministry of Justice, has said. "The women are being tried under the same procedures as male suspects and are given complete privacy and rights guaranteed by the law," he said.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/saudi-puts-26-women-trial-%E2%80%98terror-activities%E2%80%99-808656>

- **Saudi crown prince meets with British parliament defense head**

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Nayef held talks with the head of the Defense Committee at the British parliament, James Gray, on Monday. Prince Mohammed, who is also, deputy premier and minister of interior, discussed a number of issues of mutual concern during a meeting in Riyadh, the Saudi Gazette reported.

More Details:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/02/23/Saudi-crown-prince-meets-with-British-parliament-defense-head.html>

- **Saudi tries 32 'spying' for Iran**

Thirty Saudis from a Shiite-majority region of the kingdom have gone on trial for allegedly spying for Iran, local media reported on Monday. An Iranian and an Afghan are also accused, the reports said. The allegations come after Saudi Arabia and some of its allies cut diplomatic ties with Tehran in January during a crisis between the regional rivals.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=75365>

- **Riyadh confirms military aid halt to Lebanon**

Saudi Arabia on Monday reaffirmed its support to the Lebanese people, despite confirming the suspension of a \$3 billion military aid package to Lebanon. In a statement, made during a cabinet session chaired by Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz, the council ministers said the suspension was a response to Beirut's "non-condemnation of the flagrant attacks on the Kingdom's Embassy in Tehran and Consulate General in Mashhad."

More Details:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/02/22/Riyadh-reaffirms-support-to-Lebanon-despite-military-aid-halt.html>

- **Yemen army commander shot dead in Aden**

A gunman killed a senior Yemeni army officer in Aden on Monday, as violence in the southern port city which is the headquarters of the Saudi-backed government showed no let-up, military sources said. The gunman, who was on the back of a motorcycle, killed General Abedrabbo Hussein as he was leaving his home in the Sheikh Othman district of the city, the sources said.

More Details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/news/middle-east/371459/yemen-army-commander-shot-dead-in-aden>

- **Saudi arms purchases almost triple in five years**

Arms imports by Saudi Arabia increased by 275 per cent in 2011-2015 when compared to 2006-2010, a report issued by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) revealed yesterday. "A coalition of Arab states is putting mainly US- and European-sourced advanced arms into use in Yemen," Senior Researcher with SIPRI's Arms and Military Expenditure Programme Pieter Wezeman said. "Despite low oil prices, large deliveries of arms to the Middle East are scheduled to continue as part of contracts signed in the past five years."

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/middle-east/24088-saudi-arms-purchases-almost-triple-in-five-years>

- **Minister: Sudan open to joining Saudi-led coalition into Syria**

Sudan's government has expressed its openness to join the Saudi-led military coalition to fight in Syria. During a press conference in Khartoum on Monday, Sudanese Foreign Minister Ibrahim Gandour said Sudan is committed to any political or military decision taken by the leadership of the alliance. Sudan is part of the 34-nation Muslim coalition to fight Daesh.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/minister-sudan-open-joining-saudi-led-coalition-syria-808980>

- **Qatari, Russian leaders discuss Syrian crisis**

The Amir of Qatar Shaikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani held a phone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin and discussed latest developments in Syria and ways of ending the spiraling crisis.

Qatar News Agency (QNA) said that the two sides agreed to step up efforts and intensify efforts to contribute to ending the Syrian crisis.

More Details:

<http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/712479>

- **Lebanon must make crucial choice, Bahrain says**

Bahrain's foreign minister has stressed that Saudi Arabia's decision to halt aid to Lebanon was sound and deserved to be supported. "We have issued a formal endorsement of the Saudi decision which we see as sound," Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmad Al Khalifa said. "Lebanon has to realise that it is part of the Arab nation and that its Arab brothers support it and stand by it at all times. Lebanon has to be fully aware of such a fact and take it into consideration," the minister told the media on Sunday evening as he attended in Manama the launch of a documentary on Bahrain's relations with the United Nations.

