



# THE EMIR OF KUWAIT RESETS THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN HIS COUNTRY: REASONS AND DEVELOPMENTS

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## PREFACE

**P**olitical activity in Kuwait evolved after its independence in 1961, expanding vertically through the establishment of constitutional political formations that kept pace with political modernization in the region and the world. It also expanded horizontally, including all segments of Kuwaiti society in political partici-

pation and influencing political decision-making. Kuwait became a participatory emirate, its political system combining elements of both monarchical and parliamentary systems.

Despite all stages of political development and expansion in Kuwait, the country's fundamental decision-making structures have remained unchanged, adapting them-

Most Kuwaitis believe that the ongoing political disagreements hinder economic reforms in their country, thereby delaying Kuwait's integration into the economic renaissance witnessed by their neighbouring Gulf countries.

selves to political openness. Additionally, internal political problems and crises have also been recurring for decades. Most Kuwaitis believe that the ongoing political disagreements hinder economic reforms in their country, thereby delaying Kuwait's integration into the economic renaissance witnessed by their neighbouring Gulf countries. As a result, the Kuwaiti economy remains, to this day, heavily dependent on oil revenues.

On May 10, 2024, the Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, issued a decree dissolving the National Assembly (the Kuwaiti Parliament). The Emir and the Cabinet took charge of the duties and authorities of the National Assembly, and some articles of the constitution were suspended for a period not exceeding four years, during which all aspects of the country's democratic process would be studied and evaluated. Two days after this decision, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad issued a royal decree forming a new government consisting of 13 ministers, headed by Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who specialises in economics.

This step was anticipated, as Kuwait had been experiencing a state of "political paralysis" for months, if not years, before this action. The tension between the National Assembly and the government in Kuwait had reached dead ends, restricting the government's work internally and weakening its dynamism regionally and internationally. In his speech announcing these measures, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad stated: "The turmoil in the political scene in the country has reached a stage where I can no longer remain silent. Duty obliges us to take all necessary measures to achieve the highest interest of the country."<sup>1</sup>

The articles of the constitution that were suspended are: 51, 65, 71, 79, 107, 174, and 181.<sup>2</sup> All these articles pertain to the role of the National Assembly as a legislative authority and regulate the relations between the Emir, the parliament, and the government within a governance system based on the separation of powers with cooperation, according to Article 50 of the current Kuwaiti constitution.

1 "Amir dissolves Kuwait Parliament", GDN Online, <https://www.gdnonline.com/Details/1312013>

2 Mirza al-Khuweildi, "Kuwait: Parliament Dissolved, Constitution Articles Suspended for Democratic Review", Asharq Al-Awsat, <https://english.aawsat.com/gulf/5011416-kuwait-parliament-dissolved-constitution-articles-suspended-democratic-review>



Election advertisements on a street in Kuwait

## FEATURES OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM IN KUWAIT

Most historical sources agree that Kuwait's political history began with the settlement of the Al-Utub tribe in this area located northwest of the Arabian Gulf in 1716. This area was called "Kazma" until the late 17th century, then began to be called "Qurain" until the late 19th century, and has been known as "Kuwait" since then.<sup>3</sup> Al-Utub are a branch of the larger Arabian tribe of "Anaz-zah." Migration of groups from other tribes, apart from Al-Utub, increased in this region, leading to the need for more organisation and social administration to manage the af-

fairs of the population in this area. The Al-Sabah family was one of the most influential families within the Al-Utub tribe. Therefore, in 1752, the people of this region chose Sheikh Sabah bin Jaber Al-Sabah, the leader of the Al-Sabah family, to be their ruler. After he died in 1776, rule passed to his son, Sheikh Abdullah bin Sabah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Since then, governance in Kuwait has been hereditary within the Al-Sabah family, with continued consensus and conviction among the Kuwaiti people regarding the legitimacy of their rule<sup>4</sup>. Most Kuwaitis, regardless of their social, ideological, and political affiliations, consider the continued rule of the Al-Sabah family crucial for stability. They

3 "Kuwait was known as Kazma in early 17th century", Kuwait Times, 16 January 2018, 4.

4 Watheq Mohammed Barrak Al Sadoon, "Policy Making In Kuwait», Regional Studies Journal, Vol. 7, Issue 18, 2010, p 247. <https://www.iasj.net/iasj/article/32506>

The inherited values and traditions of Kuwaiti society have significantly influenced the contours of political life and decision-making mechanisms in the country.

believe it achieves the necessary balance among the diverse interests of societal and political actors in Kuwait.

