



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

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1. IRAQ

- **Iraq: Nearly 100 Current MPs Unqualified to Run Again for Parliament**

Several dozens of Iraqi lawmakers are said to not be qualified to run again for the upcoming parliamentary elections in the country after holding a first academic degree was made an obligation for the candidates. According to a source from the House of Representatives, nearly 100 current members of parliament do not hold any academic certificates; consequently, they are not eligible to run for parliament again.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/409552>

- **KRG PM Reveals Outcome of Visits to Baghdad, Tehran**

Nechirvan Barzani, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Prime Minister announced the aims of KRG delegation visit to Baghdad and Tehran on Monday. Barzani said at a press conference following a meeting of Council of Ministers on Monday that the KRG delegation had discussed oil, salaries, airports and border crossings with Iraqi PM Haider al-Abadi.

More Details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=42601

- **KRG seniors head to Baghdad to attend decentralization conference**

A high-ranking delegation from Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), that includes four governors, has headed towards Baghdad at an official invitation from the federal government, Kurdish media sources revealed Wednesday. The sources said the delegation is headed by the Minister of Housing and Construction Darbaz Kosrat Rasool.

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/22844/KRG-Seniors-head-to-Baghdad-to-attend-decentralization-conference>

- **450,000 displaced have returned to Iraq's Nineveh: Govt**

At least 450,000 displaced persons have returned to their homes in the northern Nineveh province following the expulsion of the Daesh terrorist group from the region, the Iraqi government said Tuesday. "The Ministry of Immigration and Displaced Persons' Affairs has managed to repatriate roughly 450,000 people from Nineveh province -- out of 1,350,000 -- following the liberation of their areas [from Daesh]," Immigration Minister Jassim al-Jaf said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/450-000-displaced-have-returned-to-iraqs-nineveh-govt/1040323>

- **EU calls for a more inclusive, democratic Iraq**

The European Union announced yesterday its new strategy for Iraq, saying it will continue to support the country's unity and preserve its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The EU Foreign Affairs Council endorsed the new strategy during the EU foreign ministers meeting in Brussels. "The EU will continue to support the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq as well as its religious and ethnic diversity," the strategy said.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180123-eu-calls-for-a-more-inclusive-democratic-iraq/>

- **Iraq seeks aid to rebuild after IS, but donors could be wary**

Iraq hopes to raise billions of dollars at a conference next month to fund reconstruction after its costly war against the Islamic State group, but many fear the country's endemic corruption could undermine the appeal. Iraq declared victory over the Islamic State group in December after driving the extremists from nearly all the territory they once held, but three years of grueling combat has taken a devastating toll, leaving entire towns and neighborhoods in ruins.

More Details:

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/01/23/iraq-seeks-aid-to-rebuild-after-is-but-donors-could-be-wary.html>

- **Iraq didn't tell Berlin it had sentenced a German woman to death for joining ISIS**

Germany was not officially informed that one of its citizens, a woman of Moroccan descent, had been sentenced to death in Iraq for joining Islamic State and allegedly carrying out attacks on Iraqi Security Forces, according to a German official. On Sunday, Iraq's Supreme Judicial Council announced that a German woman was sentenced to death by hanging for joining ISIS with her daughters.

More Details:

<https://thedefensepost.com/2018/01/23/iraq-notify-germany-woman-death-sentence-isis/>

- **Iranian military adviser proposes Iran-Iraq-Pakistan alliance against U.S.**

“This coalition should be formed with participation of governments and nations in order to be able to act successfully against the U.S.,” Rahim Safavi suggested. He also said that provoking division among countries in region is on the U.S. agenda.

More Details:

http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/eefbf834-924c-46df-b7d8-f708b6cebd09

- **Al-Abadi Stresses Continued Efforts to Pursue Terrorists in Iraq**

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi has stressed a continuation of the Iraqi security and intelligence efforts to pursue terrorists in all parts of Iraq . In press conference, Al-Abadi said that the Iraqi security forces will continue to pursue terrorists over the borders in order to face justice due to their crimes against the innocent people.

More Details:

<http://www.spa.gov.sa/viewfullstory.php?lang=en&newsid=1712779>

- **Iraq PM asks NATO chief to shift personnel training back home**

Iraq wants the training of its military personnel by the NATO to be carried out on its soil, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi was quoted saying on Tuesday. In a statement by his media office, Abadi, in a phone call with NATO’s Secretary-General, Jens Stoltenberg, “expressed Iraq’s desire to continue the training of its forces and to shift the training process to inside Iraq”.

