



# MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

## GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

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## 1. IRAQ

- **Iraqi Interior Minister Visits Tuz Khurmatu**

Iraq's Interior Minister Asim al-Araji has paid a visit to the conflicted town of Tuz Khurmatu and met with local administrative and security officials. According to Iraqi media outlets, Araji visited Tuz Khurmatu on January 22nd. The visit comes months after Tuz Khurmatu was taken over by the Iranian-backed militias of Hashd al-Shaabi, an offensive which has resulted in challenges to the stability of the town.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/409262>

- **May 12 set for parliamentary elections in Iraq**

Iraqi parliament voted to hold parliamentary elections in May, a Kurdish lawmaker Bakhtyar Shaways, said on Monday (January 22), one day after the federal court rejected delay of the elections. The Iraqi Council of Representatives held its regular session on Monday to vote on the election law and agreed to a date for the parliamentary elections.

More Details:

[http://en.abna24.com/news/middle-east/may-12-set-for-parliamentary-elections-in-iraq\\_878722.html](http://en.abna24.com/news/middle-east/may-12-set-for-parliamentary-elections-in-iraq_878722.html)

- **Parliament refuses to increase quota of Yazidis in new election law: MP**

Iraqi parliament on Monday turned down a request to increase the seats of the Yazidis in the elections law. This came as lawmakers were voting on amends to the law in today's session. Vian Dakhil, a Yazidi lawmaker, said the speaker of the parliament Selim al-Jabouri rejected a request to increase the Yazidi quota in the parliament.

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/22786/Parliament-refuses-to-increase-quota-of-Yazidis-in-new-election-law-MP>

- **The Last Thing Iraq Needs is More Maliki**

One month after formally declaring victory over the Islamic State, Iraq now turns its attention to its upcoming parliamentary elections, which will play a significant role in shaping the future of a country long plagued by civil war and sectarian strife. These elections, currently scheduled for May 12, will determine which coalition controls Iraq's parliamentary Council of Representatives, and in turn, from

which coalition the prime minister will be selected. Among the challengers to sitting Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi's "Victory Alliance" coalition is his predecessor, Nouri al-Maliki, whose State of Law Coalition is seen by many as the most likely to wrestle control of the government away from Abadi.

More Details:

<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-last-thing-iraq-needs-more-maliki-24177>

- **Othman: Abadi and Barzani Have Not Reached Solutions to the Political Problems between Baghdad and Erbil**

The Kurdish leader figure, former MP, Mahmoud Othman revealed that Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and the President of the Kurdistan region government, Nechirvan Barzani have not reached solutions to the political problems between Baghdad and Erbil. "Iran has intervened in Barzani's visit to Baghdad as it is requested that the visit of Barzani and his delegation to Tehran should be through Baghdad, after meeting Abadi with the Kurdish delegation before going to Iran.," he said in a statement to the National Iraqi News Agency (NINA).

More Details:

[http://www.ninanews.com/News\\_Details.aspx?TPJUH90MFtBmwDLLKsqOdw%253d%253d](http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?TPJUH90MFtBmwDLLKsqOdw%253d%253d)

- **Russia invites Iraq to take part in inter-Syrian dialogue in Sochi**

Russian Ambassador in Baghdad Maxim Maximov has invited Iraq to take part in the inter-Syrian dialogue, scheduled to be held in Sochi, Russia, later this month. During a meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari, Maximov handed over a message from Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, inviting Iraq to participate in the Syrian National Dialogue Congress, which will be held on January 29-30.

More Details:

<https://www.iraqinews.com/arab-world-news/russia-invites-iraq-take-part-inter-syrian-dialogue-sochi/>

- **Anti-ISIS Operations near Hawija; 15 Killed in Iraq**

Following a Supreme Court decision that eliminates the possibility of delaying elections, Parliament set May 12 as the date for national elections. The Iraqi Constitution requires elections to occur no later than 45 days before the end of the term.

More Details:

<https://original.antiwar.com/updates/2018/01/22/anti-isis-operations-near-hawija-15-killed-iraq/>

- **Germany protests death sentence for IS member in Iraq**

Germany has protested a death sentence which the Iraqi judiciary issued against a German national for affiliation with the Islamic State militants, German press reports were quoted saying. London-based, Saudi-owned Asharq al-Awsat quoted the reports saying that the German embassy in Baghdad had officially protested a death sentence against a Moroccan-German woman found guilty for providing logistic assistance to the militant group.

More Details:

<https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/germany-protests-death-sentence-member-iraq/>

- **IED attack kills one civilian in Iraq's Baghdad**

ONE civilian was killed and two others were wounded when an improvised explosive device (IED), emplaced by unidentified militants, detonated in the Hor Rajab region in al-Doura town in Iraq's Baghdad province on 18 January, Iraqi News reported. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

More Details:

<http://www.janes.com/article/77248/ied-attack-kills-one-civilian-in-iraq-s-baghdad>

- **BP signs development deal with Iraq**

BP has signed an initial agreement with the Iraqi government to ramp up production from the giant Kirkuk oilfield in Iraqi Kurdistan, as reported by the Financial Times (FT) on Friday. The memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed in Kirkuk on Thursday by BP's Head of Middle East Operations, Michael Townsend.

