



# MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

## GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

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## 1. IRAQ

- **A ring of care for Mosul's civilians**

In a precedent for urban warfare, Iraq's battle to retake the city of Mosul from ISIS includes a chain of care facilities for civilians wounded in the intense fighting. This marks a triumph for humanitarian law. The battle to retake the Iraqi city of Mosul from Islamic State, which began five months ago, has now become the most intense urban warfare since World War II. Street-to-street fighting in Mosul's western and older section has put Iraqi forces to the test against ISIS fighters, who took Iraq's second-largest city in 2014.

More details:

<http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/the-monitors-view/2017/0330/A-ring-of-care-for-Mosul-s-civilians>

- **UN Chief pledges solidarity with Iraqi government and people**

On what he called a "visit of solidarity" with Iraq, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Thursday welcomed the commitment of the country's leaders to civilian protection and national dialogue, and pledged the ongoing support of the United Nations as the Government seeks to bolster aid delivery to needy populations and rebuild Iraq institutions.

More details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302606181>

- **Iraqi army forces retake several areas in, around Mosul**

Iraqi government forces, backed by allied fighters from the Popular Mobilization Units, have liberated more areas in and around Mosul as they are engaged in massive operations to drive the Daesh Takfiri terrorists out of the strategic northern city.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/03/30/516151/Iraq-Mosul-Daesh-rocket-attack-execution>

- **U.S. Department of State and Smithsonian Partner on Emergency Cultural Heritage Work in Iraq**

The State Department and the Smithsonian announce a new \$400,000 project to enable Iraq's State Board of Antiquities and Heritage and others to conduct on-the-ground work to document and stabilize the recently liberated ancient city of Nimrud.

More details:

<https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/03/269323.htm>

- **U.S. airstrike was responsible for civilian deaths in Mosul, Iraqi officials say**

A top Iraqi military officer said Wednesday it was clear that the devastating explosion on the west Mosul neighborhood of Jadidah this month was a U.S. airstrike, but he insisted the troops that requested it didn't realize civilians were present.

More details:

[http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En\\_NewsReader/dfd8f37f-a710-4172-a7c1-d96e92d10fcd/-U-S--airstrike-was-responsible-for-civilian-deaths-in-Mosul--Iraqi-officials-say-](http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/dfd8f37f-a710-4172-a7c1-d96e92d10fcd/-U-S--airstrike-was-responsible-for-civilian-deaths-in-Mosul--Iraqi-officials-say-)

- **Rush hour on Mosul's 'displacement highway'**

On west Mosul's Baghdad Street, thousands of displaced Iraqis flee the fighting with their meagre belongings but similar numbers walk in the other direction, heading straight back into the war-torn city.

More details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/region/rush-hour-mosul%E2%80%99s-displacement-highway%E2%80%99>

- **Amid Civilian Deaths, Trump Cites "Very, Very Good" Results in Iraq**

In Iraq, a suicide truck bomb struck a police checkpoint south of Baghdad Wednesday, killing 17 people and wounding about 40 others. Meanwhile, fighting raged in western Mosul, where civilians remain trapped amid fighting by U.S.-backed Iraqi forces and ISIS. On Wednesday, the head of U.S. Central Command admitted to a House committee the United States probably played a role in the deaths of as many as 200 civilians in an airstrike on Mosul on March 17.

More details:

[https://www.democracynow.org/2017/3/30/headlines/amid\\_civilian\\_deaths\\_trump\\_cites\\_very\\_very\\_good\\_results\\_in\\_iraq](https://www.democracynow.org/2017/3/30/headlines/amid_civilian_deaths_trump_cites_very_very_good_results_in_iraq)

- **US: 774 killed**

The US military said yesterday that 284 members of the Iraqi security forces had been killed since the battle to retake western Mosul began, with about 1600 wounded.

More details:

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=394889>

- **Kurdistan Region will hold independence referendum this year: officials**

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq will hold an independence referendum this year through which Kurds will decide on their future, Kurdish officials say. Hoshyar Zebari, former Iraqi Finance and Foreign minister, told BasNews the people of Kurdistan Region will decide on their future through an independence referendum which will take place in 2017.

More details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/baghdad-politics/kurdistan-region-will-hold-independence-referendum-year-officials/>

- **Calls for support as destroyed Mosul Museum seeks to rebuild**

When Iraqi soldiers entered the Mosul Museum on March 13, they were greeted by scenes of enormous damage caused by the Islamic State (IS). Some items had been destroyed or burned, while others had been stolen by IS militants and sold to antiquities traders.

More details:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/mosul-museum-iraq-culture-nineveh-assyrian.html>

- **Saudi Arabia denies plans to cancel previous loans to Iraq**

Saudi foreign ministry denied on Thursday a recent report on Saudi intention to cancel its loans to Iraq, Al Arabiya local news reported.

More details:

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/31/c\\_136172003.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/31/c_136172003.htm)

- **High-tech war kit can't prevent civilian deaths in Iraq**

The US has repeatedly accused the Islamic State group of using civilians as human shields. Despite using state-of-the-art weaponry, the US-led coalition fighting the Islamic State group in Iraq appears unable to avoid civilian casualties as it battles the militants in close urban combat.

