



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

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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

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23 MAY 2017

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1. IRAQ

- **Paramilitary leader says western Nineveh's Qairawan retaken from IS**

Nineveh (IraqiNews.com) An Iraqi paramilitary leader said Tuesday that pro-government forces recaptured Qairawan region, west of Nineveh, from Islamic State militants, a major victory at IS-held regions near the borders with Syria.

More Details

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/paramilitary-leader-says-western-ninevehs-qairawan-retaken/>

- **10-year-old Yezidi Girl Freed from IS in Mosul**

Another Kurdish Yezidi girl was freed from the grips of Islamic State (IS) militants on Monday in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, said a Kurdish official.

More Details

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/kurdistan/352303>

- **Nechirvan Barzani Visits Nawshirwan Mustafa's Shrine**

President of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Nechirvan Barzani on Monday visited the shrine of the fighter Nawshirwan Mustafa who passed away at his home in the city of Sulaimani on Friday.

More Details

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=40417

- **IMIS arrests, tortures Sunni Iraqis in Mosul**

ran's Militia in Iraq and Syria (IMIS) have tortured Sunni Iraqis while displacing Mosul over alleged ISIS links, a video obtained by The Baghdad Post revealed Monday.

More Details

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/10959/Video-IMIS-arrests-tortures-Sunni-Iraqis-in-Mosul>

- **Graphic video: ISIS beheads 19 Kurdish dissidents in gruesome mass execution**

ISIS published a lengthy video on Sunday showing a series of executions on alleged Kurdish and government spies in the Iraqi province of Kirkuk. Forced to write pro-ISIS slogans with their own blood, the Kurdish prisoners of war were either beheaded or shot in the head, in some cases with

high-caliber rifles. In characteristic ISIS fashion, the executions were carried out by Kurdish members of the Islamic State.

More Details

<https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/graphic-video-isis-beheads-19-kurdish-dissidents-gruesome-mass-execution/>

- **Iraqi Prime Minister receives Saudi Minister of Energy**

Prime Minister of Iraq, Dr. Haider Al-Abadi, and Saudi Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources, Khalid bin Abdul Aziz Al-Falih, have discussed the situation of the oil market in the region, ways of opening channels of investment, economic cooperation and contribution to the reconstruction of Iraq, in addition to participating in energy projects and transfer of knowledge and exchange of experiences between the two countries.

More Details

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302615342>

- **Most Iraqi and Syrian refugees women, kids**

Almost 70 per cent of Australia's special intake of 12,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees are women and children. Families account for 99 per cent of the refugees taken into Australia, some of which do not include men, with more than 40 religious affiliations identified among the cohort.

More Details

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2017/05/23/most-iraqi-and-syrian-refugees-women-kids>

- **Militants Execute Collaborators near Kirkuk; 80 Killed in Iraq**

Ján Kubiš, the U.N. envoy to Iraq, said on Monday that despite increasingly difficult fighting conditions, the fall of Mosul is imminent. Furthermore, major operations will likely conclude by the end this year. However, that does not mean the Islamic State threat will be finished. Kubiš expects smaller attacks to continue.

More Details

<http://original.antiwar.com/updates/2017/05/22/militants-execute-collaborators-near-kirkuk-80-killed-in-iraq/>

- **UN envoy: Liberation of Mosul from ISIL is 'imminent'**

Jan Kubis tells UN Security Council armed group will soon be defeated but continues to use civilians as human shields.

More Details

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/05/envoy-liberation-mosul-isil-imminent-170523024826682.html>

- **Fifth rotation of NZDF Troops heads to Iraq**

The fifth rotation of New Zealand Defence Force troops left today for a six-month mission in Iraq. New Zealand troops have helped train more than 22,000 Iraqi Security Forces personnel since the mission began two years ago. Photo credit: the Australian Defence Force

More Details

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO1705/S00308/fifth-rotation-of-nzdf-troops-heads-to-iraq.htm>

- **Nearly 200,000 Civilians Remain under Daesh Control in Iraq's Mosul – UN**

Hundreds of thousands of civilians remain in the areas of the Iraqi city of Mosul that are controlled by Daesh terrorist group, UN Assistance Mission head in Iraq Jan Kubis told the UN Security Council on Monday.

More Details

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201705231053878042-civilians-daesh-mosul/>

- **Australia: Protect Civilians in Iraq and Syria**

As civilian casualties in Iraq and Syria rise in the battle against the Islamic State (also known as ISIS), the Australian government should take all feasible measures to protect civilians during military operations and improve the transparency of its operations, Human Rights Watch said today.

More Details

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/05/22/australia-protect-civilians-iraq-and-syria>

- **As Iraqi air force grows more confident, U.S. advisers provide guidance**

As Iraq presses ahead in the fight against the Islamic State, its air force continues to grow in size and ability with the help of advisers from the U.S Air Force. Col. Jay Sabia, commander of the 370th Air Expeditionary Advisory Group in Iraq, said in a May 18 interview that Iraq now has 18 F-16Cs and 14 pilots — trained in Tucson, Arizona — flying daily combat missions out of Balad Air Base against ISIS.

