



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Procees of Iraq

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

Energy Security

Enerji Güvenliđi

Economy News

Ekonomi Haberleri

Peace Process

Barış Süreci

Ethnic and Secterian Groups

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

Non State Actors

Devlet-dış Aktörler

Relations with the West

Batı'yla İlişkiler

MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

25 FEBRUARY 2016

NO: 2109

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. IRAQ | 4 |
| • Mauritania Officially Agrees to Host The Next Arab Summit In July | 4 |
| • Dozens of ISIS members killed, wounded in coalition bombardment on Iraqi-Syrian borders ... | 4 |
| • Liberation of Fallujah will be faster than Ramadi, says Anbar Governor | 4 |
| • Swedish teenager claims she was duped into going to Iraq with jihadist boyfriend | 4 |
| • Kuwaiti Consul to Erbil: Peshmerga forces is fighting holy war against ISIS | 5 |
| • Mosul civilians embark on conflict with IS militants | 5 |
| • Jubouri meets Secretary General of Arab League Nabil al-Arabi in Cairo..... | 5 |
| • Al-Hashed al-Sha’bi militia: 1200 fighters have not received their salaries since last year | 6 |
| • Iraq's winds of war, recrimination..... | 6 |
| • Japan, Iraq agree to raise energy investment | 6 |
| • Timeline of Trump’s comments on Iraq invasion: Not loud, not strong, and no headlines..... | 6 |
| • Iraq’s Pupular Mobilization Forces between Opponents, Proponents | 7 |
| • Trapped between Iraq frontlines, refugees illustrate Sunni Arab predicament | 7 |
| • Military Intervention Put Iraq's Territorial Integrity at Risk | 7 |
| • Number of US Military Contractors in Iraq in 2015 Soars | 8 |
| 2. SYRIA | 8 |
| • Questions remain as Syria ceasefire implementation approaches | 8 |
| • UN eyes new round of Syria talks..... | 8 |
| • Russia starts ceasefire talks with rebels in five Syria provinces | 8 |
| • Syrian army grabs Aleppo province town from ISIS | 9 |
| • Obama cautious on Syria plan as opposition yet to commit..... | 9 |
| • Kurdish YPG says it will observe the upcoming ceasefire | 9 |
| • Putin discusses Syria ceasefire with Saudi’s King Salman | 9 |
| • Kerry: 30,000 soldiers needed to establish safe zone in Syria | 10 |
| • Syrian Army kills Scores of Terrorists in Different Provinces | 10 |
| • Syria's Main Opposition Bloc Opposes Parliamentary Elections | 10 |
| 3. IRAN | 11 |
| • February 26 Will Go Down as Election D-Day in Iran | 11 |
| • Kerry advises US Senate not to ‘rush’ to more Iran sanctions | 11 |
| • ‘Cessation of hostilities’ should not help terrorists to reorganize | 11 |
| • Iranian political parties oppose hegemony of western powers..... | 11 |
| • Leader: Elections would display people’s power | 12 |
| • Russia hopes to launch satellite for Iran in 2018 | 12 |
| • Iran eyes to buy Boeing 737 | 12 |
| • Azerbaijan, Iran sign historic agreement..... | 12 |
| • Swiss president to visit Iran to expand economic ties | 13 |
| • Iran elections: stakes are high as reformists seek further political gains | 13 |
| 4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE | 13 |
| • No let-up in Israel demolitions despite international concern | 13 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| • Israel prevents Kenyan president from meeting with Abu Mazen | 13 |
| • Israeli killed by friendly fire during West Bank attack..... | 14 |
| • Gazan amputees walk in each other's shoes | 14 |
| • Human rights groups claim Israel Security Agency outsourcing torture to PA | 14 |
| • Israeli navy shoots Palestinian fishing boats in Gaza | 15 |
| • Palestinian family calls for release of son kidnapped in Holland | 15 |
| • Al Qiq's lawyer says the Palestinian hunger striker is dying | 15 |
| • Israel Decries Iran Aid for Dead Palestinians' Families..... | 15 |
| • Israel issues 9 home demolition orders in Jerusalem-area village..... | 16 |
| 5. JORDAN and LEBANON..... | 16 |
| • Greece 'won't be Lebanon of Europe': minister | 16 |
| • Hizbullah, Mustaqbal Hold Mini Dialogue after Rising Tension | 16 |
| • Hezbollah hushes toll of fighters killed over four years | 17 |
| • Instead of Lebanon, Saudi Arabia gives billions to Sudan | 17 |
| • Lebanon must act on Hezbollah in Yemen, says Saudi..... | 17 |
| • Queen inaugurates crèche at Hashemite University, tours several facilities | 17 |
| • Jordan's King Abdullah set to visit White House | 18 |
| • UAE assistance sent to Syrian refugees in Zaatari camp..... | 18 |
| • Border guards receive 74 Syrian refugees..... | 18 |
| • Lebanese Defense Committee meets British delegation | 18 |
| 6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA..... | 19 |
| • Most drugs enter Saudi Arabia through land borders | 19 |
| • Warship hit by Houthi missile off Yemeni coast..... | 19 |
| • Kuwait joins Gulf neighbours in warning against Lebanon travel | 19 |
| • Saudi jets to arrive in Turkey to strike ISIS | 20 |
| • Bahrain opposition leader jailed for insulting ruling system - lawyer..... | 20 |
| • Yemeni army recaptures key base near capital | 20 |
| • Yemeni government accuses Hezbollah of supporting Houthis..... | 20 |
| • Yemeni Ballistic Missile Attack killed 50 Saudi Troops in Jawf Province | 21 |
| • Royal decree designates minister tasked with stakeholder jurisdictions in BHB..... | 21 |
| • Bahraini opposition leader gets year in prison for 2015 speech..... | 21 |
| 7. EGYPT..... | 22 |
| • Egypt leader blames 'terrorism' for Russian plane crash..... | 22 |
| • Egypt's president says criticism threatens the state..... | 22 |
| • Air France-KLM urge release of \$13M blocked in Egypt | 22 |
| • Egypt still probing brutal killing of Italian student | 22 |
| • Sisi to Egyptians: 'Do not listen to anyone else but me' | 23 |
| • Egypt Sentences 4 Coptic teenagers for contempt of Islam | 23 |
| • House panel OKs bill to call Muslim Brotherhood terror group..... | 23 |
| • El Nadeem Centre receives warrant for closure | 24 |
| • Armed forces seize ammunition in central Sinai..... | 24 |
| • Egypt's bourse rises by 0.12 pct at the beginning of trade | 24 |
| 8. NORTH AFRICA..... | 24 |
| • UN says all sides guilty of 'war crimes' in Libya conflict..... | 24 |