More details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/high-tech-war-kit-cant-prevent-civilian-deaths-iraq-1953894066>

- **Iraqis move on landmark Mosul mosque**

Thousands of residents flee from Islamic State-held areas inside Mosul, the militants' biggest remaining stronghold in Iraq. Iraqi special forces and police fought Islamic State (IS) militants to edge closer to the al-Nuri mosque in western Mosul on Wednesday, tightening their control around the landmark site in the battle to recapture Iraq's second city.

More details:

<https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/world/middle-east/2017-03-30-iraqis-move-on-landmark-mosul-mosque/>

- **'Wherever we went, we got bombed': Mosul refugees slam Iraqi & US anti-ISIS offensive**

Exploring the destroyed parts of Mosul, RT has been able to gather more evidence in support of Amnesty International's report which accuses the US-led coalition and Iraqi government of indiscriminately bombing houses with civilians inside along with ISIS targets.

More details:

<https://www.rt.com/news/382771-mosul-airstrikes-civilian-casualties/>

- **12,000 homes, \$200 million: The cost of rebuilding just part of Iraq's shattered Christian community**

Islamic State has damaged more than 12,000 homes belonging to Christian families in just one region of Iraq and destroyed a further 700. The figures come from Aid To The Church In Need (ACN), the Catholic charity that responds to persecution of believers around the world. ACN says the cost of repairing and replacing the homes will be around \$200 million.

More details:

<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/12000.homes.200.million.the.cost.of.rebuilding.just.part.of.iraqs.shattered.christian.community/106417.htm>

- **Russian diplomat says humanitarian tensions over Mosul are white-hot**

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova recalled that about 400,000 civilians remained in the city at a time when food and medical supplies were almost exhausted. The humanitarian tensions over Mosul have soared to record-highs after five months of fighting for control of the city, whose people are now faced with the risk of famine, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told a news briefing on Thursday.

More details:

<http://tass.com/politics/938405>

- **President Barzani, UN Secretary General discuss independence referendum**

The UN Secretary-General on Thursday arrived in Erbil and was received by the Kurdistan Region President Masoud Barzani at the Erbil International Airport. Antonio Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, arrived in Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan Region, and is scheduled to hold meetings with the Region's officials.

More details:

<http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/e7de3258-c2c5-44c7-8385-a212edcc14f3/President-Barzani--UN-Secretary-General-discuss-independence-referendum>

- **Rivalry between Iraqi Kurdistan's PUK and KDP over Kirkuk oil grows**

Iraqi Kurdish politicians deny an incident involving armed men taking over oil company headquarters recently, has anything to do with political rivalry. But insiders say it does – and the problem is serious.

More details:

<http://ekurd.net/puk-kdp-kirkuk-oil-2017-03-30>

- **Iraq Signals It Is Improving Compliance With OPEC Cuts**

As part of the OPEC deal, Iraq has cut its oil production by more than 300,000 bpd, and so far in March its average output stands at 4.464 million bpd, according to Iraq's state oil marketing company SOMO. Iraq's compliance to OPEC's cuts is 90 percent, SOMO director Falah al-Amiri said on Thursday, as reported by Reuters.

More details:

<http://oilprice.com/Latest-Energy-News/World-News/Iraq-Signals-It-Is-Improving-Compliance-With-OPEC-Cuts.html>

- **Russia Provides Practical Support to Iraq in Anti-Terror Fight, Deputy PM Says**

Russia does not only provide coordination support to Iraq in the fight against terrorism, but also supplies arms and trains military personnel, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov said. The current operation to recapture Mosul carried out by the Iraqi troops backed by the US-led international coalition began in October 2016 and resulted in the liberation of the eastern part of the city this January. However, fighting in the western areas of Mosul continues.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703311052146328-russia-iraq-terror-fight-support/>

## 2. SYRIA

- **New ministers sworn in before President al-Assad**

New ministers of Justice, Economy and Foreign Trade and Administrative Development were sworn in before President Bashar al-Assad on Thursday. Ministers Hisham Mohammad Mamdouh al-Shaar, Mohammad Samer Abdelrahman al-Khalil and Salam Mohammad al-Saffaf, respectively, were named by Decree no. 92 for 2017 issued by the President on Wednesday.

More details:

<http://sana.sy/en/?p=103279>

- **Getting rid of Assad no longer US priority in Syria, says Haley**

The US diplomatic policy on Syria is no longer focused on making the war-torn country's president Bashar al-Assad leave power, the US ambassador to the United Nations said yesterday, in a departure from the Obama administration's initial and public stance on his fate.

More details:

<http://www.independent.ie/world-news/middle-east/getting-rid-of-assad-no-longer-us-priority-in-syria-says-haley-35581148.html>

- **Number of people fleeing Syria's civil war passes the 5 million mark**

Geneva: The number of people fleeing Syria's civil war to Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt has passed the 5 million mark, data from the UN refugee agency showed on Thursday. Syrians have poured across their borders since anti-government protests in 2011 spiralled into a full-blown conflict between rebels, Islamist militants, government troops and foreign backers.

