



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

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1. IRAQ,

- **President Calls on Leaders of Political Blocs to Meet In His Office on Thursday**

The President of the Republic Fuad Masum called on the leaders of the political blocs to a meeting in his office on Thursday evening. A source told the National Iraqi News Agency / NINA / "The president called on the leaders of the political blocs to a meeting in his office on Thursday evening to discuss a range of political issues," .

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?WAG%252b6Jr4%252b8JNgKeNGqdSRg%253d%253d

- **Total curfew imposed in Baghdadi area in search of ISIS suicide bombers**

A source in Anbar Province police announced, that the security forces imposed a total curfew in al-Baghdadi area west of Ramadi (110 km west of Baghdad) to search for the ISIS suicide bombers, after foiling their attack on the residential complex. The source said in an interview received by IraqiNews.com, "The security forces in al-Baghdadi area (70 km west of Ramadi) imposed a curfew, including people, motorcycles and various kinds of vehicles from noon today until further notice, after obtaining information that the ISIS suicide bombers are roaming in the area."

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/urgent-total-curfew-imposed-in-al-baghdadi-in-search-of-isis-suicide-bombers/>

- **House Speaker Arrives To US**

The president of the House of Representatives Salem al-Jubouri arrived today to the United States; at the invitation he received from American universities and research institutions to develop concepts and ideas on the developments in the political and economic situation in Iraq and the region.

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?JfTfpfr8NJEubtBhn1NJ0A%253d%253d

- **Army forces repel 2 attacks by ISIS on Thurthar and Saqalawiya, 49 militants killed**

Baghdad Operations Command announced on Wednesday, that the Iraqi security forces had managed to repel two attacks by ISIS on the areas of al-Thurthar and Saqalawiya, while pointed out to the killing of 49 "terrorists" and the seizure of their weaponry and heavy equipment. The command said in a statement followed by IraqiNews.com, "The army's 1st brigade had managed to

repel an attack by ISIS on the area of al-Thurthar,” noting that, “The clashes resulted in killing 35 terrorists in the battlefield.”

More Details:

<http://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/army-forces-repel-2-attacks-isis-thurthar-sagalawiya-49-militants-killed/>

- **Barzani Reveals A Date For The Referendum On the Future of Kurdistan Region**

The President of Kurdistan, Massoud Barzani revealed the date of the referendum on the future and the fate of the province. He said during his meeting with the political parties, "We must hold a referendum on the fate and the future of the Kurdistan region before the presidential elections in the United States of America, which will take place on the eighth of next November, so as the people of Kurdistan gives its decision."

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?OQBciQw00KQIXDL54UV6ag%253d%253d

- **ISIS booby-traps the only safe exit in Fallujah**

Administration of Fallujah city in Anbar Province called for an “immediate intervention” to retake the city from ISIS and save 5,000 families entrapped inside the city, while also called the international coalition to intensify their air strikes on ISIS. The administration also pointed out that the only safe port that the security forces had opened for the families in the city has been booby-trapped by ISIS.

More Details:

<http://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/urgent-isis-booby-trapped-the-only-safe-exit-from-fallujah/>

- **Barzani Reveals a Date for the Referendum on the Future of Kurdistan Region**

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More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?OQBciQw00KQIXDL54UV6ag%253d%253d

- **Unidentified militants kill civilian in Talebiyah area in eastern Baghdad**

A source in the Iraqi police said on Wednesday, that a civilian was killed in a militant attack that took place in al-Talebiyah area in eastern Baghdad. The source said in a statement received by IraqiNews.com, "Unidentified militants opened fire against a civilian that was driving his personal vehicle in the area of al-Talebiyah in eastern Baghdad, resulting in his immediate death."

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/unidentified-militants-kill-civilian-talebiyah-area-eastern-baghdad/>

- **Iraqi F16 fighter jets destroy vital targets, kill dozens of ISIS elements in Hawija**

A security source revealed early on Wednesday, that dozens of ISIS members were killed in an aerial bombardment carried out by the Iraqi F16 fighter jets in Hawija southwest of Kirkuk (250 km north of Baghdad). The source said in an interview obtained by IraqiNews.com, "Today, Iraqi F16 fighter jets bombed vital targets, including ISIS headquarters and gatherings in Hawija and its surroundings, (45 km southwest of Kirkuk), killing dozens of ISIS members, as well as destructing the goals completely."

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/iraqi-f16-fighter-jets-destroy-vital-targets-kill-dozens-of-isis-elements-in-hawija/>

- **Hakim, Larijani Discuss Developments In Security and Political Situation in the Region**

Head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq Ammar al-Hakim discussed in his office in Baghdad with the head of the Iranian Shura Council, Ali Larijani, political and security situation in Iraq and the region. Hakim reiterated during the meeting, according to a statement of the Supreme Council "his call for an Islamic dialogue table which respects the areas of influence, emphasizing the importance of concerted efforts to get rid of terrorism and extremist ideas.

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?NfsClQbd4ogUTy0dMf3Svg%253d%253d

- **Prominent ISIS leaders killed in airstrike south of Tikrit**

media officials to the Ministry of Defense announced, that a number of leaders in the so-called the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIS) were killed, while eight booby-trapped vehicles were destructed in an airstrike carried out by the international coalition aviation south of Tikrit. The media officials to the Ministry of Defense reported, "The international coalition aviation has carried out an airstrike on a gathering of ISIS east of Muskashafah area."

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/prominent-isis-leaders-killed-in-airstrike-south-of-tikrit/>

- **Leading Iraqi Shi'ite says Islamic State shrugging off U.S. air strikes**

Flush with cash and weapons, Islamic State is attracting huge numbers of foreign fighters to Iraq and Syria and withstanding U.S.-led air strikes that are failing to hit the right targets, a powerful Iraqi Shi'ite paramilitary leader told Reuters in an interview. Hadi al-Amiri also said Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was alive and in Iraq, despite reports that he had been wounded.