ORTADOĞU STRATEJİK ARAŞTIRMALAR MERKEZİ
CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STRATEGIC STUDIES
مركز الشرق الأوسط للدراسات الاستراتيجية

| | |
|---|-----------|
| • Libyan militia says it arrested ISIS leader in country's west..... | 25 |
| • 100 Libya MPs back unity government, demand new vote | 25 |
| • US backs Libyan legislators over unity government..... | 25 |
| • Libyan forces retake another city from Daesh | 26 |
| • Counterterrorism: Nine bunkers destroyed in Medea..... | 26 |
| • Minutes of 3rd Session of Algerian-Tunisian Technical Road Transport Committee Inked..... | 26 |
| • Caïd Essebsi, Silva discuss impact of regional situation | 26 |
| • Morocco Had Been Tracking Terrorist for "Months" Before His Arrest on Tuesday | 27 |
| • Tunisia police protest over pay, work conditions | 27 |
| 9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN | 27 |
| • Afghan migrants 'voluntarily' head home from Germany | 27 |
| • Pakistani, Afghan lawmakers back enhanced ties for lasting peace | 28 |
| • Russia Urges Taliban To Hold Talks With Afghan Government..... | 28 |
| • ISIS loyalists among 50 killed in Afghan army operations: MoD | 28 |
| • Seven Taliban killed by own bomb during training in Ghazni | 28 |
| • 2015 bloodiest year for Afghan civilians | 28 |
| • Russia Sends 10,000 AK-47s to Afghanistan..... | 29 |
| • U.S. Money Will Keep Flowing To Afghanistan As Oversight Plummets..... | 29 |
| • Govt. Welcomes Opportunity Offered At QCG to Hold Directs Peace with Taliban | 29 |
| 10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST..... | 29 |
| • Ceasefire deal not binding Turkey if security threatened | 29 |
| • Turkey FM says YPG trying to divide Syria..... | 30 |

1. IRAQ,

- **Mauritania Officially Agrees to Host The Next Arab Summit In July**

The Secretary-General of the Arab League Nabil al-Arabi announced that "Mauritania officially asked to host the next Arab summit." He said in a statement on Tuesday at the headquarters of the Arab League, "it was agreed to hold the summit in next July, after the apology of Morocco for hosting summit, which was scheduled on 6 and April 7"

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?YNm2KaorklukiUeaJlQZhw%253d%253d

- **Dozens of ISIS members killed, wounded in coalition bombardment on Iraqi-Syrian borders**

A security source in Anbar Province announced on Wednesday, that dozens of ISIS members were either killed or wounded in an aerial bombardment carried out by the international coalition aviation on their convoy on the Iraqi-Syrian borders. The source said in a brief statement received by IraqiNews.com, "Today the international coalition aviation, backed by the army forces and al-Jazeera Operations shelled a number of convoys belonging to ISIS in Qaim District and the Syrian Albu Kamal.

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/dozens-of-isis-members-killed-wounded-in-coalition-bombardment-on-iraqi-syrian-borders/>

- **Liberation of Fallujah will be faster than Ramadi, says Anbar Governor**

The Governor of Anbar Province, Suhaib al-Rawi, announced on Wednesday, that the liberation of Fallujah is going to be a lot faster than retaking the city of Ramadi, while emphasized that the local government has completed the establishment of safe paths and havens for the displaced.

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/148371/>

- **Swedish teenager claims she was duped into going to Iraq with jihadist boyfriend**

A Swedish teenager who went to Iraq with a jihadist boyfriend claimed on Wednesday that she had been duped into going into Islamic State-controlled territory. 16-year-old Marilyn Nevalainen, who left Sweden last June after her 19-year-old partner decided to fight for Isil, spoke out after being freed in a covert operation in the Isil-controlled city of Mosul.

More Details:

<http://english.shafaaq.com/politics/17441-swedish-teenager-claims-she-was-duped-into-going-to-iraq-with-jihadist-boyfriend.html>

- **Kuwaiti Consul to Erbil: Peshmerga forces is fighting holy war against ISIS**

The Kuwaiti Consul to Kurdistan Omar Ahmad al-Kandari revealed on Wednesday, that Iraqi Kurdistan will overcome the current financial crisis, while pointed out that the Peshmerga forces is fighting a holy war against ISIS. Kandari said during the ceremony of the national day of Kuwait and followed by IraqiNews.com, “The good relations between Masoud Barzani and the former Prince of Kuwait led the political leadership in Kuwait to respect the Kurdistan Region.”

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/baghdad-politics/kuwaiti-consul-to-erbil-peshmerga-forces-is-fighting-holy-war-against-isis/>

- **Mosul civilians embark on conflict with IS militants**

PUK office director in Mosul told PUKmedia that armed confrontations started between Mosul civilians and Islamic State militants on Wednesday evening due to IS' oppression of the people. According to Mr. Ghayas Surchi, the PUK operative in Mosul, civilians started an onslaught on IS militants on the left wing of the city and drove the militants to the right wing. The people had been able to retake Karrama, Quds and Intisar neighborhoods from the terrorists.

More Details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=37740

- **Jubouri meets Secretary General of Arab League Nabil al-Arabi in Cairo**

The Office of the Iraqi Parliament Speaker Salim al-Jubouri announced on Wednesday, that the latter met with the Secretary General of the Arab League Nabil al-Arabi in the Egyptian capital Cairo, while pointed out that al-Jubouri stressed the need for joint coordination between the Arab states in the fight against “terrorism.” Jubouri’s office said in a statement followed by IraqiNews.com, “Today, Jabouri met with the Secretary General of the Arab League Nabil al-Arabi,” noting that “During the meeting, they reviewed the overall situation on the Arab and regional states and the challenges in the region as well as the role of the Arab League.

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/baghdad-politics/jubouri-meets-secretary-general-arab-league-nabil-al-arabi-cairo/>

- **Al-Hashed al-Sha’bi militia: 1200 fighters have not received their salaries since last year**

An official within al-Hashed al-Sha’bi militia in Kirkuk said on Wednesday, that 1200 fighters from al-Hashed al-Sha’bi forces have not been paid since last year, appealing to Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to disburse the salaries. Hassan Mahmoud al-Soufi, an official within al-Hashed al-Sha’bi, said in a statement obtained by IraqiNews.com, “The fighters of al-Hashed in Hawija as well as the forces stationed in the area of al-Fatha in Hamrin Mountains (125 km southwest of Kirkuk), and our forces consisting of four regiments with the strength of 1,200 fighters, who are from the residents of al-Abasi, al-Zab, al-Riyad and Hawija areas southwest of Kirkuk, have not been paid since last year.”

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/features/al-hashed-al-shabi-militia-1200-fighters-not-received-salaries-since-last-year/>

- **Iraq's winds of war, recrimination**

Despite some recent military successes against the Islamic State (ISIL) forces, both the security and the humanitarian situation in Iraq remain fragile and precarious. That's the assessment from Jan Kubis, the U.N. special representative in a sobering report to the Security Council on the road ahead.