The inherited values and traditions of Kuwaiti society have significantly influenced the contours of political life and decision-making mechanisms in the country. Kuwaiti society has shown early political awareness of the benefits of democracy compared to other societies in the region. Kuwait boasts a distinguished history of political participation in the Middle East. It witnessed the formation of its first municipal council in 1930 and had an experiment that lasted for months to establish its first legislative council in 1938<sup>5</sup>.

Since its enactment in early 1963<sup>6</sup>, the Kuwaiti Constitution has marked a significant political and social milestone in Kuwait's entity. It provided the people of Kuwait with an acceptable range of freedoms, justice, and genuine citizenship. The Constitution also granted extensive powers to the National Assembly, with the condition that these freedoms

and powers do not exceed the space allowed for political movements and "manoeuvres" sanctioned by the Emir and the influential figures of the ruling family represented in the authority (Crown Prince, Prime Minister). The Kuwaiti Constitution gives the Emir a central and decisive role in regulating the performance of the elements of the political system in the country.<sup>7</sup>

In Kuwait, political parties are banned, but the constitution allows the formation of associations and unions. Over successive parliamentary sessions, political blocs within the National Assembly have emerged with their distinct ideological, political, and social characteristics. These blocs have come to resemble parties in terms of organisational structure.

We can understand the political spectrum in Kuwait through the following division of political groups that typically participate in successive elections for the National Assembly in Kuwait:

5 Watheq Al Sadoon & Mithaq Khairallah Jaloud, *Political decision-making in the Arab Gulf countries, Iraq*: Mosul University Press - Dar Ibn Al-Atheer for Printing and Publishing, 2013, pp. 41-45.

6 The former Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, ratified the Kuwaiti constitution on November 11, 1962, and the constitution officially entered into force in the country on January 29, 1963. Ibid, pp. 46-47.

7 Kuwaiti 1962 Constitution, [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Kuwait\\_1992](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Kuwait_1992)



1- Islamic learning groups are divided into two parts:

Firstly, Sunni Islamic Groups, such as the "Salafi Islamic Gathering," which secured 8 seats in the National Assembly in the latest parliamentary elections held in April 2024, and the "Islamic Constitutional Movement - Hadas-" representing the Muslim Brotherhood in Kuwait, which won 2 seats in the last elections.<sup>8</sup>

Secondly, Shia Islamic Groups; Shia Muslims constitute a minority in Kuwait; their number is estimated at between 500-700 thousand people out of the total population of Kuwait, which reached four million, three hundred and fifty thousand people<sup>9</sup>. The prominent Shia Islamic groups include the "National Islamic Alliance," "Justice and Peace Gathering," and "Islamic National Accord Movement." Shia representatives (Islamic, liberal, and independent) won 8 seats in the latest elections<sup>10</sup>.

2- Liberals, such as the "Popular Action Movement," "National Democratic Alliance," "Dignity Movement," and "Kuwait Democratic Forum." Liberals secured approximately 15 seats in the latest elections.

3- Independents; these are divided into two parts:

Firstly, Tribal Candidates: Before every parliamentary election, each tribe in Kuwait organises a meeting to recommend the tribe

members who will run in the electoral race. These meetings are called "Tashwariyat" or "Fariyat" (Consultative Councils). One of the main tasks of these councils is to nominate candidates from their tribe for parliamentary elections. Tribal candidates secured approximately 21 seats in the latest elections. However, not all tribal candidates are independents; some belong to other political groups but run for parliamentary elections representing their tribe.<sup>11</sup>

Secondly, Family Candidates: some Kuwaiti families hold significant historical and social status in the country, especially those with influential financial and commercial capabilities in the country's economy. They represent a segment of Kuwaitis whose lives are characterised by a civilian nature, referred to in Kuwait as "Hadar" (urban). Family candidates secured approximately 14 seats in the latest elections. However, not all family candidates are independents; some belong to other political groups but run for parliamentary elections representing a gathering of urban Kuwaiti families<sup>12</sup>.