More Details:

<http://english.shafaaq.com/politics/17336-leading-iraqi-shi-ite-says-islamic-state-shrugging-off-u-s-air-strikes.html>

- **Several IS posts pounded in Iraq, Syria & assault repelled by Peshmerga**

Coalition warplanes targeted several Islamic State strongholds in Mosul on Wednesday, January 27, 2016, Mosul PUK office director Ghayas Surchi told PUKmedia. Also, earlier this morning, the Peshmerga repelled an Islamic State offensive east of Bashik sub-district which was meant to target a Peshmerga tunnel through a car bomb. The assault, however, was stopped before the vehicle could make it to its destination.

More Details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=37608

- **Appeal for \$298m for Syrian Refugees in Iraq**

With no let-up to the war in Syria, UN, humanitarian and development agencies in Iraq have appealed for \$298 million in ongoing assistance for nearly 250,000 Syrian refugees in Iraq. The appeal was made at the launch of the Iraq chapter of the Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in Erbil today, attended by H.E. Dr. Ali Sindi, Minister of Planning, Kurdistan Regional Government. Also in attendance were Minister Falah Mustafa, head of the department of Foreign Relations, KRG, as well as key government and humanitarian agencies, and donors assisting refugees in Iraq.

More Details:

<http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/2016/01/27/appeal-for-298m-for-syrian-refugees-in-iraq/>

- **Mass grave in Iraq's Ramadi holds at least 40 Islamic State victims: officials**

Iraqi authorities have uncovered a mass grave in Ramadi containing at least 40 bodies, including women and children, apparently killed by Islamic State insurgents when they seized the city in May,

police and provincial officials said. Footage posted on the Facebook page of the provincial police on Wednesday showed what appeared to be bodies in varying states of decay being pulled from a shallow grave in the capital of Anbar province which Iraq's military recaptured last month.

More Details:

<http://news.yahoo.com/mass-grave-iraqs-ramadi-holds-least-40-islamic-072333096.html>

- **Some Asylum Seekers in Germany Are Moving Back to War-Torn Iraq**

The first thing that Leith Khdeir Abbas, a 27-year-old Iraqi asylum seeker who arrived in Germany four months ago, plans to do after he makes the return journey on Wednesday is to kneel down and kiss the soil that he calls home. "I fled to Germany to build my future. But I realized I can't build it on fake promises," he said at Berlin's Tegel airport where he and some 50 similarly disenchanting young Iraqi men were about to board an Iraqi Airways plane to Erbil in northern Iraq. A growing number of Iraqi refugees in Germany are choosing to return to their war-torn country, frustrated with a slow asylum process in a country overwhelmed by the influx of 1.1 million asylum seekers last year, most still living in shelters.

More Details:

<http://www.aina.org/news/20160127203254.htm>

- **Iraq forces struggling despite U.S. military training**

Iraq's 72nd Brigade was slowly moving through a live-fire exercise recently under the watchful eyes of U.S., Spanish and British coalition trainers when things began to go wrong. One part of the unit moved forward too quickly across the open field of the military base, putting a team of Iraqi engineers in danger of being hit by friendly fire. A coalition trainer noticed the error, radioed to his counterpart embedded with the formation, and the men were shifted to take the engineers out of harm's way.

More Details:

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2016/01/27/iraq-forces-struggling-despite-us-military-training/79392434/>

- **Ex-Obama adviser: US is headed for deeper involvement in Iraq, Syria**

The U.S. is headed toward deeper military involvement in Iraq, Syria and Libya to fight ISIS in Iraq and Syria, according to President Obama's former national security adviser Tom Donilon. 'My own judgment is ... we're going to become more deeply involved in both Iraq and Syria going forward here to address the challenge,' Donilon said at a Politico event Monday evening.

More Details:

<http://www.mojahedin.org/newsen/43102/Ex-Obama-adviser-US-is-headed-for-deeper-involvement-in-Iraq-Syria>

- **Iranian, Iraqi media blow whistle on U.S. Delta Force clandestine operation**

Although the Obama White House, the Pentagon and most American news outlets have painted a picture of solidarity and cooperation between U.S. armed forces and the Iraqi government and military, reports coming out of the Middle East on Tuesday paints an entirely different picture.

More Details:

<http://conservativebase.com/7110885/iranian-iraqi-media-blow-whistle-on-u-s-delta-force-clandestine-operation/>

- **Iraq's 1000km trench 'to repel suicide bombers'**

A new front line has been emerging in Iraq, separating the semi-autonomous Kurdish region not just from the militants of the so-called Islamic State but also from the rest of the country. The Kurds say the 1000km trench is designed to repel suicide bombers but there are fears in Baghdad that it is the first step in the break-up of the country.

More Details:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35426000>

2. SYRIA

- **U.S. supports excluding Kurds from Syrian peace talks in Geneva**

The United States stands by the UN's decision not to invite any Kurdish representatives to intra-Syrian peace talks set to take place in Geneva this week, State Department spokesperson Mark Toner told reporters on Wednesday. "I understand there's differing views and differing opinions on their [Kurdish] inclusion or exclusion," Toner said. "We stand by the process thus far, how it's chosen [and] who represents the Syrian opposition."

More Details:

<http://www.examiner.com/article/u-s-supports-excluding-kurds-from-syrian-peace-talks-geneva>

- **Excluding Kurds from Syria Peace Talks Recipe for 'Permanent War'**

The Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) has not been invited by the United Nations to the talks between the Syrian government and the opposition that are scheduled to begin in Geneva,

Switzerland on Friday. The Kurdish party accused Ankara of throwing its weight behind the UN decision.

More Details:

<http://sputniknews.com/middleeast/20160128/1033818743/excluding-kurds-from-talks-means-war.html>

- **A dangerous gambit in northern Syria**

DAESH has effectively become a convenient excuse for the Obama administration and others to ignore objections against controversial policies. With Syrian peace talks around the corner, stakeholders have become notably less concerned about concealing their behind-the-scenes dealings with warring parties. The United States, for instance, no longer denies its partnership with the Democratic Union Party (PYD), in northern Syria. Having confirmed in October that it had airdropped 50 tons of weapons and ammunition to the YPG, the PYD's military wing, the Obama administration now wants to establish a military base in al-Hasakah.

