

The cost of politics in **Kuwait**

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Introduction

Kuwait has historically stood out from its oil-wealthy neighbours in housing a politically powerful and obstreperous parliament. Elected at a minimum every four years by Kuwaiti citizens over the age of 21¹, elections in recent years have happened more frequently², as the body can be, and had been, dissolved either by the *amir* or by the Constitutional Court before it has finished its term. The increasing number of elections has been accompanied by an increase in the costs of contesting with one study estimating that they have risen 20-50% in recent years.³ While Kuwait boasts one of the world's highest GDPs per capita, nearly \$54,000,⁴ cost is often a deterrent for Kuwaitis considering running in parliamentary elections.

But this political landscape has shifted following the announcement of a sustained dissolution of the Kuwaiti parliament by Amir Shakh Mishaal Ahmed al-Sabah (r.2023-present) on 10 May 2024. Such a dissolution is concerning but not unprecedented: parliament was dissolved between 1976 and 1981 and between 1986 and 1992, and in both cases was restored without major restraints on its power to legislate. The *amir* has asserted that this dissolution is to last no more than four years and that its purpose is the “revision of the democratic process in its entirety.”⁵ The announcement comes on the heels of an announcement made by 30 of the 50 elected members of parliament (MPs) that they would not accept the incoming interior minister and general discontent among Kuwaitis about the inability of their parliament to produce legislation, largely due to sustained disagreement with the unelected cabinet.⁶ While it is too early to determine all of the impacts of this change, it will likely alter the way that parliamentary elections are held in the future, potentially with an impact on the costs of seeking political office.

Methodology

In line with Westminster Foundation for Democracy’s “cost of politics approach,” research began with gathering comprehensive information about the source of cost in politics in Kuwait and the level of such costs. When we reference politics here, we refer to the practice of participatory politics through involvement in Kuwait’s parliamentary elections in June 2023 and April 2024. When we outline the cost of politics, we refer to any costs incurred from the moment a candidate decides to run for a seat in the legislature, the costs of campaigning, and any costs incurred during the truncated parliamentary term.

Two main sources were used to gather this data. First, comprehensive desk research in English and Arabic was conducted across existing scholarly literature and journalistic pieces related to this topic. Second, interviews with former or existing candidates, as well as with Kuwaiti political scientists and activists, enriched the desk-based findings. In total 12 interviews – half of whom were under 35 years old but just one of whom was female - were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide, with a collection of questions was also circulated via WhatsApp to a number of politically active Kuwaiti individuals.

Context

Kuwait is distinctive among its neighbours in the Gulf Cooperation Council. Since independence in 1961, the state has housed a relatively powerful and active parliament despite being ruled by a monarchy in the hands of the Al-Sabah family. Historically, it was among the poorest of the prominent families, meaning that it sustained support through political connections whilst relying on merchants for finances.⁷ This arrangement has shaped the character of Kuwaiti politics: because the ruling family from the nineteenth century depended on merchants for funds, “from the beginning governance in Kuwait was based on compromise and coalition-building, not extreme authoritarianism or brute force.”⁸ As a result, Kuwait’s system of government has tended to allow for much more popular participation than other systems in the Gulf.

Still, the *amir*, who must be a male descendant of Sheikh Mubarak al-Sabah (r. 1896-1915), remains the central figure in Kuwaiti government. He is “head of state, appoints all government ministers, and is not accountable under constitutional law.”⁹ Furthermore, the *amir* enjoys the rights to initiate, suspend, and publicise legislation, as well as to rule by decree when parliament is not in session. His approval is also required before the declaration of any law proposed by the legislature, which he or the Constitutional Court can dissolve at will, provided that new parliamentary elections are called within two months of its dissolution.¹⁰ In fact, the *amir*’s most recent dissolution of parliament in February 2024 came on the heels of a speech by MP Abdul Karim al-Karndari in which the *amir* believed al-Kandari had disrespected his office through the use of “offensive and inappropriate” language.¹¹