More details:

<http://www.mid-day.com/articles/number-of-people-fleeing-syrias-civil-war-passes-the-5-million-mark/18123199>

- **New NATO Terror in Homs Martyrs Five on Minibus**

A new NATO terror well organized attack hit Homs, yesterday, 29/March/2017. on al Siteen Street in the al Zahra neighborhood. The NATO terror method this time was by using an IED (improvised explosive device), exploded on a mini-bus during rush hour, when people were travelling for work, for their universities, other schools.

More details:

<http://www.syrianews.cc/new-nato-terror-homs-martyrs-five-minibus/>

- **Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O'Brien, Statement to the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Syria**

A sequence from the statement: "After painstaking negotiations by our Humanitarian Coordinator and the OCHA team, another convoy is planned to deploy today: to the hard-to-reach area of Rastan in Homs, reaching over 110,000 people in total, which would mean we would reach some 310,000 people against the plan if it successfully deploys."

More details:

<http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/under-secretary-general-humanitarian-affairs-and-emergency-relief-64>

- **UNRWA lauds EU contribution to Palestinian refugees in Syria**

The European Union has donated 10 million euro (USD 10.6 million) to the aid programmes in Syria of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

More details:

<http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2599094&Language=en>

- **Trump Administration Goes After ISIS Money Men in Iraq, Syria**

The Trump administration on Thursday went after the financial network supporting the Islamic State, slapping sanctions on two of the terror group's money men based in Iraq and Syria.

More details:

<http://nation.foxnews.com/2017/03/30/trump-administration-goes-after-isis-money-men-iraq-syria?section=10367>

- **Chris Woods of Airwars: 'We're talking here about a unilateral US war' in Syria**

"There are two separate US wars going on in Syria right now," says Chris Woods, the head of Airwars, an independent monitoring group that tracks and assesses airstrikes in Syria and Iraq. "There's the coalition war, which is the well-known one, and there's the separate, shadow war against so-called Al-Qaeda remnants (Hay'at Tahrir a-Sham)." In the last several weeks, the number of airstrikes by the United States-led international coalition against the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq has jumped

exponentially. With it, civilian casualties. This month, there have been more than 1,000 claimed civilian deaths from coalition airstrikes in Iraq and Syria, Airwars reports.

More details:

<http://syriadirect.org/news/chris-woods-of-airwars-%E2%80%98were-talking-here-about-a-unilateral-us-war%E2%80%99-in-syria/>

### 3. IRAN

- **Majlis speaker: Iran a safe haven in troubled west Asia**

Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani said the Islamic Republic of Iran is the safest country in the troubled region of west Asia. Under such circumstances, all should exercise vigilance in dealing with regional developments, he said.

More details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82478303/>

- **Top US general calls for use of ‘military means’ to disrupt Iran**

Iran has increased its destabilizing role in the Middle East and must be dealt with through various means, including military action where appropriate, the top US military commander for the Middle East General Joseph Votel said this week.

More details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/top-us-general-calls-for-use-of-military-means-to-disrupt-iran/>

- **Canada’s senate to debate Iran sanctions**

A Canadian senator has urged his colleagues to abandon a proposed bill that would impose sanctions on Iran, saying that the draft does not fulfil its stated aim “to deter Iran-sponsored terrorism, incitement to hatred, and human rights violations”. But on Wednesday, the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade voted in favour of moving Bill S-219 to a debate in Canada’s Senate chamber.

More details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/canada-s-senate-debate-iran-sanctions-1737137391>

- **State Dept.: Sanctions Alone Not Enough to Stop Iran's Missile Programme**

Sanctions on Iran are not enough to stop the country's illicit ballistic missile program, according to senior State Department officials, who said on Thursday that a new package of sanctions targeting the Islamic Republic would not halt the country's missile development. The Trump administration announced earlier this month a large package of sanctions targeting Iran, Syria, and North Korea for their efforts to transfer illicit.

More details:

<http://freebeacon.com/national-security/state-dept-sanctions-alone-not-enough-stop-irans-missile-program/>

- **Steinitz to Jpost: Iran's Traction in Syria a greater threat to Israel than ISIS**

As world powers focus on toppling ISIS, Iran is quietly gaining traction in Syria – posing a direct threat to Israel, eastern Mediterranean countries and the entire Arabian Peninsula, according to National Infrastructure, Energy and Water Minister Yuval Steinitz. “It’s very easy and convenient to focus on ISIS,” he told The Jerusalem Post. “But we have two challenges in Syria: one is ISIS and one is Iran”

More details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Irans-traction-Syria-a-greater-threat-to-Israel-than-ISIS-485663>

- **Iran to US: Stop harassing Persian Gulf states**

Iran's defense minister has called on the US to leave the Persian Gulf and stop harassing regional countries. Brigadier General Hossein Dehqan made the remarks on Thursday in response to recent hostile comments by US officials against the Islamic Republic. “What is the US doing in the Persian Gulf? They better leave this region and not harass the regional countries,” Dehqan said, adding, “Is it acceptable that an ignorant armed robber breaks into someone's house and expects to get red carpet treatment? This is an instance of modern, 21st century barbarism.”