More Details:

http://www.dailysabah.com/columns/yahya_bostan/2016/01/28/a-dangerous-gambit-in-northern-syria

- **High Hopes: Division Bell Tolls for Syria Talks**

For those who cannot wait to find out why, the answer is straightforward. The power-mad United States and its partners in crime, mainly Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey, insisted on inviting their “moderate” terrorists to the negotiating tables. In contrast, Syria, Iran and Russia objected to involving any terrorist group, including those allied to Al-Qaeda and ISIL, which includes some of the Saudis' closest proxy forces.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13941107001672>

- **Syrian oppositions set conditions for peace talks**

Some Syrian opposition groups are threatening to boycott UN-backed peace talks unless Syria's government lifts blockades on opposition-held areas. The United Nations has invited representatives of Syria's government and opposition groups to Geneva for the first peace talks in two years, due to open on Friday.

More Details:

http://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/english/news/20160128_15.html

- **Al-Nusra Front boosts presence in Aleppo**

Al-Qaeda's affiliate in Syria, Al-Nusra Front, has boosted its presence in the country's divided former economic capital of Aleppo, a monitoring group said on Wednesday, according to AFP. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Al-Nusra has erected new positions in several districts of the northern city after having sent in a convoy of 200 vehicles loaded with fighters.

More Details:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/207169#.VqnL9NB8u0A>

- **Germany urges doubling of funds in Syrian crisis**

A Syria donors' conference in London next week co-hosted by Germany will urge participating countries to double the amount of money they are giving to tackle the humanitarian crisis, Downing Street said on Wednesday. On a call between the leaders of Britain, Germany and Norway, they agreed "that all countries in attendance should look to at least double their 2015 financial contribution to the crisis," Prime Minister David Cameron's office said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://www.thelocal.de/20160128/germany-urged-to-double-funds-in-syrian-refugee-crisis>

- **Washington Calls on Opposition Groups to Attend Syria Peace Talks**

The United States is urging the invited Syrian opposition groups to participate in the upcoming talks in Geneva "without preconditions." The talks on a ceasefire were supposed to have started on Monday, but they have been put off until Friday due to disagreements over who should sit at the negotiating table.

More Details:

<http://en.alalam.ir/news/1783727>

- **Full Throttle: From Aleppo to Daraa, Syrian Army Advances on Militants**

Scores of Daesh and al-Nusra Front terrorists have reportedly been killed after the Syrian Army launched major offensives in the key provinces of Aleppo, Damascus, Daraa, Deir ez-Zor, Hama, Homs and Idlib. The Syrian Army and the National Defense Forces (NDF) have staged a spate of major military operations all across Syria over the past twenty-four hours, in which dozens of Daesh and Al-Nusra Front militants were killed and many more wounded, according to media reports.

More Details:

<http://sputniknews.com/middleeast/20160128/1033822424/syria-army-daesh.html>

- **UK to give sanctuary to unaccompanied refugee children**

The UK is to accept more unaccompanied child refugees from Syria and other conflict zones - but the government has not said how many. The Home Office will work with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to identify "exceptional cases" from camps in Syria and neighbouring countries.

More Details:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-35422777>

- **China's New Grand Strategy for the Middle East**

President Xi Jinping's recent trip to the Middle East signals a willingness to revise China's policy in the region, one that has traditionally centered on non-interference, as shown in Beijing's reluctance last year to get involved in Syria's humanitarian crisis. As a part of Xi's new Middle East strategy, China is poised to abandon the sidelines and increase its involvement in the region, Gal Luft at Foreign Policy reports:

More Details:

http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2016/01/chinas-new-grand-strategy-for-the-middle-east/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+chinadigitaltimes%2FbKzO+%28China+Digital+Times+%28CDT%29%29

3. IRAN

- **Iran gains access to blocked gas properties**

A POGC official said the UAE and the Netherlands have released blocked Iranian gas properties and equipment. Project Director of Phases 17 and 18 at Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) Hassan Boyeri referred to the restitution of some blocked Iranian gas equipment in Dubai and Netherlands adding "with the lifting of sanctions, some foreign companies, which had sold their equipment for the operation of Phases 17 and 18 through third-parties, have arrived in Assaluyeh to accomplish and implement their facilities."

More details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/81938757/?>

- **Iran-France ties must make up for sanction-related losses: Rouhani**

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani says Tehran and Paris must initiate close and widespread ties to make up for the losses caused by the recently removed "cruel and unjust" sanctions which were imposed on Iran.

More details:

<http://iranfrontpage.com/news/politics/foreign-policies/2016/01/iran-france-ties-must-make-up-for-sanction-related-losses-rouhani/>?

- **Iran slams Russian, Kazakh media over ship fire outbreak on Volga river**

An Iranian shipping line has denied reports regarding a fire incident on its ship sailing on the Volga River on Jan. 27, criticizing Russian and Kazakh media outlets for reporting false news.

More details:

<http://en.trend.az/iran/business/2486689.html>?

- **US Navy confirms leaving Iran naval drill zone after warnings**

The US Navy has confirmed that one of its warships left an area used by Iran for a naval drill in the Persian Gulf waters after receiving warnings from Iranian forces.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2016/01/28/447646/Iran-drill-US-warship-Persian-Gulf/>

- **S. Korea willing to build nuclear plants in Iran: Salehi**

Iran's nuclear chief announced on Wednesday that South Korea has expressed its willingness to cooperate with Iran in building nuclear power plants.

More details:

http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=252529

- **Turkey's TAV airport CEO sees market potential in Iran**

Turkey's leading airport operator, TAV Airports has plans to pursue new projects in South Asia and Iran, TAV's CEO Sani Sener told Anadolu Agency on Wednesday.

More details:

<http://www.dailysabah.com/money/2016/01/28/turkeys-tav-airport-ceo-sees-market-potential-in-iran/>?

- **First container train links China to Middle East**

A container train linking China and Iran departed from Yiwu City in east China's Zhejiang Province loaded with Chinese small commodities on Thursday morning. According to the train's operator, Yiwu

Tianmeng industry investment company, it is the first regular container train linking China to the Middle East.