After every election, parliamentary opposition to the government emerges in Kuwait, consisting of individual deputies or parliamentary blocs. The political system in Kuwait does not prohibit the existence of opposition, as long as it adheres to the constitutional provisions and prevailing political and social norms in the country. The current parliamentary opposition in Kuwait compris-

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8 "Few changes after Kuwait holds first parliamentary election under new emir", Al Jazeera, 5 Apr 2024. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/4/5/few-changes-after-kuwait-holds-first-parliamentary-election-under-new-emir>

9 Muhammad Abdel-Al, "How Many Shiites Are There in Kuwait," The Comprehensive Arab Encyclopedia, May 26, 2023. <https://www.mosoah.com/news/world-news/how-many-shiites-are-there-in-kuwait/>

10 "A Reading of the Results of the Parliamentary Elections in Kuwait," Sky News Arabia, April 5, 2024.

11 "Kuwait tribes are rearranging their electoral papers away from Tashwariyat," Al-Arab newspaper, May 19, 2023.

12 "With the names...the winners of membership in the Kuwaiti National Assembly in 2024," CNN Arabia, April 5, 2024.



The Kuwaiti National Assembly session in which Sheikh Meshaal al-Ahmad was sworn in as Crown Prince in October 2020.

es Islamic, liberal, independent, Shia, and tribal deputies, totaling 29 members in the National Assembly of 2024<sup>13</sup>. They advocate for political and economic reforms.

We can say that the political system in Kuwait provides a significant space for practicing democracy compared to the absolute monarchy systems in the other GCC countries.

## CRISIS DEVELOPMENTS

Although the Constitution of Kuwait is considered a distinctive hallmark of political modernity in the region, it is criticised for its rigidity and the difficult requirements that must be met for amendments. A constitutional amendment has become an urgent necessity for all parties involved in the polit-

ical process in Kuwait, including the ruling family. Conversely, the Kuwaiti Constitution is also criticised for its "excessive" flexibility on some important issues, such as the interrogation of ministers. Any member of the National Assembly can request and execute the interrogation of any minister, making this authority a tool for political threats and blackmail. This, in turn, disrupts governmental performance and delays reforms and the development of services provided to citizens, especially when some of the interrogation topics are not important and do not affect the lives of a wide segment of Kuwaitis. The performance and effectiveness of the National Assembly depend on the quality of its members in each session, which may either lean towards confrontation with the government or towards appeasement.

<sup>13</sup> "With 29 seats...the opposition maintains its majority in the Kuwaiti National Assembly," Al-Arabi TV website, April 5, 2024.

We can say that this political crisis began in early August 2022, when Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad issued a decision to dissolve the National Assembly formed after the 2020 elections, by Article 107 of the Kuwaiti Constitution, which grants the Emir of the country the authority to dissolve the parliament and call for new parliamentary elections within two months from the date of dissolution.<sup>14</sup> At that time, Sheikh Mishal was the Crown Prince to his brother, the late Emir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, but he was exercising the powers of the Emir based on an Amiri decree issued in November 2021, which delegated some of the Emir's constitutional powers to him. The former Emir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad's health was not good, and many believe that Sheikh Mishal was the one in charge of ruling Kuwait since the death of his brother, the previous Emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, on September 29, 2020<sup>15</sup>.

Sheikh Mishal dissolved the parliament in August 2022 after escalating conflicts and tensions between opposition members of the National Assembly (who constituted the majority) and the government of then-Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. This crisis persisted for months before the dissolution of the parliament due to the government's refusal to repeatedly undergo parliamentary interrogations, which it considered a "disruption" of the executive authority. In contrast, opposition members insisted on their constitutional rights. At the

time, Sheikh Mishal mentioned in his decree that he decided to dissolve the parliament "to correct the political scene, which was characterised by lack of harmony, lack of cooperation, disagreements, conflicts, prioritising personal interests, and behaviours and practices that threatened national unity."<sup>16</sup>

So, new elections for the National Assembly were held on September 29, 2022, but the political scene did not change as opposition forces regained the majority in the new parliament.<sup>17</sup> A state of political stalemate continued for months thereafter, delaying the formation of a new government following those elections. In March 2023, the Constitutional Court in Kuwait issued a decision annulling the elections of September 2022 due to the invalidity of the reasons for dissolving the previous parliament.<sup>18</sup> The court decided to reinstate the parliament of 2020 to resume its work as if it had never been dissolved and as if the 2022 elections had never taken place. The previous parliament resumed its functions in April 2023. This step is an indicator of judicial independence and the effectiveness of the principle of separation of powers in Kuwait's political system.

The return of the 2020 National Assembly did not resolve the crisis between the government and the parliament; instead, it deepened it. This compelled Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, then Crown Prince, to announce

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14 "The Crown Prince of Kuwait issues a decree dissolving Parliament and explains the reasons," Al Jazeera, August 2, 2020.