More Details

<https://www.airforcetimes.com/articles/as-iraqi-air-force-grows-more-confident-us-advisers-provide-guidance>

- **Iraq War veteran pursues run for Yoder's seat, sets up likely Democratic primary fight**

An Army veteran who was awarded a Bronze Star for his service in Iraq will run for U.S. Rep. Kevin Yoder's seat as a Democrat. Joe McConnell, a 35-year-old Johnson County native who works in operations strategy for the business networking site LinkedIn, moved back to his home state with his wife and 2-year-old daughter after spending the past eight years in California.

More Details

<http://www.kansascity.com/news/politics-government/article152006097.html>

- **Trump's Middle East Policy Shift Prompts Unease in Iraq, Lebanon**

President Donald Trump's overture to Muslim leaders in Saudi Arabia has raised concern and anger in Shiite-majority Iraq and among the Christian, Shiite and Sunni population in Lebanon, two of America's most important regional partners in the war on terror, which maintain good relations with Shiite Iran

More Details

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/trumps-middle-east-policy-shift-prompts-unease-in-iraq-lebanon-1495497616>

- **Emir invites Iraqi premier al-Abadi to visit Qatar**

HH the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has sent a written message to Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, inviting to visit Qatar. The message was delivered by HE the Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani during a meeting with the Iraqi Prime Minister in Baghdad yesterday.

More Details

<http://www.gulf-times.com/story/549827/Emir-invites-Iraqi-premier-al-Abadi-to-visit-Qatar>

- **UN: Kurdistan does not immediately declare independence after referendum**

The UN Special Envoy to Iraq, Ján Kubiš, has told a Security Council meeting in New York on Monday that the Kurdistan Region does not seek to declare independence following the much-anticipated independence referendum to be held in 2017.

More Details

www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/220520174

- **Iraq supports 6-month extension of OPEC-led output cuts: Alamri**

Iraq is backing an extension of current OPEC-led output cuts for six months, the head of country's oil marketing body said Monday, putting it at odds with a growing consensus for a nine-month extension by a number of key oil producers.

More Details

<https://www.platts.com/latest-news/oil/london/iraq-supports-6-month-extension-of-opec-led-output-27834661>

2. SYRIA

- **Syria ready to boost cooperation with ICRC**

Syrian Foreign and Expatriates Minister Walid al-Muallem met on Monday the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Peter Maurer and the accompanying delegation. Minister al-Muallem reviewed the efforts undertaken by the Syrian government to improve citizens' humanitarian and living conditions across the country and the positive results of the national reconciliation efforts in several areas despite the obstacles and difficulties caused by the crimes of terrorist organizations that receive support from regional and international sides, asserting that the practices of these sides and the unilateral and unjust sanctions against Syria play a major role in aggravating the humanitarian crisis.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/125532/Syria-ready-to-boost-cooperation-with-ICRC>

- **In Syria's devastated twin towns, tears mix with rubble**

Arriving with her husband and 10-year-old daughter to check on their home for the first time in five years, Adibeh Ghosn had trouble recognizing the neighborhood. In disbelief, she walked over the mounds of rubble leading to her home. "Where are the neighbors, where are the people? What has happened here?" she cried, wiping away tears as she gazed at the horizon of collapsed buildings, houses stripped of doors and windows, and finally her own charred home.

More Details:

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/ML_SYRIA_TWIN_TOWNS?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-05-23-01-43-49

- **Syrian army destroys ISIL fortifications, hideouts in Deir Ezzor**

Syrian Army and Armed Forces units, backed by the Syrian Air Force, carried out strikes against gatherings and fortifications for ISIL terrorist organization in Deir Ezzor city and its surrounding. SANA reporter in Deir Ezzor said that the Syrian Air Force killed a number of ISIL terrorists and destroyed their equipment during its airstrikes against their movements, gatherings and fortifications in the graveyards area, al-Tharda junction, the area surrounding al-Panorama and the Regiment 137 on the southwest outskirts of Deir Ezzor city.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/125530/Syrian-army-destroys-ISIL-fortifications-hideouts-in-Deir-Ezzor>

- **Pro-regime forces advance toward base in Syrian Desert as US warns: Coalition will 'defend' itself**

Pro-regime forces in the eastern Syrian desert are advancing towards a coalition base near the Iraqi-Syrian border, while a US military spokesperson tells Syria Direct that the American-led forces will "defend themselves" from any further encroachment. "If pro-regime forces move further south or east from their current positions, this will be considered a threat," an unnamed US military spokesperson told Syria Direct by email on Sunday.

More Details:

<http://ar.syriadirect.org/news/pro-regime-forces-advance-toward-base-in-syrian-desert-as-us-warns-%E2%80%98coalition-forces-will-defend-themselves%E2%80%99/>

- **Manbij security forces release 41 prisoners after mediation by Syrian tribes**

The internal security forces of Manbij city in northern Syria released on Monday 41 detainees after mediation by local tribal leaders. Farouk al-Mashi, the co-head of the Manbij city council thanked the internal security forces to accept the request of the elders and tribal leaders of Manbij for an amnesty.