More Details:

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2016/02/197_199020.html

- **Japan, Iraq agree to raise energy investment**

Japan and Iraq have agreed to enhance economic ties by boosting Japanese investment in the Iraqi energy sector. The agreement was reached during a 21-24 February visit to Japan by Iraqi oil minister Abdel Abdul Mahdi. Baghdad is hoping for further investment in Iraq by Japanese companies, which is essential to help support the country's economy that has been hard hit by the drop in oil prices, Mahdi said yesterday in a meeting in Tokyo with Japan's foreign minister Yoji Muto and trade and industry (Meti) minister Motoo Hayashi.

More Details:

<http://www.argusmedia.com/News/Article/?id=1193875>

- **Timeline of Trump’s comments on Iraq invasion: Not loud, not strong, and no headlines**

Donald Trump has said — and said he has said — a lot of things about the Iraq War. Since he entered the presidential race, Trump has touted his early opposition to the war in 2003 prior to the invasion, demonstrating his wisdom and foresight. Trump even claimed that the Bush White House approached him prior to the invasion to ask him to tone down his rhetoric — a wildly unsupported claim that received Four Pinocchios. Still, Trump continues to say he made “headlines” in 2003 and

2004 with his early opposition. He certainly made headlines in 2004, but there's no sign that Trump opposed the invasion or was vocal about it prior to the invasion.

More Details:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2016/02/25/timeline-of-trumps-comments-on-iraq-invasion-not-loud-not-strong-and-no-headlines/>

- **Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces between Opponents, Proponents**

The Iraqi prime minister's office has stated that Mohsen al-Kaabi, a retired major general, has been appointed as the deputy chief of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF). The decree says that the new deputy chief reserves all of the executive and supervisory authorities, as he is given a carte blanche to choose heads of different branches of the PM Forces and to create new administrations in the body of the force. Furthermore, he was commissioned by the country's chief commander of the armed forces to more accurately supervise the procedures of training and using the PMF.

More Details:

<http://en.abna24.com/cultural/archive/2016/02/25/737042/story.html?>

- **Trapped between Iraq frontlines, refugees illustrate Sunni Arab predicament**

They are trapped between two worlds - one they want to leave and the other to which they are denied entry. For three months, more than 500 men, women and children have been living in no-man's land in northern Iraq, caught in the crossfire between Kurdish forces and Islamic State.

More Details:

<http://news.trust.org/item/20160225070507-ct6sv/?source=fiOtherNews2>

- **Military Intervention Put Iraq's Territorial Integrity at Risk**

The complicated situation in Iraq is the result of interference in the country's policies from outside, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov said Thursday. The country's integrity has been put "at stake" by this external interference, Bogdanov said during a meeting at the Valdai International Discussion Club in Moscow.

More Details:

<http://sputniknews.com/middleeast/20160225/1035320191/intervention-iraq.html?>

- **Number of US Military Contractors in Iraq in 2015 Soars**

Some 2,028 US contractors were deployed in Iraq as of January 2016, compared to 250 the previous year, according to a recent Defense Department report. Excepting Pentagon employees, 5,800 additional contractors were sent to Iraq by other state agencies such as the State Department.

More Details:

<http://sputniknews.com/middleeast/20160225/1035310703/us-contractor-return-iraq.html?>

2. SYRIA

- **Questions remain as Syria ceasefire implementation approaches**

Pressure was building on Syria's warring parties to abide by a partial ceasefire brokered by Moscow and Washington as the UN discussed a draft resolution that would endorse the agreement due to take effect Saturday. The 15 members of the Security Council hope to adopt the text on Friday when UN envoy Staffan de Mistura will report on efforts to silence the guns and revive peace talks.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=75448>

- **UN eyes new round of Syria talks**

United Nations Syria envoy Staffan de Mistura will announce Friday – the day when the expected ceasefire will take place - a date for a new round of talks between Syria's warring parties. Countries belonging to the "International Syria Support Group" will also hold a meeting of their ceasefire taskforce on Friday, De Mistura said told reporters on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/02/25/UN-to-launch-new-round-of-Syria-talks-.html>

- **Russia starts ceasefire talks with rebels in five Syria provinces**

Moscow said Wednesday it has started ceasefire negotiations with rebel groups in five Syrian provinces following a Moscow-Washington deal on a cessation of hostilities in the war-torn country. The Russian defence ministry said in a statement that it has opened a coordination centre in Syria that is "already carrying out work with representatives of the groups in various settlements in the provinces of Hama, Homs, Latakia, Damascus and Deraa."

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=75441>

- **Syrian army grabs Aleppo province town from ISIS**

Syria's state-run news agency and an opposition monitoring group say government troops have recaptured a town in Aleppo province from ISIS militants. The victory is key for Syria's military access to the provincial capital, Aleppo city.

More Details:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/02/25/Syrian-army-recaptures-town-in-Aleppo-province-from-ISIS.html>

- **Obama cautious on Syria plan as opposition yet to commit**

U.S. President Barack Obama expressed caution on Wednesday about a plan to stop fighting in Syria, while the main opposition group said it had yet to commit to the deal. Combatants are required to say whether they will agree to the "cessation of hostilities" by noon on Friday (1000 GMT), and to halt fighting at midnight Saturday. The United Nations hopes the planned halt in the fighting will provide a breathing space for Syrian peace talks to resume.

More Details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/news/middle-east/371884/obama-cautious-on-syria-plan-as-opposition-yet-to-commit>

- **Kurdish YPG says it will observe the upcoming ceasefire**

The Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) have announced that they will observe a Russia-US ceasefire plan in Syria, but will retaliate if attacked. "We, in the People's Protection Units, give great importance (to the plan), and we will abide by it completely, while reserving the right to respond to any aggressor in the framework of legitimate self-defense," YPG official Redur Xelil was quoted by Reuters as saying on Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/kurdish-ypg-says-it-will-observe-upcoming-ceasefire-809870>

- **Putin discusses Syria ceasefire with Saudi's King Salman**

Russian President Vladimir Putin held a telephone conversation on Wednesday with Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz to discuss the ceasefire agreement brokered between Russia and the US in Syria, the Kremlin said. "The Saudi monarch welcomed the agreements and expressed readiness to

cooperate with Russia to implement them,” the Kremlin said. The two sides have reportedly agreed to continue contact on the issue.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/middle-east/24137-putin-discusses-syria-ceasefire-with-saudis-king-salman>

- **Kerry: 30,000 soldiers needed to establish safe zone in Syria**

Up to 30,000 troops will be needed in Syria to protect any safe zone in northern Syria, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said late Wednesday. Citing Pentagon estimates, Kerry told a Senate committee that protecting a safe zone was more complicated than many anticipated.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/kerry-30000-soldiers-needed-establish-safe-zone-syria-809976>

- **Syrian Army kills Scores of Terrorists in Different Provinces**

One of the most events in the battle field is that army establish new progress in hunting terrorists affiliated to Jabhat al-Nusra and expanded its control in Darayya city in the western Ghouta in Damascus Countryside. In the countryside of the central province of Homs, army units clashed with a terrorist group of ISIS terrorist organization in the vicinity of al-Bardeh village and al-Bayarat area in the eastern countryside of Homs province, military source told SANA.