More Details:

<http://gulfnews.com/news/mena/lebanon/lebanon-must-make-crucial-choice-bahrain-says-1.1677608>

## 7. EGYPT

- **Eni to develop development Zohr gas field offshore Egypt**

Italian multinational oil and gas company Eni has secured approval from the Egyptian Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources for the development of Zohr gas field located offshore Egypt.

More details:

<http://explorationanddevelopment.energy-business-review.com/news/eni-to-develop-development-zohr-gas-field-offshore-egypt-230216-4818661?>

- **Egyptian victims of botched eye injection to be sent to Germany for treatment**

Egypt's health minister has ordered that five patients who suffered severe complications following an eye injection earlier in February be sent to receive treatment in Germany.

More details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/188296/-asp?>

- **The mysterious meeting between Abbas and Sisi**

The ongoing conflict between Mohammed Dahlan, the former head of Fatah, and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has soured relations between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Egypt. A senior Palestinian source in the Gaza Strip told Al-Monitor that as long as the crisis between the two is not resolved, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi is unwilling to deal with Abbas.

More details:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/02/mohammed-dahlan-mahmoud-abbas-egypt-sisi-hamas-fatah.html#ixzz40z5NDxy6>

- **Egypt 'strongly condemns' Syria attacks that killed 180 people**

Egypt condemned the terrorist attacks that took place near a Shia shrine outside Syria's capital Damascus and in Homs on Sunday, killing over 180 people, Egyptian foreign ministry spokesperson Ahmed Abu Zeid said on Monday.

More details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/188273/-.aspx?>

- **Turkey wants estranged Egypt to be part of working group on Libya**

Turkey has expressed willingness for Egypt to take part in a proposed working group formed to coordinate international efforts in Libya, which has been mired in conflict following an uprising that toppled veteran leader Muammar Gaddafi five years ago, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu has said.

More details:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-wants-estranged-egypt-to-be-part-of-working-group-on-libya.aspx?pageID=238&nID=95542&NewsCatID=510>

- **Egypt minister apologises over police abuses**

Baku-APA. Egypt's interior minister apologised Monday for human rights abuses committed by police after an officer killed a driver with his service weapon in Cairo last week, APA reports quoting AFP.

More details:

<http://en.apa.az/- 239717.html?>

- **Egypt, Angola Discuss Investment Opportunities**

Investment Minister Ashraf Salman discussed on Sunday 21/2/2016 with Angolan Economy Minister Abrahão Gourgel prospects of bilateral cooperation and investment opportunities.

More details:

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201602230237.html>

- **Egypt hopes to issue international bond by end-June -fin min**

Egypt's government hopes to return to the international bond market with a debt issue by the end of June, Egyptian Finance Minister Hany Kadry Dimian said on Monday.

More details:

<http://thecairopost.youm7.com/news/195579/news/egypt-hopes-to-issue-international-bond-by-end-june-fin-min?>

- **Egypt human rights center attempts to postpone closure**

A Cairo-based rehabilitation center for torture victims filed an application to the court on Sunday to postpone its pending closure.

More details:

<http://jurist.org/paperchase/2016/02/egyptian-human-rights-center-attempts-to-postpone-closure--dnp.php?>

- **The Situation of Journalists in Egypt is Unacceptable**

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has written to President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi requesting the release of journalists who are detained arbitrarily in Egypt. As violations of freedom in general and media freedom in particular continue to grow, the letter also voices concern about the safety of media personnel and stresses the need to combat impunity for violence against journalists.

More details:

<http://en.rsf.org/egypt-the-situation-of-journalists-in-22-02-2016,48857.html?>

## 8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Ban Ki-Moon's visit, strong message to Morocco, says Sahrawi official**

The Head of the Sahrawi delegation to negotiations with Morocco for the settlement of the conflict in Western Sahara, Khatri Addouh hoped Monday, in Smara, that the upcoming visit of the United Nations' Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, to the region, is a "strong message" to the Moroccan occupier, who continues to create obstacles for the efforts of the international community.

More details:

<http://www.aps.dz/en/world/10965-ban-ki-moon%E2%80%99s-visit,-strong-message-to-morocco,-says-sahrawi-official?>

- **Algeria supports only UN-led counter-terrorism operations: minister**

Algerian officials on Monday stressed after meeting the visiting U.S. assistant secretary that any counter-terrorism operation should be within a UN framework, in light of U.S. airstrikes against the Islamic State (IS) in Libya on Friday which killed more than 40, according to APS news agency.