More details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-01/28/c_135054169.htm?

- **Moscow, Tehran Share Opinions on Syrian Crisis Settlement**

Russia and Iran share a common view on the settlement of the Middle Eastern political and social crises, including the nearly five-year conflict in Syria, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said Wednesday. Tehran also supports the efforts of UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura to ensure dialogue with Syria, he stressed.

More details:

<http://sputniknews.com/middleeast/20160128/1033826762/russia-iran-syria-crisis.html?>

- **Saudi Arabia's act of strategic defiance**

The Saudi decision to execute Shiite cleric Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr at this particular juncture was a strategic act of defiance meant to challenge Iran and the United States in particular. The Saudis wanted to send a blatant and carefully calculated message that the Kingdom is capable of standing on its own, and it will not be deterred by either the already destabilized region or by the repercussions of its act.

More details:

<http://www.transconflict.com/2016/01/saudi-arabias-act-of-strategic-defiance-281/?>

- **Europe signals new era for Iran**

After years of tensions over Iran's nuclear ambitions, Europe is ushering in a new era of relations with the once-pariah state, welcoming Iranian President Hassan Rouhani to Italy and France with high expectations that he can set in motion lucrative business deals and regional peacemaking.

More details:

<http://www.nwaonline.com/news/2016/jan/28/europe-signals-new-era-for-iran-2016012/?>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **UN chief redoubles criticism of Israel's 'stifling' occupation**

'You can count on me' to speak up, achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace Ban Ki-moon says, but Palestinians 'losing hope' UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on Wednesday criticized Israel's "stifling" occupation of the Palestinian territories, ignoring Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's condemnation of his remarks earlier this week.

More Details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/un-chief-redoubles-criticism-of-israels-stifling-occupation/>

- **Israeli P.M. Benjamin Netanyahu: Ban Ki-moon comments encourage terror**

The Israeli Prime Minister and his representative at the United Nations slammed the U.N. secretary general -- the head of the world's organization for peace and security -- for comments made about Israeli settlements in the West Bank. "The U.N. Secretary General's remarks give a tailwind to terrorism. There is no justification for terrorism," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said of Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in a statement.

More Details:

<http://edition.cnn.com/2016/01/27/middleeast/netanyahu-united-nations-terror/index.html>

- **UN's Ban stands firm on Israeli-Palestinian remarks after Netanyahu rebuke**

"Are we meant to watch as the world endlessly debates how to divide land while it disappears before our very eyes?" Ban says some Palestinians ask. After Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu blasted UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon earlier this week for remarks that Netanyahu said provided a "tailwind for terrorism," the UN top diplomat, a day after being rebuked, seemed to stand firmly by the views he expressed on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/UNs-Ban-stands-firm-on-Israeli-Palestinian-remarks-after-Netanyahu-rebuke-443031>

- **Israel criticised by closest allies**

The US, EU and UN have issued unusually stern criticism of Israel, provoking a sharp response from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and raising Palestinians' hopes of steps against their neighbour. UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon on Tuesday described Israel's settlements as "provocative acts"

that raised questions about its commitment to a two-state solution, nearly 50 years after occupying lands the Palestinians seek for a state.

More Details:

<http://www.timeslive.co.za/thetimes/2016/01/28/Israel-criticised-by-closest-allies>

- **Senior PFLP member calls to escalate the 'intifada'**

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine says terror wave should be expanded in order to unify the Palestinians. Zaher al-Shishtari, one of the leaders of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) terrorist group, on Wednesday called for the escalation of the current wave of terrorism against Israelis, which Palestinian Arab terrorist groups are referring to as the “Al-Quds Intifada”.

More Details:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/207159#.VqnP5NB8u0A>

- **Israel Must Try or Free Hunger-striking Palestinian Journalist al-Qiq**

There are 660 Palestinian currently being held by Israel without trial, a hunger strike is an attempt to challenge this policy with one's body, not a 'disciplinary infraction.' The administrative detainee Mohammed al-Qiq, 33, has been on hunger strike for 65 days, demanding that the Israeli authorities either release him or put him on trial. Al-Qiq has been hospitalized in Haemek Hospital in Afula for a month, and his lawyers say his life is in danger. He has not yet been force-fed even though the law now allows it, but he has been given medical treatment against his will.

More Details:

<http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/1.699947>

- **Israeli court rejects request for hunger striker's release**

The Israeli Supreme Court on Wednesday turned down a petition lodged by an NGO requesting the release from administrative detention of Palestinian hunger-striker Mohammed Al-Qeq. "The court rejected a petition submitted by the Palestinian Prisoners Society requesting my client's release," Al-Qeq's lawyer, Ashraf Abu Sneineh, said.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/middle-east/23591-israeli-court-rejects-request-for-hunger-strikers-release>

- **Israel Continues to Sow the Seeds of Discontent**

Israel, it seems, has found a new weapon against Palestinian attacks – the humble cucumber seed. Soldiers have been handing out seeds at checkpoints with advice to Palestinians – a nation of farmers until their lands were swallowed up by Jewish settlements – to stop their recent knife attacks on Israelis and invest in a peaceful future.

More Details:

<http://dissidentvoice.org/2016/01/israel-continues-to-sow-the-seeds-of-discontent/>

- **This uprising is about more than knives**

When the “intifada of the knives” set off in October last year, Western reporters flooded in to Jerusalem to cover the new “escalation,” interview people from “both sides of the conflict” and raise several variations of the old question: “Is this the beginning of a third intifada?”

Inevitably, the journalists left once a massive crackdown significantly reduced the number of deadly attacks against Israelis in the city. It is an all too familiar pattern for Palestinians, who know by now that it’s only “escalation” when there are dead or wounded Israelis. Deaths, injuries, arrests and home demolitions inflicted on Palestinians by Israel are deemed business as usual, not worthy of further inquiry.

More Details:

<https://electronicintifada.net/content/uprising-about-more-knives/15416>

- **UN Inaction Has Emboldened Israel**

Iran considers the persistence of the Israeli regime's criminal activities a result of the United Nations Security Council's failure to honor its obligations regarding the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. The Islamic Republic's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Gholamhossein Dehqani made the statement on Tuesday while addressing an open UN Security Council meeting titled "Palestine and the Middle East" on behalf of the 120-member Non-Aligned Movement, whose rotating presidency is currently being held by Tehran, Press TV reported.