More Details:

[http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN\\_Direje.aspx?Jimare=42591](http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=42591)

- **Iraq signs rare gas deal with US firm**

Iraq has signed a deal with a U.S. company to tap natural gas in one of its southern oil fields, a step toward exploiting a natural resource that has been neglected for decades. Iraq has long flared much of its natural gas, a byproduct of pumping crude oil, because of a lack of infrastructure. But the Memorandum of Understanding signed Monday would allow Orion Gas Processors to capture and process up to 150 million cubic feet per day of associated gas from the Nahr Bin Omar field.

More Details:

<http://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/business/article195906379.html>

## 2. SYRIA

- **Syrian opposition leader decries plight of East Ghouta**

Decrying the worsening situation in the besieged Eastern Ghouta region, the head of Syria's opposition delegation said Monday that helping civilians must be prioritized. "The situation in Eastern Ghouta is causing serious concern, and the last three months were the worst ever for this region," Nasr al-Hariri, head of the opposition's High Negotiations Committee (HNC), said during a meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on his first-ever visit to Moscow.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/syrian-opposition-leader-decries-plight-of-east-ghouta/1039314>

- **Syrian opposition launches operation against regime**

Syria's armed opposition launched an operation Monday against Assad regime controlled regions around Turkmen Mountain in Latakia governorate, said its commander. Speaking to Anadolu Agency, Jabal al-Islam Commander Zahir Abu Usama said Russia is "intensely attacking Idlib".

More Details:

<https://www.yenisafak.com/en/world/syrian-opposition-launches-operation-against-regime-3003106>

- **Russian military arranges return of 9,500 refugees to Syria's Rif Dimashq province**

Officers from the Russian Center for Reconciliation of the opposing sides in Syria have arranged the return of more than 9,500 refugees to the Al-Buwaitah settlement in the Rif Dimashq province. "The negotiation process was rather difficult but we managed to succeed by making joint efforts," the Russian Center's spokesman Major General Viktor Pankov told reporters. "We made a joint working visit to the settlement, assessed the situation, particularly its security aspect," he said, adding that "we managed to bring back 1,500 families, which is more than 9,500 refugees."

More Details:

<http://tass.com/defense/986390>

- **Russia invites Kurds to join Syria peace congress**

Russia said on Monday it had invited Kurds to take part in an upcoming Syrian peace congress in Sochi, despite a Turkish offensive against Kurdish militia in northern Syria. Together with regime backer Iran and rebel supporter Turkey, Russia – a key backer of Syrian president Bashar Al Assad – is preparing to host the January 30 talks with the aim of agreeing a new constitution for post-war Syria.

More Details:

<https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/russia-invites-kurds-to-join-syria-peace-congress-1.697807>

- **Deaths reported in shelling of Syria's Damascus**

Five people have been killed in artillery fire in the Syrian capital, Damascus, according to a UK-based war monitoring group. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), which gathers details of casualties from a network of sources inside the country, said on Monday that 11 others were wounded in the attack on the neighbourhood of Bab Touma.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/deaths-reported-shelling-syria-damascus-180122135625479.html>

- **Representatives of Russia and Syria discussed preparation of Congress of Syrian national dialogue in Sochi**

Mikhail Bogdanov, special envoy of Russian president in Near East and states of Africa, Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia, discussed preparation of the Congress of Syrian national dialogue in Sochi with Riyad Haddad, ambassador of Syria to Moscow, reports TASS news agency. "The parties have discussed the situation in Sochi and around it with the emphasis on the complex of issues of political regulation of Syrian crisis. They discussed preparation of the Congress of Syrian national dialogue in Sochi," reads the message, the negotiations have been initiated by the Syrian side.

More Details:

<http://www.kaztag.kz/en/news/detail.php?ID=594256>

- **US aid chief visits Syria's Raqqa as city recovers from IS rule**

The US government's aid chief, Mark Green, made an unannounced visit to Raqqa in Syria on Monday, the most senior US civilian official from the Donald Trump administration to visit the war-struck northern city months after it was retaken from the Islamic State (IS) group. Green was accompanied by the head of the US Central Command General Joseph Votel. US-backed Kurdish-led fighters known as Syria Democratic Forces (SDF) recaptured Raqqa, the capital of IS's self-proclaimed caliphate and its last major stronghold in Syria, back in October 2017.

More Details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/us-aid-chief-visits-syrias-raqqa-city-recovers-rule-165887836>

- **U.S. warns Russia on Syria's chemical weapons after new attack is reported**

The United States sternly criticized Russia's failure to rein in its Syrian ally, Bashar Assad, on Monday after reports of a new regime chemical weapons strike. Rights monitors say 21 people, including children, suffered breathing difficulties Monday after an alleged chemical attack on a besieged rebel enclave outside Damascus.