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/03/30/516137/Iran-US-Hossein-Dehqan>

- **Iran Condemns Arab League's Statement on Trio Islands**

"These islands are inseparable parts of Iran and will also remain to be so and repeating the lies will not change the historical facts," Qassemi said. Qassemi's remarks came in reaction to Arab League's recent final declaration which was issued at the end of its summit in Jordan.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960110000591>

- **Iran witnesses positive trade balance for 2nd year**

The Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (ICA) released a report recounting the volume of export and import in the last year of Iranian calendar (1395). The same report affirms that it is for the first time in the last 37 years that the trade balance of the country is positive for the second consecutive year and it stands now at 246 million dollars.

More details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124482/Iran-witnesses-positive-trade-balance-for-2nd-year>

## 4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Netanyahu says coalition rift mended, early Israeli vote less likely**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu resolved a dispute with his finance minister on Thursday over broadcast regulation, an issue that had put a strain on the governing coalition and fed speculation of an early election.

More details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-politics-idUSKBN1711JI>

- **Arab States Urge UNESCO to Reject Israeli Sovereignty over Western Jerusalem**

Arab states called on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Executive Board to endorse a resolution, rejecting Israeli sovereignty over western Jerusalem, local media reported Thursday.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703311052141540-arab-states-israel-western-jerusalem/>

- **Israel / Palestine: new Settlements in occupied West Bank**

Israel's security cabinet on Thursday approved the building of the first new settlement in the occupied West Bank in two decades, even as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu negotiates with Washington on a possible curb on settlement activity.

More details:

[http://www.euronews.com/2017/03/31/israel-palestine-new-settlements-in-occupied-west-bank?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+euronews%2Fen%2Fnews+%28euronews+-+news+-+en%29](http://www.euronews.com/2017/03/31/israel-palestine-new-settlements-in-occupied-west-bank?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+euronews%2Fen%2Fnews+%28euronews+-+news+-+en%29)

- **Abbas: Trump is serious about peace**

PA chairman praised President Trump's efforts to achieve peace between Israel and the PA. Palestinian Authority (PA) chairman Mahmoud Abbas praised President Donald Trump on Thursday, saying he is "serious" about solving the Israel-PA conflict.

More details:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/227551>

- **Israeli-Sponsored anti-BDS Conference held at the United Nations**

Anne Frank has been quoted as saying, "Look at how a single candle can both defy and define the darkness." That is precisely what happened for one rare day this week at the United Nations, the international body that was once instrumental in creating the state of Israel but is now being used by Israel's enemies as an instrument to destroy the Jewish state. A ray of light shone through the darkness of anti-Semitism that too often descends on the UN's chambers.

More details:

<http://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/266279/israeli-sponsored-anti-bds-conference-held-united-joseph-klein>

- **UN Criticizes Hamas for closing crossing on Israel border**

The United Nations and human rights groups have accused Gaza's Hamas rulers of endangering their own people by closing the territory's main crossing with Israel.

More details:

[http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/ML\\_GAZA\\_HAMAS?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-03-30-14-03-08](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/ML_GAZA_HAMAS?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-03-30-14-03-08)

- **Venezuela, Israel in talks to reestablish Diplomatic ties**

Relations between the two countries collapsed in 2009 following the conclusion of Operation Cast Lead, a three-week armed conflict fought between the IDF and Hamas militants.

More details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Report-Venezuela-Israel-in-talks-to-reestablish-diplomatic-ties-485741>

- **One State for Two Nations**

Palestine can attribute most of its instability and insecurity issues to the war with Israel. Therefore, the country would benefit greatly from the resolution of the conflict and formation of the bi-national state, says Suha Aljundi.

More details:

<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=82338>

- **Tensions arise as Palestinians commemorate 'Land Day'**

Palestinians across Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory held protests and marches on Thursday for Land Day -- the day in 1976 when Israel confiscated approximately 21,000 dunums of historic Palestinian land across Israel, sparking widespread protests that lead to the death of six young Palestinians at the hands of Israeli forces.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/tensions-arise-palestinians-commemorate-%E2%80%98land-day%E2%80%99-957012>

- **Leaders of Egypt, Jordan, Palestinian Authority to Meet with Trump in April**

On Thursday, the Times of Israel reported that the leaders of Jordan, Egypt, and the Palestinian Authority would separately meet with President Donald Trump at the White House in April.

More details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/03/30/leaders-of-egypt-jordan-and-palestinian-authority-to-meet-with-trump-in-april/>

- **Despite history of inciting terror, Palestinian leader slated to visit the U.S. next week**

Controversial Palestinian Authority leader Jibril Rajoub is slated to enter the United States for a high-profile speaking event at the Israel Policy Forum (IPF) next week – prompting outcry from terror watch experts and victim's families who claim that his incitements led to the murder of their Israeli-Americans loved ones.

More details:

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/03/30/despite-history-inciting-terror-palestinian-leader-slated-to-visit-u-s-next-week.html>

## 5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Meadows, Jordan Hammered on Twitter by Trump over Health Care Bill**

President Donald Trump continued his social media war on his own party Thursday evening, attacking senior House Freedom Caucus members on Twitter.