More Details:

<https://www.iraqinews.com/features/iraq-pm-asks-nato-chief-shift-personnel-training-back-home/>

- **The PMF Carries out a large-Scale Search Operation in Sayyid Gharib areas in Salahuddin**

The popular mobilization forces / brigade 313/ in coordination with the security forces carried out a search campaign for the area of Sayed Gharib south of Salahuddin province. The media of the popular mobilization said "large search and inspection operations carried out by the 313 Brigade in the popular mobilization and the army and the federal police in the groundwater area adjacent to Sayed Gharib and the area of Al-Saalwa and Channel VIII (North Dakhil)," noting that "operations began in two axes in coordination with the federal police and the Iraqi army "

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?YOk8Cs23dSkKS%252fkV5unqUQ%253d%253d

- **Iraq's PMF Rejects Bahraini Claims, Says Focus Is Fighting ISIL**

Karim al-Nouri, Spokesman for the PMF said "the Mobilization's only mission is to fight the terrorist group ISIL" and termed Bahraini Interior Minister's statements as fake and false accusations, Al-Waght reported. Responding to Bahrain's accusation of PMF involvement in supporting "terrorist operations", Al-Nuri added that "the Bahraini Interior Minister statements are unfortunately aimed at marketing the internal crisis, protests and popular uprising in his country beyond its borders to try to urge the international and regional [community] to voice support for his country's corrupt regime."

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13961103000986>

- **Mass Grave Uncovered near Mosul; 47 Killed in Iraq**

Residents of a pair of predominantly Kurdish neighborhoods in Kirkuk say the provincial governor who was recently appointed by Baghdad, Rakan al-Jibouri, has ordered them to abandon their homes. Residents of Nawroz and Kurdistan have a week to leave. The orders are, apparently, part of an Arabization campaign begun under Saddam Hussein.

More Details:

<https://original.antiwar.com/updates/2018/01/23/mass-grave-uncovered-near-mosul-47-killed-iraq/>

- **3 French women militants risk death sentence in Iraq**

Three French women who joined the Daesh group before being captured by Iraqi forces could be facing the death penalty as they await trial in Baghdad, sources close to their cases said. The women were detained after Iraqi fighters ousted the militants from Mosul last July, one source said, confirming a report on RMC radio.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/cedc2e29-9038-458f-9c4c-ac2b1c7c0608.aspx>

- **US vice president confirms US intention to pull out of Iraq nuclear deal**

US vice president Mike Pence has reiterated to Israeli leaders that the Trump administration plans to pull out of the landmark 2015 Iran nuclear deal unless the pact is amended. The remarks came as Mr Pence wrapped up his visit to Israel. On Monday, he repeatedly referred to Jerusalem as Israel's capital, speaking alongside the country's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He also used a high-profile speech to the parliament to announce plans to speed up the timing of the opening of the US Embassy in Jerusalem, moving it from Tel Aviv, by the end of 2019

More Details:

<https://www.energyvoice.com/other-news/161668/us-vice-president-confirms-us-intention-pull-iraq-nuclear-deal/>

2. SYRIA

- **'Who can oppose cleansing Syria of terrorists?'**

Turkish Presidential Spokesman Ibrahim Kalin said Tuesday that no one can stand against clearing Syria of terrorist organizations. Speaking during a live television broadcast about Operation Olive Branch in Syria's northern city of Afrin, Kalin said the military campaign was launched to secure Turkey's borders and its citizens from terror threats. "When it becomes an issue of our national security, Turkey fulfills the responsibilities [through] its own capabilities. It is our responsibility to save Turkish citizens and its borders. For this, we don't need permission from anyone.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/who-can-oppose-cleansing-syria-of-terrorists/1040534>

- **Tillerson to present US strategy on Syria to European, Arab allies**

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson will give an outline of the United States' strategy to stabilise Syria and push ahead with a political solution when he holds talks with close allies in Paris on Tuesday, Western and Arab diplomats said. Tillerson will first attend a meeting hosted by France on an initiative to target those responsible for chemical attacks, largely in Syria. He then holds informal consultations on the Syrian strategy with a smaller group of foreign ministers from key allies - Britain, France, Germany, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86897>

- **US, France lead calls for action following Syria chemical attacks**

A group of countries are pushing for sanctions against perpetrators of chemical attacks in Syria, after new strikes on opposition areas of Damascus. US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Russia "ultimately bears responsibility" for such strikes, ratcheting up the pressure against Syrian regime backer Moscow.

More Details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2018/1/24/us-france-call-for-action-against-syria-chemical-attacks>

- **Russia proposes new investigative body for chemical weapons use in Syria**

Russia on Tuesday proposed a new investigative body under the auspices of the Security Council to determine the perpetrators of chemical weapons use in Syria, but the United States remained wary of the Russian move. In a Security Council meeting on Syria, Russian Ambassador to the United Nations (UN) Vassily Nebenzia proposed a new international investigative body that would be able to establish evidence for the Security Council to identify perpetrators in the use of chemical weapons.

More Details:

http://www.china.org.cn/world/2018-01/24/content_50291602.htm

- **US pushes for new sanctions after reports of chemical attack in Syria**

Two dozen countries agreed Tuesday to push for sanctions against perpetrators of chemical attacks in Syria, with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson saying Russia "ultimately bears responsibility" for such strikes. Twenty-four nations approved a new "partnership against impunity" for the use of chemical weapons, just a day after reports they were used in an attack that sickened 21 people in rebel-held Eastern Ghouta, which Tillerson said was suspected to involve chlorine.