More Details:

<http://financialtribune.com/articles/national/35206/un-inaction-has-emboldened-israel>

- **Attacking churches in Palestine: An Israeli policy since 1948**

Israeli documents have revealed that the Israeli army deliberately adopted a policy based on the destruction, vandalism and harm of the sanctity of churches in Palestine, during and after the 1948 war. An Israeli book, which will be published next month, explains how the Israeli army carried out

seizure and destruction operations against churches located in the Palestinian cities, towns and villages the army took control off after expelling their people.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/articles/middle-east/23590-attacking-churches-in-palestine-an-israeli-policy-since-1948>

- **‘It Won’t End Until We Talk’**

When Robi Damelin’s son was killed by a Palestinian sniper in 2002 while on reserve duty in the West Bank, Damelin refused to give in to the urge for revenge. Instead, she decided to become a peace activist. “Some people die when their child is killed. They give up on life and channel all their grief into the desire for revenge,” she said. “I can’t give up hope. It’s what keeps me going and gets me out of bed every morning. The pain of losing my child is what spurs me on to do whatever I can to prevent others from experiencing this.”

More Details:

<http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-life-and-religion/196693/it-wont-end-until-we-talk>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Vulture captured in Lebanon suspected of spying for Israel**

A vulture from an Israeli nature reserve has been captured in southern Lebanon by locals who claimed it was spying. The bird was spotted in the Lebanese town of Bint Jbeil, several miles from a nature reserve in Israel's Golan Heights. People who captured the bird, numbered P98, said they noticed a transmitter device, wing tags and a metal rings with Israeli markings attached to its body.

More details:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/vulture-captured-in-lebanon-suspected-of-spying-for-israel-a6837526.html>

- **PA trains security officers in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon**

The Palestinian Authority has completed a training course for 400 new recruits who will serve as security guards in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, according to a commander for the Palestine Liberation Organization in Lebanon. The commander of a joint PLO security force, Munir Maqdash, told Ma’an on Tuesday that four military patrols consisting of 100 officers each had already been qualified to join the Palestinian Authority National Security forces.

More details:

<http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?ID=769986>

- **HRW chides Lebanon over handling of refugees, protests**

Human Rights Watch renewed its criticisms Wednesday of the Lebanese government's policies toward Syrian refugees and protesters. "As security challenges in Lebanon mount, so do concerns about the government failing to adequately protect human rights," Nadim Houry, HRW deputy Middle East director, said in the group's annual world report. The report noted that authorities have been imposing restrictive and costly residency renewal regulations for Syrian refugees since January 2015, causing many of them to lose their legal residency.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/hrw-chides-lebanon-over-handling-refugees-protests-798558>

- **Israeli warplanes fly over south airspace**

The Israeli war jets are currently hovering over Hasbaya, Orkoub, Jabal Sheikh and Shebaa Farms and on medium altitude, NNA field reporter said.

More details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/55873/Israeli-warplanes-fly-over-south-airspace?>

- **Hizbullah to Break Silence on LF-FPM Reconciliation**

Hizbullah will come out of its silence on the latest rapprochement between the Lebanese Forces and the Free Patriotic Movement on Friday. A statement said that Hizbullah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah will make a televised address at 8:30 pm on the presidential elections. Since LF chief Samir Geagea's endorsement for the founder of the FPM MP Michel Aoun earlier this month, there has been speculation that Hizbullah no longer considers the lawmaker its candidate for the presidency.

More details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/200625-hizbullah-to-end-silence-on-lf-fpm-reconciliation?>

- **Snow storm adds to misery of Syrian refugees in north Lebanon**

Leila Khamiss, a 50-year-old displaced Syrian woman, said that the Syrian refugees living in tents in northern Lebanon have not received help or aid despite a current severe snow storm that has dumped mounds of snow across the mountainous areas there since Saturday. In the "tin neighborhood" in the northern port city of Tripoli, tens of Syrian refugee families are living already under hard conditions and the snow storm, dubbed Thalassa, has added to their misery, forcing them

to temporarily evacuate the tents to live with other refugees who have the "luxury" of living in rented rooms or apartments.

More details:

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/525610/snow-storm-adds-misery-syrian.html?>

- **Jordan Reportedly Confirms Ban on Bringing Jewish Religious Clothing Into Kingdom**

Kingdom's Foreign Ministry apologizes after Israeli family told to leave 'Jewish things' behind at border, but says ban is due to security reasons, Channel 2 reports.

More details:

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.699926?>

- **Report: Jordan Threatened by Flow of Terrorists from Syria**

Jordan's political and military experts have warned against the new wave of flow of terrorists into Jordan after the recent defeats of the terrorist groups across Syria, specially their recent defeat in Dara'a province, media reports said on Wednesday. "Tight security measures should be established along the borders between Jordan and Syria as terrorists are heading towards Jordan," the Arabic-language al-Qad newspaper quoted Jordanian experts as saying on Wednesday.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13941107001442>

- **How to Solve the Syrian Refugee Crisis? Create Jobs in Middle East, Germany Says**

Germany has a new plan to help Syrian refugees living in Middle Eastern countries gain some stability. It wants to create 500,000 short-term jobs that would allow refugees to survive in the overburdened countries taking them in, the German minister for economic cooperation and development said Tuesday during a visit to Jordan.

More details:

<http://www.ibtimes.com/how-solve-syrian-refugee-crisis-create-jobs-middle-east-germany-says-2282084?>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **HH Emir of Qatar arrives in Rome**

HH the Emir Shaikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani arrived Wednesday afternoon in the Italian capital, Rome, on an official visit to the Italian Republic.

More Details:

<http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/708291>

- **The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Calls at Security Council for International Protection for the Occupied State of Palestine and to Condemn Israeli Terrorism**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia confirmed before the Security Council that the Palestinian cause was and is still at the forefront of its worries, calling on the Security Council once again to set up an international protection system concerning the occupied Palestinian state, including Al-Quds, in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy.