More details:

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-02/23/c\\_135121206.htm?](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-02/23/c_135121206.htm?)

- **Review of bilateral economic cooperation between Algeria, Unites States**

Minister of Industry and Mining, Abdesselam Bouchouareb received Monday, in Algiers, the United States Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Thomas Shannon, wh is on a working visit to Algeria.

More details:

<http://www.aps.dz/en/economy/10970-review-of-bilateral-economic-cooperation-between-algeria,-unites-states?>

- **Libya faces looming humanitarian crisis**

Deputy special representative of the United Nations Secretary General in Libya, Ali Al-Zaatari, arrived in Cairo for a short visit in a bid to advocate for the worsening humanitarian situation in Libya.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/libya-faces-looming-humanitarian-crisis-808678>

- **Italy: American Drones to Get Base, Official Says**

Italy has agreed to allow American armed drones to take off from an air base in Sicily to defend the coalition force fighting Islamic State extremists in Libya.

More details:

[http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/23/world/europe/italy-american-drones-to-get-base-official-says.html?&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/23/world/europe/italy-american-drones-to-get-base-official-says.html?&_r=0)

- **Nigerians arrive in Italy via Libya, says Frontex**

Frontex, the EU border management agency, said some 5,600 refugees, mostly Nigerians, arrived in Italy last month by boat, after crossing the Mediterranean. Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orbán was quoted as saying that 50 million of Nigerians could arrive in Italy via Libya.

More details:

<http://www.euractiv.com/section/justice-home-affairs/news/nigerians-arrive-via-libya-to-italy-says-frontex/>

- **ISIS IN SPAIN: Police swoop on suspected jihadi network in dawn raids**

FOUR people suspected of recruiting jihadists to fight for Islamic State (ISIS) and carry out terror attacks in Europe have been arrested in dawn raids in a joint operation between police in Spain and Morocco.

More details:

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/646629/ISIS-spain-police-jihadi-raids>

- **Tunisia extends 'state of emergency' amid border fears**

In a statement to TAP, official spokesman for the Presidency of the Republic Moez Sinaoui said, on Sunday, that the President of the Republic decided on an extension of the state of emergency, "after consultation with the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the House of the People's Representatives (HPR), on the issues related to national security notably the situation in the borders and in the region."

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/tunisia-extends-%E2%80%98state-emergency%E2%80%99-amid-border-fears-808632>

- **Tunisian army shoots 'infiltrators' near Algerian border**

Tunisian troops stationed near the border with Algeria opened fire on Saturday on an SUV after it crossed into Tunisian territory, the Tunisian Defence Ministry said in a statement.

More details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/africa/24062-tunisian-army-shoots-infiltrators-near-algerian-border?>

- **More efforts are needed to reduce prison overcrowding (Justice Minister)**

Minister of Justice Amor Ben Mansour, on Monday, argued for the implementation of international standards in the respect of human rights and improving prison conditions of inmates in Tunisian jails.

More details:

<http://www.tap.info.tn/en/index.php/politics2/33647-more-efforts-are-needed-to-reduce-prison-overcrowding-justice-minister?>

## 9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **'At Least 13 Killed' In Afghan Suicide Bombing**

An Afghan official says a suicide bomber targeting a police commander has killed at least 13 people in the province of Parwan.

More Details:

<http://www.rferl.org/content/afghanistan-suicide-bombing-police-parwan/27567334.html>

- **16 Ministries Fire Experts To 'Hire Relatives'**

A number of high ranking officials accuse cabinet members of hiring relatives instead of experienced directors in sixteen government ministries.

More Details:

<http://www.tolonews.com/en/afghanistan/23900-16-ministries-fire-experts-to-hire-relatives>

- **Afghan Military Downplays Recent Troop Withdrawal**

Afghanistan's military has downplayed the recent withdrawal of troops from bases in a restive southern province, saying "logistics" and "tactical" reasons prompted the move.