More Details:

<http://en.alalam.ir/news/1792961>

- **Syria's Main Opposition Bloc Opposes Parliamentary Elections**

According to a decree signed by Syrian President Bashar Assad on Monday, parliamentary elections will be held on April 13. According to the NCC leader, holding elections now would have a negative impact on efforts toward a political settlement of the crisis in Syria, as they are to be run by the current leadership, and not a transitional government.

More Details:

<http://sputniknews.com/middleeast/20160225/1035333294/syria-parliamentary-elections.html?>

3. IRAN

- **February 26 Will Go Down as Election D-Day in Iran**

On Friday, February 26, not only will Iranians vote for the new Parliament, Assembly of Experts elections are also being held on the same day. Since the next election (presidential) won't be for another 2 years, the political parties who lose the landmark vote will be condemned to be in the opposition on all levels for a considerable amount of time.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13941205001259>

- **Kerry advises US Senate not to 'rush' to more Iran sanctions**

US Secretary of State John Kerry has advised the Republican-dominated Senate not to impose more sanctions on Iran after the historic nuclear deal between Tehran and the world powers.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2016/02/25/452178/nuclear-iran-icpoa-john-kerry-us-senate-gop>

- **'Cessation of hostilities' should not help terrorists to reorganize**

Iran's Hassan Rouhani has told Russian President Vladimir Putin in a phone call Syrian borders should strictly be controlled to cut the influx of terrorists during ceasefire. Rouhani and Putin talked over a phone call about the recent ceasefire negotiated and agreed by Russia, Syria and the US to be implemented this weekend. Rouhani believed that Russian air strikes against terrorist strongholds forced terrorists and their supporters to come to negotiation table.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/114734/Cessation-of-hostilities-should-not-help-terrorists-to-reorganize>

- **Iranian political parties oppose hegemony of western powers**

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said on Wednesday even the moderates in Iranian political spectrum oppose hegemony of western governments.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/81977732/>

- **Leader: Elections would display people's power**

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Wednesday underlined the significance of voting in the Friday elections, saying it would display people's power despite different kinds of pressures, cruel sanctions, and propaganda against Iran. The Leader also assured that the Iranian nation will be the ultimate victor despite all the efforts made by the enemy, Tasnim News Agency reported.

More Details:

<http://www.iran-daily.com/News/137292.html>

- **Russia hopes to launch satellite for Iran in 2018**

"We hope to sign the satellite launch contract by the middle of April. If the contract is signed, the launch may take place at the end of 2018," Leonid Macridenko, the head of the Russian Space Monitoring Systems, Information & Control and Electromechanical Complexes (VNIIEM), was quoted by TASS news agency as saying on Wednesday, reported by presstv.ir

More Details:

<http://www.iran-daily.com/News/137315.html>

- **Iran eyes to buy Boeing 737**

Baku, Azerbaijan, Iran is interested to buy Boeing 737 from the US air craft manufacturer, Asghar Fakhrieh Kashan, Iran's deputy transport minister said. Basically the Boeing 737 is a proper plane for Iran, however the Iranian airlines will make decision, Fakhrieh Kashan said, Iran's Tasnim news agency reported Feb. 24.

More Details:

<http://en.trend.az/iran/business/2499204.html>

- **Azerbaijan, Iran sign historic agreement**

Azerbaijan and Iran have signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of energy and water resources use, continuation of the construction and operation of hydroelectric power plants and hydroelectric complexes "Khudaferin" and "Giz Galasi" on the Araz River, a source in the Ministry of Economy of Azerbaijan said Feb. 25.

More Details:

<http://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/business/2499177.html>

- **Swiss president to visit Iran to expand economic ties**

Swiss President Johann Schneider will visit Iran on Feb.26 to discuss expanding economical, political relations with Tehran, IRNA reported. According to the report, he will lead a 40-member economic and scientific delegation during the visit.

More Details:

<http://en.trend.az/iran/politics/2499203.html>

- **Iran elections: stakes are high as reformists seek further political gains**

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, looks meaningfully into the camera as he holds a piece of paper poised over a plastic ballot box. "Elections are the bulwark of our nation," proclaims the Farsi caption. "People at the polling stations will protect the destiny of our nation and prevent our enemies taking over our land."

More Details:

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/25/iran-elections-stakes-are-high-as-reformists-seek-further-political-gains>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **No let-up in Israel demolitions despite international concern**

Israeli authorities have demolished a newly built school for a Bedouin community near Jerusalem, saying it had been illegally constructed. The move comes with the UN and the European Union raising concern over a sharp increase in demolitions by Israel in recent weeks.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=75445>

- **Israel prevents Kenyan president from meeting with Abu Mazen**

Hebrew reports said the Israeli authorities have prevented Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta from going to Ramallah to meet with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen). Israeli radio quoted sources in the Israeli Foreign Ministry as saying the request of the Kenyan president, who is visiting Israel, to travel to Ramallah to meet with Abu Mazen has not been granted, as his request was made at the last minute.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/middle-east/24131-israel-prevents-kenyan-president-from-meeting-with-abu-mazen>

- **Israeli killed by friendly fire during West Bank attack**

A Palestinian attempted to stab an Israeli in the occupied West Bank on Wednesday and Israeli forces opened fire, fatally wounding the intended victim and injuring the attacker. Jerusalem's Shaarei Tzedek hospital, where both men were taken, said that the Israeli arrived in "critical condition" and later died of his injuries.

More Details:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/02/24/Israeli-killed-by-friendly-fire-during-West-Bank-attack.html>

- **Gazan amputees walk in each other's shoes**

The friendship of three amputees was a remarkable sight to see as they stood on the beach in Gaza City, but what was even more surreal about the sight was that two of them shared one pair of shoes. One of the men, Adli Obeid, 24, had his right leg amputated, while the other, Mansour Al-Qurm, 26, had his left leg amputated. They sustained their injuries separately from what they call a "deceitful" Israeli missile.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/middle-east/24133-gazan-amputees-walk-in-each-others-shoes>

- **Human rights groups claim Israel Security Agency outsourcing torture to PA**

The B'Tselem and HaMoked human rights groups on Wednesday released a report accusing the Shin Bet security agency of knowingly using information extracted by Palestinian security services through torture to incriminate Palestinians held in Israeli prisons. The report also alleged that prison abuse by the Shin Bet, including sleep deprivation, exposure to hot and cold, inedible food, and physical beatings, was a matter of "formal interrogation policy." Overall, some of the cases amounted to "torture," it said.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/human-rights-groups-claim-israel-security-agency-outsourcing-torture-pa-809536>

- **Israeli navy shoots Palestinian fishing boats in Gaza**

Israeli warships on Wednesday fired at Palestinian fishermen off the coast of Gaza Strip and damaged one of the boats. According to Palestinian security forces, Israeli navy forces fired at the fishermen's boats sailing at a distance of 4 nautical miles off the Gaza shore. No injuries were reported, but the fishermen were forced to return to the beach.

