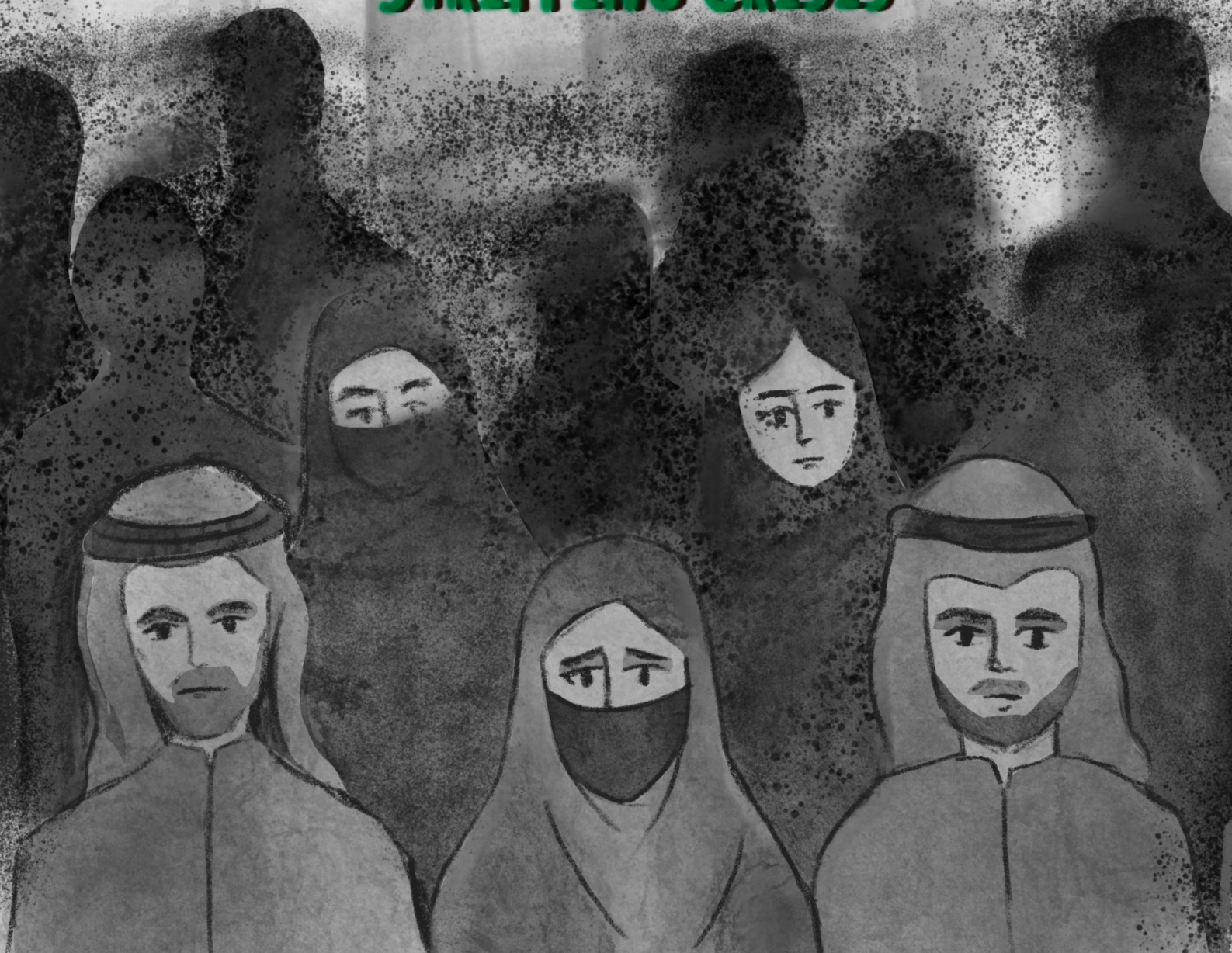


STATELESS BY DECREE

END KUWAIT'S CITIZENSHIP
STRIPPING CRISIS



STATELESS BY DECREE

End Kuwait's Citizenship Stripping Crisis

July 2026

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ABOUT THE REPORT

SALAM DHR's Andrew McIntosh and GZ drafted the initial text; Andrew McIntosh reviewed the final version. Evgeniya Serebryakova, Ciara Salisbury, Meridith Womble, and Meriem Oukacine contributed to the report, including to the section on international law. A NASI-led joint submission to a UN Special Rapporteur shaped the content and provided case material. GCHR's Kristina Stockwood; MENA Rights Group's Falah Sayed, and a member of the GMAS team, contributed to the legal and other sections. Tiana Danielle Xavier and other ISI colleagues contributed to the section on international legal framework. Drewery Dyke undertook research for the report, drafted most of the final text, and edited the remaining sections. Alanis Mah designed the cover page.

SALAM for Democracy and Human Rights (SALAM DHR) focuses on freedom of expression, association and assembly; human rights defenders; the administration of justice, including torture; and on thematic issues, notably deprivation of citizenship, statelessness and the right to take part in public affairs in Bahrain, the Gulf and wider SWANA region.

The Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR), founded in 2011, provides support and protection to human rights defenders (HRDs) in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, with an emphasis on the Gulf and neighbouring countries, in order to promote human rights, including but not limited to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. GCHR undertakes regional and international advocacy to bring about a safer environment for HRDs.

The Global Movement Against Statelessness (GMAS), or The Movement, is a community of stateless people, activists and civil society allies dedicated to the eradication of statelessness and the achievement of equal nationality rights for all and the human rights of all stateless people. The Movement centres and is led by people directly impacted by statelessness, nationality deprivation and discriminatory nationality laws and works to increase solidarity in the field.

Hawiati, the MENA Statelessness Network (Hawiati) is a network that brings together those who work on, and are interested in, statelessness in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The organisation aims to reduce and end statelessness in the region and protect the human rights of stateless persons in the MENA, through activities based on 11 objectives.

Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion (ISI) is the first human rights NGO dedicated to promoting the right to a nationality and the rights of stateless people globally. ISI works collaboratively to counter discrimination and intolerance and promote inclusive societies by realising and protecting everyone's right to a nationality.

MENA Rights Group is a legal advocacy NGO that defends and promotes fundamental rights and freedoms in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The organisation works at both the individual and structural level. MENA Rights Group represents victims of human rights violations before international law mechanisms and brings key issues to the attention of stakeholders to call for reform.

Northern Arabia Surviving Indigeneity (NASI) addresses the systematic marginalization of Bedouin communities, notably in Kuwait, who have been rendered stateless through arbitrary government policies. NASI advocates for the fundamental human right to nationality and works to ensure that no person is left without legal identity, citizenship, or access to basic human rights.

Rights Realization Centre (RRC) promotes international human rights standards in the southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA) and Horn of Africa regions. It conducts outreach, training, research and advocacy with NGOs and technical advice to governments and businesses.

The **Global Statelessness Fund** made this report possible.