More Details:

<http://www.mofa.gov.sa/sites/mofaen/ServicesAndInformation/ImportantIssues/Pages/ArticleID201612714274394.aspx>

- **Yemen in disarray five years after uprising**

The people's demand for regime change was met, but the country has since been torn apart by war with thousands killed. It has been five years since protesters took to the streets of Yemen's capital Sanaa to demand regime change. The uprising succeeded, but the events that followed have resulted in an even more fractured country torn by war.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/01/yemen-uprising-160127140920599.html>

- **Lawmaker calls for more controls in oil sector**

Member of the parliament's budgets committee MP Abdulrahman Al-Jeeran said it is not possible to follow an effective rationalization policy amidst the lack of control in the oil sector, adding that current leaderships are not qualified to manage the rationalization and the budgets, and that there is no effective and true role of the oil sector in service of the society.

More Details:

<http://news.kuwaittimes.net/website/lawmaker-calls-for-more-controls-in-oil-sector/>

- **Nazaha can't monitor judges**

The Supreme Judicial Council has rejected a proposal for the National Anti-Corruption Commission (Nazaha) to monitor judges in corruption cases because it believes this would threaten the independence of the judiciary.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/featured/news/871681>

- **Iran warns US warship to leave Sea of Oman**

Iranian state media reports that the country's navy is conducting a drill in the Sea of Oman and warned a U.S. warship to leave the area. The naval drill began Wednesday near the Strait of Hormuz, the strategic strait between the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

More Details:

<http://english.cntv.cn/2016/01/28/VIDEATreBzd6F03R14flf9X160128.shtml>

- **Human Rights Watch criticises Qatar on changes to its labour law**

Human Rights Watch has criticised Qatar's promised changes to its labour laws before the 2022 World Cup, claiming they still leave migrant workers "acutely vulnerable". Since Qatar controversially won the right to host the World Cup in December 2010, criticism has been mounting over the treatment of the growing army of labourers building the infrastructure required.

More Details:

<http://www.theguardian.com/football/2016/jan/27/human-rights-watch-criticises-qatar-changes-labour-law-2022-world-cup>

- **Qatar's support for the entire Al Jazeera operation is in question, diplomats say.**

When Qatar announced the closure of Al Jazeera America this month, the decision by its new ruler marked a more cautious approach to public diplomacy by the tiny Gulf state after years of cultivating a high-profile international role.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Al-Jazeera-America-closure-marks-a-quieter-Qatar-442972>

- **Bahrain, Tunisian relations hailed**

Bahrain News Agency Bahrain , Tunisian relations hailed Bahrain News Agency President Essebsi said that the coming period would witness tangible strides in the bilateral relations binding Tunisia and Bahrain , pointing out that joint cooperation will be intensified.

More Details:

<http://www.arabic-news.de/news/521274/bahrain-tunisian-relations-hailed-bahrain-news-agency>

- **Saudi Arabia approaches Russia about oil output cuts, report claims**

Saudi Arabia approached the Russian Federation about possible oil output cuts within the framework of the Organisation for Petroleum Exporting Countries, Transneft chief Nikolai Tokarev said on Wednesday, according to a report from TASS. "Saudi Arabia came forward with the initiative to have a discussion that would include the members of OPEC," Tokarev said following a meeting between oil company executives and the Ministry of Energy.

More Details:

<http://www.digitallook.com/news/international-economic/saudi-arabia-reportedly-approaches-russia-about-oil-output-cuts--1012553.html>

7. EGYPT

- **Russia to resume flights to Egypt after opening Sharm consulate**

Speaker of the Russian State Duma (Parliament) Sergey Naryshkin said Wednesday that flights would be resumed to Egypt after opening a Russian consulate in Sharm el Sheikh, Youm7 reported.

More Details:

<http://thecairopost.youm7.com/news/191250/news/russia-to-resume-flights-to-egypt-after-opening-sharm-consulate>

- **The day Egypt went 'offline'**

When Egyptians woke up on the Friday of 28 January 2011, they had no clue that it was going to be one of the bloodiest days of the 18 days of the 25 January Revolution, during which protesters' resistance strengthened in the face of security forces' brutality.

More Details:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2016/01/27/the-day-egypt-went-offline/>

- **Al-Jazeera takes Egypt to court over arrests, seizures**

The pan-Arab TV network Al-Jazeera is suing Egypt, saying the closure of its business and harassment of its journalists there had caused losses of more than \$150 million (138 million euros), its lawyers said Wednesday. The international arbitration claim on behalf of the Doha-based channel is being lodged under the jurisdiction of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes in Washington.

More Details:

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1035271/al-jazeera-takes-egypt-to-court-over-arrests-seizures/>

- **Egypt F-16 crashes during training drill, kills crew**

Egypt's military says an F-16 crashed during a training drill in an undisclosed location in the country, killing its entire crew. Thursday's statement did not specify the number of dead or provide further details.

More Details:

<http://www.startribune.com/egypt-f-16-crashes-during-training-drill-kills-crew/366765931/>

- **Egypt government seeking to fix 'damage' to education system**

Egypt's education system has "damaged a generation" of young people who are not able to compete in a global market, according to a government adviser. Tarek Shawki, chairman of Egypt's Presidential Advisory Council for Education and Scientific Research, said the country's poor education system has "killed the curiosity and creativity" in young people.

More Details:

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/egypt-government-seeking-fix-damage-education-system>

- **U.S. ambassador-at-large for women's issues to arrive in Cairo this weekend**

U.S. ambassador-at-large for Global Women's Issues Catherine Russell will arrive in Cairo in this weekend, an official at the U.S. embassy told The Cairo Post Thursday. Ambassador Russell is paying a tour to Egypt and Tunisia from Jan. 27 to Feb. 2, according to a statement issued Wednesday evening from the U.S. Department of State.