15 Diaa Nouh, "The Implications of Delegating Some of the Emir's Powers to the Kuwaiti Crown Prince," RA Center for Strategic Studies, November 20, 2021, <https://rcssegyp.com/7948>

16 "Kuwait Crown Prince dissolves parliament", Kuwait News Agency, 2 August 2022.

17 Ahmed Hagagy, "Kuwaiti opposition wins big in election, standoff with government to endure", Reuters, October 25, 2022.

18 "Kuwaiti Constitutional Court dismisses parliament, setting off fresh political crisis", Gulf States Newsletter GSN, Issue 1166, 23 Mar 2023.

Most of the public opinion in Kuwait believes that there should be a balance between addressing the legitimate demands of the opposition and avoiding disruption of government operations.

again on April 17, 2023, the dissolution of the parliament and the holding of new elections within two months. Accordingly, new parliamentary elections were held in June 2023, also resulting in the opposition forming the majority in the new parliament.<sup>19</sup> The same disputes and controversy between the legislative and executive authorities resumed. The opposition wins a majority after each new election, showing the electoral integrity in Kuwait.

This crisis entered a new phase after Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad became the Emir of Kuwait following the death of the former Emir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad on December 16, 2023. Some opposition members began imposing "unprecedented" conditions on the selection of the new Crown Prince and the new Prime Minister. This prompted Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad in February 2024 to issue an Amiri decree dissolving the 2023 parliament and calling for new elections.<sup>20</sup> The new elections were held in April 2024, but nothing changed regarding this political crisis's elements and interactions. All the conflicting par-

ties still had the same hard-line stance, thus leading the country into a state of political deadlock, which was reflected in the economic and social conditions in the country.

The public opinion in Kuwait has become convinced, after the repetition of these political problems, that the decisions to dissolve the parliament and then hold new elections no longer benefit resolving this chronic political crisis in Kuwait. This crisis has begun to affect the security and economy of the country. There is a growing belief that Kuwait is in urgent need of bold and decisive political action that compels all elements of the political system in Kuwait to engage in a comprehensive review and reassessment of the entire political process. This is necessary to reset the system and pave the way for political, economic, and security-related reforms.

Despite a large portion of Kuwaiti public opinion believing that the opposition is right in some of its demands, particularly those related to combating corruption in the country and uncovering the details of some corruption cases in-

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19 "A major breakthrough for the Kuwaiti opposition... 24% change rate in the 2023 National Assembly," Al-Khaleej Al-Jadeed, June 7, 2023.

20 Clemens Chay, "Kuwait Parliament's Suspension: More Opportunities, Fewer Losses," Arab Reform Initiative, June 3, 2024.



volving members of the ruling family, significant events have unfolded. In April 2021, the Kuwaiti Ministers Court decided on the pre-trial detention of former Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah due to the corruption case known in Kuwait as the "Army Fund" case.<sup>21</sup> At that time, former Defence and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defence Jassar Abdul Razzaq Al-Jassar, and a group of Kuwaiti army officers were also detained in the same case. Then, in March 2022, the Ministers Court acquitted all the defendants in this case.

It is worth noting that the Ministers Court in Kuwait was established under Law No. 88 of 1995 concerning the trial of ministers, based on Article 132 of the Kuwaiti Constitution, which stipulates: "A special law shall determine the offences committed by ministers in the course of their duties, the procedures for accusing and prosecuting them, and the competent authority for their trial, without prejudice to the implementation of other laws regarding acts or ordinary offences committed by them and the civil liability resulting from their actions."<sup>22</sup>

But, in November 2023, the Kuwaiti Court of Cassation issued its final verdict in the "Army Fund" case, which included a decision to refrain from pronouncing punishment on Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak but required him to return sums of money related to charges of misuse of Army Fund monies. It sentenced

Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, his undersecretary Jassar Al-Jassar, and other officers to seven years of imprisonment with hard labour.<sup>23</sup> At the time this verdict was issued, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad was the Crown Prince, but he was the one steering the reins of power in Kuwait.

The "Army Fund" case was raised in front of the Kuwaiti public in November 2019, when the former Kuwaiti Defence Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (son of the former Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah) filed a report to the Kuwaiti Public Prosecution, revealing documents showing the embezzlement of approximately 240 million Kuwaiti Dinars (around 800 million USD) from funds allocated to the Kuwaiti army during the tenure of his predecessor Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. When this case broke out, Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah was serving as the Interior Minister. This case led to the resignation of the Kuwaiti government headed by Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah at the time<sup>24</sup>.