Prior to the May 2024 proclamation, the Cabinet, or Council of Ministers, led by an *amir*-appointed prime minister, set much of the political agenda and directed the work of government agencies.¹² It also tended to include members of the al-Sabah ruling family. These ministers, even if not elected, automatically became MPs, though their number in the legislature could not exceed one-third of the total number of members.¹³ Still, the cabinet was “an arm of the rulers” in the legislature.¹⁴ These cabinet members voted equally with other MPs on most issues, excluding votes of no confidence against ministers.¹⁵

Before its sustained dissolution in May 2024, Kuwait’s National Assembly, consisted of 50 elected members in addition to the aforementioned appointed members of the cabinet. The parliament had significant abilities to check the power of the executive branch. It could “declare an election invalid by a majority vote (article 95); vote a minister out of office (article 101); express no-confidence in a minister, including the prime minister (article 102); reject laws proposed by the executive branch (article 66); and draft and pass independent laws and regulations, though they must be approved by the *amir* to become law.”¹⁶ Notably, the legislature also held authority to oversee public finances, which has become a significant policy issue, as repeated allegations of government corruption emerge.¹⁷

From its inception, parliament has proven itself inclined to confront the unelected arms of government about their performance, which has led to repeated clashes between elected MPs and appointed members of cabinet, often ushering in cabinet resignations and temporary dissolutions of parliament. In recent years, one of the primary instruments of opposition in parliament has been the use of interpellations, oftentimes referred to as “grillings,” of members of the cabinet on issues related to their performance. Any MP could choose to question a minister in a process that could lead to a vote of no confidence or to the minister’s resignation when this vote was imminent. During the fifteenth parliament (2016-2020), the last to sit for its entire term, there was an average of eight interpellations per year.¹⁸ But interpellations, in addition to being a means of expressing frustration with cabinet performance, “can be driven by personal rivalries, blackmail in retaliation against political enemies or in exchange for personal favours, and even a show of strength to constituencies.”¹⁹

Political parties have not been a feature of Kuwait’s legislature, but political blocs, although lacking legal status, largely took on the same duties as parties, organising electoral campaigns and community outreach.²⁰ The most powerful and longest lasting political blocs - the Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM), the Kuwait Democratic Forum (KDF), the Popular Action Bloc (PAB), and Islamic Salafi Gathering (ISG) - held just six seats in the parliament before its sustained dissolution. ISG, which had three of those seats, dates back to 1981 and voices support for the implementation of conservative social policies. It generally backs democratic practices, such as separation of the roles of crown prince and prime minister, and the holding of tribal primaries.²¹ The ICM, which held one seat, emerged after the liberation of Kuwait from Iraq in 1991 as the political branch of Kuwait’s Muslim Brotherhood. As such, it is also inclined to advocate for conservative social policies, such as the banning of alcohol and the implementation of gender segregation at Kuwait University.²²

KDF, on the other hand, serves largely as a coalition for secular left-leaning candidates although none of its members served in the latest parliament. Its members have tended to be an outspoken part of the opposition and the bloc is known for dedicating itself to political equality and democracy, as well as efforts to stamp out corruption.²³ The PAB, is another secular left-leaning group. Members include longstanding opposition figure and former parliamentary speaker Ahmed al-Saadoun and tribal opposition figure Musallam al-Barrak. The group, which held two seats following the April 2024 election, is known for “advocating public oversight of government spending, continued populist social policies, and protection of the constitution.”²⁴

Outside of political blocs formed on the basis of ideology, candidates for the 2023 and 2024 parliamentary elections ran as members of powerful tribal blocs. Districts furthest from the urban centre (Districts IV and V) were largely dominated by representatives from tribal blocs, which represent the majority of the population there. These areas historically have been less wealthy and less politically connected than urban areas which tend to house powerful members of the business elite. Even today, social and political divisions exist between merchant and tribal populations in Kuwait, with tribes in recent years becoming more outspoken members of the legislature.