More Details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/us-pushes-new-sanctions-after-reports-chemical-attack-syria-2072118652>

- **Pentagon: U.S. Kills 150 Islamic State Fighters in Syria Airstrike during Government Shutdown**

The Pentagon announced that the U.S. killed 150 Islamic State (ISIS) fighters in an airstrike targeting eastern Syria during the federal government shutdown Saturday. A statement from U.S. Central Command, which is responsible for U.S. troops in the Middle East, said that the airstrike hit one of the last areas under Islamic State control near the Syrian border with Iraq.

More Details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2018/01/23/us-kills-150-islamic-state-shutdown/>

- **Over 10,000 People Including 700 Children Killed In US-Led Anti-Terror Coalition Forces In Syria in 40 Months**

Over 10,000 people have been killed since the US-led anti-terror coalition forces began its operations against the Islamic State (IS) in Syria in September 2014, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said on Tuesday. According to the data, at least 2,815 civilians, including 655 children, and 7,396 IS militants were among those killed.

More Details:

<https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/over-10000-people-including-700-children-killed-in-us-led-anti-terror-coalition-/307288>

- **Four S-400 deployed to Syria - Russian military**

The Russian military has deployed four units of its state-of-the-art S-400 anti-aircraft missile defensive systems to Syria. In the videos published by the Russian Defense Ministry on Tuesday, two of the four units can be seen being delivered to the Hmeimim airbase in Syria's coastal province of Latakia.

More Details:

http://en.abna24.com/news/europe/four-s-400-deployed-to-syria-russian-military_878895.html

- **Kalashnikov's 'robot strike vehicle' tested in near real combat conditions in Syria**

Kalashnikov has tested its Soratnik automated fighting vehicle in conditions that were close to actual combat. The unmanned strike vehicle is one of the vehicles that Russia's largest weapons maker promised to showcase last year at an army expo. While it is not clear if the "Soratnik automated fighting vehicle" is the same one that Kalashnikov spoke about last year, its capabilities, as reported by Tass, are similar.

More Details:

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/kalashnikovs-robot-strike-vehicle-tested-near-real-combat-conditions-syria-1656427>

3. IRAN

- **Interior Ministry clarifies root causes of Iran protests**

Deputy Interior Minister Hossein Zolfaqari has shed light on the root causes of the recent protests which broke out across the country and died out after a week, saying the ministry has provided President Rouhani with an inclusive report on the sources of public discontent. The report has been issued to give an objective account of the recent unrest and is devoid of any political bias so as to avoid making miscalculations, Zolfaqari was quoted by IRNA as saying on Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://irannewsdaily.com/interior-ministry-clarifies-root-causes-iran-protests/>

- **Iranian Parl. approves Iran's membership in UNTOC**

The MPs at Iranian Parliament approved Iran membership in the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) on Wednesday. Of the 226 MPs present in the today's public session of the parliament, 132 MPs voted in favor of the bill, while 80 voted against it, and 10 abstained.

More Details:

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/131583/Iranian-Parl-approves-Iran-s-membership-in-UNTOC>

- **Iranian Speaker Blasts US Designation of Hamas, Hezbollah as Terrorist Groups**

Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani lashed out at the US for putting the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance groups, Hamas and Hezbollah, in the black list of terrorism. "At present, the US says that Hamas and the similar groups are terrorists but we don't accept this," Larijani said, addressing an open session of the parliament in Tehran on Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13961104000397>

- **Iran Deal reveals US lies to world: Senior diplomat**

The July 2015 nuclear deal did reveal the US years-long lies to the world countries and to the public opinions, spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry said here on Wednesday. 'For so many years, Iranian nation tested the flavor of friendship with US with ill-wishing and unjust measures,' Bahram Qasemi said on Wednesday in response to the anti-Iran remarks made recently by US Vice President Mike Pence.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82806671>

- **Iran says it never sought nukes**

Responding to the US accusation's on Iran's will to develop nuclear deal, Tehran says that it never sought nuclear weapons. "Contrary to the sly and speculative words of the American official, the Islamic Republic of Iran has never sought to obtain nuclear weapons," IRNA news agency quoted the spokesperson of the Iranian Foreign Ministry, Bahram Qasemi, as saying.

More Details:

<https://en.trend.az/iran/politics/2851830.html>

- **Iran nuclear deal revision Trump's delusion: Shamkhani**

A senior Iranian official says the idea of making revisions to the multilateral 2015 nuclear agreement is brazen, stressing that the suggestion is a mere delusion entertained by US President Donald Trump. Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani made the remarks in an interview with Iran's Arabic-language Al-Alam news channel after the US president once again threatened to withdraw from the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), if some "disastrous flaws" were not fixed.

More Details:

http://parstoday.com/en/news/iran-i74341-iran_nuclear_deal_revision_trump's_delusion_shamkhani

- **French FM criticizes US for putting pressure on EU to change Iran deal**

The French foreign minister has criticized the US for exerting pressure on European countries to change the terms of the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, saying Washington knows when an agreement is inked, all parties must honor their end of the bargain. "There is a basic principle on which we are very firm, it's the upholding of the (nuclear deal) to the extent it is respected," Jean-Yves Le Drian said ahead of a meeting with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in Paris on Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/01/24/549977/Iran-JCPOA-Jean-Yves-LeDrian>

- **Rouhani says his government's key failed to open locked social apps**

The Iranian president has said his government's measures failed to remove ban on some social apps in the country. Hassan Rouhani made the remarks during a live interview on the national TV late on Monday. Referring to his 2013 electoral campaign symbol of a key to the country's problems, the host asked the president if his key failed to open the locked apps and Rouhani said: "The 11th administration's key [Rouhani's previous administration] could not open them. Let's hope the 12th government succeeds."