More details:

<http://www.rollcall.com/news/politics/meadows-jordan-hammered-twitter-trump-health-bill>

- **King Abdullah to visit White House April 5: official**

Jordan's King Abdullah will visit the White House next week for his second meeting with Donald Trump since the US president took office, a US official told AFP Thursday.

More details:

<http://www.france24.com/en/20170330-king-abdullah-visit-white-house-april-5-official>

- **PA, Jordan compete for aid at Arab League Summit**

Jordan's King Abdullah II was not the only one who paraded proudly among the heads of state who gathered on March 29 for the Arab League Summit on the Jordanian shores of the Dead Sea.

More details:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/jordan-palestinian-authority-king-abdullah-ii-mahmoud-abbas.html#ixzz4ctFjgZha>

- **Car Bomb Blast Kills 3 People in Lebanese Town near Syrian Border - Source**

An explosive-laden off-road vehicle exploded in the Lebanese town of Aarsal near the Syrian border killing three people, the source in the mayor's office told Sputnik Thursday.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703301052134939-car-bomb-lebanon-syria/>

- **PM Hariri visits Saudi Arabia, as Lebanon seeks warmer ties**

Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri has held talks with Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman during his first visit to the kingdom since returning to the post in November.

More details:

<http://yalibnan.com/2017/03/31/pm-hariri-visits-saudi-arabia-as-lebanon-seeks-warmer-ties/>

- **PM Mulki chairs joint meeting on economic growth**

Prime Minister Hani Mulki on Thursday chaired a joint meeting between the government's economic team and the Economic Policy Council (EPC), where the two sides discussed plans to help economic sectors overcome challenges and enhance the competitiveness of the national economy.

More details:

<https://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/pm-mulki-chairs-joint-meeting-economic-growth>

- **Al Shamsi appointed Interpol Foundation ambassador**

The Board of Directors of the Interpol Foundation for a Safer World has decided to appoint Hamad Saeed Al Shamsi, the UAE's Ambassador to Lebanon, as the ambassador of the foundation at the Unity for Security Forum held in Abu Dhabi.

More details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302606146>

- **Hezbollah remains a potent military threat for Israel**

The Israeli airstrike in the city of Palmyra in mid-March targeting a weapons shipment meant for Hezbollah was the deepest raid into Syrian territory since the beginning of the Syrian civil war.

More details:

<http://www.atimes.com/hezbollah-remains-potent-military-threat-israel/>

- **Bassil starts Australia visit in Perth, says honorary consuls to be appointed worldwide**

Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil on Thursday met with the Lebanese Diaspora in the capital of Western Australia, Perth, where he started an official tour in the continent.

More details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/77343/Bassil-starts-Australia-visit-in-Perth-says-honorary-consuls-to-be-appointed-worldwide>

- **Lebanese Army Shells Militant Posts in Arsal Outskirts**

Clashes erupted in the border area of Arsal in northeastern Lebanon on Tuesday night, when militants from the so-called Al-Nusra Front attacked several “Hezbollah” posts located along the Lebanese-Syrian border.

More details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/theaawsat/news-middle-east/lebanese-army-shells-militant-posts-arsal-outskirts>

## 6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Five Yemeni civilians killed in separate Saudi airstrikes**

Five Yemeni civilians have been killed during Saudi airstrikes on residential areas in the provinces of Sa’ada and Sana’a as the civilian casualties of Riyadh’s military campaign keeps growing. According to Yemen’s al-Masirah television, a Saudi airstrike on a market in Sa’ada Province left four people dead and two others wounded on Thursday.

More Details

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/03/31/516201/Yemen-Saudi-Arab-League>

- **Aiding Saudi Arabia’s Slaughter in Yemen**

President Trump is following the same path as his predecessor, bowing to the Saudi royal family and helping in their brutal war against Yemen, as Gareth Porter described to Dennis J Bernstein. Saudi Arabia continues to escalate its war against Yemen, relying on the strong support of the U.S. government even as the poverty-stricken Yemenis are pushed toward starvation, according to investigative reporter/historian Gareth Porter.

More Details

<https://consortiumnews.com/2017/03/30/aiding-saudi-arabias-slaughter-in-yemen/>

- **Qatari Prince demanding compensation in Czech court**

A court started dealing with a complaint lodged by Qatari Prince Hamid bin Abdal Thani, who was convicted of sexual abuse of underage girls in the Czech Republic and who demands a compensation of 225,000 crowns for the time he spent in the custody, yesterday.

More Details

<http://www.praguemonitor.com/2017/03/31/qatari-prince-demanding-compensation-czech-court>

- **Qatar-UK business forum a huge success**

Qatar-UK Business and Investment Forum held over the past two days in London and Birmingham has resonated widely in British political and economic circles. In a statement to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Dr Catherine Raines, Undersecretary of the British Ministry of International Trade, confirmed the success of the Forum in consolidating the distinguished economic and trade relations between Qatar and the United Kingdom.

More Details

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/30/03/2017/Qatar-UK-business-forum-a-huge-success>

- **Bahrain delegation visits Lahore to explore business opportunities**

A high-level business delegation from the Kingdom of Bahrain, led by Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism Zayed R Alzayani, on Thursday visited Lahore to explore mutual business, trade and investment opportunities.