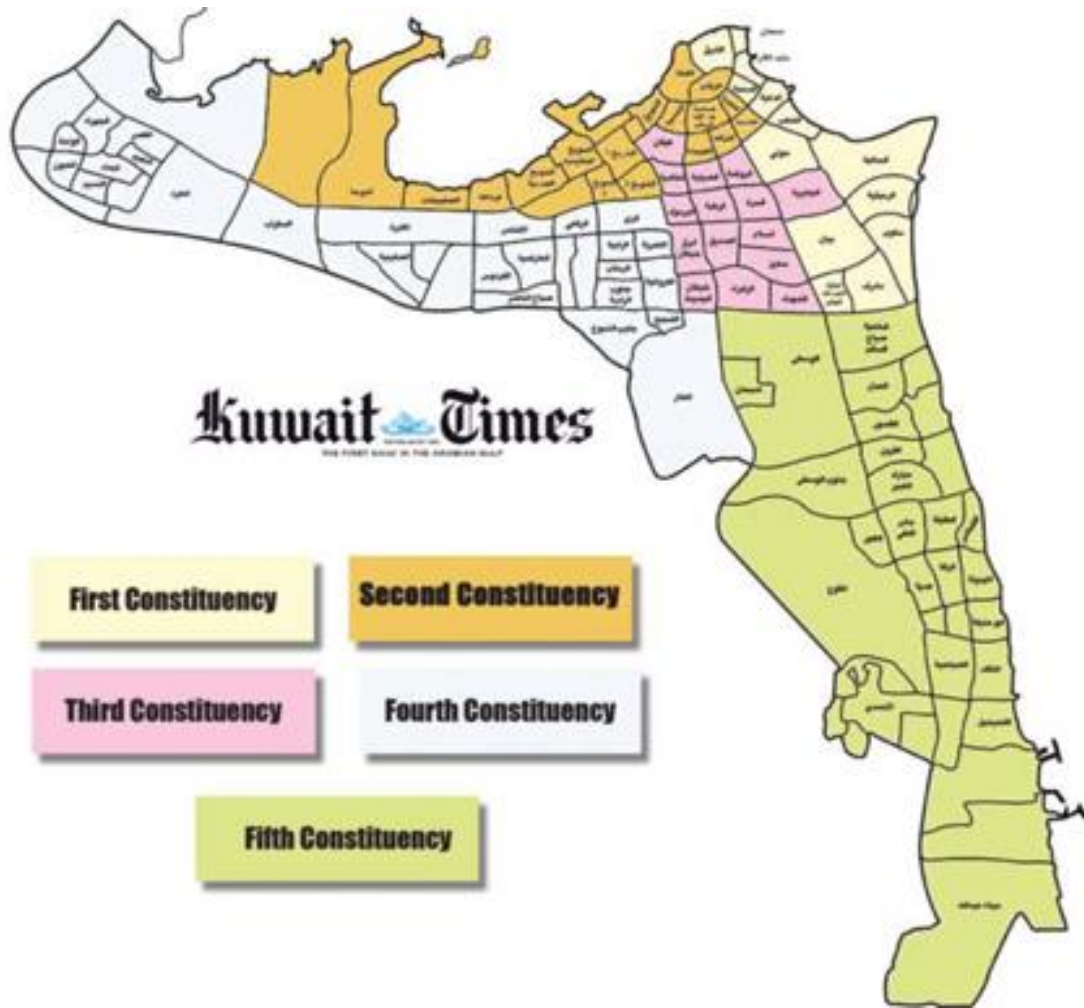


Figure 1: Electoral map of Kuwait, © Kuwait Times

The largest tribes in Kuwait, each with more than 40,000 voters, are Azimi and Mutayri, while medium sized tribes with about 20,000 voters include Rushayda, Ajman, and Anaza.²⁵ Such tribes have tended to fare best in the outlying fourth and fifth districts and have been accused of having the advantage of being able to coordinate their votes through technically illegal tribal primaries. Since the 1970s, tribes have hosted primary elections in *dīwāniyyāt* - officially banned informal gatherings often held in private homes at which political discussions are often central. In advance of elections, tribal leaders create committees which work to recruit and announce candidates, for whom tribal members are permitted to cast up to two votes each. Once chosen candidates are announced, tribe members pledge their support to these figures. Experts have gone so far as to say that “no candidate can win without meeting with the major *dīwāniyyās* of his constituency.”²⁶