More Details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/420648/Rouhani-says-his-government-s-key-failed-to-open-locked-social>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **'Apartheid state': Israel's human rights record criticised at UN**

A fiery exchange between Iran and Israel broke out at the United Nations in Geneva on Tuesday while South Africa labelled Israel an “apartheid state” over its treatment of Palestinians. The exchange came during a major review of Israel’s human rights record by more than 100 country delegates, including the 47-strong United Nations Human Rights Council who spearheads the session.

More Details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/iran-south-africa-condemn-israel-human-rights-record-un-826726973>

- **Hamas Chief: US, Israel Decisions on Al-Quds Threat to Palestine**

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh warned against the “rash decisions” of the US and Israel with regard to Jerusalem al-Quds as a historic threat against Palestine. In a Tuesday speech, Haniyeh described US President Donald Trump’s recognition of East Jerusalem al-Quds as “the beginning of the end of Israel”, presstv reported.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13961104000258>

- **Hamas Hails Arab-Israeli Lawmakers For Protesting Pence Speech With ‘Jerusalem Is Palestine’**

Terror group Hamas on Monday praised Arab lawmakers in Israel’s Knesset for protesting during Vice President Mike Pence’s speech and holding up signs reading “Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine.” In an English-language tweet riddled with spelling mistakes, Hamas praised “Palestinian” members of Knesset from the Joint (Arab) List party for “refusing the racial speech” by the American vice president. Using the hashtag #alquds, which is the Arabic name for Jerusalem, the tweet said the city is the “eternal capital of #Palestine.”

More Details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/jerusalem/2018/01/23/hamas-hails-arab-israeli-lawmakers-for-protesting-pence-speech-with-jerusalem-is-palestine/>

- **UN Security Council to hold a session on Palestine, says permanent representative**

Palestine’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations Riyad Mansour said on Wednesday that the Security Council is scheduled to meet on Thursday in order for the Council members to shoulder

their responsibility regarding implementation of the UN resolutions related to the Palestinian question. Another meeting of the Security Council will be held on the 22nd of next month to discuss the situation of Palestinians after 50 years of Israeli occupation in addition to the state of affairs of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), Mansour told Voice of Palestine radio.

More Details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=6yNpfoa96188916945a6yNpfo>

- **Slovenia likely to recognise state of Palestine: Minister**

The Slovenian government hopes MPs will vote to recognise the Palestinian state and become only the second country to do so as an EU member state, Slovenian Foreign Minister Karl Erjavec said on Monday. "Everybody (other EU member states) backs such a Slovenian step that will happen if parliament green lights the proposal for recognising the Palestinian state," Erjavec told private channel POP TV.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/ace80aec-7b8c-4d0f-b4e3-098096a1526b.aspx>

- **Women journalists protest separation during Pence visit to Jerusalem**

Women journalists covering US Vice President Mike Pence's visit Tuesday to the Western Wall criticised what they called discrimination after being forced to stand behind men under rules enforced by Jewish ultra-Orthodox authorities. The Western Wall, one of the holiest sites in Judaism, is governed by the ultra-Orthodox Jewish establishment and women and men must visit it separately.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86898>

- **Wadi Hilweh Information Centre director released on bail**

Israeli police have released Jawad Siyam, the director of the Wadi Hilweh Information Centre in Silwan, on the condition of him staying away from the Damascus Gate, as well as Salahuddin and Sultan Suleiman streets in Jerusalem for two weeks. He was released on the condition he pay \$1,500 bail. Siyam said Israeli police raided Siyam's house in Silwan and summoned him for questioning at the Salahuddin Street police station.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180124-wadi-hilweh-information-centre-director-released-on-bail/>

- **2 Palestinians shot, injured after alleged stabbing attempt near Nablus**

Israeli forces shot and injured two Palestinians on Tuesday near the Zaatara military checkpoint, south of Nablus in the northern occupied West Bank. Witnesses told Ma'an that two "youths" were wounded, and that Israeli forces closed down the checkpoint in both directions shortly after the incident.

More Details:

<http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=779776>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Lebanon's Aoun meets Kuwait emir on first Gulf trip since PM crisis**

Lebanese President Michel Aoun led a delegation to Kuwait on Tuesday, his government's first visit to the Gulf since the shock resignation and return of the prime minister late last year. The "positive" visit, with talks on bilateral issues, was "an achievement in itself," said Lebanon's Minister of State for Administrative Reform Inaya Ezzeddine, speaking at a reception for the Lebanese community in Kuwait City.

More Details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/lebanons-aoun-meets-kuwait-emir-first-gulf-trip-pm-crisis-1191276422>

- **US Treasury: Lebanon must cut Hezbollah from financial system**

Lebanon must cut Iran-backed Hezbollah from the financial sector, a US official on combating illicit finance said on Tuesday, two weeks after Washington began a new push to disrupt the militant group's global financing routes. On a two-day visit to Lebanon, the US Treasury's Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing Marshall Billingslea "urged Lebanon to take every possible measure to ensure (Hezbollah) is not part of the financial sector".