More Details

<http://nation.com.pk/business/31-Mar-2017/bahrain-delegation-visits-lahore-to-explore-business-opportunities>

- **Terex delivers rough terrain telehandler to Omani army**

Terex Corporation, a global manufacturer of lifting and material processing products, has successfully delivered its Genie GTH-4018 high-reach, rough terrain telehandler to Oman's military. A robust new recruit for the Sultan of Oman's Armed Forces, the Genie GTH-4018, which comes with optional bucket and forklift attachments, was supplied through authorised Genie distributor in Oman, Al Fairuz Contracting.

More Details

[http://www.tradearabia.com/news/CONS\\_322703.html](http://www.tradearabia.com/news/CONS_322703.html)

- **Dubai property meltdown: developers struggle with poor profits**

Like many other developers in the UAE, Dubai-based Drake & Scull is grappling with declining revenues on the back of challenging conditions in construction sector. The building company said on Thursday that it breached financial covenants in relation to a sukuk-syndicated facility and other bank facilities in 2016, after having incurred losses last year.

More Details

<http://ameinfo.com/construction-real-estate/residential/dubai-property-meltdown-developers-struggle-poor-profits/>

- **UAE considers buying Russian helicopters**

The United Arab Emirates is interested in purchasing Kamov Ka-226 and Ansat light helicopters from Russia, the CEO of Russian Helicopters has been quoted as saying in a media report.

More Details

[http://www.tradearabia.com/news/MISC\\_322715.html](http://www.tradearabia.com/news/MISC_322715.html)

- **Saudi amnesty gets lukewarm response from Telangana illegal workers**

An amnesty for illegal workers in Saudi Arabia, enabling them to leave the country without penalty or imprisonment, may seem like a good opportunity. But Telangana workers are not warming up to the idea.

More Details

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/saudi-amnesty-gets-lukewarm-response-from-telangana-illegal-workers/articleshow/57933665.cms>

- **Pro-Houthi protesters attack Saudi military spokesman in London**

Pro-Houthi protesters ambushed Maj. Gen. Ahmed Al-Assiri, the military spokesperson for the Saudi-led coalition to restore the legitimate UN-backed government in Yemen, as he attempted to speak at an event organized by the European Council on Foreign Relations in London on Thursday. Al-Assiri was attacked by eggs and then physically challenged by a protester who claimed he is placing him under “citizen’s arrest” for what he described as “war crimes” in Yemen.

More Details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1076871/saudi-arabia>

## 7. EGYPT

- **Mubarak’s case reopened**

Hosni Mubarak was free for the first time in six years. A day earlier, however, a Cairo Criminal Court accepted an appeal by prosecutors against an earlier court ruling ending investigations in what is referred to as the Al-Ahram gifts case. In January 2013 Mubarak paid LE18 million against gifts he, his immediate family and senior aides, had received from the state-owned Al-Ahram press and publishing establishment.

More Details

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/20062.aspx>

- **Colossus discovery highlights difficulties of preserving Egypt's heritage**

As a recently discovered pharaonic statue was being pulled out of groundwater in the Cairo slum of Matariya, children gathered around, chanting, "There is nobody like Ramses II!" Egyptians have always been proud of their ancient heritage, but such heritage is neither being handled correctly nor being put to good use to attract much-needed tourists.

More Details

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/egypt-discovery-pharaonic-statute-archaeology-microscope.html#ixzz4ct2XL7i9>

- **India, Egypt should unify efforts to face terrorism: Envoy**

India and Egypt should unify their efforts to face challenges like terrorism, extremism and radicalisation, India's envoy here said today. The historical bilateral relationship since the time of Mahatma Gandhi and Egyptian leader Saad Zaghloul is continuing to this time, Ambassador of India to Egypt Sanjay Bhattacharyya said.

More Details

[http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/57933964.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/57933964.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

- **Rwanda, Egypt ink deal to cooperate in combating crime**

Rwanda and Egypt have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen bilateral cooperation in combating crime. Rwanda's Prosecutor General Jean Bosco Mutangana signed the deal alongside his Egyptian counterpart, Nabeel Ahmed Sadek, on Thursday in Cairo.

More Details

<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2017-03-31/209855/>

- **Egypt lowers customs exchange rate to 16.5 pounds/dlr in April**

Egypt said on Thursday it would set its customs exchange rate to around 10 percent below the market price of the dollar for April in an effort to control inflation. Egypt's inflation rate has soared since it floated its currency last November, with annual urban consumer price inflation hitting 30.2 percent in February - its highest level in more than three decades.

More Details

[http://af.reuters.com/article/egyptNews/idAFL5N1H77AX?feedType=RSS&feedName=egyptNews&utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+reuters%2FAfricaEgyptNews+%28News+%2F+Africa+%2F+Egypt+News%29&&rpc=401](http://af.reuters.com/article/egyptNews/idAFL5N1H77AX?feedType=RSS&feedName=egyptNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+reuters%2FAfricaEgyptNews+%28News+%2F+Africa+%2F+Egypt+News%29&&rpc=401)

- **Egypt's subsidization program**

"Lease the pyramids and the Egyptian Museum to me, and I'll pay the government 10 times the current revenue up front," is the offer I made to an Egyptian minister in response to his remarks about the country's economic stagnation.