More Details:

[https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/01/23/world/crime-legal-world/u-s-warns-russia-syrias-chemical-weapons-new-attack-reported/#.Wmb4s65l\\_cs](https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/01/23/world/crime-legal-world/u-s-warns-russia-syrias-chemical-weapons-new-attack-reported/#.Wmb4s65l_cs)

### 3. IRAN

- **Spokesman: Troubled Passenger Planes Sales to Iran Means Breach of N. Deal by US**

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Bahram Qassemi cautioned the US administration to avoid impeding or delaying the sales of passenger planes to Tehran, warning that any such move amounts to the violation of the nuclear deal. "The US administration has undertaken to implement the (2015) nuclear deal precisely and is required to facilitate the sales of civilian airplanes to Iran," Qassemi told reporters in his weekly press conference in Tehran on Monday.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13961102001581>

- **EU wrong to think non-JCPOA concessions will keep Trump in the deal: Araghchi**

A high ranking Iranian official has stressed that EU states who think they can persuade US President Donald Trump to stay in Iran's nuclear deal by making non-JCPOA concessions are "totally wrong." "Some Europeans think that if they give Trump non- JCPOA concession, they will be able to keep him inside the nuclear deal, this is a totally wrong policy which will without a doubt have a reverse result," Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araghchi made the remarks on Monday.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/01/23/549849/iran-us-deal-eu-trump>

- **Senior Iran official: Resistance, only hope for Palestinians**

A senior advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says anti-Israeli resistance is the only hope for Palestinians as they have lost their trust in the United States and their efforts to reach a compromise with Tel Aviv have also failed. Addressing a conference in Tehran on

Monday on the issue of Palestine, Ali Akbar Velayati said, “Palestinians have exhausted all efforts aimed at reaching a compromise [with Israel] and Mahmoud Abbas, who runs the Palestinian self-rule, has noted that the United States cannot be trusted anymore.”

More Details:

[http://en.abna24.com/news/iran/senior-iran-official-resistance-only-hope-for-palestinians\\_878720.html](http://en.abna24.com/news/iran/senior-iran-official-resistance-only-hope-for-palestinians_878720.html)

- **Top U.S., French Diplomats to Meet On Iran**

Iran is expected to dominate Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's January 23 meeting with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian in Paris, the second leg of the U.S. top diplomat's weeklong trip to Europe. After meeting with top British officials in London on January 22, Tillerson cited progress in getting European support for tough penalties against Tehran that could prevent a U.S. withdrawal from Iran's nuclear deal with world powers.

More Details:

<https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-nuclear-deal-us-france-talks/28991297.html>

- **Iran Starts Water Transfer to Control Dust Pollution**

Iran has established an irrigation canal in the southwestern Khuzestan province as part of efforts to counter the menace of dust pollution hitting western and southwestern provinces bordering Iraq. Iran's Minister of Agriculture Mahmoud Hojjati made a visit to the canal which is expected to navigate water to the regions from which sand and dust storms originate. During the visit, he was accompanied by Governor General of Khuzestan province Gholam-Reza Shariati.

More Details

<http://ifpnews.com/exclusive/iran-starts-water-transfer-control-dust-pollution/>

- **Iran: ECO Cultural Institute plays effective role in cultural diplomacy**

Iran's minister of culture and Islamic guidance appreciated Tuesday ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) for playing 'incomparable role' in promotion of cultural diplomacy in the region. 'Iranian cultural institutes should prepare the ground for fostering cultural interactions with the neighboring Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) members, Abbas Salehi said in a meeting held here with President of ECO Cultural Institute in Tehran Mohammad-Mehdi Mazaheri.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82805386>

- **Us seeking to maintain conflicts in West Asia**

Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, Leader's top military aide warns of new Saudi-US-Israeli plots in the region and said, "US is currently maintaining hubs of conflict and using these conflicts to stimulate disputes in the region as well." In a special televised interview in IRIB Channel II, he pointed to the crimes committed by ISIL terrorist group in Iraq and Syria and said, "the terrorist group [DAESH] could spread war in various parts of neighboring Syria for 82 months at the unsparing material and political support of Zionist regime, US and some reactionary Arabic countries."

More Details:

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/131544/Us-seeking-to-maintain-conflicts-in-West-Asia>

- **US-EU Initiative on Iran Nuclear Deal Unlikely to Have Positive Results - Moscow**

The initiative of the United States and the E3 members of the nuclear deal with Iran (Germany, France and the United Kingdom) to launch a working group to address concerns around the agreement is unlikely to bring any positive results, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told Sputnik.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/world/201801231060989688-eu-us-iran-nuclear-deal/>

## 4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Pence pledges US embassy move by end of 2019 on Jerusalem trip**

US Vice President Mike Pence pledged to move the American embassy in Israel to Jerusalem by the end of 2019 on Monday in a speech to Israel's parliament that saw Arab lawmakers expelled after they shouted in protest. As Pence spoke, Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas arrived to meet European Union foreign ministers in Brussels, urging them to "swiftly" recognise the state of Palestine.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86883>

- **Arab MPs ejected after protesting Pence Knesset speech**

Palestinian members of the Israeli parliament have been forcibly removed from the chamber after staging a protest at the start of US Vice President Mike Pence's speech. Pence's visit in Israel, the last leg of a regional tour, was boycotted by Palestinian leaders following US President Donald Trump's decision last month to declare Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/arab-mps-ejected-protesting-pence-knesset-speech-180122160854881.html>

- **Foreign minister says US bias toward Israel proves Palestinian stand is correct**

Foreign and Expatriates Minister Riyad Malki said on Tuesday that the speech by US Vice President Mike Pence in the Israeli parliament, which was totally biased toward Israel, proves that the Palestinian decision to rule out a US role in the peace process is correct. Speaking to Voice of Palestine radio, Malki reiterated the Palestinian stand, which was also expressed during a meeting with European Union foreign ministers in Brussels on Monday, that the US mediation of the peace process or its monopoly over it are no longer acceptable and do not exist anymore.