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Acronyms, Spelling, Glossary, **Language** and Conventions

- Common acronyms used in the text include GoK for the Government of Kuwait. Elsewhere, full names are stated before acronyms are used;
- The terms ‘citizenship’ and ‘nationality’ are used interchangeably;
- In reference to Kuwait’s head of state this text uses ‘Amir’ or ‘ruler’, according to the cited specific author’s usage, with a preference for Amir;
- This text does not use honorific or customary titles such as ‘shaykh’, or its variants, like sheikh;
- Laws enacted by Amiri decree in Kuwait are ordered by cardinal number and the year; this text uses the decree number with an oblique, followed by the year to denote this practice. Thus law **158/2024** means Decree Law (number) **158 of 2024**;
- The text refers to a government committee charged with assessing nationality revocation cases. Different sources use slightly different names for this body, such as Supreme Committee for the Investigation (or Verification) of Kuwaiti Citizenship, but other expressions are also used, depending on the source;
- The terms ‘law’ and ‘act’ are used interchangeably, reflecting the usage of specific authors and sources;
- Central System, or Apparatus - An institution of the Government of Kuwait (GoK). The Central Agency to Remedy the Situation of ‘Illegal Residents’, most often called, in this report, the Central System, or Apparatus; the Arabic, Jihaz al-Merkezi. It is the government body that oversees all aspects of stateless Bidoon persons’ lives, from the delivery of identity documents to instructing access to state services;
- This text generally refers to the longstanding stateless community in Kuwait as Bidoon, but has not changed the spelling used in other sources. For example, at least one UN document uses bidun. The word Bidoon / Bedoon and other variants are from the Arabic phrase bidoon jinsiyya, without nationality or citizenship. The term should not be confused with the term Bedouin, the plural of badu, or its variants, meaning nomad. In Kuwait, tens or scores or more Bidoon families are of Bedouin origin, though most appear to have been settled in Kuwait for many decades, and many - number not known - have never lived a nomadic life. In this report, Bidoon is used for the singular and Bidoons for the plural.

Overview

“What is happening in Kuwait has gone beyond madness, and its consequences may be even more severe than the invasion. With the stroke of a pen, 16% of the citizens were stripped of their citizenship and relegated to stateless status or foreigners. Up to today, 228 Kuwaitis, including their families and all their dependents, were granted citizenship [meaning or scope unclear].

In less than two years, the number of those stripped of their citizenship has approached 70,000, not counting children and grandchildren. The total number, including those who have relinquished their nationality, reaches more than 235,000 Kuwaitis, representing approximately 16% of the population. These individuals were stripped of their citizenship through discriminatory decisions. Today, names are not just numbers or symbols; they are the names of those who shaped Kuwait”

Approximate and partial translation of a polemic post on Instagram, 25 January 2026. See: Watan News USA, <https://www.instagram.com/reels/DT8c5y4kwgR/> accessed 26 January 2026; link no longer working at the time of publication

The present report does not address the consequences of the attacks on Kuwaiti territory in the context of armed conflict in the Persian Gulf that started in February 2026 and which is ongoing at the time of writing, July 2026.

On 27 May 2024, Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the ruler, or Amir of Kuwait, issued a decree forming the Supreme Committee for the Investigation of Kuwaiti Nationality (the Supreme Committee).¹ Over the course of 2024-2025 and into 2026, this body arbitrarily stripped scores of thousands of Kuwaitis of their citizenship, violating a catalogue of internationally recognised human rights.

The Government of Kuwait (GoK) enacted its Nationality Law in 1959, prior to achieving independence from the United Kingdom (UK) in 1961. Over the following years, successive governments enacted piecemeal amendments. In December 2024 and April 2026, the GoK enacted comprehensively revised legislation. It provided the retroactive basis for the mass revocation of citizenship and wholesale narrowing of access to Kuwaiti citizenship.

In March 2025, the Amir asserted, in a televised speech, that the citizenship stripping campaign was part of a national effort to “restore Kuwait to its rightful people, clean and free of impurities”, with the official goal being “national purification”.² Interior Minister Fahad al-Yousef claimed, also in March 2025, on Kuwait’s al-Rai TV that the country had been “hijacked” by other nationalities: “I will not mention these nationalities. There are nationalities that are foreign to Kuwaiti society – its social life, language, character and social relations.” Fahad al-Yousef claimed these individuals represented a collective danger of undermining the “authentic nature” of Kuwaiti society and creating “lineage confusion.”³ The preamble to an April 2026 amendment to the law on citizenship asserted that “protecting the national identity remains a top priority”, without explaining the character of the concept.⁴ This conceptual approach and the GoK’s legitimisation for its conduct has not changed at the time of writing.

Between 2024-2026 the GoK arbitrarily stripped the citizenship of:

- Women married to Kuwaitis;
- Those granted citizenship for services to Kuwait in previous years, decades or generations, also depriving their descendants of citizenship;
- Those deemed retrospectively to have acquired citizenship fraudulently or illegally, invalidating their descendants' right to citizenship;
- Those considered dual nationals, illegal under Kuwaiti law; and
- Those deemed by an administrative decision not subject to review or independent review, a security risk or whose continued citizenship the GoK considered undesirable or detrimental.

**"...restore Kuwait to its
rightful people, clean
and free of impurities"**

THE AMIR, TELEVISED
SPEECH, MARCH 2025

Insofar as Kuwait does not allow dual citizenship, the GoK's citizenship revocation campaign has, as a consequence, created statelessness or heightened the risk of statelessness. For example, women who abided by the law in previous years and decades by surrendering their nationality upon marriage, faced statelessness as an immediate consequence of government action. Likewise, those granted or bestowed citizenship by the government for acts beneficial to Kuwait, generally surrendered, in line with the law, former nationalities and who, along with their descendants, also faced statelessness arising from government action.

Depending on the individual or family, the impact of the revocation decision means that the GoK summarily withdrew their right to attend a government school, access free state health care, have a job with the government or have a job at all, or receive their state pension. These actions have placed countless individuals in the position of having to turn to help from embassies and consulates of states whose citizenship they may have previously held, or that of their parents or grandparents' citizenship: GoK actions manufactured statelessness and left thousands of people at risk of statelessness, where individuals - at the time of writing - have been unable to re-acquire nationality.

Evidence collated by our organisations indicates that in most cases, people obtained Kuwaiti nationality in accordance with the laws that were in force at the time. This includes the vast majority of cases which are of non-Kuwaiti women who acquired citizenship through marriage – as well as those who obtained it through descent from a parent or grandparent. Additionally, in many cases, people born and raised in Kuwait to parents or grandparents who had previously been granted citizenship also have no meaningful or effective connection to any other country.

A summary overview of the legal changes enacted by the GoK between 1959 and 2024/6, referencing impact, is set out under domestic legislation.

This report explores the character and conduct of the GoK's citizenship stripping campaign. Below, it sets out the legal basis and human impact of the campaign: testimonies speak of significant personal and intergenerational suffering and distress; retroactive and arbitrary revocations have rendered thousands stateless or at risk of statelessness, stripping them of identity documents, income, healthcare, education, and freedom of movement. The government's actions appear to violate Kuwait's own Constitution and laws and a swathe of GoK international human rights obligations.

A catalogue of human rights violations shaped the **citizenship stripping campaign**

The GoK's 2024-2026 citizenship stripping campaign did not happen in a vacuum: it was only one aspect of unfolding socio-political upheaval in the country and formed one component of a catalogue of human rights violations - some longstanding, grave in character and some widespread or generalised - shaped Kuwait's 2024-2026 citizenship stripping campaign (see Appendix 4).⁵

In May 2024, five months following his appointment, the ruler of Kuwait suspended Kuwait's National Assembly, or parliament. The suspension of parliament removed checks and balances provided by this part of government and marked a consolidation of power.⁶

**May
2024**

Five months after his appointment, the ruler of Kuwait suspends the National Assembly.