Finally, an emerging phenomenon in Kuwait’s parliamentary system prior to its sustained dissolution was the rise of so-called service MPs: those candidates who run primarily to disburse material benefits to members of their in-group rather than in support of a specific political ideology. This practice is often associated with tribal candidates from outlying electoral districts. Experts believe that the prevalence of service MPs spurred “the gradual reemergence of clientelistic politics

[which] has led candidates to emphasise their ability to deliver services through their connections to state institutions.”²⁷ If a candidate, once elected, has proven himself unable or unwilling to provide services, in the form of access to the state through positions in government or through sustained social welfare benefits, his/her re-election becomes less likely.

Drivers of the cost of politics

Pre-campaign costs

In total, 205 candidates – just 6.3% of whom were female, the lowest percentage since the 2020 election – contested in April 2024. The procedure for getting on the ballot was relatively straightforward and inexpensive. The Department of Elections Affairs, housed by the Ministry of Interior, received candidacy applications for a period of 10 days and required payment of KD 50 (GBP 130) as a registration fee. Registration could be insured for an additional payment of KD 500 (GBP 1,300). However, the Ministry of Interior had oversight over those eligible to register and such decisions can be, and have been, made on the basis of political leanings. In fact, in 2016, a loyalist legislature – opposition groups²⁸ boycotted elections held between 2012 and 2016 - passed a law barring people convicted of insulting the *amir*, God, or the prophets from contesting elections.²⁹ Nonetheless, and rather remarkably, in 2022 two MPs won seats in parliament from prison, having been jailed for their involvement in a technically illegal tribal primary election during the campaign period.³⁰

Mobilising voters around a single candidate period requires substantial resources. The switch to a single non transferrable vote (SNTV) system in 2012, which decreased the number of votes per person from four to one, has made gaining the support of a political bloc more expensive and politically competitive. Whether this is to hold a *dīwāniyyā* meeting for a primary or more advanced technological means of coordinating votes the costs are high. In recent years, tribes have bought mobile telephones with cameras as a means of encouraging people to cast votes for specific candidates in the primary and later proving their voting for that candidate in the election. “According to one campaign manager for a winning candidate, nearly 310 mobile phones, costing \$600 each, were bought to distribute to young people to stimulate their participation.”³¹ Some of these costs fall on individual candidates, while others are undertaken by tribal blocs to ensure votes are cast for their chosen candidate. One innovative way to avoid security personnel, given that tribal primaries are technically illegal, was for a tribal bloc hold a primary on commercial air flight – albeit a costly means of avoiding intervention.³² The approach deployed by tribal blocs also placed pressure on political blocs to organise around a single candidate in each district to increase chances of success.

Campaign expenditure

The official campaign period can last two months, but this depends largely on when and how parliament is dissolved. In 2024, parliament was dissolved on 15 February and the date of the

election was confirmed on 2 March for 4 April, leaving just over six-weeks for campaigning.³³ In 2024, the newspaper *Asharq Alawsat* estimated campaign costs *starting* at around KD150,000 (387,788 GBP), which is lower than the average we heard in interviews, which was KD200,000 (517,824 GBP).³⁴ One electoral consultant estimated that campaign spending could reach KD2 million (5.2 million GBP)³⁵ adding that “the cost of electoral campaigns reflects the seriousness and strength of the candidate.”³⁶ Interviewees noted that lesser-known candidates generally need to spend more on campaigning to raise awareness about their campaign and their agenda. Pre-existing recognition of a candidate among Kuwaiti society is a key component of electoral success. In the words of one interviewee who was a former youth candidate - aspirants must be at least 30 years old at the time of elections to be eligible to stand - “if people know someone, they do not need to spend as much.”