More Details:

<http://www.voanews.com/content/afghan-military-downplays-recent-troop-withdrawal/3201576.html>

- **Afghani falls 21 percent against dollar in one year**

Afghanistan's currency has fallen as much as 21 percent against the dollar, officials noted Sunday, blaming insecurity for the problem.

More Details:

<http://1tvnews.af/en/news/afghanistan/20979-afghani-falls-21-percent-against-dollar-in-one-year>

- **Pakistan's parliament completely shifted to solar power**

Pakistan's parliament has become world's first parliament, whose entire electricity system has been completely shifted to solar power.

More Details:

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/100393-Pakistans-parliament-completely-shifted-to-solar-power>

- **12 Al-Qaeda, LeJ Terrorists Killed In Karachi Encounters**

The Sindh police killed 12 terrorists belonging to the banned al-Qaeda Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and Lashker-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) in two encounters in the Pipri and Gadap areas on Monday.

More Details:

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/100359-12-al-Qaeda-LeJ-terrorists-killed-in-Karachi-encounters>

- **NATO Suggests Afghan Forces Defend Less, Attack More**

NATO advisers want Afghan soldiers to spend less time manning checkpoints and more taking the fight to Taliban militants, a key tactical shift the coalition hopes will enable local forces to quell a rising insurgency, reports Reuters.

More Details:

<http://www.tolonews.com/en/afghanistan/23904-nato-suggests-afghan-forces-defend-less-attack-more>

- **Pakistan's efforts important for trust building, Foreign Minister tells QCG meeting**

Minister of Foreign Affairs Salahuddin Rabbani says that Pakistan's efforts in Afghan peace process are crucial and trust building.

More Details:

<http://www.khaama.com/pakistans-efforts-important-for-trust-building-foreign-minister-tells-qcg-meeting-4596?>

- **10 illegal Afghan citizens detained in Quetta raids**

Pakistan info-icon's paramilitary troops have detained 10 Afghan citizens in Quetta, the capital of southwestern Balochistan province.

More Details:

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2016/02/23/10-illegal-afghan-citizens-detained-quetta-raids?>

- **Idomeni: Train tracks cleared out – Afghan refugees return to Athens**

About 6,000 refugees have gathered at the border after FYROM and Serbia's decision to exclude Afghans.

More Details:

<http://www.tovima.gr/en/article/?aid=778978>

## 10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkish Ambassador: More than 40 thousand of suspected elements prevented from joining daash in Iraq and Syria**

The Turkish Ambassador in Baghdad, Farouq Qimagji announced that more than / 40 / thousand of suspected elements of having links with daash from various countries of the world were prevented by the Turkish authorities from joining the organization in Iraq and Syria over the past year. Qimagji said, in an interview with National Iraqi News Agency / NINA / that more than / 37 / thousand suspected elements who have links to Daash were prevented by Turkish authorities from entering the country during the year 2015 in the light of the information available to them from their origin countries or from the other in the international coalition countries against Daash terrorist organization.

More Details:

[http://www.ninanews.com/News\\_Details.aspx?f2%252fqHJ4CbW7wBYm5XsM0Ag%253d%253d](http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?f2%252fqHJ4CbW7wBYm5XsM0Ag%253d%253d)

- **Turkey says US, Russia truce process for Syria is positive**

Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus said on Monday that Turkey will respond positively to the truce between the US and Russia over the Syrian conflict. "The announcement of the truce and starting of the truce process is positive for us also," said Kurtulmus after a press conference following a Cabinet meeting chaired by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Ankara.

More Details:

<http://www.trtworld.com/turkey/turkey-says-us-russia-truce-process-for-syria-is-positive-53434>

- **Turkish PM voices support for Syrian people**

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu has said his country will continue to support Syrians against the Bashar al-Assad regime, Russia, Iran and ISIL. In an interview with Al Jazeera English television early Tuesday, Davutoglu said: "We will not let our Syrian brothers and sisters to be at the mercy of this barbaric regime, or ISIL, or Russia or Iran or other forces".

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/169744/turkeys-erdogan-says-syria-exports-terrorism>

*\*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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