An independent member of a UN human rights body expressed concern that the suspension contributed to political instability and eroded the effective exercise of political rights.⁷ Following the suspension of the National Assembly, its powers have been assumed by the Amir and Council of Ministers, which answers to the Prime Minister, appointed by the Amir. The Amir is currently the sole arbiter of power in the country, and rules by decree.

The suspension of the National Assembly violates Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), viz. the right and opportunity to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives [and] (b) to vote and be elected at genuine periodic elections [...] guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors.⁸

A 4 June 2026 article in the Economist noted that:

“Talk shows have been banned. Diwanias—Kuwait’s discussion forums—have been closed. Restrictions on the media extend even to WhatsApp groups of three or more. Municipal elections have been cancelled. “We’ve become a dictatorship,” says one academic.”⁹

The impacted persons discussed in this report are not, overwhelmingly, from the approximately 92,000 or more people in Kuwait generally called Bidoon (see glossary, above). Defined by the government as stateless from 1962 to the mid-1980s, the GoK now refers to them as “illegal residents” though UNHCR and the international community continues to define members of the community as stateless.

Summary Recommendations to the **GoK** :

- End statelessness in Kuwait by 2030, ensuring that no person in Kuwait can be considered, under international standards and practice, as stateless;
- Proactively work with UNHCR and civil society to develop and implement a concrete programme for ending statelessness;
- Immediately suspend the revocation of citizenship until the Nationality Law be aligned with international human rights standards and international best practice, including by working with the OHCHR and UNHCR in order to ensure compliance;
- Ensure that those affected by citizenship revocation can fulfill their basic needs, such as education, healthcare, housing, the right to dispose of their personal bank accounts, manage property, and obtain identity and travel documents; and
- Reinstate the nationality of all those whose citizenship the government revoked in the absence of an independent or effective review and due process.

Methodology

Contributing organisations' researchers and the team involved in finalising this initiative primarily based this report on five sources of information:

1. The contents, findings and impact assessment set out in 38, mainly women's testimonies, of varying degrees of comprehensiveness, including over 10 in-depth interviews;
2. Our assessment of the legal framework, including Kuwait's international obligations as a state party to binding treaties, soft law - that is, agreements, principles and declarations developed and issued by UN bodies that are not treaty law but which reflect international best practice - and Kuwait's domestic laws and procedures;
3. A discourse analysis based on over a year's study of media reporting on the issues under consideration, as well as government statements, including on social media;
4. Group engagements, including webinars and workshops, such as one held by SALAM DHR in June 2025 and 14 August 2025, which NASI organised as an open and a public "Space" session on X (formerly Twitter). Between 5500-6000 users of the X platform were active listeners, while 290 thousand people tuned in overall.¹⁰ The event precipitated receipt of scores of testimonies, only a few of which are used in the text below; and
5. Coalition members' and partners' reports and assessments (see Appendix 3).

International Legal Framework

“Everyone has the right to a nationality. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality...”

Article 15 (1) & (2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Right to Nationality, as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), is a well-developed and entrenched principle of international human rights law. This right – as many other rights before – has been the subject of a tug-of-war between assertions of state sovereignty on the one hand, and individual rights on the other. The current scope of international law, as captured in the Principles on Deprivation of Nationality as a National Security Measure, recognises the sovereign right of states to determine their own nationality laws (and thereby determine who is and is not recognised as a citizen), but applies a framework within which such nationality laws should operate.¹¹ Accordingly, basic principles – including the prohibition of discrimination, the prohibition of arbitrariness, the avoidance of statelessness and respect for other basic human rights – must be reflected in the nationality laws of states.

While international law does – in exceptional circumstances – provide room for states to deprive nationality of their citizens, these powers must fit within this framework. If they are arbitrary, if they are discriminatory, if they result in statelessness, if they are applied without any procedural safeguards, or if they lead to significant other breaches of human rights law, then they are not permissible. This **basic rule** is articulated in the **Principles on Deprivation of Nationality** as follows:

- 4.2. *Where a State, in exception to this basic rule, provides for the deprivation of nationality for the purpose of safeguarding national security, the exercise of this exception should be interpreted and applied narrowly, only in situations in which it has been determined by a lawful conviction that meets international fair trial standards, that the person has conducted themselves in a manner seriously prejudicial to the vital interests of the state.*
- 4.3. *The exercise of this narrow exception to deprive a person of nationality is further limited by other standards of international law. Such limitations include:*
 - 4.3.1. *The avoidance of statelessness;*
 - 4.3.2. *The prohibition of discrimination;*
 - 4.3.3. *The prohibition of arbitrary deprivation of nationality;*
 - 4.3.4. *The right to a fair trial, remedy and reparation; and*
 - 4.3.5. *Other obligations and standards set forth in international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international refugee law.*¹²

There is a strong legal basis for this position, which is elaborated in depth in the *Commentary to the Principles on Deprivation of Nationality as a National Security Measure*.¹³ Many of the legal sources used in this analysis are treaties that Kuwait has acceded to and has direct obligations under. This includes the six core international human rights treaties to which Kuwait is a state party:

TREATY	KUWAIT IS A STATE PARTY TO
CERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

The avoidance of **statelessness**

NOT RATIFIED

The **1954** Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the **1961** Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Kuwait has not ratified the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.¹⁴ Nonetheless, the right to a nationality is protected through the core treaties, including: CERD, Art. 5(d)(iii); CEDAW, Art. 9; CRC, Arts. 7 and 8, in addition to the regional Arab Charter on Human Rights, Art. 24 – all of which Kuwait is a state party to and must adhere to. Importantly, the right to nationality exists in close relation to the duty to avoid statelessness; avoidance of statelessness is seen as a “corollary” to the right to a nationality.¹⁵

Many of those stripped of citizenship have no effective link to any other nation and were consequently made stateless. The GoK’s conduct violates the obligation to prevent statelessness, recognised under international human rights law as a corollary of the right to a nationality.

Prohibition of discrimination

The prohibition of discrimination is one of the foundational tenets of international human rights law. UDHR Article 1 declares that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” and Article 2 provides that all rights shall be enjoyed without discrimination. The prohibition of discrimination is, among others, laid out in ICCPR, Art 26 and CERD, Art. 5(d)(iii). A State must not deprive an individual of their nationality as a result of direct or indirect discrimination in law or practice, on any ground prohibited under international law, including race,

colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, ethnicity, property, birth or inheritance, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity, or other real or perceived status, characteristic or affiliation. Each State is bound by the principle of non-discrimination between its nationals, regardless of whether they acquired nationality at birth or subsequently, and whether they have one or multiple nationalities.

Women who acquired nationality through marriage under Article 8 of Kuwait’s 1959 Nationality Law constitute the majority of those stripped of citizenship during the ongoing campaign. As of August 2025, at least 26,000 of the more than 37,000 documented revocations affected women.