More Details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/news/middle-east/371793/israeli-navy-shoots-palestinian-fishing-boats-in-gaza>

- **Palestinian family calls for release of son kidnapped in Holland**

Palestinian dentist living in Holland with his wife and four children have gone missing and no news has been received about his whereabouts, his brother told PalSawa yesterday. Contact with 38-year-old dentist Adnan Kollab ceased at the end of last week, his brother Ghassan said, adding that efforts were being made by the Euro-Mid Observer for Human Rights to locate him.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/middle-east/24134-palestinian-family-calls-for-release-of-son-kidnapped-in-holland>

- **Al Qiq's lawyer says the Palestinian hunger striker is dying**

Imprisoned Palestinian hunger-striker Muhammad al-Qiq could die at any moment, one of his lawyers said Wednesday, warning that he could no longer breathe easily and was suffering severe pain. Hiba Masalha, a lawyer for the Palestinian Authority's Committee for Prisoners' Affairs, said that after 92 days on hunger strike, al-Qiq's body had "collapsed," and he was suffering severe cramps and stiffness, sight problems, a low heart rate, and was unable to talk.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/al-qiq%E2%80%99s-lawyer-says-palestinian-hunger-striker-dying-809552>

- **Israel Decries Iran Aid for Dead Palestinians' Families**

Israel on Thursday denounced an Iranian decision to give thousands of dollars to relatives of Palestinians killed during Israeli-Palestinian violence that has soared in recent months. Iran's ambassador to Lebanon, Mohammad Fathali, said Wednesday that Tehran would offer \$7,000 to the families of each Palestinian killed in what he called the "Jerusalem intifada".

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/203075-israel-decries-iran-aid-for-dead-palestinians-families>

- **Israel issues 9 home demolition orders in Jerusalem-area village**

Israeli forces on Wednesday issued nine home demolition orders to residents in the occupied East Jerusalem village of al-Issawiya, a local follow-up committee member said. Muhammad Abu al-Hummus told Ma'an that Israeli forces issued the home demolitions in the Abu Riyala area of the village, telling residents their homes would be demolished due to lack of permits.

More Details:

<http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=770431>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Greece 'won't be Lebanon of Europe': minister**

Greece on Thursday said it would not be left by the rest of the EU to become the "Lebanon of Europe" by hosting millions of migrants and refugees. Speaking ahead of a crucial meeting in Brussels, Greek migration minister Yannis Mouzalas criticized other countries for "unilateral" actions that affect Greece.

More Details:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/02/25/Greece-won-t-Lebanon-of-Europe-minister.html>

- **Hizbullah, Mustaqbal Hold Mini Dialogue after Rising Tension**

A dialogue between Hizbullah and al-Mustaqbal Movement has suffered a relapse as a result of the tension that rose last week following the Saudi announcement that it would cut \$4 billion in aid to the Lebanese army and security forces. While the dialogue was held in Ain el-Tineh on Wednesday night, it was only attended by Nader Hariri, the adviser of al-Mustaqbal leader Saad Hariri, Hizbullah chief Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah's advisor Hajj Hussein Khalil, and Finance Minister Ali Hassan Khalil as the representative of Speaker Nabih Berri.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/203040-hizbullah-mustaqbal-hold-mini-dialogue-after-rising-tension>

- **Hezbollah hushes toll of fighters killed over four years**

The Washington Institute for Near East Studies recently published a report that showed the extent of deaths of Lebanese Hezbollah militias in Syria. Eight hundred and sixty five members of the Hezbollah militia were killed in the period between the end of September 2012 and Feb. 16, according to statistics of the Washington Institute for Near East Studies.

More Details:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/02/24/Hezbollah-hushes-toll-of-its-fighters-killed-over-4-years.html>

- **Instead of Lebanon, Saudi Arabia gives billions to Sudan**

Saudi Arabia has decided to donate \$5 billion to the Sudanese army after it stopped billions in support for the Lebanese army, a Sudanese newspaper reported a government official saying on Tuesday. According to AlKhaleejonline.com, which reported the news from the Sudan Tribune, the pledge was made during a short visit by the Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubier to Khartoum. He met with the Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir on Monday.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/middle-east/24132-instead-of-lebanon-saudi-arabia-gives-billions-to-sudan>

- **Lebanon must act on Hezbollah in Yemen, says Saudi**

A Saudi military spokesman urged Lebanon on Wednesday to stop the Shiite Lebanese movement Hezbollah from exporting its "mercenaries" to Yemen and Syria, Al Arabiya News Channel reported. Brigadier General Ahmed al-Asiri said participation of some Iranian and Hezbollah "mercenaries," who were killed in Yemen, violated the U.N. resolution 2216, which demanded an end to violence in the southern Arabian Peninsula country.

More Details:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/02/24/Yemeni-govt-says-have-evidence-Hezbollah-is-involved-in-backing-the-Houthis.html>

- **Queen inaugurates crèche at Hashemite University, tours several facilities**

Her Majesty Queen Rania on Wednesday inaugurated the Hashemite University's nursery, and toured several other facilities on campus that "reflect the university's commitment to social progress and innovation". The Queen commended the university's compliance with Article 72 of the Labour Law, which requires organisations to establish day cares on their premises for children of their female employees, according to a statement from Her Majesty's office.

More Details:

<http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/queen-inaugurates-cr%C3%A8che-hashemite-university-tours-several-facilities>

- **Jordan's King Abdullah set to visit White House**

Resolving the conflict in Syria and meeting the needs of war-stricken refugees are expected to dominate discussions as President Barack Obama meets Wednesday with Jordan's King Abdullah II. Jordan shares a border with Syria and Iraq, and Abdullah's visit to the White House takes place as his country struggles to accommodate more than 630,000 Syrian refugees.

More Details:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/02/24/Jordan-s-King-Abdullah-set-to-visit-White-House.html>

- **UAE assistance sent to Syrian refugees in Zaatari camp**

A new aid convoy donated by the United Arab Emirates' Ahmad Bin Zayed Foundation was sent to Syrian refugees in the Zaatari refugee camp, northeast of the Kingdom. UAE ambassador to Jordan, Bilal al-Bodour, who oversaw the delivery of the aid consignment, said Jordan has been coming under major pressure as a result of hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees, stressing that his country will continue to assist the Kingdom to help it grapple with this burden.