Kuwait’s parliament has tended to be comprised of veteran politicians. Indeed, the oldest MP to win in 2024 was Ahmed al-Saadoun. At 89 years old he first contested for a seat in parliament in 1975.³⁷ Once a candidate like al-Saadoun comes to have a reputation for good governance and gains political trust, it is easier for them to gain votes. In contrast, younger newcomers may struggle to secure financial support if they do not enjoy support from a political bloc. Jarrah al-Fouzan, the youngest MP elected in 2024 at age 35 - he had also been elected in 2023 - demonstrated that it is not impossible for younger candidates to win seats, but youth candidates often require more funding than veteran politicians who are already well-known by the voting public in order to win.

To become better known, one major cost was the establishment of a *maqar*, or an election headquarter, or *khaima*, a tent. It is in this headquarters that voters can learn more about candidates; it is also here that tea and coffee, in addition to catered meals, are also served daily during the campaign. These tents remain in place for the entirety of the campaign period and represent an important social aspect of campaigning. Costs vary depending on how many election events are held and where they are hosted; with some candidates holding daily events, in addition to offering tea and coffee. The larger and more active the *maqar* or *khaima* and the more events held, the higher costs will be. One interviewee noted that in 2023 prominent candidates, such as Hassan Johar, Abdulkareem al-Kandari, Muhannad al-Sayer, and Muhalhal al-Mudhaf, stopped putting up campaign tents because of the expenditure they had accrued through repeated elections. In 2020 the Kuwaiti Federation of Restaurants reported that campaign events could cost between KD 3,000-7,000 (7,824-18,257 GBP) and can have up to 2,000 guests in outlying tribal regions.³⁸

Other costs include billboards on large highways, social media posts and arranging for appearances on popular podcasts like that of Abdulrahman al-Bedah and television shows like Aladalah TV. Abdulrahman al-Bedah, who has 185,000 followers on Instagram and over 38,000 followers on Twitter, served as an important means of gaining exposure, particularly for lesser-known candidates or those running as independents. Obtaining a spot on al-Bedah’s podcast reportedly cost between KD3,000-5,000 (7,779-12,964 GBP) in 2024. Whilst hiring a billboard in 2022 for two weeks cost KD50,000 (130,405 GBP) on a main road, with this price doubling in the

last two weeks before the election.³⁹ Candidates often prioritise hiring one billboard in a high-traffic area over having multiple billboards. Professional campaign videos, which cost aspirants between KD1,000-3,000 (2,608-7,824 GBP), have also grown in prominence following elections held under the restrictions imposed to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic. To have these videos spread by verified accounts either associated with political or tribal blocs or influential Kuwaitis entails additional costs, as of 2022: “Twitter costs amount to KD200 to KD300 per tweet, while media packages with at least 20 mainstream media outlets cost between KD500 to KD1,500.”⁴⁰

In 2024 costs also varied widely based on the size of campaign and by district. Outlying districts generally have higher populations than smaller, urban districts. For instance, a candidate in the first district could win a seat with 3,249 votes, compared to a candidate in the fourth district who needed 6,473 votes.⁴¹ The higher the number of votes needed for a seat, the higher the costs of campaign events and the operation of a *khaima*. Interviewees opined that tribal candidates tend to spend more money on campaigning than Kuwaitis in urban districts. But vote-buying tends to be less common in outlying districts than in the urban districts.

Vote-buying remained a relatively common practice and a significant campaign cost in 2024. Between 1981 and 2006 Kuwait had 25 electoral districts, which made vote-buying relatively affordable and common; according to one interviewee, a district could be won with as little as 250 votes, and one vote could be bought for as little as US\$1,000, in many ways obviating the need for campaigning. In the 2006 election, the first in which women had the right to vote, there were reports that women were offered designer bags containing KD1,000 (2,608 GBP) in cash to secure their vote.⁴² But following that election a movement called *Nabiha Khamsa* (“We Want Five”) successfully advocated for a reduction in the number of electoral districts, and from 2008-2024 Kuwait had five electoral districts. Nonetheless candidates interviewed confirmed that vote-buying still took place and was often organised through agencies independent of political blocs, albeit agencies with links to individual candidates. In 2024, candidates could purchase 50 votes for between KD3,000-5,000 (7,824-13,040 GBP) depending on district, with internal districts costing more than the outlying tribal districts. While the government has voiced concern about such practices and established official agencies to prevent the illegal practice, they have remained a part of Kuwaiti politics.