The 2009 Secretary-General’s report on arbitrary deprivation of nationality recalls that “the principle of non-discrimination is a common feature applicable to the context of international human rights instruments”, including in respect to “issues related to nationality”.¹⁶ Any deprivation of nationality on discriminatory grounds is considered arbitrary for the purposes of international law. This is affirmed across different international conventions, soft law instruments, jurisprudence, and enjoys broad consensus in doctrinal writings.¹⁷

Prohibition of arbitrary deprivation of nationality

The prohibition of arbitrary deprivation of nationality is set out in Article 15(2) of the UDHR and subsequently enshrined in different international and regional legal instruments. The deprivation of nationality is presumptively arbitrary and may only be overridden in circumstances where such deprivation is, at a minimum: carried out in pursuance of a legitimate purpose, provided for by law, necessary, proportionate and is in accordance with procedural safeguards.

Decree Laws 116/2024 and 158/2024, issued on 23 and 31 December 2024, formalised the retroactive revocation of citizenship of thousands of individuals without individual adjudication, notice or independent review, in direct violation of the prohibition on arbitrary deprivation of nationality under international law.

26,000

Of more than 37,000 documented revocations as of August 2025 affected women.

ARTICLE 8

The provision of Kuwait’s 1959 Nationality Law under which foreign women acquired nationality by marriage.

The right to an effective remedy and **fair trial**

“not subject to appeal under any circumstances”

DECREE LAW 158/2024

The right to an effective remedy is set out in UDHR, Art 8 and 10, ICCPR, Art. 2(3) and 14(1), CERD, Article 6, and the Arab Charter on Human Rights, Article 12.

*HRC’s General Comment No. 31 and the UN General Assembly urge States to “ensure that any person who alleges that his or her human rights or fundamental freedoms have been violated has access to a fair procedure for seeking full, effective and enforceable remedy within a reasonable time and that, where such violations have been established, victims receive an adequate, effective and prompt remedy, which should include, as appropriate, restitution, compensation, rehabilitation and guarantees of non-recurrence”.*¹⁸

Kuwait’s Court of Cassation ruled in 2022 that nationality matters are acts of sovereignty not subject to judicial oversight. Decree Law 158/2024 explicitly states that revocation decisions are “not subject to appeal under any circumstances.” The Grievance Committee established in March 2025 lacks independence and operates effectively within the executive branch. The acts of GoK are in direct contravention to the right to an effective remedy. It is also notable that the right to an effective remedy and reparation must also be complemented by the right to a fair trial.¹⁹

Cascading **violations** of associated rights

Those stripped of citizenship have suffered loss of employment and pensions, frozen bank accounts, loss of state housing, denial of healthcare and education, and restrictions on freedom of movement, constituting multiple violations of rights protected under the core treaties.

Following her September 2025 visit to Kuwait, the [United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls, its Causes and Consequences](#), Reem al-Salem, stated that as of August 2025, between 40,000 and 60,000 individuals had been impacted. She noted that:

*“Women bear a disproportionate burden as the majority of those whose citizenship has been revoked, are foreign women who had naturalized via marriage to Kuwaiti men under the Article 8 [of the 1959 Nationality Law], along with the descendants who inherited citizenship through maternal lines.”*²⁰

**between
40,000
&
60,000**

Individuals impacted as of August 2025, according to the UN Special Rapporteur.

The Special Rapporteur noted that the consequences of citizenship stripping included, but were not limited to:

- Freezing of their bank accounts;
- Revocation of property ownership;
- Loss of jobs;
- Loss of pensions;
- Loss of subsidized housing;
- Loss of education opportunities (reserved for Kuwaiti nationals)
- Ability to travel to countries outside of Kuwait; and
- Access other basic services and privileges that had been reserved for Kuwaiti nationals.

Al-Salem added that *“women who lost their nationality have become more vulnerable in their legal as well as social/marital status [and that the] measures have left many in a profound state of shock and mental suffering.”* She also observed that these women’s suffering had been exacerbated *“by the increase in bullying and harassment of their children due to this situation.”*

Exclusion of individual complaints procedure

Despite acceding to these treaties, the GoK has not acceded to individual complaints procedures available under them; it does not permit treaty bodies to investigate individual cases or with a view to complying with the relevant treaty body’s recommended actions.

Embedding **discrimination against women through reservations to treaties**

On accession to the human rights treaties to which Kuwait is a state party, it lodged “interpretive declarations” or reservations that arbitrarily imposed restrictions to the rights guaranteed under the respective treaty. Such reservations subordinate international standards to Kuwaiti law and practice, effectively preserving a hierarchy of rights in which the GoK rejects equal protection under law for women and non-Kuwaitis and embeds in law certain forms of discrimination.

This approach conflicts with the principle that human rights are indivisible and interdependent: nationality rights cannot be realised without equality and non-discrimination guarantees found across multiple treaties. Similarly, the six core treaties to which Kuwait is a party must be read as collectively protecting all dimensions of nationality rights, including equality before the law, freedom

from discrimination based on origin, identity, belief or opinion, and respect for peremptory norms.

Recent UN treaty bodies, in successive, periodic assessments of the GoK's implementation of the treaties have set out in their Concluding Observations how such restrictions are not permissible under the terms of the relevant treaty, and undermine the protection of fundamental human rights, including those related to discrimination, freedom of expression, equality before the law, and citizenship-related matters relevant to this analysis.

How the Government of Kuwait protects enduring discrimination by the use of reservations - the case of CEDAW

In respect to the CEDAW, the GoK rejected Article 9.2, by which *"States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children"*, since *"it runs counter to the Kuwaiti Nationality Act, which stipulates that a child's nationality shall be determined by that of his father."* The GoK also rejected Article 16.f which grants women equal rights to men regarding guardianship, wardship, trusteeship, and adoption of children - in as much as it conflicts with the provisions of the Islamic Shariah.

In 2024, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern over the GoK's continued reservations to Articles 9.2 and 16.1.f of the Convention, *"the latter of which is incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention"* and reminded the GoK that a reservation that is incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention is impermissible under international law.²¹

The Committee urged the GoK to withdraw the reservations, including by engaging with domestic stakeholders in order to overcome resistance to the withdrawal of the reservations.²² The Committee reported concern that *"women are denied the right to acquire, change, retain and transmit their nationality"* and that *"children born out of wedlock or as a result of rape in Kuwait to non-Kuwaiti mothers and Kuwaiti fathers are placed in orphanages, and the mothers of these children can be prosecuted and deported."*

Similarly, the Human Rights Committee noted that *"nationality can be transmitted to children only by Kuwaiti fathers, and not by Kuwaiti mothers married to a non-Kuwaiti man"*.²³ The Committee echoed calls made by the Committee on the Rights of the Child to *"undertake a comprehensive review of existing laws and practices to repeal or amend, in accordance with the Covenant, all provisions that discriminate on the basis of gender, including the Personal Status Act and the Nationality Act."*²⁴

Treaty body assessments pre-date the 2024-2026 citizenship stripping campaign but set out how the GoK's pre-existing rejection of international human rights standards in relation to women, children and nationality paved the way for the arbitrary deprivation of citizenship and rights of many thousands of people.

Kuwait's persistent disregard - **defiance?** - for international human rights appeals, recommendations and **warnings**

16

States made recommendations on citizenship in the May 2025 UPR. All were "noted", not accepted.