More Details:

<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2018/01/24/US-Treasury-Lebanon-must-cut-Hezbollah-from-financial-system.html>

- **Washington probes Hezbollah 'narcoterrorism'**

A senior US Treasury official met Monday in Lebanon with President Michel Aoun on a visit that comes after Washington announced a probe into Hezbollah "narcoterrorism". The US Justice

Department said on January 11 it was creating a task force targeting the powerful Lebanese Shiite movement that the United States considers a terrorist group.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86887>

- **Lebanon Issues Arrest Warrant for Hashd al-Shaabi Top Leader**

Lebanese public prosecutor has issued an arrest warrant for Qais Khazali, the leader of Asayib Ahl al-Haq, a major component of the Shi'ite militias of Hashd al-Shaabi in Iraq. According to Lebanese al-Akhabr paper, the warrant was issued earlier on 15th January after Khazali crossed Lebanon borders illegally.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/409534>

- **Jordan's diplomat condemns 'attempts to prejudge the identity of occupied Jerusalem'**

Israel accused the United Nations on Tuesday of continuous discrimination against it over its treatment of Palestinians and called for reforms of its human rights body. The Human Rights Council's regular examination of Israel's record, the first since 2013, comes after US President Donald Trump recognised Jerusalem last month as the capital of Israel, angering Palestinians, Middle East leaders and world powers.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/region/jordan%E2%80%99s-diplomat-condemns-attempts-prejudge-identity-occupied-jerusalem%E2%80%99>

- **Pence Middle East trip a cause for concern in Jordan**

US Vice President Mike Pence's Middle East trip stands out as a positive milestone for the Israeli Right. But for Jordan it looks entirely different. This is because it has reinforced the sense of the demise of the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a core Jordanian interest, perhaps even a matter of survival.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Pence-Middle-East-trip-a-cause-for-concern-in-Jordan-539631>

- **King meets with Belgian monarch, Guinean president in Davos**

His Majesty King Abdullah, on Tuesday, kicked off a series of meetings, held on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, where he met with King Philippe of Belgium. The meeting discussed relations between the two countries and means of enhancing them, especially in economic fields, in addition to current regional and international developments.

More Details:

http://petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=337415&CatID=13

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Death of a leader: Where next for Yemen's GPC after murder of Saleh?**

The end, when it came for Ali Abdullah Saleh, the former president of Yemen, was swift. Fleeing Sanaa, his convoy was hit by a grenade and sniper attack at a checkpoint supervised by Houthi gunmen. Only days earlier the 75-year old had been an ally of his Houthi killers, before seeking common cause with their opponents, the Saudi-led coalition.

More Details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/when-leader-dies-how-yemen-gpc-fell-apart-after-murder-saleh-tareq-saudi-uae-aden-sanaa-1966816018>

- **WHO delivers 200 tons of health supplies to Yemen**

World Health Organization (WHO) delivered 200 tons of medicine and medical aid to Yemen, according to a written statement by the organization. Four UN planes carrying the aid landed in Sana'a Airport during the week, the statement said. "The shipments include essential medicine, insulin vials, antibiotics, rabies vaccines, intravenous (IV) fluids, and other medical supplies and equipment," it added.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/europe/who-delivers-200-tons-of-health-supplies-to-yemen/1035184>

- **Saudi-led Arab Coalition launches a major humanitarian operation in Yemen**

Foreign ministers of the Saudi-led coalition announced on Monday the launch of a comprehensive humanitarian operation in Yemen. The countries announced the provision of \$1.5 billion in aid to help the Yemeni people. They said that: the Al Khadra border crossing with Yemen will be opened to

facilitate the delivery of aid to Yemen; the capacity of the ports in Yemen will be expanded to receive the aid; and the port of Hodeidah will remain open for an additional month.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180123-saudi-led-arab-coalition-launches-a-major-humanitarian-operation-in-yemen/>

- **Saudi Arabia Welcomes OIC's Condemnation of Houthi Missile Strike against Riyadh**

Saudi Arabia welcomed on Tuesday the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) condemnation of the Houthi militias' failed ballistic missile strike against Riyadh last month. Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz chaired a cabinet session in Riyadh during which ministers hailed the OIC foreign ministers for condemning "in the strongest of terms the Iran-backed Houthis for firing an Iranian-made ballistic missile against Riyadh on December 19, 2017."

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1152386/saudi-arabia-welcomes-oic%E2%80%99s-condemnation-houthi-missile-strike-against-riyadh>

- **Saudi Arabia and UAE discuss Yemen with US and UK**

The foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and the UAE met with their British and American counterparts in Paris on Tuesday to discuss challenges in the Middle East. The state-run Saudi Press Agency said that Saudi Arabia's Adel Al Jubeir, UAE's Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, US secretary of state Rex Tillerson attended a dinner hosted by foreign secretary Boris Johnson at the UK embassy.