More Details:

<http://aranews.net/2017/05/manbij-security-forces-release-41-prisoners-mediation-syrian-tribes/>

- **UN eyes Syria peace talks in June**

Despite little progress in the latest round of Syrian peace talks, negotiations are set to resume in June, the UN envoy said on Monday. Staffan de Mistura told the Security Council that "important gaps remain between the parties on major issues" following the sixth round in Geneva held last week.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/a5bfbea8-e76f-40e3-b971-45d56f832e46.aspx>

- **Syrian forces retake the “capital of the revolution”**

For the first time since 2011, the Syrian city of Homs is under complete government control. The city was dubbed the “capital of the revolution” when the Syrian uprising began. Along with their families, several hundred rebel fighters boarded buses leaving the city on Saturday and Sunday. Many headed to the rebel-held province of Idlib. The move was part of what the Syrian government calls a reconciliation agreement; however, opposition groups say they are being pushed out.

More Details:

<https://news.vice.com/story/syrian-forces-retake-capital-of-the-revolution>

- **Tens of Ahrar Al-Sham Terrorists Killed in Suicide Attack in Idlib**

Local sources reported that simultaneous with intensifying clashes among rival terrorist groups in Northwestern Syria tens of Ahrar al-Sham militants, including a field commander, were killed in a suicide attack on one of their command posts in Idlib. The sources said that tens of terrorists were killed in a suicide attack on Ahrar al-Sham's command post in Tal (hill) al-Touqan region in Eastern Idlib near Abu al-Dhuhour airport that is under Ahrar's control.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960301000761>

- **Another Syrian Kurdish politician arrested by Rojava Asayish forces**

The Rojava Asayish on Saturday arrested another member of the Kurdish National Council in Syria, Bashar al-Amin, in his house at 11.30. “Al-Amin’s fate is still unknown... we hold the PYD [Democratic Union Party] responsible for his safety. We [KNC] demand the pro-PYD Asayish security forces to disclosure the destiny of Mr. Bashar al-Amin immediately,” the KNC said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://aranews.net/2017/05/another-syrian-kurdish-politician-arrested-rojava-asayish-forces/>

- **Syria: ISIL Terrorists to Withdraw from Yarmouk Camp in Southern Damascus**

The sources said that the ISIL has distributed a number of leaflets across Yarmouk camp and Hajar al-Aswad region, determining three destinations in ISIL-held regions in Syria. They added that the ISIL has urged its fighters to register their names for evacuation from the camp. The sources pointed out that the ISIL is to leave the region and hand over its positions to the army units.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960301000645>

3. IRAN

- **Iran Plans to Secure Corridor towards Mediterranean**

Syria's High Negotiations Committee (HNC) admitted on Monday that Iran has increased its "infiltration" in Syria to protect a land corridor towards the Mediterranean Sea, at a time when the Syrian regime sent Palestinian militias to Deir Ezzor.

More Details;

<http://english.aawsat.com/caroline-akoum-and-asharq-alawsat/news-middle-east/iran-plans-secure-corridor-towards-mediterranean>

- **Iran not to wait for US permission to test ballistic missiles**

Iran's newly-elected president Hassan Rouhani said on Monday that the country will continue its ballistic missile program despite criticism from US officials.

More Details;

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/125535/iran-not-to-wait-for-US-permission-to-test-ballistic-missiles>

- **Iran Urges Stronger French Role in JCPOA Implementation**

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani called on France to play a more active role in the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a nuclear agreement between Tehran and the Group 5+1 (Russia, China, the US, Britain, France and Germany).

More Details;

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/05/23/1417187/iran-urges-stronger-french-role-in-jcpoa-implementation>

- **Iran-Russia anti-narcotics police chiefs discuss issues of mutual interest**

Iran's Anti-Narcotics Police Chief General Massoud Zahedian in a meeting with his Russian counterpart highlighted Iran and Russia's determination to uproot smuggling illegal drugs.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82541634/>

- **Iran, EU to build petrochemical plant in Asaluyeh**

Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC) and an European Company agreed to jointly build a petrochemical plant with worth 3 billion euro in Asaluyeh, Adel Nejad-Salim, CEO of PGPIC said May 22.

More Details;

<http://en.trend.az/iran/business/2757947.html>

- **Trump Encourages Israel to Team Up With Arab Neighbors against Iran**

US President Donald Trump encouraged Israel to make good with its Arab neighbours through their shared enemy, Iran, while in Jerusalem on Monday during his first trip abroad as US president.

More Details;

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/trump-encourages-israel-team-arab-neighbors-against-iran-977312>

- **Americans don't know our region: Iran president criticises Donald Trump, calls Saudi trip 'a show'**

Newly re-elected Iran President Hassan Rouhani on Monday criticised United States President Donald Trump's administration. Rouhani also undercut Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia, calling it "just a show". Trump, who is on his first official foreign trip, had singled out Iran, saying the country "fuelled the fires of sectarian conflict and terror for decades."

More Details:

<https://scroll.in/latest/838425/americans-dont-know-our-region-iran-president-criticises-donald-trump-calls-saudi-trip-a-show>

- **Rouhani urges US to drop 'hostile' policies towards Iran**

Iran's re-elected President Hassan Rouhani said Monday that United States should drop its "hostile" policies towards the Islamic republic.