In the May 2025 Universal Periodic Review (UPR), representatives of 16 states made recommendations to Kuwait relating to its laws and practices of citizenship, including the unfolding citizenship stripping campaign – all of which were “noted” by Kuwait, signalling that it does not commit to implementing it.²⁵ The recommendations included the following (for the full set of recommendations, see Appendix 5 - Recommendations under the Theme: Rights related to name, identity and nationality, from the 4th Cycle of the UPR):

- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland - Implement policies to ensure that “Article 8” women whose Kuwaiti nationality has been revoked continue to receive access, without discrimination, to employment, justice, and social services (discussed below);²⁶
- Kingdom of the Netherlands - Ensure that decisions on the revocation of citizenship are subject to transparent legal procedures and judicial oversight, especially for human rights defenders;²⁷
- Australia - Fully implement obligations under international law to prevent statelessness, with reference to the revocation of Kuwaiti nationality, and resolving the ongoing legal status of the Bidoon;²⁸
- Czechia - Improve the status of the stateless population (so-called Bidoons) and refrain from creating new stateless persons as part of the wave of citizenship revocations.²⁹
- Germany - Create a more transparent process through which stateless people can appeal against loss of citizenship, and mitigate the adverse effects of statelessness on freedom of movement, particularly for women;³⁰ and
- Spain - Ensure legal security and safeguard the rights of those who may have been harmed by the withdrawal of nationality, in line with current international conventions.³¹

Kuwait's heightened obligations as a Human Rights Council (HRC) member

In 2023, Kuwait was elected to the 47-member United Nations Human Rights Council for the 2024–2026 term. Under paragraph 9 of UN General Assembly Resolution 60/251, Council members are expected to “uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights.” Membership therefore entails a heightened expectation of compliance with evolving international human rights standards. However, Kuwait’s new nationality framework flouts the Council’s June 2023 resolution on equality in nationality rights.³² The resolution:

"Urges all States to refrain from enacting or maintaining discriminatory nationality legislation, policies and practices, in a manner consistent with their respective obligations under international law, with a view to avoiding statelessness and loss of nationality, preventing vulnerability to human rights violations and abuses, decreasing the risk of exploitation and abuse, and eliminating discrimination against all women and girls in the acquisition, change, retention or conferral of nationality."

It further encourages a review of laws and practices that cause statelessness and requires safeguards ensuring equality between men and women in the conferral of nationality and access to documentation.

The GoK has expressly ignored the overwhelmingly majority of specific concerns raised by successive UN treaty bodies, special procedures and partner governments - as part of the UPR, as well as repeated appeals from civil society from 2024 to 2026.³³ The GoK has instead continued to entrench discriminatory nationality laws, resist accountability mechanisms, and strip tens of thousands of people of citizenship without due process, in direct contravention of its international obligations. This pattern of non-compliance is not incidental: it reflects a deliberate and sustained policy choice to subordinate international human rights obligations to domestic law and practice, a choice that has directly enabled the arbitrary deprivation of nationality of tens of thousands of individuals.

The GoK is standing for re-election to the 2027-2029 cycle of the Human Rights Council. States are permitted to stand and be members of the Human Rights Council for two consecutive cycles. The International Service for Human Rights has issued a [scorecard](#) (see image below) that offers a quick 'at-a-glance' of Kuwait’s human rights record through criteria focusing on its cooperation with UN human rights bodies. Through Council membership, States commit themselves to “*uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights*”, and to fully cooperate with the Council and its mechanisms. As the GoK doesn't meet 13 of the 17 scorecard criteria, our organisations conclude that Kuwait does not comply with the Human Rights Council membership criteria.



KUWAIT

Status: seeking re-election

Previous terms: 2011-2014, 2024-2026

Voluntary pledges

- ☐ Has the State submitted a public pledge on its candidacy?
- ☐ Has the State submitted the public pledge in a timely manner?

Strengthening the Council's effectiveness

- ☐ Has the State supported all country-specific resolutions at the Human Rights Council or General Assembly?
- ☐ Has the State played a leadership role on country situations at the Council?
- ☐ Has the State opposed all attempts to defund HRC mandates at the Fifth Committee?

Cooperation with Special Procedures

- ☐ Has the State consistently accepted country visit requests?
- ☒ Has the State sent substantive replies to communications sent by Special Procedures?

UPR

- ☐ Has the State developed and published an action plan for the implementation of UPR recommendations?
- ☐ Has the State submitted a voluntary UPR mid-term report?

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2026 CANDIDATE

Treaty bodies

- ☐ Has the State ratified the 9 core international human rights treaties plus the related optional protocols?
- ☐ Has the State accepted all individual complaint mechanisms?
- ☒ Does the State not have any outstanding treaty body reports?

Civil society

- ☐ Does the State have no unresolved cases of reprisals highlighted in Secretary-General reports (2015 – 2025)?
- ☒ Has the State publicly expressed concern, by name, about particular victims of reprisals related to UN engagement at the General Assembly or Human Rights Council?
- ☐ Has the State sponsored the last HRC and Third Committee resolutions on human rights defenders, civil society space and reprisals?

National Human Rights Institution

- ☐ Does the State have a NHRI in conformity with the Paris Principles (A-status)?

Financial contributions

- ☒ Has the State paid its UN contributions in full and in a timely manner?

Domestic Legal Framework

Kuwait's 1962 Constitution, with a 1992 amendment, sets out general commitments to a separation of legislative, executive and judicial powers and vague assertions of generalised enfranchisement and empowerment of people and pillars of society. However, the Amir's unchecked power is present in each of these spheres.³⁴

The GoK's narrow and restrictive approach to citizenship derives from the constitutional equivocation of Article 27, which states that citizenship "*shall be determined by law*". This suggests a principle of legality, requiring that any action to define, grant, or revoke nationality would be based on clear legal provisions. In practice, its implementation is opaque and subject to the whims of the Amir.

In Part IV of the Constitution, entitled The Power, Article 51 states that the Amir possesses legislative power, Article 52 states that executive power is "*vested in the Amir*" while judicial power is vested in the courts, "*in the Amir's name*", and Article 54 defines the Amir as Head of State, who is "*safeguarded and inviolable*". These provisions provide the context for Amir's May 2024 suspension of the National Assembly, whose powers, set out from Articles 79 to 122 of the Constitution, are depicted as secondary to that of the Amir.

In respect to those stripped of their citizenship, the Constitution promises judiciability in respect to decisions, whether by private or state actors: Article 166 states that "*The right to litigation is guaranteed to all. The Law shall determine the procedure and the conditions necessary for the exercise of that right.*"

Despite the assertion in Article 166 that access to or eligibility for Kuwaiti nationality is not generally addressed in the courts, Kuwait imposes strict legal limitations on judicial jurisdiction over nationality and citizenship matters, effectively shielding these decisions from legal review. The Court of Cassation, Kuwait's highest judicial authority, ruled on 17 April 2022 that citizenship and nationality issues are "*acts of sovereignty*" and therefore do not fall

under judicial oversight. Courts have no jurisdiction to hear challenges to citizenship decisions. The Court of Cassation reportedly grounded this in Article 2 of Amiri Decree 23/1990, on the Organisation of the Judiciary.