More Details:

<https://www.thenational.ae/world/saudi-arabia-and-uae-discuss-yemen-with-us-and-uk-1.698222>

- **Qatar Economy Can Survive 'Forever' Under Embargo, Minister Says**

Qatar's economy performed better than expected last year and required "minimal" government support to blunt the effects of a trade and diplomatic embargo by Saudi Arabia and three other Arab countries, a minister said. There are no signs of a resolution to the crisis, Sheikh Ahmed Bin Jassim Bin Mohammed Al Thani, Qatar's minister of economy and commerce, told Bloomberg TV in an interview in Davos. Government support for the economy was needed only in the first few weeks, focusing mostly on logistics to reroute imports, he said.

More Details:

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-01-24/qatar-economy-can-survive-forever-under-embargo-minister-says>

- **Kuwait participates in anti-chemical weapons meeting in France**

Kuwait took part Tuesday in a ministerial conference on the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons. Kuwait's Ambassador in Paris Sami Al-Sulaiman headed the Kuwaiti delegation, on behalf of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, at the event.

More Details:

<https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2685425&Language=en>

- **Iraqi Prime Minister hails ties with Kuwait, works to boost them**

Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar Al-Abbadi described on Tuesday bilateral relations with Kuwait as 'fundamental', calling for further boosting such relations in the economic and social fields. "The Kuwaiti-Iraqi bilateral relations witnessed a radical change, moving from the hostility phase following Saddam Hussain's invasion to the country, to the brotherhood phase." Abbadi made his remarks during a reception of Kuwaiti media delegation, which is currently visiting Iraq.

More Details:

<http://news.kuwaittimes.net/website/iraqi-prime-minister-hails-ties-kuwait-works-boost/>

7. EGYPT

- **How Egypt presidential election is rendered irrelevant**

Abdel Fattah el-Sisi removed any remaining doubt last week, as he formally announced his intention to seek a second term in Egypt's upcoming presidential elections. The Egyptian army chief-turned-president's announcement surprised few experts, who say Sisi is almost guaranteed to be re-elected, after he made it nearly impossible for any real political opponent to challenge his firm grip on power.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/egypt-presidential-election-rendered-irrelevant-180122125426620.html>

- **Parliament responds to US NGO report on Copts in Egypt**

The Egyptian Parliament's foreign affairs committee drafted a report to respond to a US Congress memorandum on the situation of Copts in Egypt, said the head of the committee Tarek Radwan on Monday. Coptic Solidarity, an American non-governmental organisation (NGO) based in Washington, prepared a memorandum in December claiming that there is systematic discrimination against the minority Christian group by the Egyptian government.

More Details:

<https://dailynewsegypt.com/2018/01/23/parliament-responds-us-ngo-report-copts-egypt/>

- **Sisi campaign submits candidacy documents to elections commission**

The electoral campaign for President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi submitted documents to the National Elections Commission (NEC) on Wednesday, seeking a second term for the sitting president. Sisi announced on his official Facebook page that he assigned Mahmoud Kareem as the general coordinator for his electoral campaign, and Bahaa al-Din Abo Shaqa as his legal representative and campaign spokesman.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/sisi-campaign-submits-candidacy-documents-to-elections-commission/>

- **Sami Anan Officially Banned from Running in Presidential Elections**

Egypt's National Elections Committee (NEC) has officially disqualified presidential hopeful Sami Anan from participating in the upcoming elections due to his "non-civilian status," local media reports. The NEC claimed that since Anan is affiliated with the country's Armed Forces he is prohibited from running for and being elected to political office.

More Details:

<https://egyptianstreets.com/2018/01/24/sami-anan-officially-banned-from-running-in-presidential-elections/>

- **64 NGOs request to monitor Egyptian presidential election**

The Minister of Social Solidarity, Ghada Wali, stated on Tuesday that the National Elections Commission (NEC) had received a total of 64 requests from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to monitor the 2018 Egyptian presidential election, but they must demonstrate support for human rights and democracy in order to be granted a license. Wali explained that NGOs will be given a license allowing them to monitor – within the NEC's rules – the elections if they meet a set of requirements, as set out by the NEC. After NGO representatives register their names in the NEC database, Wali revealed that some of the requirements include that an NGO must have a good reputation and demonstrate impartiality, fairness, and former experience in monitoring elections.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptdailynews.com/detail/-ngos-request-to-monitor-egyptian-presidential-election>

- **Sisi announces Karem general coordinator of his pres. campaign**

President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi declared on Wednesday that Ambassador Mahmoud Karem will be the general coordinator for his presidential campaign and that Mohamed Bahaa el-Din Abu Shoka will be his legal representative and his presidential campaign's spokesperson. This was declared by President Sisi during the closing session of the "Tale of Homeland" conference, according to his official Facebook page.