More Details;

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2017-05/23/content_29455889.htm

- **Higher Targets Set for Iran Oil, Gas Production**

The National Iranian Oil Company has approved a plan envisioning its target for crude oil and natural gas production in the present fiscal that ends in March 2018.

More Details:

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/energy/65008/higher-targets-set-for-iran-oil-gas-production>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Rocket launched from Sinai at Israel, IDF says**

A rocket was fired from Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula at southern Israel on Tuesday morning, amid a visit to the country by US President Donald Trump, the army said.

More details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/rocket-launched-from-sinai-at-israel-idf-says/>

- **Trump Visits Israel: Live Updates and Analyses from Day Two of the President's Visit**

Trump expected to meet Palestinian President Abbas in Bethlehem before visiting the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial and delivering an address at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem

More details:

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.791207>

- **Abbas Adviser Says Trump Visit Could Reopen Path to Talks**

A senior Palestinian official says he expects President Donald Trump's visit to the Holy Land to reopen a path toward resuming long-stalled Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

More details:

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/ML_TRUMP_PALESTINIANS?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-05-23-02-11-11

- **Hamas says Trump smeared Palestinian ‘resistance’**

Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas accused US President Donald Trump on Monday of smearing the name of Palestinian “resistance” to Israeli occupation during a speech on Islam. Addressing Muslim leaders in Riyadh on Sunday, Trump called for unity against “Islamic terror”, specifically naming Hamas and the Daesh terror group.

More details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/region/hamas-says-trump-smeared-palestinian-resistance%E2%80%99>

- **Palestinian shot dead by Israeli police**

A Palestinian tried to stab Israeli police in the occupied West Bank on Monday and was shot dead, Israeli authorities said. However, passerby vehemently denied the claim.

More details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/f0106386-3e5e-4030-b4bb-c087668d9050.aspx>

- **Palestinians stop work for hunger-striking prisoners**

Palestinians were on Monday observing a general strike in solidarity with prisoners refusing food in Israeli jails for more than a month over their conditions. The strike paralysed east Jerusalem as well as West Bank cities and suburbs, with shops closed and both public and private sector employees refusing to work, AFP correspondents said.

More details:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-4530104/Palestinians-stop-work-hunger-striking-prisoners.html>

- **Israeli Soldiers Kill a Child near Bethlehem**

Israeli soldiers shot and killed, on Monday evening, a Palestinian child at the Container military roadblock, near Bethlehem, reportedly after he attempted to stab them.

More details:

<http://imemc.org/article/israeli-soldiers-kill-a-child-near-bethlehem/>

- **Trump Admin Declares Jerusalem Part of Israel in Major Policy Shift**

The Trump administration declared the president is in "Jerusalem, Israel," on Monday for a series of meetings with Israeli officials, a proclamation that breaks with years of American policy refraining from stating that the city of Jerusalem is part of Israel.

More details:

<http://freebeacon.com/national-security/trump-admin-declares-jerusalem-part-israel-major-policy-shift/>

- **Fourth Israeli Spy Drone Crashes in Lebanon since Beginning of Year**

Lebanese media reported that Israeli drone had crashed in Lebanon, becoming the fourth unmanned aerial vehicle crashing in the country in 2017.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201705221053873366-israeli-drone-crash-lebanon/>

- **Palestinian Security Forces Unable to Move Protest Tent Prior to Trump Trip to Bethlehem**

A senior source in the Palestinian Authority has told Breitbart Jerusalem that Palestinian security forces were unable to convince activists claiming to support prisoners on hunger strike in Israeli jails since last month to abandon a protest tent that was erected near the entrance to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

More details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/jerusalem/2017/05/23/palestinian-security-forces-unable-move-protest-tent-prior-trump-trip-bethlehem/>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Lebanon: No to refugees, yes to investment in Syria**

The Lebanese government is continuing its policy of warnings and intimidation about the repercussions of Syrian refugees on Lebanon by announcing figures about the extent of the economic and social ramifications. The refugee burden has increased the country's economic hardship, but this does not justify many individuals in power and in the media escalating racist rhetoric. Officially, most of the apprehension over refugees comes in the context of seeking international assistance for Lebanon as a host country that bears a burden beyond its capabilities.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1103411#>

- **SMC donates Dhs3m to Big Heart Foundation Clinic in Jordan**

In a first-of-its kind initiative by an Arab media organisation, Sheikh Sultan Bin Ahmed Al Qasimi, Chairman of Sharjah Media Council and Sharjah Media Corporation (SMC), has announced a donation of Dhs3 million to The Big Heart Foundation Clinic at Al Zaatari Camp in Jordan, a facility that hosts approximately 80,000 Syrian refugees. SMC's donation to The Big Heart Foundation (TBHF) – a Sharjah-based global humanitarian charity dedicated to helping refugees and people in need worldwide – follows a visit to the camp by a Sharjah delegation that encompassed officials from a number of government bodies and organisations.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/b750563d-2a45-4546-a892-d16e1775f22e.aspx>