More Details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=wz3hoWa96172737144awz3hoW>

- **Palestine Joins Global Push to Eliminate Landmines**

Palestine has become the 164th state to ban antipersonnel landmines, another sign of the growing global stigma against these abhorrent weapons. Palestine acceded to the Mine Ban Treaty following the treaty's annual meeting in Vienna in December. Palestine has expressed support the treaty for the past two decades.

More Details:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/01/22/palestine-joins-global-push-eliminate-landmines>

- **Senior Qaeda leader calls for attacks on Jews, Americans over Jerusalem**

A senior al-Qaeda leader has called on Muslims "everywhere" to rise up and kill Jews and Americans in response to US President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital. In a video released Monday, Khalid Batarfi said Trump's decision was "a declaration of a new Jewish-Crusader war" and every Muslim had a duty to "liberate" the holy city, the SITE Intelligence monitoring group reported.

More Details:

<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2018/01/23/Senior-Qaeda-leader-calls-for-attacks-on-Jews-Americans-over-Jerusalem.html>

- **Israeli settler harrases Palestinian farmers in Jordan Valley**

An Israeli settler reportedly harassed Palestinian farmers in the northern Jordan Valley on Sunday, preventing them from grazing their livestock, according to official Palestinian Authority (PA)-owned Wafa news agency. Wafa reported that an Israeli settler from the illegal Rutum settlement chased down Palestinian shepherds out of pastures in the northern Jordan Valley in order to prevent them from feeding their livestock.

More Details:

<http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=779772>

- **Abbas accepts return of US to broker peace process**

Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas has told his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi that he would accept US mediation of the peace process, Arab48.com reported yesterday. Abbas accepted this on the condition that he is part of the international effort. An unnamed Palestinian source said: “Abbas told Al-Sisi that he accepts the return of US mediation even without the abolition of the US President Donald Trump’s recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.”

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180123-abbas-accepts-return-of-us-to-broker-peace-process/>

- **Israel May Shutter Dublin Embassy**

The Irish have historically stood with the Palestinian people, with their popular leaders drawing parallels between the Palestinian struggle and their own. Earlier this week, long-time supporter of Palestine, and president of the Sinn Féin party in Ireland, Gerry Adams called the International Community once again to recognize a Palestinian State. He called on his own government to upgrade the status of the Palestinian mission in Ireland to full ambassadorial status.

More Details:

<http://www.palestinechronicle.com/israel-may-shutter-dublin-embassy/>

## 5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Khatib Says Gemayel Trying to 'Gain Popularity'**

Environment Minister Tarek al-Khatib said he is still “not certain” about the source of the trash that accumulated on Monday at the Keserwan's shore and accused Kataeb Party leader Sami Gemayel of trying to gain popularity for the upcoming parliamentary elections, al-Joumhouria daily reported on

Tuesday. “I can not define the source of the trash. A technical team has been dispatched to conduct a detection report after which I can determine the source,” Khatib told the daily.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/241229-khatib-says-gemayel-trying-to-gain-popularity>

- **Tueini: Bassil's proposal aims at extending deadline for expatriates' registration**

Minister of State, Nicolas Tueini, said Tuesday that the proposal made by Minister Gebran Bassil on the modification of the electoral law is aimed at prolonging the deadline for the registration of expatriates for the vote. In an interview with the Voice of Lebanon 93.3, Minister Tueini said the amendment is not essential, but allows for more expatriates to vote.

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/87467/Tueini-Bassil-39-proposal-aims-at-extending-deadline-for-expatriates-39-registration>

- **President Aoun ahead of Kuwait Visit: Lebanon Stability Red Line**

Lebanese President Michel Aoun stressed on Monday that stability of Lebanon is a red line that cannot be crossed, ahead of a visit to Kuwait. Talking to Kuna news agency ahead of the visit on Tuesday, President Aoun underlined that the ties between Lebanon and Kuwait are “historic, strong and steady.” He said that the message he will carry to Kuwait won’t differ from those he held to countries he had visited since his election in November 2016.

More Details:

<http://english.almanar.com.lb/431220>

- **Piles of washed up trash on Lebanese shore cause outrage**

Environmentalists say a winter storm has pushed a wave of trash onto a Lebanese shore just outside Beirut, stirring outrage over a waste management crisis that has choked the country since 2015. Zouq Mosbeh’s beach was covered in a mantle of garbage on Tuesday, after an extended storm battered the Mediterranean country.

More Details:

<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2018/01/23/IN-PICTURES-Piles-of-washed-up-trash-on-Lebanese-shore-cause-outrage.html>

- **King invited to Kuwait-hosted rebuild Iraq event next month**

His Majesty King Abdullah on Monday received an official Iraqi invitation to participate in the Kuwait-hosted conference on reconstructing Iraq on February 12-14, a Royal Court statement said. During a meeting with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al Abadi's special envoy, chief of the Iraqi National Intelligence Service Mustafa Kadhimi, His Majesty stressed Jordan's support for Iraq to achieve stability, unity and the efforts exerted by the Iraqi government to achieve development and build a better future for its people.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/king-invited-kuwait-hosted-rebuild-iraq-event-next-month>

- **Foreign Ministry issues tender for new ambassador to Jordan**

The Foreign Ministry confirmed Tuesday that it had issued an internal tender to select a new ambassador to Jordan, as it moves to repair diplomatic ties that were badly strained following a deadly shooting incident in Amman involving an Israeli embassy guard last year.