Costs when elected

During their time in office, Kuwait’s MPs largely depended on the state, rather than on their own coffers, to provide for their constituents. There is pressure to vote against government measures to decrease spending or increase taxes, such as value-added taxation. In fact, one dissolution of parliament in 2023 emerged after MPs advocated for the government taking on consumer and personal loans of Kuwaiti citizens – which the cabinet refused.⁴³ But MPs are rarely expected to provide monetarily for their constituents, with the exception of one dinner held at the end of a campaign, regardless of its success, to thank supporters.

Sources of funds

Families fund campaigns for their family members whilst membership in a political bloc or large tribal bloc can also help to offset personal financial outlay on campaigning. One interviewee stated that a bloc can absorb up to 90% of campaign costs if it is powerful and cohesive. Although legislation did not formally allow for political parties, in reality political blocs served many of the same functions of voter coordination and mobilisation. Sponsorship from a political bloc required previous membership within it and often an internal vote or discussion among the leadership about candidates. Nonetheless, only seven of those who won seats overall were formally members of political blocs, as opposed to candidates proposed by tribal blocs who were more successful in winning parliamentary seats and who also provided significant financial support to chosen candidates.

Incumbent MP's who contested again in 2024, having won in the June 2023 elections, were also able to utilise the resources at their disposal effectively: 39 of the 46 incumbents who contested were returned. Many Kuwaitis continue to hold perceptions that MPs have access to alternative sources of funding that are acquired illegally. In 2011, local media reported that KD25 million (238 million GBP) was deposited into the accounts of two MPs; with the suggestion that this funding had been paid by the government to secure support for certain policies in the legislature.⁴⁴ Those individuals running as independents who were not already in office were at a major financial disadvantage as they often were left to self-finance or rely on family or private funding from specific donors to run their campaigns. This was particularly the case for younger and female candidates, with raising resources an acute challenge for women since not all Kuwaitis, or political blocs back a public role for women in politics.

MPs benefits

Candidates who were elected in 2024 were required to resign from any other positions they held before they took up office. They were entitled to take home a salary of around KD2,300 (5,950 GBP per month).¹ Furthermore Article 80 of the pensions law also allows MPs to receive a pension if they had not received one before becoming an MP. As a result, one interviewee estimated the actual salary to be nearer KD5,000 (13,040 GBP) per month.

Notably, Kuwaiti MPs also enjoy immunity from criminal prosecution. Linked to this, there are opportunities for corruption, as MPs make side deals or guarantees to powerful people in society, thereby allowing them to earn more than their state-provided salary. In September 2017, Kuwaiti press reported that several MPs received a “second exceptional” salary.¹

Beyond money: women and youth in Kuwaiti politics

Only one woman – Jenan al-Bushehri - has won a seat in parliament in the last two elections (June 2023 and April 2024). While the largest number of women ever elected is four of 50 elected candidates in 2009. The importance of traditional social values and contrasting views of the place of women in political life has, to date, been more significant than money in keeping women out of parliament. Beyond costs, women have faced a major challenge just to be listed as a candidates for major political blocs⁴⁵ and from Islamists and tribal groups who won more than half of the seats in the 2024 election. Tribal and Islamist groups tend to appeal to traditional values and often support gender segregation; indeed, many members of these groups opposed granting women the right to vote – a right they gained in 2005 - in the 1990s and early 2000s. Thus, while finances can support efforts to raise awareness about certain candidates, if that candidate will never be accepted among certain segments of society with particular views about women, the level of spending becomes irrelevant. “Women running for elected office positions do not have the same opportunities as men, not only financially, but also in terms of access to connections and support from the public and society” underscored one women’s political participation advocate speaking in 2020.⁴⁶