- **Ties that could deepen**

Early this month, the Chinese embassy and the Jordan Chamber of Trade held a discussion on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Jordanian- Chinese diplomatic relations. His Majesty King Abdullah paid five official visits to the People's Republic of China since his accession to the Hashemite throne: in June 2002, when China's president was Jiang Zemin, in July 2004, when His Majesty held talks with then president Hu Jintao, in October 2007, where the highlight was the King's eloquent speech at the University of Beijing, and in September 2013 and September 2015, when he met with President Xi Jinping.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/opinion/jawad-anani/ties-could-deepen>

- **Jaber Says US Renders 'Invalid' Draft 'Sanctions' Against Lebanon**

The Lebanese parliamentary delegation in Washington assured that new US financial sanctions against Lebanon will not be imposed, pointing out that reports about the matter were inaccurate "leaks," al-Joumhouria daily reported on Tuesday. "Everyone is talking as if there are new US sanctions against Lebanon, which is a big fallacy because it has not happened yet," a member of the delegation MP Yassin Jaber told the daily.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/230401-jaber-says-us-renders-invalid-draft-sanctions-against-lebanon>

- **Army Strategy for Energy and Water launched at Beirut Military Club**

A launching ceremony of the Lebanese Army Strategy for Energy and Water took place at the Central Military Club, Manara-Beirut, on Monday, with the participation of Minister of National Defense, Yaacoub Sarraf, representing President Michel Aoun and Prime Minister Saad Hariri. The initiative is funded by the European Union, and implemented in collaboration with the Engineering Directorate at the Lebanese army and CEDRO Project.

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/79531/Army-Strategy-for-Energy-and-Water-launched-at-Beirut-Military-Club>

- **PM Kvirikashvili Attends World Economic Forum**

Georgia and Jordan signed a mutual agreement on deepening cooperation in tourism within the frames of the World Economic Forum (WEF) on the Middle East and North Africa 2017 held in Jordan last weekend. Georgian Prime Minister, Giorgi Kvirikashvili, and his Jordanian counterpart, Hani Mulki, also attended the signing ceremony.

More Details:

<http://georgiatoday.ge/news/6598/PM-Kvirikashvili-Attends-World-Economic-Forum>

- **Fakhoury, Haley discuss cooperation**

Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Imad Fakhoury on Monday met US ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, and discussed bilateral cooperation and challenges facing Jordan in the light of the regional situation. At a meeting on Monday, the two sides highlighted the “distinguished” relationship between Jordan and the US at all levels. Citing the “continuous” US support to Jordan, Fakhoury underlined the “huge” impact of this support on the Kingdom’s development process and ability to turn “challenges into opportunities”.

More Details:

<http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/fakhoury-haley-discuss-cooperation>

- **Trial begins for nine Jordanians over Karak castle attack**

Nine Jordanians have gone on trial in connection with last year's attack on one of the oldest castles in the Middle East. Gunmen linked to ISIL killed 10 people and injured tourists at Karak castle.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/video/news/2017/05/trial-begins-jordanians-karak-castle-attack-170522135613896.html>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **UAE Consul General in New York Meets with Philadelphia Mayor to Discuss Bilateral Relations**

United Arab Emirates Consul General in New York traveled to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on a diplomatic mission where he met with Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney. Consul General Al-Suwaidi and Mayor Kenney discussed the close UAE-US ties and opportunities to expand the bilateral relationship between the UAE and Philadelphia, the fifth-most populous city in the US.

More Details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302615335>

- **Dafza Organises “Indian Business Forum”**

The Dubai Airport Freezone Authority (Dafza) has organised a special forum for Indian businesses under the theme ‘India: A Strategic Partner for Growth in an Evolving Global Economy’ in the presence of Dr. Mohammed Al Zarooni, Director General of Dafza, Vipul, Indian Consul General in Dubai; Bindu Chettur, President, Indian Business Professional Council-Dubai and board members of the IBPC; and several other prominent figures and representatives of government agencies and leading Indian companies.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/ca44b70c-6f54-4fe1-8e31-60f2bba6fe4c.aspx>

- **UAE Health Ministry Inks Inventory Pact with Pfizer**

UAE’s Ministry of Health and Prevention (MOHAP) recently signed an agreement with Pfizer for a strategic inventory of medicines in Abu Dhabi.

More Details:

http://www.tradearabia.com/news/HEAL_325340.html

- **Import ban by UAE, Kuwait hurts Oman’s agricultural sector**

The UAE ban on Omani melons, watercress and carrots is having a huge economic impact as well as hurting the reputation of agricultural products of the country, say industry players. Kuwait followed UAE in banning the import of carrots from Oman, while imposing strict regulations on other farm products.

More Details:

<http://www.muscatdaily.com/Archive/Oman/Import-ban-by-UAE-Kuwait-hurts-Oman-s-agricultural-sector-510d>

- **Qatar Needs to Do Its Part**

An important goal of President Donald Trump’s meetings with Arab and Islamic leaders this past weekend was to encourage them to shoulder more of the burden in defending our common interests, particularly in combating the threats from terrorism and Iran.

More Details:

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/05/22/qatar-needs-to-do-its-part/>

- **Saudi Airstrike Hits Marib**

The US-backed Saudi warplanes waged a strikes on Serwah district of Marib province, an official told Saba on Monday.