This case explains the presence of transparency and accountability in governmental work in Kuwait, on the one hand, and the other hand, it reveals the existence of a struggle between wings within the ruling Al-Sabah family.

However, most of the public opinion in Kuwait believes that there should be a balance between addressing the legitimate de-

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21 Muhammad Abdel Ghaffar, "Kuwait... the acquittal of Jaber Al-Mubarak and 8 others in the Army Fund case," Anadolu Agency, March 8, 2022.

22 Fatima Khaled Al-Mohsen, "What is the Ministers' Court," Al-Jarida, November 19, 2019, <https://www.aljarida.com/articles/1574094395079078700>

23 Mubarak Al-Habib, "The Court of Cassation draws the curtain on the case that preoccupied public opinion for years," Al-Qabas Kuwaiti newspaper, issue 17867, November 27, 2023, [https://d.alqabas.com/archive/1701027817595\\_USNzg.pdf](https://d.alqabas.com/archive/1701027817595_USNzg.pdf).

24 Anwar Al-Ruqi, "What is the story of the issue - Army Fund funds - in Kuwait?", Al-Arabi Al-Jadeed, November 26, 2023.

Most observers of Kuwaiti affairs believe that Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad possesses qualifications that enable him to accomplish real change and restore stability to the country's political process.

mands of the opposition and avoiding disruption of government operations; moreover, it should stop the practices of some opposition members who stir up tensions in the political scene for their narrow personal interests rather than public interests.

The ruling family in Kuwait always prioritises responding to public opinion, believing that the legitimacy of their authority primarily derives from continued support of the Kuwaiti people, before relying on the constitution and supporting political factions aligned with them.

The aforementioned circumstances led Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad to decide, on May 10th, to dissolve the National Assembly, granting the Emir and the Cabinet the powers and authorities of the National Assembly, and suspending the application of certain constitutional articles for a period not exceeding 4 years.

## INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CHALLENGES

Most observers of Kuwaiti affairs believe that Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad possesses qualifications that enable him

to accomplish real change and restore stability to the country's political process. He spent most of his professional life contributing to building Kuwait's security and defence institutions. He graduated from Hendon Police College in the UK in 1960 and joined the Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior, where he rose through the ranks to become the head of the "General Investigations Administration" in 1967, which under his leadership transformed into the "State Security Administration," a position he held until 1980. In 2004, Sheikh Mishal held the position of Deputy Chief of the National Guard with the rank of minister<sup>25</sup>. Additionally, Sheikh Mishal has accumulated extensive experience in Kuwaiti local, regional, and international affairs through his close and constant companionship with the late Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, which helped him establish strong Gulf, Arab, and international relations.

After his recent decision to dissolve the parliament and suspend certain provisions of the constitution, Sheikh Mishal chose Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah as Crown Prince. This appointment came as a significant surprise because he is the first Crown

<sup>25</sup> "What do we know about Sheikh Mishal Al-Sabah, the new Emir of Kuwait?", BBC NEWS Arabic, December 20, 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/articles/c6p16vwd995o>



A scene from a popular market in Kuwait

Prince in Kuwait's history from outside the "Jaber Al-Mubarak" and "Salem Al-Mubarak" branches of the Al-Sabah family, belonging instead to the "Hamad Al-Mubarak" branch. Traditionally, after the death of Kuwait's ruler Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah (Mubarak the Great) in 1915, the succession to the Crown Prince and Emirship in Kuwait had been limited to his two branches, "Jaber Al-Mubarak" and "Salem Al-Mubarak." It was customary for the Crown Prince to be one of the sons of a previous Emir<sup>26</sup>, a condition that Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled did not meet. This move by Sheikh Mishal proves his determination to bring about real changes in the political system, regardless of the cost.

As an indication of the firmness and accountability of the corrupt during the era of Sheikh Mishal, even if they were members of the ruling family, the Kuwaiti Court of Cassation decided on June 27, 2024, to imprison Sheikh Sabah Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah (son of former Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah) for 10 years, on charges related to money laundering in the case known as the "Malaysian Fund" case.<sup>27</sup>

In early this July, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior issued a warning to Shiite religious institutions in Kuwait to avoid raising sectarian flags or slogans, marching in the streets, or building marquees outside buildings during the Ashura ceremony, which occurs

26 Eman Al-Hamoud, "The selection of the Kuwaiti Crown Prince breaks the established rule for this position," Radio Monte Carlo International website, June 2, 2023.