When it comes to youth representation, because incumbents or former MPs have tended to fare well in elections, younger candidates – representing 52% of Kuwait’s population which is aged 24 or under - have been disadvantaged. Unless young candidates are linked to powerful political or tribal blocs, they are often forced to shoulder the significant financial burden privately. One interviewee stated that successful young candidates tend to gain financial backing from their families, thereby putting those from less affluent families at a further disadvantage. Those that lacked experience in the public or political eye, for instance through the National Union of Kuwaiti Students, also have remained at a distinct disadvantage.

Recommendations

Kuwaitis are very knowledgeable and passionate about domestic politics in their country. As can be seen from sustained high turnout rates, 62% in April 2024,⁴⁷ they also see parliament as a central part of political life in their country even if trust in the institution to perform effectively is less pronounced. In part this is linked to the influence of money in politics, which as this study has shown is pervasive and, in some instances, a determining factor in election outcomes. To tackle this the following recommendations are proffered:

- Parliament, which has long been central to Kuwaiti political life, should be restored to allow a space for public participation in politics. Nonetheless, its relationship with unelected segments of government, particularly the cabinet, needs to be re-examined in such a way to facilitate a focus

on legislation rather than interpellation or obstruction. While turnout for parliamentary elections remained high, a survey conducted in early 2024 showed that 55% of Kuwaitis interviewed “strongly” or “somewhat” agreed that “the National Assembly *slowed down* government.”⁴⁸ The introduction of political parties, discussed below or the election of a prime minister could potentially facilitate a change in this relationship.

- For money to play less of a role in Kuwaiti politics writ large, a political parties law would help shore up support for specific agendas, rather than for specific individuals or individual families or tribes. Furthermore, voters would be better able to hold to account specific parties for their lack of performance in parliament. When it comes to the relationship with cabinet, the inclusion of parties could make repeated interpellations of cabinet ministers a less common occurrence, since it would be parties on the whole, rather than individuals, who would need to agree to question ministers in parliament.
- With no official limit on campaign expenditure, high levels of spending are likely to continue unchecked when elections are restored. Legislation placing caps on campaign spending and continued efforts to form an electoral commission to regulate elections and enforce spending regulations could help efforts to stamp out corruption and the practice of vote-buying. Such a cap could also help to narrow the gap between independent and youth candidates, and those who enjoy the financial backing of a strong bloc. For this to be effective, however, public trust would need to exist in these institutions. One way to facilitate public trust in an electoral commission would be for it to be formulated in parliament by elected MPs. In August 2023, parliament approved a draft law entitled “Establishing a General Election Commission” to oversee elections and regulate the process of elections, under the auspices of the Minister of Justice.⁴⁹ The proposed legislation stipulated that an electoral commission under the purview of the Justice Ministry would meet six months in advance of parliamentary elections with the goal of “defining rules for advertising, campaigns, electoral expenses, resources, media obligations, and the participation of civil society organisations in monitoring elections.”⁵⁰ Although it is yet to be implemented, interviewees involved in active politics were broadly supportive of the introduction of a spending cap, potentially related to contributions that can be received either from private individuals or political blocs.
- Changing the electoral system away from SNTV to a system in which citizens have more than one vote could also encourage both political blocs and independent candidates to form coalitions with other blocs or candidates, as well as to reach out to voters outside of their base. The shift away from SNTV could potentially make campaigning less costly, as evidence from Japan has shown high campaign costs to be associated with the SNTV system⁵¹.
- A quota for female MPs could help to reduce the costs and level the playing field for Kuwaiti women, who have thus far struggled to gain representation in parliament, despite sustained grassroots efforts. In 2022 a proposal of Minister of Justice and MP Mishari al-Ajnari for 20% representation for women, was supported by survey data showing that 51% of Kuwaitis accepted this idea.⁵²
- Linked to this is a need to create spaces in which women can be more engaged in everyday political discussions in Kuwait given that much of political life takes place outside of its political

institutions and in a way that is exclusive to men. *Dīwaniyya*, which tend to be organised on a weekly basis within private homes as a means to discuss political, economic, and social issues, have traditionally only involved men. But some are now organised outside of homes, and others are arranged by and for women, while some now allow both genders to participate. As a signal of increased recognition of women's political participation, gender-integrated *dīwaniyyāt* should be encouraged and supported.