More Details:

<http://thecairopost.youm7.com/news/191317/news/u-s-ambassador-at-large-for-womens-issues-to-arrive-in-cairo-this-weekend?>

- **Top IS leader killed in Sinai: military sources**

Army forces carrying out raids in the restive Sinai Peninsula killed a top leader of a militant group that pledged allegiance to the Islamic State on Wednesday, military sources have said, according to Egypt Independent.

More Details:

<http://www.unian.info/world/1248505-top-is-leader-killed-in-sinai-military-sources.html?>

- **Teenager risks imprisonment for the ultimate holiday photo as he films himself CLIMBING Egypt's Great Pyramid of Giza**

Taking holiday photography to new heights, a teenage thrill-seeker risked his life and imprisonment on a trip to Egypt by scaling the Great Pyramid of Giza. Although it is illegal to climb the 4,500 year old icon, German tourist Andrej Ciesielski journeyed to Cairo with the express intention of rooftopping one of the three mammoth tombs at Giza. From above, he captured breathtaking images of a hazy desert landscape punctuated by the ancient wonder of the world and said that the photographs were worth the threat of up to three years in prison.

More Details:

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/travel_news/article-3418882/German-teenager-risks-imprisonment-ultimate-holiday-photo-CLIMBING-Great-Pyramid-Giza-Egypt.html

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Zitouni: No dispute between Algeria, France**

Minister of Mujahedeen Tayeb Zitouni stressed Wednesday in Paris that there was "no dispute" between Algeria and France, adding that he noticed a change in attitude and tone of France regarding memory-related issues.

More details:

<http://www.aps.dz/en/algeria/10528-zitouni-no-dispute-between-algeria,-france?>

- **Fake bombs found at Paris airport**

A security exercise gone wrong saw tempers flare in a Paris airport, after fake explosive devices were discovered by FedEx workers in a ripped package on Thursday morning. Employees of the American courier service at Charles de Gaulle airport were shocked to find a pressure cooker filled with nuts and bolts inside a package in transit from the US to Tunisia.

More details:

<http://www.english.rfi.fr/france/20160128-fake-bombs-found-paris-airport?>

- **The terrible illusion of the Arab Spring**

At the outset of the Arab Spring, a handful of analysts noted that what started in Tunisia and spread to the rest of the region was just the beginning of a long-term process that would necessarily go through ups and downs - revolutionary upsurges and counter-revolutionary setbacks.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/01/qa-terrible-illusion-arab-spring-160126105954308.html?>

- **Human Rights Watch denounces decline of tolerance for dissident voices in Morocco, occupied Western Sahara**

The Non-Governmental organization, Human Rights Watch said Wednesday, in its annual report on Human Rights, that the tolerance for dissident voices in Morocco and Western Sahara diminished during 2015.

More details:

<http://www.aps.dz/en/world/10524-human-rights-watch-denounces-decline-of-tolerance-for-dissident-voices-in-morocco,-occupied-western-sahara?>

- **Tunisia offered Bahrain's aid for security in meet**

Prime Minister HRH Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa reiterated Bahrain's support to Tunisia to maintain its security and stability and said that the current security and political challenges require stronger Arab cooperation so as to achieve people's aspirations to development.

More details:

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppId=13618&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=2>

- **US considers military intervention in Libya**

In response to the ongoing violence in Libya, the Pentagon has said it is mulling an armed intercession. "IS" jihadists have become increasingly active in the country following a period of instability.

More details:

<http://www.dw.com/en/us-considers-military-intervention-in-libya/a-19008775?>

- **Libya asks to be labelled top health emergency by WHO**

Libya on Wednesday asked the World Health Organization to raise the emergency level in the country to the highest category, saying it would help mobilise resources for people in need.

More details:

<http://www.thecitizen.co.tz/News/-/1840340/3052416/-/k8r4hs/-/index.html?>

- **Angela Merkel Extends Invitation to King Mohammed VI to Visit Germany**

King Mohammed VI on Wednesday held a phone call with Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Angela Merkel, the King's office said in a statement. During the phone call, the German Chancellor invited the Moroccan monarch to visit Germany. The call was an opportunity to discuss the positive development of bilateral relations.

More details:

<http://www.morocoworldnews.com/2016/01/178318/angela-merkel-extends-invitation-to-king-mohammed-vi-to-visit-germany/>

- **Algeria suspends Libya flights**

Algeria has suspended flights to Tripoli, a few days after it detained hundreds of Moroccans trying to travel to Libya having arrived at the international airport in the capital Algiers. Libya has become a regional concern since Daesh (the so-called IS) militants gained ground there and called for foreign recruits, especially from North Africa. Algeria is an important US ally in its fight against armed groups in the region.

More details:

<http://saudigazette.com.sa/world/mena/algeria-suspends-libya-flights/?>

- **Tunisia busts militant cell linked to Daesh**

Tunisian police have broken up a cell recruiting fighters for Daesh in Libya and Syria, authorities said on Wednesday. Tunisia declared a state of emergency after a suicide bombing killed 12 presidential guards on a bus in the capital Tunis in November.

More details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/fc9b6815-99ac-44a3-ae2f-631a4b924ee0.aspx?>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **PIA employees' protest enters third day**

Protest by Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) workers continued on third consecutive day against proposed privatization of the national airlines.

More details:

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/94407-PIA-employees-protest-enters-third-day>

- **NAP being criticised for point-scoring: Ch. Nisar**

Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan has stated that National Action Plan (NAP) is being criticized only for point-scoring. Addressing a press conference here Thursday, the Interior Minister said, "Incidents of terrorism in the country have gone down after launch of operation Zarb-e-Azb and NAP."

More details:

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/94408-NAP-being-criticised-for-point-scoring-Ch-Nisar>

- **Border with Afghanistan not safe: Khattak**

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Pervez Khattak has said that border between Pakistan and Afghanistan is not safe and without securing it cities in the country can't be made safe for people. Explaining security situation in the province, the chief minister said on the occasion that entry points at Miramshah, Angor Adda and Torkham were open for any sort of movement and terrorists involved in the recent Charsadda incident came from across the border.