Further, as recorded in 1995, the GoK "*has stated the view that conferring citizenship is a sovereign right that is not subject to international scrutiny. It cites international instruments such as the Hague Conventions of 1930 as granting states full discretion in determining who should be their nationals.*"³⁵ On 18 October 2012, then Prime Minister Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad al-Sabah told a member of the team preparing this report that disputes relating to the granting of nationality is a sovereign matter and not subject to court challenge.³⁶ Similarly, a 2013 ruling in an asylum case in the UK noted, too, that "*After independence the Kuwaiti government formed a committee to register and review claims for nationality, but this body was dismantled in 1969. Thereafter, claims relating to itizenship remained matters of administrative determination. There is no right of appeal to the courts.*"³⁷

More recently, for a 2024 example of this premise, Article 1 of the two-article, Decree Law 158/2024 of 31 December 2024 states, in part, that nationality decisions are made by, for example, the Council of Ministers, and that *“This decision shall not be subject to appeal under any circumstances.”*³⁸

Kuwait's 1959 Nationality Law and amendments made in December 2024 and April 2026

Kuwait Law No. 2/1948 was the first definition of Kuwaiti Nationality Law. In 1948 Kuwait was a British-protected state and the 1948 law was influenced by the UK Nationality Act of the same year: it had rights based on birth in Kuwait although not unconditional, insofar as the subject had to remain resident until majority. One [report](#) stated that the 1948 law was not applied since it did not come into force yet it informed and shaped the 1959 [Nationality Law](#), Amiri Decree Law 15/1959.

According to Article 1 of the 1959 legislation, criteria for eligibility was continued presence in Kuwait since 1920: an enduring, highly restrictive definition of who qualifies for citizenship, layered in subsequent years by further, incremental restrictions:³⁹

At least seven sets of amendments were made to the National Law between 1960 and 1987, including restrictions limiting the number of naturalisations that could take place each year to 50 in 1960, the removal a Kuwaiti woman's ability to transmit her citizenship to her children in 1980, and a specification that only Muslims qualify for Kuwaiti nationality in 1981.⁴⁰ These include, inter alia, Decree Law 30/1970; 100/1980, 1/1982 and 40/1987.⁴¹

In 1985, the government began applying provisions of the Alien Residence Law, 17/1959 to the Bidoon, stripping them of previously held rights and benefits: up to that point the authorities considered them, in practice, as indistinguishable from Kuwaiti nationals with regards to state benefits and rights. In 1986 the GoK severely restricted Bidun's eligibility for travel documents, and, as recorded by Human Rights Watch:

“In 1987 the government began refusing to issue Bidun new or renew driver's licenses or register their cars, and began ending public education for Bidun children and instructing private schools to require valid residency permits. In 1988 the ban on public education was extended to the university, and Kuwaiti clubs and associations were instructed to dismiss their Bidun members.”

In 1988, officials transferred statistical data on the Bidoon from the category of the Kuwaiti to “alien”.⁴²

Decree laws 116/2024 and 158/2024, reportedly issued on 23 and 31 December 2024, respectively, amended specific aspects of Kuwait's 1959 Nationality Law, Amiri Decree Law 15/1959.⁴³

TEXT BOX 1

The highly restricted scope for acquisition of Kuwaiti citizenship

Following the enactment of law passed in December 2024 (see below) which removed the naturalisation of non-Kuwaiti women who marry male Kuwaiti nationals, citizenship is conferred through patrilineal descent or, exceptionally, could be acquired through government decree.

The 1959 Nationality Law and amendments to December 2024 describe the following grounds for acquisition of nationality:

- **Article 1** Article 1 sets out a restrictive, historical basis for nationality. It states that: ‘Original Kuwaiti nationals are those persons who were settled in Kuwait prior to 1920 and who maintained their normal residence there [...]’ Such persons are termed “first class citizens”.
- **Article 2** states that “Any person born in, or outside, Kuwait whose father is a Kuwaiti national shall be a Kuwaiti national himself.” Article 3 provides for citizenship in respect to a foundling, or orphan, whose kinship to the father is not legally established, upon reaching maturity.⁴⁴ This provision, however, did not grant automatic citizenship to children of Kuwaiti mothers and foreign fathers.
- **Article 3** provides for the treatment as Kuwaiti of foundlings and any person born in or outside Kuwait to a Kuwaiti mother where the father (and his nationality) is not known or cannot be determined, until majority, when the Minister of Interior will rule whether the person can be granted citizenship;⁴⁵
- **Article 4** provides for the discretionary granting of citizenship by Minister of Interior decree according to criteria including (4.1) lawful residence for 20 years; 15 if an Arab; (4.2) gainfully employed and free of “honour” and “honesty” linked convictions; (4.3) speaking Arabic; (4.4) relevant qualifications; (4.5) Muslim and if by conversion then for five years, where it is lost by a proven deviation away from Islam. Article 4 provides for a committee to adjudicate naturalisation demands;
- **Article 5**, likewise provides for naturalisation by decree on the basis of (5.1) significant act or service to Kuwait;⁴⁶
- **Article 7** (following the enactment of Decree Law 116/2024) provides for the naturalisation of children (born in Kuwait) to a naturalised male, to be determined within one year of reaching majority;⁴⁷
- **Article 7 bis** (bis is a legal term that denotes a second, additional or corollary item) empowers the Minister of Interior to treat, on a discretionary basis, the minor child born to a Kuwaiti mother, where the non-Kuwaiti father is “a prisoner of war, has irrevocably divorced his mother, or has passed away” in the same manner as a Kuwaiti until the age of majority;
- **Article 8** (following the enactment of Decree Law 116/2024) states only that marriage of a non-Kuwaiti woman to a Kuwaiti does not automatically grant her citizenship;
- **Article 12** provides for the re-acquisition of nationality by women in reference to marriage but it is based on laws amended or repealed in December 2024 and its application, in practice, appears either impossible or highly unlikely.

Decree Laws 116/2024 and 158/2024: the first comprehensive **limitations to the Nationality Law**

The GoK reportedly asserted that the general objective of 116/2024 was to strengthen nationality security, combat the challenge of falsification or manipulation of state-issued identity documents, and to achieve “*social justice*”, including by “*protecting the children of Kuwaiti women and ensuring the stability of families*”.

Decree Law 116/2024 provides that:⁴⁹

- A non-Kuwaiti woman who married a Kuwaiti since 1987 will not acquire Kuwaiti nationality;
- The naturalisation of a male, non-Kuwaiti no longer facilitates his wife’s naturalisation;
- The children of a naturalised, male Kuwait are considered Kuwaiti and have the right to choose their nationality within a year of reaching majority, or the age of 21;
- The Minister of Interior be able to recommend the issue of a decree that strips a person of their Kuwaiti nationality where the GoK deems that granted “*through fraud, forgery, or based on false statements*”;⁵⁰
- Citizenship be removed where a person “*is convicted by a final judgment after being granted Kuwaiti citizenship of a crime involving moral turpitude or dishonesty, or of a crime against internal or external state security, or of a crime against God, the prophets, or the Amir*”;
- A minor born to a Kuwaiti mother, and who continually resides in Kuwait, where his non-Kuwaiti father is “*a prisoner, or [who has] divorced his mother irrevocably, or died, may be treated as a Kuwaiti until he reaches the age of majority.*”
- “*Modern scientific methods*” will be used in the determination of nationality (without reference to any other form of investigative mechanism);

The December 2024 amendments that broadened the scope of revocation of nationality played a crucial role in enabling the citizenship stripping campaign initiated by the government in mid-2024. The amendments, set out in Articles 10, 11, 13, 14 and 21 bis A and B of the 1959 Law, broadened and cemented the restrictive scope of access to Kuwaiti citizenship as presaged by the government’s mid-2024 citizenship stripping campaign. They are as follows:

- Article 10 provides for the loss of nationality where a Kuwaiti woman voluntarily acquires the nationality of a non-Kuwaiti husband;
- Article 11 provides for the loss of nationality where an adult, male Kuwaiti voluntarily acquires the citizenship of another state. It provides for his wife

to remain Kuwaiti unless she likewise voluntarily acquires another nationality and for minor children to take the nationality of the father unless they seek to once again become Kuwaiti within two years of the age majority. The article further provides for the re-acquisition of nationality, subject to conditions. The article, and the additional clarification in Article 11 bis appear to seek to limit dual nationality in favour of sequential citizenship.