More Details:

<http://www.sabanews.net/en/news465350.htm>

- **Pentagon: Seven Al-Qaeda militants killed in Yemen Raid**

Washington: US forces carried out a ground raid on an Al-Qaeda compound in in Marib Governorate in Yemen in the early hours of Tuesday, killing seven militants, the Pentagon said.

More Details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/23/05/2017/Pentagon-Seven-Al-Qaeda-militants-killed-in-Yemen-raid>

- **Islamic Development Bank Plans to Enter Saudi Housing Sector**

The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) plans to enter the Saudi housing sector through investments that are being prepared by technical teams in cooperation with the Saudi Housing Ministry. The bank also inked an agreement with the Saudi Education Ministry tasking the bank to find solutions for the unemployment crisis driven by the discrepancy between education programs and labor markets demands.

More Details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/a-alghabiri/business/islamic-development-bank-plans-enter-saudi-housing-sector>

7. EGYPT

- **Egypt may recover slightly, Saudi could lag in Gulf**

May 23 Egypt's stock market may recover some of the previous day's heavy losses on Tuesday while Gulf markets look set to stay within recent ranges because of a lack of fresh news and the approach of the holy month of Ramadan.

More Details;

<http://www.reuters.com/article/mideast-stocks-idUSL8N1IP0M0?rpc=401&>

- **Egypt guarantees security for tourists from Kazakhstan**

Egypt guarantees security for the tourists from Kazakhstan, said Haisam Ibragim, ambassador of Egypt to Kazakhstan.

More Details;

<http://www.kaztag.kz/en/news/detail.php?ID=541579>

- **Sudanese official hints to Egypt's involvement in recent Darfur fighting**

A Sudanese official has hinted to the involvement of Egypt in supporting the recent rebels' attacks in East and North Darfur states saying the attack aims to obstruct the permanent lift of U.S. sanctions imposed on Sudan.

More Details;

<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article62525>

- **Sheffield bioenergy experts collaborate with Egyptian partners to produce drinking water**

Seawater in Egypt could be turned into drinking water using biomass energy as a source of heat in a new collaborative project from academics at the University of Sheffield UK and Port Said University in Egypt.

More Details;

<https://phys.org/news/2017-05-sheffield-bioenergy-experts-collaborate-egyptian.html>

- **Egypt procures 2.33 mln tonnes of local wheat since start of harvest**

Egypt, the world's largest importer of wheat, has procured 2.33 tonnes of wheat from local farmers since its harvest began in mid-April, the supply ministry said in a statement on Sunday.

More Details;

<http://www.blackseagrains.net/novosti/egypt-procures-2-33-mln-tonnes-of-local-wheat-since-start-of-harvest>

- **Terrorism is the greatest challenge in the region, Egypt's FM tells Rhodes Conference**

Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry said Monday, in an address to the Rhodes Conference for Security and Stability, that the terrorist phenomenon is the greatest challenge in the region as it aims at dismantling societies and shaking their stability,

More Details;

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/269286/-.aspx>

- **Trump Holds Talks with Egypt's President on Security, Bilateral Cooperation**

US President Donald Trump discussed with his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah Sisi the issues of security and bilateral cooperation in various spheres including fighting against terrorism on Sunday, the White House said in a statement.

More Details;

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201705221053841658-trump-holds-talks-sisi/>

- **Middle East Shares Mostly Decline, Egypt Plunges after Central Bank Surprises with Rate Hike**

Egypt's central bank surprised markets and lifted its overnight deposit rate and overnight lending rate by two percentage points - its first increase since a hike of three percentage points in November. It raised rates to combat hyperinflation and after the International Monetary Fund recommended the move, Reuters said.

More Details;

<http://www.nasdaq.com/article/middle-east-shares-mostly-decline-egypt-plunges-after-central-bank-surprises-with-rate-hike-cm792701>

- **48 ISIL Suspects Referred to Military Court over Church Bombings in Egypt**

The Egyptian military judiciary on received 48 suspected member of the ISIL terror group for involvement in three deadly church bombings.

More Details;

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960301001440>

- **Egypt 4G launches approach after frequencies readied**

Egypt's communications minister Yasser al Kadi confirmed 4G frequencies are now ready for use, with launch of services approaching following lengthy delays.

More Details;

<https://www.mobileworldlive.com/featured-content/top-three/egypt-4g-launches-approach-after-frequencies-readied/>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Serinus Energy Inc.: Sabria Field in Tunisia Temporarily Shut-in**

Serinus Energy Inc. ("Serinus", "SEN" or the "Company") (TSX:SEN)(WARSAW:SEN) announces that it has temporarily shut-in production at the Sabria field in Tunisia due to continued social unrest in the southern part of the country. Protestors in the region are demanding employment and regional development initiatives from the government. These protest actions have blocked all roads leading to the southern oilfields of Tunisia including the Company's Sabria field. As a result of the road blockages, the Company has been unable to ship its oil production to market and has resulted in the Company filling its storage tanks at Sabria to capacity.