More Details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1076791/offbeat>

- **Arab summit provides chance for warmer Egypt-Saudi ties: experts**

The recently-held Arab summit in Jordan represents a chance for warmer ties between Egypt and Saudi Arabia that have gone through ups and downs due to their different visions on various issues including the Syrian crisis, the war in Yemen and others, said political experts. A lot of efforts have been made by Jordan and other states to prepare for the summit as a meeting point for Arab leaders with different positions on various key issues.

More Details

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/31/c\\_136171848.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/31/c_136171848.htm)

- **Opportunities for SMEs**

Like many other sectors in Egypt, the country's small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have been affected by the Central Bank of Egypt's (CBE) decision to float the Egyptian pound late last year, which saw it slide to LE18 to the dollar compared to LE8.8 before the floatation. This meant an increase in expenditure and consequently in the value of loans for SMEs, said Soha Suleiman, executive vice chairman of the Banque du Caire. However, these things could be mitigated through partnerships, she said.

More Details

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/20064.aspx>

- **As Egypt-U.S. relationship moves forward, jailed Egyptian journalists left behind**

Among the things Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and U.S. President Donald Trump are scheduled to discuss during their April 3 meeting in Washington is Egypt's fight against terrorism.

Egypt's government has broadly interpreted this fight to include jailing dozens of journalists, including photographer Abdelrahman Yaqot, who a few days before el-Sisi arrives in Washington will have checked in at the local police station, as he must every month to meet the terms of his release from prison.

More Details

<https://cpj.org/blog/2017/03/as-egypt-us-relationship-moves-forward-jailed-egyp.php>

## 8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Tunisia signs Malta MedFish4Ever Declaration**

Tunisia along with other Mediterranean countries pledged to save Mediterranean fish stocks and protect the region's ecological and economic wealth in the framework of the Ministerial Conference on Mediterranean Fisheries organised by the European Commission in Valletta, Malta, on March 29-30.

More details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302606186>

- **Insecurity and Governance Challenges in Southern Libya**

Southern Libya remains a region of endemic instability wracked by communal conflict, a shortage of basic services, rampant smuggling, and fragmented or collapsed institutions. The region has long existed on the periphery of Libya's politics and international concerns—but that must change. Increasingly, the vacuum of governance in the south has drawn in political actors from northern Libya and outside states.

More details:

<http://carnegieendowment.org/2017/03/30/insecurity-and-governance-challenges-in-southern-libya-pub-68451>

- **China Railway Group to open subsidiary in Tunisia**

China Railway, one of the major companies operating in infrastructure construction and manufacturing of engineering equipment and components, is opening an office in Tunisia.

More details:

<http://africabusinesscommunities.com/news/china-railway-group-to-open-subsiary-in-tunisia/>

- **Oil exports halted from two western Libya oil ports**

Two oil terminals in western Libya Zawiya and Mellitah are under force majeure after a pipeline shutdown prevents them from fulfilling their contracts.

More details:

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/business/oil-exports-halted-from-two-western-libya-oil-ports/article/489195#ixzz4csvj3OD9>

- **Russia offers Serraj “assistance” to rebuild Libya stability**

Russia’s deputy foreign minister Mikhail Bogdanov has told Presidency Council head Faiez Serraj that Russia is willing to provide help to Libya to deal with the political crisis in the country. However, the nature of the help has not been publicly disclosed although Bogdanov, who has special responsibility for the Middle East and Africa, is reported saying that Moscow wants to see Libya a prosperous and united country.

More details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/03/30/russia-offers-serraj-assistance-to-rebuild-libya-stability/>

- **Morocco hosts month-long African art festival**

Activities including theatre, exhibitions and concerts are being held around Rabat as part of the Africa in the Capital event. The festival follows a vast diplomatic, political and economic offensive by Morocco across the continent which culminated in its return to the African Union in January.

More details:

<http://artdaily.com/news/94852/Morocco-hosts-month-long-African-art-festival#.WN4BVdSLRkp>

- **Senior terrorist chief killed in northern Algeria**

Algerian counterterrorism forces have killed a dangerous armed terrorist in northern Algeria, Defense Ministry said in a statement on Thursday. The terrorist, nicknamed Okba, was killed in the woods of Tipaza province on Wednesday overnight, 50 km west of Algiers.

More details:

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/31/c\\_136171971.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/31/c_136171971.htm)

- **Algeria partakes in ministerial conference of 5+5 Dialogue members**

Algeria takes part in the third conference of the ministers of Higher Education, Scientific Research and innovation of the member countries of the 5+5 Dialogue, to be held Friday in Tunis.

More details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/17549-algeria-partakes-in-ministerial-conference-of-5-5-dialogue-members>

- **Algerian president's demonstrable infirmity likely to accelerate contest for a successor ahead of 2019 election**

Bouteflika is most likely to be succeeded by a continuity candidate, reducing the likelihood of a damaging power struggle among the elite. Even in the event of a candidate committed to change, economic reforms would come slowly given Algeria's entrenched vested interests.