More Details:

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/foreign-ministry-issues-tender-for-new-ambassador-to-jordan/>

- **Why Israel-Jordan crisis lasted so long**

“It all happened because of one photo. This affair could have ended much sooner.” This was what a senior member of Israel’s Security Cabinet told Al-Monitor on condition of anonymity, six months after the July 2017 shooting to death of two Jordanians by an Israeli Embassy guard that set off a severe crisis between the countries. This week, after tumultuous shuttle diplomacy between King Abdullah’s palace in Amman and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office in Jerusalem, the crisis appeared to be nearing resolution.

More Details:

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/01/israel-jordan-us-king-abdullah-ii-benjamin-netanyahu-embassy.html>

- **King, Queen to take part in World Economic Forum in Davos**

Their Majesties King Abdullah and Queen Rania accompanied by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hussein will take part in World Economic Forum Annual Meeting that will be held during January 23-26 in Davos, Switzerland under the theme "Creating a Shared Future in a Fractured World". The King is expected to meet on the sidelines of the event with leaders and representatives of the participating countries in the forum including the kings of Spain and Belgium, the presidents of

France and Poland, the German chancellor as well as the prime ministers of a number of Arab and friendly countries.

More Details:

[http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=37032#.Wmcnqa5l\\_cs](http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=37032#.Wmcnqa5l_cs)

## 6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Yemen's deputy interior minister escapes Houthi attack**

Yemen's deputy interior minister has escaped a missile attack by Houthi rebels in the south-western Taiz province on Monday, which left 11 people dead, according to military and medical sources. Houthi rebels shelled a military parade attended by Naser Lakhshaa and senior military officials in al-Khayyami barracks in southern Taiz, a military source said on condition of anonymity because he was not unauthorized to speak to media.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/yemen-s-deputy-interior-minister-escapes-houthi-attack/1038860>

- **Russia calls for diplomatic solution to Yemen conflict**

Russia on Monday called for an end to fighting in Yemen, saying there could be no military solution to the nearly four-year war between Huthi rebels and the Saudi-backed government. Russia halted its diplomatic presence in Yemen last month because of the deepening conflict and Moscow has previously expressed concern about strikes by the Saudi-led coalition.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86882>

- **Saudi-led air strike kills seven Yemenis: Residents**

Saudi-led coalition aircraft on Monday struck a building in northern Yemen that housed a clinic, killing seven people, five of them children, residents said, and the latest in a series of raids that have drawn international condemnation. A spokesman for the Saudi-led coalition had no immediate comment on the attack, which residents said occurred early in the morning. The coalition says it does not target civilians in its war against the Iran-aligned Houthi group.

More Details:

<https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/22/01/2018/Saudi-led-air-strike-kills-seven-Yemenis-Residents>

- **Germany halts arms exports to Saudis, others at war in Yemen**

The German government has announced it is suspending arms exports to Saudi Arabia and other countries waging war in Yemen, a measure that sets a new bar for Western countries selling to Riyadh and puts pressure on Canada to follow suit. Human rights advocates have accused Saudi Arabia of war crimes over its conduct in Yemen, where more than 5,200 civilians have been killed and 8,800 injured since Riyadh began a military campaign there in 2015 against Houthi rebels aligned with Iran.

More Details:

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/germany-halts-arms-exports-to-saudis-others-at-war-in-yemen/article37698778/>

- **Qatar calls on Palestinians to apply for teaching jobs**

In cooperation with the Palestinian ministry the Qatari education ministry has renewed its call on Palestinians to apply to work as teachers in Qatar, Al-Resalah reported yesterday. In November the Palestinian and Qatari education ministers signed an agreement for cooperation in education, training and other issues related to school and university education.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180123-qatar-calls-on-palestinians-to-apply-for-teaching-jobs/>

- **Abu Dhabi's Louvre leaves Qatar off the map**

The Louvre Abu Dhabi said Monday it had replaced a map of the Arabian Peninsula that omitted Qatar, embroiled in a months-long diplomatic dispute with its Gulf neighbors. The map, one of several aiming at placing exhibits in their geographical context, was located in the children's section of the museum.

More Details:

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/abu-dhabis-louvre-leaves-qatar-off-the-map/>

- **'UAE will not escalate tension with Qatar'**

UAE will not escalate the ongoing diplomatic crisis with Qatar in the best interest of the safety and security of the residents, a military official said on Tuesday. "The UAE Armed Forces will not escalate the current crisis with Qatar. We have instructions not to escalate," Brigadier General Hilal Saeed Al Qubaisi from the UAE military told reporters at a news conference held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Abu Dhabi.