More Detail:

<http://www.stockhouse.com/news/press-releases/2017/05/22/serinus-energy-inc-sabria-field-in-tunisia-temporarily-shut>

- **Saudi ITFC boosts Tunisia's economy through signing \$310million agreements**

The International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC), a member of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Group, signed two Murabaha Agreements with the total amount of US\$ 310 million. The first agreement is in favour of the Govt. of Tunisia represented by the Tunisian Electricity and Gas Company as the executing agency for financing the sourcing of natural gas for an amount of US\$160 million and the Tunisian Company of the Refining Industries to finance the imports of crude oil and petroleum products for an amount of US\$150 million.

More Detail:

http://www.zawya.com/mena/en/story/Saudi_ITFC_boosts_Tunisia's_economy_through_signing_310million_agreements-ZAWYA20170522090650/

- **Italy inks deal with Libya neighbours to stem migrant flow**

Italy has signed a deal with Libya, Chad and Niger in order to stem the flow of migrants across the Mediterranean through beefed up border controls and new reception centres in the African nations. A joint statement by the interior ministers of the four countries said they had agreed to set up centres in Chad and Niger, key transit countries for migrants who travel to Libya and on to Italy from sub-Saharan Africa.

More Detail:

<http://www.euractiv.com/section/justice-home-affairs/news/italy-inks-deal-with-libya-neighbours-to-stem-migrant-flow/>

- **Libya Quartet meeting convenes on Tuesday in Brussels**

The Secretary-General of the Arab League, Ahmed Abo El-Gheit, to arrive in Brussels on Tuesday in order to participate in the Libya Quartet meeting, media sources reported. The meeting aims to continue coordination and consultancy between the Arab League, United Nations, European Union, and the African Union, around developments in Libya. Discussions will consider joint action regarding Libya's political process under the agreement that was signed in Morocco in December 2015.

More Detail:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/libya-quartet-meeting-convenes-on-tuesday-in-brussels/>

- **Discussing the path to a viable constitution for Libya at the NCUSLR conference**

When Dr Hani Shennib, Chairman of the National Council on US-Libya Relations (NCUSLR) opened the "New Vision, Hope and Opportunities" conference the organisation co-hosted this past Wednesday with the National Council on US-Arab Relations (NCUSAR), he quoted Albert Einstein's adage, "Problems cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them" and observed that conference attendees and panelists were present in the common spirit of making Libya a better place to live. This article is the second in the Libya Herald's brief series highlighting how NCUSLR panelists applied their expertise and elevated thinking to solving Libya's problems.

More Detail:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/05/22/discussing-the-path-to-a-viable-constitution-for-libya-at-the-ncuslr-conference/>

- **Forces launch strikes after Libya air base attack**

East Libyan forces have targeted rival brigades with a series of air strikes in the southern region of Jufra, officials and witnesses said on Sunday, three days after dozens of their men were killed in a surprise attack on an air base. The escalation risks reigniting warfare in Libya's central desert regions, where forces aligned with the eastern-based Libyan National Army (LNA) have skirmished since late last year with opponents aligned with a UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli.

More Detail:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/4be1ae54-9b06-4a12-953a-4a608538d629.aspx>

- **Algeria Adamant Solution to Libyan Crisis is Through Dialogue.**

Algeria has reiterated its position that the Libyan crisis could only be resolved by parties to the conflict sitting at the negotiating table, rejecting military solutions. This was stated by Abdul Gader Bin Saleh, President of the Algerian Al Ummah Council at the Arab-Islamic-US Summit which

concluded in Riyadh on Sunday. The meeting was devoted to discussing security partnerships to combat terrorism and extremism in the world.

More Detail:

[http://www.lana-news.ly/eng/news/view/116573/Algeria Adamant Solution to Libyan Crisis is Through Dialogue](http://www.lana-news.ly/eng/news/view/116573/Algeria%20Adamant%20Solution%20to%20Libyan%20Crisis%20is%20Through%20Dialogue)

- **Algeria Military Helicopter Crash Leaves 3 Dead**

Algeria's defense ministry said Monday that three naval officers were killed when their helicopter crashed after striking power lines during a night patrol 70 kilometers southwest of the capital Algiers. The navy rescue helicopter went down on Sunday night in Tipaza province, the ministry said. The aircraft "hit high-voltage electricity lines" in the Hamr el-Ain area, killing three officers as it crashed.

More Detail:

<http://english.aawsat.com/asharq-al-awsat-english/news-middle-east/algeria-military-helicopter-crash-leaves-3-dead>

- **Algeria summons Moroccan official over assault on diplomat**

The Algerian Foreign Ministry on Saturday summoned the Moroccan ambassador after its diplomats came under attack by officials from Rabat during a UN meeting in the Caribbean. Earlier, Morocco accused Algerian diplomats of "assaulting" a Moroccan diplomat during the same meeting. The new escalation in Moroccan-Algerian relations comes amid continued tensions between the two countries over the Western Sahara conflict.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170522-algeria-summons-moroccan-official-over-assault-on-diplomat/>

- **Panama frees Morocco phosphate shipment held in Western Sahara claim**

Panama authorities have released a Moroccan phosphate shipment from the disputed Western Sahara territory after it was temporarily held by a legal challenge from the Polisario independence movement, officials said on Monday.