More details:

<http://www.janes.com/article/69161/algerian-president-s-demonstrable-infirmity-likely-to-accelerate-contest-for-a-successor-ahead-of-2019-election>

- **Iranian minister, Algerian PM discuss issues of mutual interest**

Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Reza Salehi Amiri met with Algerian Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal in Algiers on Wednesday and discussed issues of mutual interest with him.

More details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82477714/>

## 9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Mortar attack in northern Afghanistan leaves 5 dead**

An Afghan official says a mortar attack in northern Takhar province killed five civilians, including four children, all from the same family. Provincial governor spokesman Sunatullah Timor said Friday the incident a day earlier occurred when Taliban fighters attacked a security post. One of the mortars hit a nearby home, killing everyone inside.

More details:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/feeds/canadian-press/world/mortar-attack-in-northern-afghanistan-leaves-5-dead/article34514947/>

- **10 militants killed in an airstrike in Uruzgan province of Afghanistan**

At least ten insurgents were killed in an airstrike conducted in the southern Uruzgan province of Afghanistan. The Ministry of Defense (MoD) said the airstrike was carried out in the vicinity of the provincial capital Tarinkot targeting a group of insurgents.

More details:

<http://www.khaama.com/10-militants-killed-in-an-airstrike-in-uruzgan-province-of-afghanistan-02476>

- **Afghan delegation meets foreign affairs adviser, NSA**

The Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Committee on Thursday met with Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs and National Security Adviser (NSA) retired Lt Gen Nasser Khan Janjua, and both sides agreed to begin action on lists of wanted terrorists that were to be exchanged this month.

More details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1323936/afghan-delegation-meets-foreign-affairs-adviser-nsa>

- **7 killed, over 20 wounded as explosion rips through market in Pakistan**

At least seven people were killed and over twenty others were wounded after an explosion ripped through a busy market in Kurram Agency tribal region of Pakistan.

More details:

<http://www.khaama.com/7-killed-over-20-wounded-as-explosion-rips-through-market-in-pakistan-02477>

- **FBI report claims teen planned Paris-style attacks in New York**

A US citizen of Pakistani origin was planning to carry out Paris-style attacks on “heavily populated areas” in New York City, revealed a report shared by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) with Pakistani authorities.

More details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1323941/fbi-report-claims-teen-planned-paris-style-attacks-in-new-york>

- **Pakistan asks India to protect Jinnah House in Mumbai**

Pakistan on Thursday asked India to fulfill its obligation of protecting the Jinnah House – the residence with the ownership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah – in Mumbai. “We expect that the Indian government will fulfill its obligation of protecting that property and its upkeep,” Foreign Office spokesperson Nafees Zakaria said during a weekly press briefing at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here.

More details:

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/03/31/pakistan-asks-india-to-protect-jinnah-house-in-mumbai/>

- **Russian military delegation in rare visit to N. Waziristan**

A Russian military delegation on Thursday undertook an unprecedented visit to North Waziristan to witness the Pakistan Army's success in clearing the region of terrorists.

More details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1323875/russian-military-delegation-in-rare-visit-to-n-waziristan>

- **As war in Afghanistan drags on, Russia resurrects interest**

As America's effort to end 16 years of war in Afghanistan yields little progress, Russia is resurrecting its own interest in the "graveyard of empires." The jockeying includes engaging the Taliban and leading a new diplomatic effort to tackle Afghanistan's future, with or without U.S. support.

More details:

[http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US\\_UNITED\\_STATES\\_AFGHANISTAN\\_ASOL-?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-03-30-13-37-33](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US_UNITED_STATES_AFGHANISTAN_ASOL-?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-03-30-13-37-33)

- **-In Anatomy of an Afghan Bombing, Clues of a Tangled War**

For days in his hospital bed, Dr. Humayoon Azizi, the governor of the southern Afghan province of Kandahar, hallucinated. Colleagues who had been killed in the bombing that Dr. Azizi somehow survived would come to him and say they knew they were dead, but they would return with new identities. Could the governor help them?

More details:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/31/world/asia/in-anatomy-of-an-afghan-bombing-clues-of-a-tangled-war.html? r=0>

## 10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkish jets destroy PKK targets in Iraq, SE Turkey**

Turkish jets destroyed dozens of PKK targets in northern Iraq and southeastern Turkey, the military said on Thursday. The Turkish General Staff said in a statement that the airstrikes were carried out Wednesday in the northern Iraqi regions of Zap, Hakurk, and Avasin-Basyan and in Turkey's eastern Hakkari province.

More details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkish-jets-destroy-pkk-targets-in-iraq-se-turkey/784436>

- **PKK terrorists nestled in Iraq's Sinjar remain a threat to Turkey, region**

The PKK terrorist group continues to have a presence in Sinjar with at least 2,500 militants and is carrying out its policy of establishing a second base, despite calls from local groups, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Iraq's central government and Turkey for the terrorist group the evacuate the area.

More details:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/mideast/2017/03/30/pkk-terrorists-nestled-in-iraqs-sinjar-remain-a-threat-to-turkey-region>

*\*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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