- Article 13 provides for revocation *“upon the recommendation of the Minister of Interior”* where (13.1) citizenship was granted *“through fraud, forgery, or based on false statements”*, and is applied to all dependents; (13.2) after being granted Kuwaiti citizenship, the person (s) is (are) *“convicted by a final judgment of a crime involving moral turpitude or dishonesty, or of a crime against internal or external state security, or of a crime against God, the Prophets, or the Amir”*; (13.3) the persons is *“is dismissed from his government position for disciplinary reasons related to honor or integrity within 10 years of being granted Kuwaiti citizenship”*; (13.4) the authorities determine that *“the supreme interest of the state or its external security”* is met through revocation, also applicable to dependents; and (13.5) the *“authorities have evidence that he is promoting principles that would undermine the economic or social order of the country, or that he belongs to a foreign political entity”*, likewise applicable to dependents;⁵¹
- Article 14 provides for the revocation of nationality on the recommendation of police and security officials where (14.1) a person serves in the security apparatus of another state, despite instruction from the GoK to cease doing so; ((14.2) service for a state with which the GoK has suspended relations; (14.3) where a Kuwaiti residing abroad joins an enterprise deemed to undermine *“the social or economic structure of Kuwait or where he has been convicted of an offence involving breach of his allegiance to Kuwait.”*
- Article 21 bis A and B provides for the withdrawal of citizenship by the Council of Ministers following a recommendation by the Minister of the Interior where it *“appears to have been obtained by virtue of fraud or on the basis of a false declaration or on the basis of false evidence submitted by a witness.”* Revocation may be applicable to dependents (irrespective of the generational difference).
- Articles 20 and 21 - not about revocation per se - address assessment of citizenship claims. Article 20 states that the burden of proof rests upon the person claiming Kuwaiti nationality while the December 2024 amendment added that *“Modern scientific methods may be used in granting, withdrawing, or revoking citizenship, in accordance with the criteria and regulations issued by a decision of the Minister of Interior.”* Article 21 provides for investigation conducted by *“Nationality Committees established by Decree upon the recommendation of the Head of the Departments of Police and Public Security.”* They, in turn, report to a *“Supreme Committee to be established by Decree upon the recommendation of the Head of the Departments of Police and Public Security.”*

The two-article Decree Law 158/2024 amended Article 16 of the 1959 Nationality Law.⁵² Article 1 is an operational provision with financial and benefits-related implications for those involved. The pre-December 2024 text stated that: *“The acquisition, withdrawal, deprivation or re-acquisition of Kuwaiti nationality shall be of no retrospective effect, unless express provision to the contrary is made [by the relevant Decree or other instrument]”*.

Decree 158/2024, however, provides for the retroactive application of revocation. Article 1 states, in part that *“The withdrawal of citizenship, or the withdrawal of its certificates, in accordance with the provisions of Articles 13.1 and 21 bis A, shall result in the recovery of all benefits disbursed and granted based on this citizenship”* (emphasis added). That is, all benefits received from the date of granting of citizenship up to the date of its revocation will be liable, not just the cessation of such benefits from the effective date or revocation.⁵³

If the surrender of nationality was for other reasons, not provided for in the December 2024 amendments, the government may continue to provide state benefits to the person or persons involved, but the context for their retention differs from that prior to the changes.⁵⁴

TEXT BOX 2

Were revocation decisions made in advance of the formal announcement of Decree Law 116/2024 legal?

A report indicates that on 25 September 2024, Kuwait’s Cabinet, or Council of Ministers, the country’s chief executive body, approved the amendments that became December 2024’s Decree 116/2024.⁵⁵ The GoK subsequently began enforcing this legislation retroactively, in violation of Article 32 of the Constitution, which states that, “No crime and no penalty may be established except by virtue of law, and no penalty may be imposed except for offences committed after the relevant law has come into force.”⁵⁶

The GoK implemented the measures amidst a period of political restructuring and increased governmental control in Kuwait, leading to a large-scale campaign of citizenship revocation. The amendments primarily target naturalised citizens and foreign spouses. It remains unclear at the time of writing whether the government adhered to any meaningful due process as they disregarded gender equality, and the prevention of statelessness.

Above all, revocation decisions up to the time of publication of Decree 116/2024 may, in fact, have been illegal.

On 31 December 2024, the GoK published Decree-Law No. 158/2024. The short text further amended Article 16 of the Nationality Law. It provided that the withdrawal of citizenship “shall result in the recovery of all benefits that were disbursed or granted based on this citizenship.”⁵⁷ This means that individuals stripped of their nationality will also lose all associated rights and benefits, including social, economic, and civil entitlements from the date that citizenship was granted. While the Cabinet may make exceptions in certain cases, the provision added another layer of punitive measures to citizenship revocation, potentially rendering individuals and their families destitute.⁵⁸ The amendment likewise represents a significant departure from international best practices in nationality law.

Decree Law 52/2026: Kuwait's new, restrictive citizenship framework

The 5 April, 2026, Decree Law 52/2026, (titled) Regarding the amendment of certain provisions of Amiri Decree No. 15 of 1959 concerning the Kuwaiti Nationality Law, distilled the partial amendments set out in 2024.⁵⁹ It enables stakeholders and interested parties to assess the new, restrictive citizenship framework enacted by the Amir, Mishal al-Ahmad al-Sabah and the GoK.

A summary selection of the principal, thematic changes are:

Theme / Area	Pre-2024/6 laws	Post-2024/6 laws
Citizenship by descent through a Kuwaiti male	An Arab resident in Kuwait since 1945; a non-Arab resident before 1930	Anyone resident in Kuwait since 1920, with continued residency until 1959
Citizenship by descent through a Kuwaiti female	Ineligible for citizenship	Unchanged
Foundlings	Eligible for citizenship	Unchanged
Dual nationality of a naturalised person	Not permitted but no restriction detailed	Not permitted while formal renunciation within three months required, with provision of proof to Ministry of Interior, or risk forfeit of Kuwaiti nationality (Art 11 bis)
Non-Kuwaiti wife of a Kuwaiti male	Eligible for citizenship	Ineligible for Kuwaiti citizenship
Children of a naturalised Kuwaiti male and Kuwaiti mother	Eligible for citizenship	Unchanged
A non-Kuwaiti wife's retention of citizenship following the end of marriage to a Kuwaiti male (same sex marriages are not and never have been permitted)	Eligible	Ineligible and will lose citizenship
Loss or forfeit of citizenship, generally, of Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti	Acquisition of another nationality, service of state interests (eg, military) of another state	Broadly the same and in case of females, where the wife acquires non-Kuwaiti citizenship of the non-Kuwaiti husband.
Re-acquisition of citizenship by a non-Kuwaiti woman after loss of nationality	Eligible under specific restrictions	Ineligible