27 Mirza Al-Khuwailidi, "The Kuwaiti judiciary closes the curtain on the case - the Malaysian Fund - the largest money laundering case," Asharq Al-Awsat, June 27, 2024.

The external challenges that Kuwait faces are no less serious than its internal challenges. The entire Middle East region is now inflamed with conflicts and crises.



Kuwait Towers, one of the country's most recognisable architectural landmarks, was built in the late 1970s.

this month, to avoid provoking other sects of Kuwaiti society.<sup>28</sup> This is happening for the first time in Kuwait and is part of Sheikh Mishal's campaign to restore discipline to the social movement in Kuwait and prevent sectarian friction to preserve the cohesion of Kuwaiti society on the one hand and to avoid provoking Sunni Islamist

groups in the country on the other. In 2015, Kuwait witnessed the discovery of terrorist cells linked to Lebanese Hezbollah, which aimed to carry out bombings and assassinations in Kuwait, storing weapons and ammunition in farms, known at the time as the "Abdali cell" or the "Hezbollah cell in Kuwait." The cell

<sup>28</sup> "The Kuwaiti Interior Ministry warns Al-Husseiniyat against raising flags and flags and threatens violators," Shafaq News, July 6, 2024.



was known as the "Abdali cell" or "Hezbollah cell in Kuwait"<sup>29</sup>.

In the same context, on July 5, Kuwaiti security agencies conducted a large-scale search and raid campaign in the farms of the "Abdali" and "Wafra" areas, during which they arrested dozens of foreigners working on these farms for violating residency laws, and the Kuwaiti Interior Ministry announced that they would be deported.<sup>30</sup> Most of the owners of these farms are members of Sunni tribes and families in Kuwait.

The actions of the Kuwaiti government under Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad seek to strengthen the confidence of the Kuwaiti public in the power of law enforcement in the country and to send a firm message to all parties in Kuwait that the era of chaos and lawlessness has ended or is coming to an end.

On the other hand, the external challenges that Kuwait faces are no less serious than its internal challenges. The entire Middle East region is now inflamed with conflicts and crises. To the north of Kuwait is Iraq, where Iranian-backed Shiite armed factions are deployed, which from time to time repeat their threats to target Kuwait's security under the pretext of the presence of tens of thousands of US soldiers in Kuwaiti territory and other pretexts that these factions invent from time to time<sup>31</sup>, in addition to the dispute

between the two countries over the demarcation of borders and the organisation of maritime navigation in the Khor Abdullah<sup>32</sup>. From the east, there is Iran, which has long been a source of danger to the security and stability of all GCC countries, including Kuwait, especially within the framework of manipulating the sectarian card, in addition to the current dispute between Kuwait and Iran over property rights in the Durrah gas field in the Gulf waters.<sup>33</sup>

## CONCLUSION

All political and social indicators after Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad decided to dissolve the parliament and suspend some articles of the constitution lead us to believe that Sheikh Meshaal is proceeding with his new strategic vision to reset the political, security, social, and economic situation, which is based on recognising the magnitude of the internal and external challenges that Kuwait is facing. Sheikh Mishal's initiative may be the last chance to restore political stability in Kuwait. So far, this initiative has received great support, both internal and external, despite the reservations of some parts of the Kuwaiti opposition. There is high expectation that the success of the current political and social review in Kuwait will result in new prospects for the country's political process, which will contribute to consolidating the country's stability and promoting its economic development.

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29 Sylvia Westall, "Terrorism case opens sectarian disputes in Kuwait," Reuters, June 2, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKCN0Y01TB/>

30 "115 violators and wanted persons arrested in a security campaign on Abdali and Wafra farms," Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Watan, July 5, 2024, <https://alwatan.kuwait.tt/articledetails.aspx?id=753241>.

31 Michael Knights, "Kataib Hezbollah's Facade Group Threatens Gulf States Again", Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Oct 24, 2023, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/kataib-hezbollahs-facade-group-threatens-gulf-states-again>

32 Mustafa Dalaa, "The Crisis of the Khor Abdullah Agreement between Iraq and Kuwait," Anadolu Agency, October 3, 2023.

33 Jwan Kado, "The story of the rich Dorra gas field, why Iran is disputing Kuwait over it, and what is Saudi Arabia's position?", Arab Post, July 4, 2023.

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