More Details:

<http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=30478&title=UAE%20assistance%20sent%20to%20Syrian%20refugees%20in%20Zaatari%20camp#.Vs79NbKLTIU>

- **Border guards receive 74 Syrian refugees**

A total of 74 new Syrian refugees from various age groups, entered into the Kingdom through various crossing points during the last 24 hours, a military source said on Wednesday. The source said border guards provided the refugees with the necessary aid before transferring them to refugee camps.

More Details:

http://petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=239658&CatID=13

- **Lebanese Defense Committee meets British delegation**

A British delegation of Defence, comprised of a number of MPs, met on Thursday with the Lebanese Parliamentary Committee, and discussed the regional situation as well as terrorist threats. MP Samir

Jisr, head of the Lebanese committee, said that the British delegation expressed preparedness to cooperate with Lebanon to fight terrorism.

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/57455/Lebanese-Defense-Committee-meets-British-delegation>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Most drugs enter Saudi Arabia through land borders**

Most of the drugs smuggled into Saudi Arabia are amphetamine tablets and hashish. Ninety to 100 percent of the seized hashish is smuggled through the land borders with Yemen. Amphetamine tablets, according to international reports, come via Syria, Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported, quoting Maj. Gen. Mansour Al-Turki, spokesman of the Saudi ministry of interior as saying.

More Details:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/02/25/Report-Most-drugs-enter-Saudi-Arabia-through-land-borders.html>

- **Warship hit by Houthi missile off Yemeni coast**

The missile force of the Houthi rebels and allies have managed to destroyed a warship belonging to the Saudi-led coalition off Khokha coast of Hodeidah province. A military official told SABA that the missile force targeted the hostile battleship on Tuesday while it was trying to advance towards the coast of al-Faza area in Khokha district. He explained that the missile bombing hit the warship accurately and flames were seen rising from it and violent explosions were heard.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/warship-hit-houthi-missile-yemeni-coast-810018>

- **Kuwait joins Gulf neighbours in warning against Lebanon travel**

Kuwait on Wednesday became the latest Gulf state to urge its citizens to leave Lebanon following tensions over the Lebanese Shiite militia Hezbollah which is fighting to support Syria's regime. In a statement cited by the official KUNA news agency, the Kuwaiti embassy in Beirut also asked Kuwaitis to postpone any planned travel to Lebanon.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=75440>

- **Saudi jets to arrive in Turkey to strike ISIS**

Saudi jets are due to arrive at a Turkish base this week take part in the air campaign against ISIS in Syria, Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Thursday. "We are expecting the planes to arrive today or tomorrow (Friday)," Cavusoglu told the state-run Anatolia news agency, adding that Saudi equipment and personnel had already arrived on the ground.

More Details:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/02/25/Saudi-jets-to-arrive-in-Turkey-to-strike-ISIS.html>

- **Bahrain opposition leader jailed for insulting ruling system - lawyer**

A prominent Bahraini opposition figure was sentenced to a year in jail on Wednesday on charges of insulting the kingdom's ruling system in a speech last year, his defence lawyer said. But the court cleared Ibrahim Sharif, former head of the secular National Democratic Action Society, or Waad, of the more serious charge of calling for regime change through illegal means, the lawyer, Mohammed Ahmed, told Reuters by telephone.

More Details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/news/middle-east/371836/bahrain-opposition-leader-jailed-for-insulting-ruling-system-lawyer>

- **Yemeni army recaptures key base near capital**

Yemen's army and forces from the Popular Resistance were able to recapture a strategic military camp near the capital Sanaa, exclusive photos obtained by Al Arabiya News Channel show. The photos of Fardhat Nahm camp near Sanaa showed destruction of facilities belonging to Iran-backed Houthi militias and forces loyal to ousted former President Ali Abdullah Saleh by the Saudi-led coalition.

More Details:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/02/24/Yemeni-army-recaptures-strategic-base-near-Sanaa.html>

- **Yemeni government accuses Hezbollah of supporting Houthis**

Yemen's government accused Hezbollah on Wednesday of training Houthi forces, fighting alongside them and planning attacks in Saudi Arabia, Anadolu news agency reported. Its latest assertion, in a statement carried by official news agency Saba, is based on "many documents and physical evidence" found in military positions abandoned by the Houthis, which it said Hezbollah would not be able to deny.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/middle-east/24138-yemeni-government-accuses-hezbollah-of-supporting-houthis>

- **Yemeni Ballistic Missile Attack killed 50 Saudi Troops in Jawf Province**

Yemeni forces have managed to kill at least 50 Saudi troops, including commanders, in a ballistic missile attack in the country's northern Jawf province. The Yemeni army, backed by Popular Committees loyal to the Houthi Ansarullah movement, targeted a Saudi military installation in Beir al-Maraziq region with a Qaher 1 ballistic missile in the early hours of Wednesday, Yemen's Arabic-language al-Masirah news website added that a large number of Saudi troopers have also sustained injuries in the attack.

More Details:

<http://en.alalam.ir/news/1792898>

- **Royal decree designates minister tasked with stakeholder jurisdictions in BHB**

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa issued Royal Decree 12/2016 designating the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism as the minister tasked to assume the stakeholder's jurisdictions in Bahrain Bourse BSC (closed) Company stipulated in the company's articles and memorandum of association. The Prime Minister and each one of the ministers according to his domain will implement this decree effective from the date of its issuance which will be published in the Official Gazette.

More Details:

<http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/713011>

- **Bahraini opposition leader gets year in prison for 2015 speech**

A Bahraini court sentenced an opposition political figure on Wednesday to a year in prison over a speech he made in 2015 calling for change in the kingdom. Ebrahim Sharif, the former secretary-general of the secular National Democratic Action Society, was convicted on a charge of inciting hatred. The court dismissed a charge Sharif faced accusing him of promoting the toppling of Bahrain's government.

More Details:

<http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/bahrain/bahraini-opposition-leader-gets-year-in-prison-for-2015-speech-1.1678580>

7. EGYPT

- **Egypt leader blames 'terrorism' for Russian plane crash**

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi acknowledged for the first time on Wednesday that militants brought down a Russian passenger plane over the Sinai Peninsula. "Has terrorism ended? No... Whoever downed that plane, what did he want? Just to hit tourism? No. To hit relations. To hit relations with Russia," Sisi said in a speech.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=75434>

- **Egypt's president says criticism threatens the state**

Egypt's president said Wednesday that unfair criticism of the government is contributing to attempts to bring down the state, telling Egyptians not to listen to anyone but him. President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi did not go into specifics in an address broadcast live, saying only that he would "remove from the face of the Earth" anyone plotting to bring down the state.