More Details:

<https://www.khaleejtimes.com/region/qatar-crisis/uae-will-not-escalate-tension-with-qatar>

- **UAE officials under investigation for torture**

The UK police are actively investigating a group of United Arab Emirates officials for torture and cruel treatment inflicted on several Qatari nationals, a human rights lawyer has said. The Emiratis may be questioned and arrested if they were to enter the UK under the principle of universal jurisdiction, says Rodney Dixon, a barrister at Temple Garden Chambers representing three Qatari nationals, who were imprisoned and tortured between 2013 and 2015 in Emirati prisons.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/uae-officials-investigation-torture-180122174920589.html>

## 7. EGYPT

- **Russia invites Egypt to Sochi summit meeting on Syria**

Russia on Monday officially invited Egypt to a planned summit meeting in Sochi over the Syrian crisis, slated for January 28-29, according to Egypt's Foreign Ministry. "The Russian administration has invited Egypt to the Sochi Summit on the Syrian crisis," Ahmed Abu Zeid, a spokesperson for the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/russia-invites-egypt-to-sochi-summit-meeting-on-syria/1038955>

- **FM: Arab FMs to hold meeting at Arab League in February**

Minister of Foreign Affairs Sameh Shoukry arranged Monday the upcoming meeting of the Arab Foreign Ministries at the Arab League, scheduled to be held in February, in coordination with his Jordanian counterpart Ayman Safadi. This was during Shoukry's meeting with the foreign ministers of the Member States of the Coalition for Supporting Legitimacy in Yemen held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

More Details:

<https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/2/40862/FM-Arab-FMs-to-hold-meeting-at-Arab-League-in>

- **Egyptian parliamentary committee responds to 'Coptic issues' memo released by US Congress**

The head of the Egyptian parliament's foreign affairs committee, Tarek Radwan, said on Monday that the committee has finished drafting a response to a memorandum on "Coptic issues" in Egypt that was made public in December by some members of the US Congress. The memorandum, drafted by a US-based organization called Coptic Solidarity, claimed that there is systematic discrimination against Copts in Egypt by the government under President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi's administration. On reviewing the memo, some members of Congress adopted a resolution titled "Expressing concern over attacks on Coptic Christians," which received strong bipartisan support.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/288598/Egypt/Politics-/Egyptian-parliamentary-committee-responds-to-Copti.aspx>

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

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

More Details:

<http://www.egyptdailynews.com/detail/support-egypt-coalition-holds-public-conference-to-support-sisi>

- **Presidential Hopeful Sami Annan to be Investigated over Alleged Violations of Military Rules**

Former military Chief of Staff Sami Annan is to be interrogated over committing multiple violations of army regulations by declaring that he will run in Egypt's upcoming presidential elections, according to a statement released on Tuesday by the General Command of the Armed Forces. The statement said Annan had not obtained the necessary permits and endorsements from the army before declaring his intention to run in the elections, requiring him to be investigated over the matter.

More Details:

<https://egyptianstreets.com/2018/01/23/presidential-hopeful-sami-annan-to-be-investigated-over-alleged-violations-of-military-rules/>

- **Sisi poll-axed, but it's party time for Ben Ali**

Egyptians don't want Abdel Fattah al-Sisi as president for a second term, according to Twitter opinion poll by the Russian state-backed television station, RT Arabic. About two thirds (69 percent) of the 48,000 respondents said Sisi should not remain as president, compared to 31 percent who said he should.

More Details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/arabic-press-review-party-time-ben-ali-sisi-gets-poll-axed-1679533199>

- **Justice Ministry expanded courts, offices between 2014-17: Justice Minister**

The services sector of the Justice Ministry witnessed significant expansion, restoration, and maintenance of court buildings, as well as construction of new ones in the period between 2014 and 2017, Justice Minister Mohamed Hossam Abdel Rahim said on Tuesday. The construction of offices for experts, as well as for the ministry's Forensic Medicine Authority, also saw an increase over the same period, he added, while highlighting that modern forensic medical equipment had been brought in.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/justice-ministry-expanded-courts-offices-between-2014-17-justice-minister/>

- **Minister of Immigration urges Egyptian expats to vote in upcoming presidential election**

Minister of Immigration Nabila Makram urged Egyptian expatriates to vote in the upcoming presidential election. She said that there were 340,000 Egyptian expatriates who voted in the last presidential election, adding that the state aims to increase this number in the upcoming poll, set to begin in March.

More Details:

<https://dailynewsegypt.com/2018/01/22/minister-immigration-urges-egyptian-expats-vote-upcoming-presidential-election/>

## 8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Morocco: Government Reshuffle Introduces Five New Cabinet Members**

Almost three months after four ministers were dismissed from the PJD-led government, King Mohammed VI has approved five new cabinet members belonging to the same parties as the outgoing ministers thus keeping the government coalition parties unchanged. The new ministers are Abdelahad Fassi Fihri of the leftist PPS party who was appointed minister of National Planning, Urban Planning, Housing and Urban Policy succeeding to the head of his party Nabil Ben Abdellah.

More Details:

<http://northafricapost.com/21851-morocco-government-reshuffle-introduces-five-new-cabinet-members.html>

- **Western Sahara: UNSG Envoy Invites Morocco and Polisario to 'Separate' Meetings in Berlin**

In efforts to promote direct negotiations over the Western Sahara conflict, the United Nations Secretary-General Envoy Horst Kohler has invited the two parties to "separate meetings" scheduled for January 24 and 26 in Berlin, Germany. Akhbar Al Yaoum reported on Monday that Kohler aspires to open a new round of negotiations to find an agreed upon and mutually acceptable solution to the Western Sahara conflict through the talks to be held in Berlin.