More Details:

http://af.reuters.com/article/tunisiaNews/idAFL8N1IO50E?feedType=RSS&feedName=tunisiaNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+reuters%2FAfricaTunisiaNews+%28News+%2FAfrica+%2FTunisia+News%29&&rpc=401

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **13 Villages Cleared From Taliban in Wardak**

Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army launched a joint clearance operation to clear the Nerkh district of Wardak province from terrorists and enemies of peace and stability of Afghanistan. In the joint operation 13 villages were cleared from armed Taliban in Nerkh district, said a statement issued by Ministry of Interior.

More Details:

<http://afghanistantimes.af/13-villages-cleared-from-taliban-in-wardak/>

- **6250 Kg of Ammonium Seized From a Pakistani Bus in Nangarhar**

The Afghan security forces have seized 6,250 kilograms of ammonium nitrate placed inside 125 sacks from a Pakistani transportation bus in eastern Nangarhar province of Afghanistan. The provincial police commandment in a statement said the ammonium nitrate was placed in a professional way inside the bus as the driver was attempting to transport it to Jalalabad city, the provincial capital of Nangarhar province.

More Details:

<http://www.khaama.com/6250-kg-of-ammonium-seized-from-a-pakistani-bus-in-nangarhar-02806>

- **America's Afghanistan Problem: It's Not Just About Sending More Troops**

Reportedly, the Trump administration is considering adding several thousand U.S. troops—ideally accompanied by other NATO and foreign reinforcements too—to the U.S.-led mission in Afghanistan. The current mission totals some 8,500 Americans, and roughly twelve thousand foreign troops in all, so the possible increase could amount to an augmentation of 30–50 percent in total personnel.

More Details:

<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/americas-afghanistan-problem-its-not-just-about-sending-more-20794>

- **Trump needs to Outline a Strategy for Afghanistan**

The conflict in Afghanistan remains a stalemate between beleaguered Afghan security forces and the Taliban, but momentum has shifted to the latter. Taliban militants now control or contest more than 40 percent of the country. In rural areas, the Taliban have rolled out shadow governments that tackle everything from land dispute mediation to crime-fighting. Afghan troop losses are so large that entire units are getting replenished.

More Details:

<http://www.startribune.com/trump-needs-to-outline-a-strategy-for-afghanistan/423720423/>

- **Police reforms in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa**

The Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Assembly passed the K-P Police Act of 2017 on January 24th with no media coverage. It was a historic moment as it is Pakistan's first-ever provincial legislation related to the police. Credit goes to the PTI provincial government for adhering to their police reforms agenda and introducing the legislation to make the police operationally autonomous, politically neutral and democratically controlled.

More Details:

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1416450/police-reforms-khyber-pakhtunkhwa/>

- **Pakistani Lawmaker: Taliban Attack on Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai was Staged**

IN a startling revelation, Pakistani lawmaker Mussarat Ahmadzeb has alleged in a recent interview with daily Ummat – an Urdu-language newspaper – that the 2012 Taliban attack on Malala Yousafzai was merely part of a “drama” and was “scripted way before incident.”

More Details:

<https://asiancorrespondent.com/2017/05/pakistani-lawmaker-taliban-attack-nobel-laureate-malala-yousafzai-staged/#gLq2Bs4uI8IF36tT.97>

- **Pakistan Investigates Army Critics on Social Media**

Pakistani authorities are on a mission to squash all anti-military sentiments online. Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan directed the country's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to investigate 200 social media accounts with posts that criticize the country's powerful Armed Forces.

More Details:

<https://www.engadget.com/2017/05/23/pakistan-investigates-army-critics-on-social-media/>

- **Gang of Kidnappers Arrested in Herat**

Afghan intelligence operatives have arrested a group of armed kidnappers in western Herat province of Afghanistan. A statement released by the National Directorate of Security (NDS) on Tuesday said, “the intelligence directorate special forces have arrested a group of six-armed kidnappers from Injil district of Herat province”.

More Details:

<http://ariananews.af/gang-of-kidnappers-arrested-in-herat/>

- **Govt-farmers Talks Fail**

Pakistan Kissan Ittehad, a representative body of farmers from across the country, on Monday said its talks with the government on reducing the cost of production in the agriculture sector have failed after Finance Minister Ishaq Dar refused to consider their demands.

More Details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1334830/govt-farmers-talks-fail>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkey's Maarif Foundation Eyes Revamping Afghan Schools**

Turkey's state-supported Maarif Foundation has announced its readiness to invest some \$20 million to revamp and revitalize a chain of Turkish schools in Afghanistan.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2017/05/23/turkeys-maarif-foundation-eyes-revamping-afghan-schools>

- **Turkey takes more than 1,000 migrants under EU deal**

More than 1,000 “irregular migrants” have been returned to Turkey under the refugee deal with the Europe, EU Affairs Minister Omer Celik said Tuesday. Responding to a written question in parliament, Celik said 1,093 migrants had been sent back to Turkey by the EU following the introduction of the agreement in March last year.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-takes-more-than-1-000-migrants-under-eu-deal/824434>

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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