More Details:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/02/24/Egypt-s-president-says-criticism-threatens-the-state.html>

- **Air France-KLM urge release of \$13M blocked in Egypt**

Air France-KLM has urged Egypt to release upward of 100 million Egyptian pounds (\$13 million) in revenue it is unable to repatriate due to an acute dollar shortage, saying the delays were making it increasingly difficult to operate in the country. Cees Ursem, Egypt country manager, said the Franco-Dutch airline had been unable to transfer earnings out of the country since October and had last week asked the tourism minister and central bank governor to help resolve the delays.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/air-france-klm-urge-release-13m-blocked-egypt-809808>

- **Egypt still probing brutal killing of Italian student**

Egypt's interior ministry said on Wednesday it was still investigating the brutal killing of an Italian graduate student in Cairo, and suggested he may have fallen victim to criminals. Giulio Regeni, a Cambridge University PhD student who was researching Egyptian labour movements, disappeared on January 25 and his badly mutilated body was found a week later.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=75435>

- **Sisi to Egyptians: ‘Do not listen to anyone else but me’**

“Do not listen to anyone else but me,” Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said on Wednesday in a ceremony held in Cairo for the launch of the country’s sustainable development strategy, Egypt’s Vision 2030. He raised his voice as he vowed to “wipe off the face of the earth” those who want to “bring down Egypt” and work toward driving Egypt to a “fate similar to that of other” states. Set up by the ministry of planning, Egypt's Vision 2030 strategy lays out the state’s long-term plan across three dimensions, which are the economic, social and environmental dimensions.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/sisi-egyptians-%E2%80%98do-not-listen-anyone-else-me%E2%80%99-809978>

- **Egypt Sentences 4 Coptic teenagers for contempt of Islam**

An Egyptian lawyer says a court in the country’s south has convicted four Coptic teenagers of contempt for Islam after they appeared in a video mocking Muslim prayers. Three were sentenced to five years in prison each while the fourth was referred to a juvenile facility for being under the age of 18. His sentence was not announced.

More Details:

<http://thecairopost.youm7.com/news/196038/news/egypt-sentences-4-coptic-teenagers-for-contempt-of-islam>

- **House panel OKs bill to call Muslim Brotherhood terror group**

The Republican-led House Judiciary Committee has approved legislation calling on the U.S. State Department to label the Muslim Brotherhood a foreign terrorist organisation. Lawmakers voted Wednesday along party lines, 17-10. Supporters say if the measure is signed into law, the U.S. would have to deny admittance to individuals who are tied to the Brotherhood but aren't U.S. citizens or U.S. nationals.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/188480/Egypt/Politics-/House-panel-OKs-bill-to-call-Muslim-Brotherhood-te.aspx>

- **El Nadeem Centre receives warrant for closure**

Doctors at El Nadeem Centre for the Rehabilitation of Violence of Victims said Thursday that they would go to the centre's headquarters on Saturday, despite threats of closure from the state. The doctors said that even if the decision is reinforced after the weekend, they will carry on with their activities. "Even if both our clinic and our centre are closed, we shall continue to release our reports and we shall continue to help victims of violence and torture as long as we are doctors and as long as this state insists on using torture as a means to oppress its citizens," a statement released by El Nadeem said.

More Details:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2016/02/25/el-nadeem-centre-receives-warrant-for-closure/>

- **Armed forces seize ammunition in central Sinai**

Military Spokesperson Mohamed Samir has revealed that the armed forces has seized huge amounts of explosives and ammunition in central Sinai. "As part of the armed forces efforts in fighting terrorism, a third field army patrol seized a truck and motorbike while trying to escape an ambush in al-Barth area. Nine sacks of explosives used in the making of bombs were found in the truck, in addition to other three metal cylinders used as bombs and machinery guns," Samir posted on Facebook on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com//news/armed-forces-seize-ammunition-central-sinai>

- **Egypt's bourse rises by 0.12 pct at the beginning of trade**

The Egyptian stock market's benchmark index EGX 30 rose by 0.12 per cent, reaching 6,055 points, at the beginning of transactions Thursday morning. Likewise, the stock index for small and medium shares rose by 0.13 per cent while the broader EGX 100 rose by 0.07 per cent.

More Details:

<http://en.aswatmasriya.com/news/view.aspx?id=f177b8cf-20ed-4b6e-aa27-f7b844506447>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **UN says all sides guilty of 'war crimes' in Libya conflict**

All sides in Libya's chaotic conflict are likely guilty of war crimes, including torturing, raping and executing prisoners, the UN said Thursday, urging the world to do more to bring the perpetrators to justice. "A multitude of actors, both state and non-state, are accused of very serious violations and

abuses that may, in many cases, amount to war crimes," UN human rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=75450>

- **Libyan militia says it arrested ISIS leader in country's west**

A Libyan militia loyal to the Islamist-backed government in Tripoli says it arrested the leader of the ISIS branch for a western city bombed by U.S. forces last week. The Special Deterrent Force says in a Facebook post Thursday that it detained the city of Sabratha's ISIS leader named Mohammed Saad al-Tajouri and killed dozens of IS members in a gunbattle. Al-Tajouri was also known as Abu Sulieman.

More Details:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/02/25/Libyan-militia-says-it-arrested-ISIS-leader-in-country-s-west.html>

- **100 Libya MPs back unity government, demand new vote**

A majority of lawmakers from Libya's internationally recognised parliament said Wednesday that they supported a UN-backed unity government but had faced intimidation before a confidence vote. The parliament, located in the eastern town of Tobruk, was unable to hold the vote on Tuesday for the new government line-up because it lacked a quorum.

More Details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/news/middle-east/371875/100-libya-mps-back-unity-government-demand-new-vote>

- **US backs Libyan legislators over unity government**

The United States on Wednesday backed Libyan lawmakers' support for a new national unity government after the country's internationally recognized parliament said it was prevented from forming one. "The United States welcomes the February 23 endorsement for the Cabinet of the Government of National Accord, signed by a majority of Libyan House of Representatives members," State Department spokesman John Kirby said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=75453>

- **Libyan forces retake another city from Daesh**

Sabratha revolutionaries took full control of the city after repulsing Daesh, following fierce fighting that continued up to the early hours of Wednesday morning. A security source at the city said six revolutionaries were killed in the clashes that flared up between the military council and Daesh. The source confirmed that the revolutionaries fully control the city.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/libyan-forces-retake-another-city-daesh-809984>

- **Counterterrorism: Nine bunkers destroyed in Medea**

Nine bunkers serving of caches for terrorist were discovered and destroyed Wednesday by a detachment of the People's National Army in Medea (100-km south of Algiers), said the Ministry of National Defence in a communiqué Thursday. "As part of the fight against terrorism, a detachment of the People's National Army of the operational area of Medea (1st Military Region) discovered and destroyed, on 24 February 2016, nine bunkers serving of caches for terrorists and containing tools for making explosives, ten cylinders of butane gas, a power generator and various objects. Another cache was also discovered and destroyed in Sidi Bel Abbes (2nd Military Region)," said the communiqué.