Endnotes

- ¹ It is worth noting that the majority of Kuwait's residents, around 70%, is expatriate, and thus not included in the process of parliamentary elections. Kuwait's citizenship laws, like others in the Gulf states, limit naturalisation, in part because citizenship carries with it substantial financial benefits primarily through services provided by the state
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- ³ Omar, F & al-Fadhli, T. 2022. "Campaign spending outlined ahead of Assembly elections," *Kuwait Times*, 11 September. Available at <https://kuwaittimes.com/campaign-spending-outlined-ahead-of-assembly-elections/>
- ⁴ "GDP per capita, current prices," International Monetary Fund, 2024, <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/PPP@WEO/SAU/QAT/KWT/ARE/BHR>.
- ⁵ Kuwait Times. 2024. "I Cannot Remain Silent". 11 May, Available at <https://kuwaittimes.com/article/14157/kuwait/politics/i-cannot-remain-silent/>.
- ⁶ Clemens Chay, "With Parliamentary Suspension, Kuwait Has More to Gain Than Lose," Arab Reform Initiative, 3 June 2024, <https://www.arab-reform.net/publication/with-parliamentary-suspension-kuwait-has-more-to-gain-than-lose/>.
- ⁷ Tétreault, M A. 2000. *Stories of Democracy: Politics and Society in Contemporary Kuwait* (New York: Columbia University Press), 34.
- ⁸ Rizzo, H. M. 2005. *Islam, Democracy, and the Status of Women: The Case of Kuwait* (New York: Routledge), 11.
- ⁹ Shultziner, D & Tétreault, M A. 2012. "Representation and Democratic Progress in Kuwait," *Representation* 48, no. 3: 281
- ¹⁰ In practice, this has not always happened, as in 1976 and 1986 but it is stated in Article 107, Constitution of the State of Kuwait, Diwan of His Highness the Prime Minister, 1962.
- ¹¹ France 24. 2024. "Kuwait dissolves parliament as political crisis persists". 15 May. Available at <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20240215-kuwait-dissolves-parliament-as-political-crisis-persists>.
- ¹² Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy*, 146.
- ¹³ Ismael, 82.
- ¹⁴ Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy*, 146.
- ¹⁵ Shultziner and Tétreault, 286-287.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 281.
- ¹⁷ Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy*, 186.
- ¹⁸ Allarakia, L & al-Bloshi, H. 2021. "The Politics of Permanent Deadlock in Kuwait," The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, 11 March. Available at <https://agsiw.org/the-politics-of-permanent-deadlock-in-kuwait/>.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ Brown, N J. 2007. "Pushing Toward Party Politics? Kuwait's Islamic Constitutional Movement," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 13 February. Available at <https://carnegieendowment.org/2007/02/13/pushing-toward-party-politics-kuwait-s-islamic-constitutional-movement-pub-19016>, 4.

- ²¹ Freer, C. 2024. *The Resilience of Parliamentary Politics in Kuwait: Rentierism, Ideology, and Mobilization* (New York: Oxford University Press), 151.
- ²² Freer, C. 2018. "Exclusion-moderation in the Gulf Context: Tracing the development of pragmatic Islamism in Kuwait," *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 54, no. 1: 1-21.
- ²³ "Ilan al-Mabadi [Declaration of Principles]," Kuwait Democratic Forum, 1991, <https://alminbarkw.org/إعلان-المبادئ/>.
- ²⁴ Freer, C & Leber, A. 2021. "The 'tribal advantage' in Kuwaiti politics and the future of the opposition," Brookings Institution, 19 April.
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