

KUWAIT

Date of Elections: January 23, 1971

Reason for Elections

Elections were held in Kuwait to renew the National Assembly, elected on January 25, 1967, upon the normal expiry of the legislature. This was the third election since the country became independent in **1961**.

Characteristics of Parliament

The Kuwaiti Parliament is unicameral. The National Assembly is composed of 50 members in addition to the Ministers (of whom there are 10 in the present legislature) who are members by virtue of their office. The parliamentarians are elected for 4 years from the time of the first meeting of the assembly.

Electoral System

Only men aged 21 years or more who are Kuwaiti citizens by birth or who have been naturalized citizens for at least 10 years may vote. Citizens who have been sentenced for a felony or a dishonourable crime are deprived of the right to vote until they are rehabilitated. Members of the armed and police forces may not vote.

In every constituency, electoral committees appointed by the Minister of the Interior prepare voters lists which are revised in February of each year. Voting is not compulsory.

Members of the electorate who are at least 30 years old and literate in Arabic are eligible for the National Assembly. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with public office, unless otherwise stipulated by the Constitution.

Candidatures must be presented in writing to the police station of the relevant constituency during the 10 days following the publication of the decree announcing the elections. Candidates must pay a deposit of 50 dinars.

Kuwait is divided into 10 constituencies, each of which elects 5 Deputies by plurinominal simple plurality vote. Each elector votes for as many candidates as there are seats to be filled, those 5 candidates receiving the greatest number of votes being elected.

If a seat falls vacant during a legislature, a by-election is held within 2 months of the date on which the vacancy was registered. If this occurs during

the 6 months before the expiry of the term of office of the National Assembly, no by-election is held.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The decree which sets the date of the elections and opens the electoral campaign is published at least one month before the voting.

Since there are no political parties in Kuwait, candidates stand independently but represent various groups of interests and ethnic categories. There was a total of 183 candidates for the seats to be filled. Only the Arab Nationalist Movement, led by Dr. Ahmad El-Khatib, has a more specifically political nature. This group improved its position in relation to the previous legislature in which it had only 4 seats.

After the elections, the Crown Prince of Kuwait, Shaikh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir, was re-appointed Prime Minister. On February 3, he named his Cabinet which now includes 3 members of the Royal Family, compared to 5 in the previous Government, and 2 Ministers drawn from the elected members of the National Assembly.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the National Assembly

Number of registered voters. 40,649

Group	Number of seats in the National Assembly
Arab Nationalist Movement . . . . .	.10
Bedouins . . . . .	.17
Traders . . . . .	.17
Independents . . . . .	.6
	50

2. *Distribution of Deputies according to Professional Category*

Ministers. . . . .	.12
Merchants. . . . .	.11
Administrators. . . . .	.10
Journalists. . . . .	.3
Engineers. . . . .	.2
Doctors. . . . .	.2
Lawyers. . . . .	.2
Others. . . . .	.18
	60

3. *Distribution of Deputies according to Sex*

Under the terms of the Electoral Law, women are not eligible for the National Assembly.

4. *Distribution of Deputies According to Age Group*

30-40.	27
40-50.	12
Over 50.	21
	60