More Details:

<https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2018/01/238968/western-sahara-un-horst-kohler-envoy-morocco-polisario-meetings-berlin/>

- **Tunisia's plans to bring in its own national 'aadhaar' biometric id system halted -- for now**

The last time that Techdirt wrote about Tunisia was back in 2011, when the Internet helped bring about a major regime change there. Although violent protests against the government have flared up recently, in general, the processes that are being applied to shift national policies in Tunisia are both peaceful and successful. Here, for example, is some good news from Access Now on the privacy front: This week the people of Tunisia won a major victory for privacy: the dangerous biometric ID card proposal has officially been withdrawn from consideration in the Assembly of the Representatives of the People (ARP).

More Details:

<http://tdailynews.net/story-z9725530>

- **Voice of Farmers Party calls Chahed to revoke any Government member leading campaign on behalf of his party**

The Voice of Farmers Party called Prime Minister Youssef Chahed to protect his government against political and partisan infighting and to revoke any government member leading an election campaign on behalf of his party. The party refers in a statement issued on Tuesday, to the decision of Nidaa Tounes party to create a national council in charge of monitoring municipal elections and assisting the party's electoral list. 29 delegates were appointed to the various regional party co-ordinations to monitor the municipal elections. This council is composed, among others, of ministers and acting secretaries of State, advisers to the Presidency of the Republic as well as deputies.

More Details:

<https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/9784435-voice-of-farmers>

- **Bensalah hands over message from President Bouteflika to Liberia's new President**

The Speaker of the Council of the Nation Abdelkader Bensalah handed over Monday, in Monrovia, a written message from President of the Republic Abdelaziz Bouteflika to the new President of Liberia George Weah, said a communiqué of the Council.

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/22426-bensalah-hands-over-message-from-president-bouteflika-to-liberia-s-new-president>

- **RADA arrests 61 connected with Mitiga airport attack**

The Rada Special Deterrence Force announced that it has arrested 61 people and released another six, following the attack on the Mitiga airport compound that shook Tripoli last week. Spokesman Ahmen Ben Salem had previously told the Libya Herald "it was impossible to count" how many were arrested, such was the high number. Rada said the attack from militias mainly from Tajura was an attempt to break out some of their comrades held at Mitiga's jail.

More Details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2018/01/23/rada-arrests-61-connected-with-mitiga-airport-attack/>

- **UN envoy to Libya says National Conference preparations underway**

The UN envoy to Libya, Ghassan Salame, has announced that the preparations for the Libyan National Conference are going smoothly. The National Conference is one of the four stages of Salame's action plan to end Libya's current political impasse, which he announced last September.

More Details:

<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/un-envoy-libya-says-national-conference-preparations-underway>

- **UNICEF: 1.3 million Libyans, including 439.000 children, in need of humanitarian assistance**

In 2017, an estimated 1.3 million people including 439,000 children were in need of urgent humanitarian assistance in Libya due to the continued conflict, insecurity, and the collapsing economy. UNICEF reported that the periodic escalations of armed conflict that took place in 2017 further aggravated the humanitarian needs especially for the most vulnerable people including children. In addition, towards the end of 2017, an estimated 400,000 migrants and refugees were estimated to be in Libya including over 33,000 children exposed to huge protection risks and human rights violations.

More Details:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/unicef-1-3-million-libyans-including-439-000-children-in-need-of-humanitarian-assistance/>

## 9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Media, judiciary not free in Pakistan: PM Abbasi**

Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on Tuesday reiterated that the elections will be held on time and that he is 100 percent sure in this regard. The prime minister was talking to senior journalists in the Federal Capital. He said that media and judiciary are not free in Pakistan, adding that the profiles of judges be made public before their appointment. In past judges were appointed who were not worthy of being given this important assignment, he noted.

More Details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/272055-media-judiciary-not-free-in-pakistan-pm-abbasi>

- **SC orders Rao Anwar's name to be placed on ECL after reports surface of his attempt to flee country**

The Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered to place Rao Anwar's name on the Exit Control List (ECL) after reports emerged that the former senior superintendent of police Malir attempted to leave the country last night. Rao was stopped from boarding a Dubai-bound flight at Islamabad's Benazir Bhutto International Airport late on Monday night, sources told Dawn. Anwar, however, denied the reports.

More Details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1384749/sc-orders-rao-anwars-name-to-be-placed-on-ecl-after-reports-surface-of-his-attempt-to-flee-country>

- **Student group resumes protest day after Punjab University brawl ends**

A student group resumed its protest rally at the campus bridge on Canal Road demanding the arrest of people involved in a brawl at the Punjab University a day before, even as 150 people were booked by the police booking in the case. Four hundred police officials were already deployed at the university and the hostel in the morning to avert any untoward incident.

More Details:

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/178223-150-booked-after-two-student-groups-brawl-at-punjab-university>

- **US Calls On Pakistan to Arrest And Expel Taliban Leaders**

White House Press Secretary told reporters that an attack such as the hotel siege only strengthens the US's resolve to support Afghanistan. White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders told reporters at her daily press briefing that the United States has called on Pakistan to immediately arrest or expel Taliban leaders who are carrying out terror activities in Afghanistan and to prevent them from using Pakistani territory to support its operations.