More Details:

<http://www.aps.dz/en/algeria/11036-counterterrorism-nine-bunkers-destroyed-in-medea>

- **Minutes of 3rd Session of Algerian-Tunisian Technical Road Transport Committee Inked**

The minutes of the 3rd session of the Algerian-Tunisian technical committee on road transport has been inked Wednesday in Tunis. The meeting of the 3rd session of the bilateral road transport technical committee focused on examining the possibility of opening landlines between the two countries and introduce unified models of operating licenses for the international transportation service.

More Details:

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201602251019.html>

- **Caïd Essebsi, Silva discuss impact of regional situation**

President of the Republic Béji Caïd Essebsi and Portugal's Foreign Minister Augusto Santos Silva Thursday discussed the latest developments in the region and their impact on the Euro-Mediterranean area. The Portuguese FM said his country supports the democratic process in Tunisia and is committed to solidifying relations in a variety of fields.

More Details:

<http://www.tap.info.tn/en/index.php/politics2/33720-caid-essebsi-silva-discuss-impact-of-regional-situation>

- **Morocco Had Been Tracking Terrorist for “Months” Before His Arrest on Tuesday**

Morocco’s intelligence services had been tracking Hamid Abderrahman for months before they arrested him in the northern city of Nador on Tuesday, according to Akhbar Al Yaoum. According to a statement by the Ministry of the Interior, Spanish forces arrested the remaining three terrorists in the four-member cell that same day in Ceuta, a Spanish enclave in northern Morocco.

More Details:

<http://www.morocoworldnews.com/2016/02/180548/morocco-had-been-tracking-terrorist-for-months-before-his-arrest-on-tuesday/>

- **Tunisia police protest over pay, work conditions**

Several thousand Tunisian policemen protested in front of the prime minister's office on Thursday, chanting and demanding more pay and better working conditions as they face Islamist militants targeting security forces. Chanting "Leave" and "Give us our rights," protesters gathered near the premier's office in the second rally by police to test Prime Minister Habib Essid whose government is already trying to calm tensions among after riots over jobs last month.

More Details:

http://af.reuters.com/article/tunisiaNews/idAFL8N1643SU?feedType=RSS&feedName=tunisiaNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+reuters%2FAfricaTunisiaNews+%28News+%2F+Africa+%2F+Tunisia+News%29&rpc=401

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Afghan migrants 'voluntarily' head home from Germany**

A group of 135 Afghan migrants landed back in Kabul from Germany on Wednesday after volunteering to return home due to a lack of prospects in Europe, officials said.

More Details:

<http://www.thelocal.de/20160225/afghan-migrants-voluntarily-head-home-from-germany?>

- **Pakistani, Afghan lawmakers back enhanced ties for lasting peace**

Lawmakers from both the sides on Wednesday stressed the need for strengthening Pak-Afghan relations for a durable peace in the region and called for dialogue between the two countries.

More Details:

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/25-Feb-2016/pakistani-afghan-lawmakers-back-enhanced-ties-for-lasting-peace?>

- **Russia Urges Taliban To Hold Talks With Afghan Government**

Russia is urging the Taliban to start direct talks with the Afghan government and hopes that such negotiations will begin soon, Interfax news agency quoted a senior Russian diplomat as saying on Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://www.tolonews.com/en/afghanistan/23933-russia-urges-taliban-to-hold-talks-with-afghan-government?>

- **ISIS loyalists among 50 killed in Afghan army operations: MoD**

At least 50 anti-government armed militants were killed in joint military operations by the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in various parts of the country in the past 24 hours.

More Details:

<http://www.khaama.com/isis-loyalists-among-50-killed-in-afghan-army-operations-mod-0167>

- **Seven Taliban killed by own bomb during training in Ghazni**

Seven Taliban militants have been killed in the explosion of their own bomb in central Ghazni province. According the spokesperson of the provincial police headquarters, there was a training session in Hazrat Sahib Madrasa (religious seminary) in Mastofi village of Andar District on Wednesday night.

More Details:

<http://www.khaama.com/seven-taliban-killed-by-own-bomb-during-training-in-ghazni-4599>

- **2015 bloodiest year for Afghan civilians**

Deputy Minister of the National Defense Ministry at the graduation ceremony of (1,300) soldiers said, "Afghanistan's enemies have stressed on disbanding the Afghanistan after the withdrawal of

ISAF forces but it was just a dream.” The graduated soldiers said “Afghanistan National Army will change their defensive position for the coming year”.

More Details:

<http://ariananews.af/latest-news/2015-bloodiest-year-for-afghan-civilians/>?

- **Russia Sends 10,000 AK-47s to Afghanistan**

A cargo plane laden with 10,000 AK-47s landed in Kabul on Wednesday, the first part of a major Russian military aid package aimed at helping Kabul contain a resurgent insurgency.

More Details:

<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/russia-sends-10-000-ak-47s-afghanistan-n524746>

- **U.S. Money Will Keep Flowing To Afghanistan As Oversight Plummet**

The U.S. will continue to plough money into reconstruction projects in Afghanistan this year and beyond, as observers of the American project there warn that billions of dollars might be wasted or find their way to insurgents battling the country's U.S.-friendly government.

More Details:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/us-money-afghanistan_us_56cdef5fe4b0ec6725e4be62

- **Govt. Welcomes Opportunity Offered At QCG to Hold Directs Peace with Taliban**

The government has welcomes the opportunity offered at the fourth meeting of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) which held in Kabul Tuesday to hold direct peace talks with Taliban groups, President Office said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://www.tolonews.com/en/afghanistan/23939-govt-welcomes-opportunity-offered-at-qcg-to-hold-directs-peace-with-taliban>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Ceasefire deal not binding Turkey if security threatened**

A proposed ceasefire in Syria will not be binding Turkey if the country's security is threatened, Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said on Thursday, adding Ankara would take "necessary measures" against PKK-affiliate YPG and DAESH if necessary. Speaking during a press conference in the central Anatolian province of Konya, the Turkish Prime Minister said, "This ceasefire is valid for

warring sides in Syria. If one of those warring sides starts to threaten Turkey's security, this ceasefire is not going to bind us."

More Details:

<http://www.trtworld.com/turkey/ceasefire-deal-not-binding-turkey-if-security-threatened-55005>

- **Turkey FM says YPG trying to divide Syria**

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said on Thursday that the US has been sold out in Syria by the People's Protection Units (YPG) terrorist organization, which Washington considers a strategic partner. "By opening its first overseas office in Moscow, the terror group YPG has sold the US out in the field," Çavuşoğlu said on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/169827/turkey-syrian-refugees-back-kilis-nobel-bid>

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.*

Bu bülten **ORSAM Ortadoğu Uzman Yardımcısı Firuze Yağmur Gökler tarafından hazırlanmaktadır. Bülten Ortadoğu ülkelerinin yerel haber kaynaklarından derlenmektedir. Belirtilen görüşler bölge ülkelerinin haber kaynaklarına ve ismi geçen yazarlara ait olup ORSAM'ın görüşünü yansıtmamaktadır.*