More details:

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1235880/border-with-afghanistan-not-safe-khattak?>

- **Islamabad urges New Delhi to stop terror allegations against Pakistan**

Following the deadly assault on India's Pathankot Air Force base in which a number of security personnel lost lives, New Delhi said the terrorist attack was planned from inside Pakistan. India asked Pakistan to act against those responsible for the attack as it could once again damage ties. But Islamabad now urges New Delhi to stop terror allegations against Pakistan.

More details:

<http://www.khaama.com/islamabad-urges-new-delhi-to-stop-terror-allegations-against-pakistan-4526?>

- **Belarus, Pakistan to set up sci-tech and innovative cooperation center**

Belarus and Pakistan will set up a center to coordinate sci-tech and innovative cooperation, Chairman of the State Science and Technology Committee of Belarus Alexander Shumilin told BelTA. “In 2015 Belarus made serious progress in developing cooperation with such countries as Bangladesh, Pakistan and Indonesia. In autumn 2015 we held a joint Belarusian-Pakistani contest of sci-tech projects for 2016-2017 in various areas including nanotechnologies, agriculture and biotechnologies, renewable energy technologies and IT. We are also working in setting up a Belarusian-Pakistani center to coordinate sci-tech and innovative cooperation,” he noted.

More details:

<http://eng.belta.by/society/view/belarus-pakistan-to-set-up-sci-tech-and-innovative-cooperation-center-88519-2016/>?

- **China Seen Funding Half of Pakistan \$1 Billion Clean Power Push**

Pakistan expects half of the \$1 billion it’s seeking for clean-energy projects this year to come from China after an agreement between the two nations aimed at helping the government in Islamabad develop its infrastructure for years to come. Syed Aqeel Hussain Jafri, director of policy at Pakistan’s Alternative Energy Development Board, said 90 percent of the money for renewable power plants will come from overseas, with China the biggest benefactor. Excluding hydro, the ambition is to add about 800 megawatts of renewables this year, double the current installed capacity.

More details:

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-01-28/china-seen-funding-half-of-pakistan-1-billion-clean-power-push>?

- **Afghanistan had poor rights record: Human Rights Watch**

Afghanistan’s new national unity government failed to make significant gains in achieving human rights reforms in 2015, Human Rights Watch said today in its World Report 2016. Little progress was made in reining in abusive militias, reducing corruption, promoting women’s rights and reforming the courts, it said in a 659-page report.

More details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/news/pakistanafghanistan/368073/afghanistan-had-poor-rights-record-human-rights-watch>?

- **American troops to remain in Afghanistan for decades: Obama**

S military commanders have warned the Obama administration that thousands of American troops could remain in Afghanistan for decades, says a report published on Wednesday.

More details:

<http://paktribune.com/news/American-troops-to-remain-in-Afghanistan-for-decades-Obama-275580.html>

- **UN's appeal for \$393mn humanitarian aid to Afghanistan**

The United Nation's humanitarian coordinator in Afghanistan, Mark Bowden, and the country's chief executive, Abdullah Abdullah, launched an appeal on Wednesday for USD 393mn in humanitarian aid to Afghanistan in a live national television broadcast. The 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan for Afghanistan is to help millions of vulnerable people in need of food, shelter, healthcare, safe water, nutrition and other essentials.

More details:

<http://wadsam.com/afghan-business-news/uns-appeal-for-393mn-humanitarian-aid-to-afghanistan-232/?>

- **Farakhabar: Afghanistan Ranked 2nd Most Corrupt Country In The World**

A new annual study by Transparency International illustrates Afghanistan, Somalia and North Korea as the most corrupt countries among 176 in the world. Meanwhile, Executive Director for Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) Mohammad Ikram Afzali is concerned over the Afghan government's anti-corruption campaign and recommended a number of changes to this drive. "The fight against corruption should be the top priority of the National Unity Government [NUG]. There should be a political will for this purpose," he said.

More details:

<http://www.tolonews.com/en/fara-khabar/23498-farakhabar-afghanistan-ranked-2nd-most-corrupt-country-in-the-world?>

- **Afghan forces seize Taliban militants' weapons cache**

The Afghan security forces had recovered a weapons cache near the country's capital of Kabul, National Directorate of Security (NDS) said on Thursday. "The personnel of NDS have found a weapons and ammunition cache following a recent special operation in Jalriz district of (eastern) Wardak province," NDS, the country's national spy agency, said in a statement.

More details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-01/28/c_135054022.htm?

- **Obama picks new Afghan commander**

he Pentagon announced on Wednesday that U.S. President Barack Obama had nominated a veteran of the Afghan war to command U.S. and allied troops in Afghanistan. If confirmed by the Senate, U.S. Army Lt. Gen. John Nicholson would succeed Army Gen. John Campbell, who has served as commander in Afghanistan since the middle of 2014 and is expected to finish his term around March 1.

More details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-01/28/c_135053006.htm?

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkey arrests 7 DAESH suspects in capital Ankara**

Seven suspected DAESH terrorists were remanded into custody after a court appearance in Ankara on Wednesday, Turkish judicial sources reported. The suspects, along with five others, had been detained on Monday during an early morning operation in the Ulus neighbourhood. The other suspects were released on condition of judicial control.

More Details:

<http://www.trtworld.com/turkey/turkey-arrests-7-daesh-suspects-in-capital-ankara-36477>

- **Turkish ceremony remembers Holocaust victims**

Millions of people murdered, tortured and persecuted by the Nazi regime and its collaborators during World War II were commemorated on Wednesday in Turkey. Turkey's EU Minister Volkan Bozkir, the rector of Ankara University Prof. Erkan Ibis, the head of the Turkish delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Tunc Ugdul and Chief Rabbi Isak Haleva participated in the event at Ankara University in the Turkish capital.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkish-ceremony-remembers-holocaust-victims/511377>

- **Turkey: Assad, ISIL, PYD have 'no role' in Syria**

A meeting of Turkey's National Security Council has said that neither the regime of Bashar al-Assad nor any terror groups should have a role in the future of Syria. A statement from the security body came late Wednesday after a meeting in Ankara to discuss the effect of the Syrian crisis on the security and stability of Turkey and the region.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/168850/turkey-assad-isil-pyd-have-no-role-in-syria>

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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