More Details:

<https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/2/40954/Sisi-announces-Karem-general-coordinator-of-his-pres-campaign>

- **Egypt military accuses presidential hopeful of committing crimes**

Egypt's military on Tuesday accused a former armed forces chief of staff who plans to stand in presidential elections in March of forgery and other crimes linked to his candidacy announcement. The general command of the Egyptian armed forces made the allegations against General Sami Anan in a video posted on its official Facebook page.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=86896>

- **Egypt's Shoukry to head to Addis Abba for African Union meetings**

Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry will head to Addis Ababa on Wednesday evening to participate in a number of meetings preceding the 30th summit of the Africa Union, the Egyptian foreign ministry announced. According to the statement, Minister Shoukry will participate in a number of sideline events, including the African Committee for Commerce meeting and the African Committee for Libya meeting.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/288717/Egypt/Politics-/Egypst-Shoukry-to-head-to-Addis-Abba-for-African-U.aspx>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Libya: Double car bombing kills 33 in Benghazi**

At least 33 people have been killed in a double car bombing in Libya's eastern city of Benghazi, according to officials. Tuesday's first bomb went off outside Salmani neighbourhood's Bait Radwan

mosque, frequented by the fighters of Brigade 210 from east Libyan security forces, the Libya Observer reported.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/libya-double-car-bombing-kill-33-benghazi-180124062921229.html>

- **Libya mayors threaten to form unity government of their own**

Mayors of 109 Libyan municipalities threatened on Tuesday to declare civil disobedience and form a national government if political division persisted any longer in Libya. As per the final statement of the first forum of municipalities of Libya in the eastern city of Shahat, the mayors demanded the UN envoy to Libya Ghassan Salame to “speed up ending the political deadlock and assume his responsibilities by taking necessary measures to resolve the situation and pushing for urgent presidential and parliamentary elections.”

More Details:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/libya-mayors-threaten-to-form-unity-government-of-their-own/>

- **Tunisia's protests are a wake-up call for leaders**

Since Jan. 3, Tunisia has been experiencing scattered protests all over the country. The protests, which continued through the second week of January, follow the entry into force of the national budget for the 2018 fiscal year. It aims to reduce budgetary deficits and increase state revenues—so much so that state revenues from taxes make up 65 percent of the whole budget. The budget contains significant tax increases on consumer services and goods, especially non-essential goods such as tobacco, alcohol, beauty products, and perfumes. These increases apply to everyone regardless of how much income they declare.

More Details:

<http://tdailynews.net/story-z9728680>

- **Municipal elections: 36,055 among military and security forces registered on voters' lists**

The number of registered voters among the military and security forces for the next municipal elections reached 36,055, said Wednesday Adel Brinsi, Independent High Authority for Elections (ISIE) member. This figure represents 0.67% of the number of voters registered on the list of electors for the municipal poll scheduled for April 29, 2018, for the security and military forces and for May 6, 2018 for all Tunisians.

More Details:

<https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/9788321-municipal>

- **World Economic Forum: Messahel presents Algeria’s vision on conflict resolution**

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdelkader Messahel took part Tuesday, in Davos, as a representative of President of the Republic Abdelaziz Bouteflika, in the World Economic Forum in which he presented Algeria’s vision on the resolution of conflicts and promotion of dialogue and reconciliation.

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/22440-world-economic-forum-messahel-presents-algeria-s-vision-on-conflict-resolution>

- **UN Envoy Invites Parties to Sahara Conflict to Separate Talks in Berlin**

The UN Secretary General’s Personal Envoy for the Sahara, Horst Kohler, invited the “parties to the conflict” to “separate talks” in Berlin, Moroccan media reported. The invitation was addressed after Kohler’s ten-day tour in Europe and Africa to relaunch talks, said le360.ma. According to the news portal, Morocco, the Algerian-backed Polisario and Mauritania are the parties that will be invited.

More Details:

<http://northafricapost.com/21855-un-envoy-invites-parties-sahara-conflict-separate-talks-berlin.html>

- **Sellami: Morocco will be stronger despite Sudan stalemate**

Even though Morocco ended their 100 percent record with a goalless draw against Sudan on Sunday, coach Jamal Sellami is confident his decision to play a much-changed side will serve the African Nations Championship hosts well. With Morocco already qualified for the quarter finals after winning their first two matches, Sellami opted to shuffle his pack, with only one of the 11 players to have started the first two matches - Nayef Aguerd - retaining his place in the side.

More Details:

<http://marocgazette.com/story-z2918646>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Militants storm Save the Children aid group office in Afghanistan**

Militants stormed an office of the Save the Children aid agency in the Afghan city of Jalalabad on Wednesday and battled security forces who surrounded the building, wounding at least 11 people, officials said. The attack began with a suicide car bomb outside the office, followed by gunmen

entering the compound and battling Afghan Special Forces, a spokesman for the government in the eastern province said.

More Details:

<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2018/01/24/Militants-storm-Save-the-Children-aid-group-office-in-Afghanistan.html>

- **Farah Security Situation Reviewed**

Chaired by President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, a session was held for overall reviewing of security situation in Farah. In the session held yesterday at Presidential Palace, first defense and security as well as independent directorate of local governance officials delivered report of Farah security and administrative situation.

More Details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/politics/item/31772-farah-security-situation-reviewed.html>

- **CIA Director Says Taliban's Revenue Stream Will Be Cut**

Mike Pompeo says al-Qaeda is still a threat but that Washington is committed to fighting the group and other terrorist organizations. Officials from the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and US Finance Department have said that the Taliban's financial resources must be cut off as the group is using income from drug smuggling to impose pain and suffering in the world.