More Details:

<http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/us-calls%C2%A0%C2%A0pakistan%C2%A0-arrest-expel%C2%A0taliban-leaders%C2%A0after-siege>

- **UNSC wants Kabul attack perpetrators brought to justice**

The UN Security Council on Monday asked countries to bring to justice perpetrators of a weekend Taliban-claimed attack on a luxury hotel in Kabul. In a statement, the 15-membered body of the UN underlined the need to hold perpetrators, organisers, financiers and sponsors of the reprehensible act of terrorism accountable and bring them to justice.

More Details:

<https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2018/01/23/unsc-wants-kabul-attack-perpetrators-brought-justice>

- **Bilateral trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan drops by \$2 billion**

The Pakistani officials are saying that the bilateral trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan has dropped by almost two billion US dollars. Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) President Zahidullah Shinwari has said the bilateral trade between the two countries reached to \$500 million a year.

More Details:

<https://www.khaama.com/bilateral-trade-between-afghanistan-and-pakistan-drops-by-2-billion-04330>

- **CE Abdullah Promises Women's Increasing Role in Govt. Organs**

Chief Executive Dr. Abdullah Abdullah received a number of women rights' advocates and activists at his office on Monday, his office said in a statement. According to the statement, pointing at challenges and big opportunities in the country, CE Abdullah said that realistic behaving before ahead cases could guarantee stability of Afghanistan.

More Details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/politics/item/31757-ce-abdullah-promises-women%E2%80%99s-increasing-role-in-govt-organs.html>

## 10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkey's president receives update on Afrin operation**

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was updated Monday on the progress of Operation Olive Branch by commanders in a video conference, according to presidential sources. After holding meetings, Erdogan received information from military commanders in the region on the operation's third day at the Presidential Complex's government information coordination center at 11pm (2000GMT) local time, said the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to restrictions on talking to the media.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkeys-president-receives-update-on-afrin-operation/1039272>

- **Turkey, Iraq mull joint operation against PKK in Sinjar**

Turkey and Iraq are in talks for a joint operation against the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) presence in the Sinjar province of Iraq, the Turkish foreign minister has said, as the Turkish army launched a massive new operation into the Afrin region of Syria to eradicate PKK-linked forces on its southern border. "One of the issues we have discussed with Iraq is a joint operation against the PKK's presence in Sinjar province. They told us 'PKK is no different from DAESH [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant – ISIL], let's cooperate against this threat,'" Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu told daily Hürriyet on his return from his one-day visit to Baghdad late Jan. 21.

More Details:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-iraq-mull-joint-operation-against-pkk-in-sinjar-126123>

- **Turkey Aims To Eliminate the Terror Corridor in Syria'**

In its current Operation Olive Branch, Turkey aims to eliminate the PYD/PKK's terror corridor in northwestern Syria, said the head of the Turkish delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly on Monday. "As in Operation Euphrates Shield, Turkey aims to eliminate the terror corridor that is being created at our borders, to finally end the oppression of the terrorist organizations on the people of the region, and to restore peace to the region," Berat Conkar said in a letter to Paolo Alli, the president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and delegation heads of NATO countries.

More Details:

<https://en.haberler.com/turkey-aims-to-eliminate-the-terror-corridor-in-1158718/>

- **US officials arrive in Ankara to discuss Syria**

A high-level U.S. delegation arrived here Monday to discuss a number of issues with officials, including cooperation and the Turkish military operation in Syria's Afrin region, according to diplomatic sources. The American delegation will also have a meeting at the Turkish General Staff. The Turkish group will be led by Deputy Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Ahmet Muhtar Gun at the meeting Tuesday, and the U.S. delegation will be headed by Deputy Assistant Secretary Jonathan Cohen, according to the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to restrictions on speaking to the media.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/americas/us-officials-arrive-in-ankara-to-discuss-syria/1039288>

- **Operation Olive Branch targets terror groups in Syria: Turkish Deputy PM**

The only aim of Operation Olive Branch is to eliminate terrorists from its area of operations, Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozdağ said on Jan. 22. "The only target of this operation is the PKK [outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party], KCK [Kurdistan Communities Union], PYD/YPG [Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party/People's protection Units], and ISIL [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant] terror organizations," Bozdağ said in Ankara.

More Details:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/operation-olive-branch-targets-terror-groups-in-syria-turkish-deputy-pm-126147>

- **Qatar supports Turkey's efforts in Afrin operation**

Qatar's Foreign Ministry said Monday that Turkey's counterterrorist operation in Syria's Afrin region was motivated by legitimate security concerns. "The launching of the Turkish military operation last Saturday was motivated by legitimate concerns related to its national security and the security of its borders, in addition to protecting Syria's territorial integrity from the danger of secession," Qatar's official QNA news agency quoted ministry spokesperson Lulwah Rashid Al Khater as saying.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/qatar-supports-turkeys-efforts-in-afrin-operation/1039321>

- **Turkey hands over suspect in Sidon attack to Lebanon**

Turkey has handed a suspect in last week's bomb attack -- which targeted a leading Hamas member in the Lebanese city of Sidon -- over to Lebanon, the Lebanese authorities announced Tuesday. "The intelligence branch of Lebanon's Internal Security Agency has received Ahmed Bitiyya, a suspect in last week's assassination attempt on Hamas member Mohamed Hamdan," Lebanon's official National News Agency (NNA) reported.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/198132/turkey-hands-over-suspect-in-sidon-attack-to-lebanon>

*\*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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