More Details:

<http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/cia-director-says-taliban%E2%80%99s-revenue-stream-will-be-cut>

- **US forces key Haqqani leader in Pakistan days after deadly Kabul attack**

The US forces have killed a top commander of the Haqqani terrorist network in North Waziristan area of Pakistan days after the group carried out a deadly attack on Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul city. According to the local officials, the US unmanned aerial vehicles carried out airstrikes on a compound of the Haqqani terrorist network in North Waziristan, leaving at least three dead.

More Details:

<https://www.khaama.com/us-forces-key-haqqani-leader-in-pakistan-days-after-deadly-kabul-attack-04340>

- **Afghanistan may take border spat with Iran to UN**

The existing border disputed between Afghanistan and Iran would be taken to the UN, an official in western Herat province said on Wednesday. Border and Tribal Affairs Director Nazir Ahmad Haidarzada told Pajhwok Afghan News the dispute was over two areas on the border between the two countries.

More Details:

<https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2018/01/24/afghanistan-may-take-border-spat-iran-un>

- **Pakistan condemns drone strike in Kurram**

Pakistan on Wednesday condemned a drone strike conducted by coalition forces in Kurram agency and called the unilateral action detrimental to the spirit of cooperation between the two countries in the fight against terrorism. At least two people were killed in a drone strike on a house situated close to the Orakzai Agency and Kurram Agency early on Wednesday morning.

More Details:

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/178491-pakistan-condemns-drone-strike-in-kurram>

- **PTI lawmaker calls for shifting General Zia-ul-Haq's grave from Faisal Mosuqe**

A Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf lawmaker on Wednesday called for shifting grave of former military ruler General Zia-ul-Haq from the Shah Faisal Mosque. PTI lawmaker Hamidul Haq submitted a calling attention notice in the National Assembly regarding preservation of the mosque, arguing that any grave could be relocated after the period of 30 years.

More Details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/272496-pti-lawmaker-calls-for-shifting-general-zia-ul-haqs-grave-from-faisal-mosuqe>

- **JuD chief asks LHC to stop govt from arresting him**

Jamaatud Dawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Mohammad Saeed has approached the Lahore High Court to avert his arrest allegedly at the behest of the United States and India. In a petition filed through lawyer A.K. Dogar in the LHC on Tuesday, Mr Saeed said a delegation of the United Nations was due in the country on Friday (Jan 26) and the government intended to take an “adverse action” against him during the team’s stay.

More Details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1384890/jud-chief-asks-lhc-to-stop-govt-from-arresting-him>

10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Iraq's Turkmen back Turkish military operation in Syria**

Iraq's Turkmen community "completely supports" Turkey's Operation Olive Branch, which is currently underway in Syria's northern Afrin district, a member of the Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) said Tuesday. "We are well aware that this operation targets terrorist organizations in Afrin and not local residents or our Kurdish brothers," Aydin Maruf, an ITF lawmaker in northern Iraq's Kurdish region, told Anadolu Agency.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/iraqs-turkmen-back-turkish-military-operation-in-syria/1040043>

- **President Erdoğan discusses Syria with Macron, Putin**

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has spoken with his Russian and French counterparts President Vladimir Putin and Emmanuel Macron to discuss the recent developments over the phone regarding Syria and Turkey's "Operation Olive Branch" in Syria's Afrin, according to a Turkish presidential source Jan. 23. According to the source, Erdoğan told Putin the Turkish operation, launched on Jan. 20, is aimed at clearing Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) militants from the northwestern city of Afrin.

More Details:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/president-erdogan-discusses-syria-with-macron-putin-126214>

- **Turkey's Afrin operation adds to safety of Europe**

The safety of Europe, prestige of NATO and protection of the EU starts on Turkey's border, according to Union of European Turkish Democrats (UETD) head Zafer Sirakaya Wednesday. Speaking with Anadolu Agency, Sirakaya said Europe needs to stand by Turkey in the fight against terrorism. "Europe's safety, NATO's prestige and border, and protection of the EU values starts on Turkey's border," he said.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/europe/turkeys-afrin-operation-adds-to-safety-of-europe/1040967>

- **YPG using Daesh terrorists from Raqqa against Turkey in Afrin, Erdoğan says**

Daesh terrorists released from Raqqa by the terrorist PKK-linked People's Protection Forces (YPG) were reserved to fight against Turkey, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said Wednesday. "It is alleged that the YPG terrorist group has released Daesh members to fight against us. What difference does

that make? They are all the same. They are terror groups that have assumed different roles in the same scenario," Erdoğan said.

More Details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2018/01/24/ypg-using-daesh-terrorists-from-raqqa-against-turkey-in-afrin-erdogan-says>

- **'260 terrorists neutralized' in Operation Olive Branch**

At least 260 PKK/KCK/PYD-YPG and ISIL terrorists have been neutralized since the beginning of Operation Olive Branch in Syria, Turkish General Staff said Tuesday. In a statement, the military said Turkey carried out this operation under international law and Article 51 of the UN Charter and respecting Syrian territorial integrity.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/198141/260-terrorists-neutralized-in-operation-olive-branch>

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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