TABLE CONTINUES →

DECREE LAW 52/2026 — CONTINUED

THEME / AREA	BEFORE — THE LAW TO 2024	AFTER — THE LAW FROM 2024/6
Re-acquisition of citizenship by a woman who was originally Kuwaiti but who relinquished citizenship	Eligible	Eligible under specific restrictions
Revocation of nationality of a naturalised person	Specific convictions and/or security and undefined conduct contrary to “honour”, including dismissal from state employment; undefined acts against national security	Broadly similar but expanded scope for revocation, including joining a proscribed organisation; where revocation is also applicable to descendants. (see Arts 13 and 14 in both sets of law)
Retrospective application of decisions	Expressly ruled out	Retrospectivity included, ie, state may revoke nationality of person naturalised in, eg, 1971, and apply the decision to all descendants including minors born in Kuwait, who have no connection to any other state.
Evidence for citizenship	Burden of proof on the applicant (Art 20)	Art 20 states that genetic profiling and biometric identification “may be used in cases involving the loss, withdrawal, or revocation of nationality, as well as when adding any person to the father’s nationality file, in accordance with the criteria and regulations to be issued by a decision of the Minister of Interior.” ⁶⁰
Due process / judicial review of state decision	Not expressly addressed but litigation has repeatedly occurred until 2024 in relation to state process.	Art 22 states: “[A]ll decrees and decisions relating to nationality shall be deemed acts of sovereignty, and the courts shall not have jurisdiction to review them.” ⁶¹
Consequences of revocation of citizenship	Not detailed	Concerned person must repay all benefits (Art 16)

International human rights law violations in citizenship revocation and **2024/6 amendments**

The GoK's Supreme Committee for the Investigation of Kuwaiti Nationality has violated Kuwait's international human rights commitments. In respect to the ICCPR, the GoK ignored:

ICCPR	WHAT THE GoK IGNORED
Article 2.3	removed the right to a remedy;
Article 3	acted to disproportionately target women;
Article 9	eroded the right to liberty and security of person;
Article 14	ended equality before the courts by removing people's legal status;
Article 23	rejected the family as fundamental unit of society; and
Article 24	disregarded the right of children to acquire a nationality.

In respect to Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the GoK has violated:

CEDAW	HOW THE GoK VIOLATED IT
Article 1	by imposing distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex;
Article 2	by engaging in discrimination against women;
Article 7	by restricting the right of women to take part in the political and public life of the country;
Article 9	by rejecting women's equal right to acquire, change or retain nationality;
Article 12	by restricting equal access to healthcare by way of arbitrary nationality determinations;
Article 13	by imposing changes in the economic life of women through the arbitrary change of nationality; and
Other	Other provisions, including in other legally binding instruments. ⁶²

TEXT BOX 3

Sample selection of human rights violations arising from the Gok's 2024-2026 citizenship stripping campaign

*The decisions of the Supreme Committee for the Investigation of Kuwaiti Nationality appear to have violated a selection of Kuwait's international human rights commitments. Please consult the texts of the ICCPR and the CEDAW where needed.*⁶³

In respect to the ICCPR, violations may include of articles:

- 2.3 - removing the right to a remedy;
- 3 - disproportionately targeting women;
- 9 - eroding the right to liberty and security of person;
- 14 - ending equality before the courts by removing people's legal status;
- 23 - rejecting the family as fundamental unit of society and
- 24.3 - disregarding the right of children to acquire a nationality.

In respect to the CEDAW, violations may include of articles:

- 1, by imposing distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex;
- 2, by engaging in discrimination against women;
- 7, by restricting the right of women to take part in the political and public life of the country;
- 9, by rejecting women's equal right to acquire, change or retain nationality;
- 12, by restricting equal access to healthcare by way of arbitrary nationality determinations; and
- 13, by imposing changes in the economic life of women through the arbitrary change of nationality.

Scope of Kuwaiti Nationals Challenging Revocation Decisions

Kuwait nationals have, infrequently, been able to challenge government practice in relation to the implementation of laws (emphasis added), namely by asserting the administrative character of citizenship revocation decisions made by the Supreme Committee to Investigate Kuwaiti Citizenship or the Minister of Interior.

The Sabr news platform [reported in May 2015](#) that a Court of First Instance, Administrative Circuit, ruled that assertions and actions by the Ministry of Interior were insufficient grounds for the revocation of a specific claimant's nationality.⁶⁴

In March 2016, the [Court of Cassation overruled](#) lower courts' decisions in relation to the implementation of citizenship revocation found that the government's conduct was not act of sovereignty, but rather an act of administration, and that the GoK had wrongly stripped the claimant (and his children) of his (their) nationality, possibly based on the revocation of his father's citizenship.⁶⁵ A [24 March 2015 article in Kuwait's al-Jarida newspaper](#) detailed the case.⁶⁶ Taken chronologically in terms of the legal challenge mounted by the man, some of the key elements may include that:

- Lower courts had ruled that they did not have jurisdiction in the case since the act of citizenship stripping is sovereign; not administrative (unlike the Court of Cassation) in Kuwait;

And that the claimant:

- Was Kuwaiti by virtue of his father, who obtained citizenship three years before his birth and not, himself, naturalised; and that he had a Kuwaiti wife and children;
- Appealed the decision to strip him of his nationality but the government failed to respond;
- Asserted that the GoK had violated Article 27 of the Constitution, where revocation or withdrawal of citizenship, except within the limits of the law as well as Article 166, which guarantees the right of litigation (in relation to government decisions, for example);
- Submitted three separate, linked appeals to the Court of Cassation, which were taken together and then ruled as one; and
- Argued that the application of the law required, as per the Constitution, giving the judiciary the right to monitor the legality of the administrative (emphasis added) decisions and to demonstrate their compliance with the law.

In February 2021, however, [one report described](#) how the Constitutional Court rejected (to consider) an appeal addressing the eligibility of individuals for citizenship where alleged proof of the eligibility emerged after the deadline provided for in the 1959 Nationality Law.⁶⁷

In April 2021, however, the Court of Cassation reportedly made a decision analogous to the March 2016 ruling.⁶⁸ The importance of these two cases appears to be, at least prior to the passage of 2024 nationality legislation that it provides for the retroactive revocation of nationality. For example, a long-since grandparent may be deemed to have obtained nationality fraudulently and, as a consequence, dozens of his descendants born Kuwaiti, including minors, face the punitive revocation of their nationality.

Kuwait's current Minister of Interior and Chair of the Supreme Committee for Citizenship Review, Fahad al-Yousef al-Sabah stated: *"Granting nationality is a sovereign matter as ruled by the Constitutional Court, and I do not believe that any level of the judiciary has the authority to review it."*⁶⁹

It is perhaps on account of the climate that the GoK created that Zahra - a pseudonym for a person who provided testimony - was (in her words) "blocked" from hiring a lawyer (see below).

Scope and operation of citizenship revocations in 2024-2025

TEXT BOX 4

Operationalisation of citizenship for political outcomes

The GoK has previously operationalised citizenship for political outcomes. In 2015, Kuwait human rights and political activists told a member drafters of this report that "revocation of citizenship is an even more severe punishment than imprisonment, since the government also strips the nationality of dependents of adult males whose citizenship has been revoked."⁷⁰

In July 2014, the government revoked the citizenship of two men seen as opposing the government, Ahmed al-Jabr (al-Shammari), owner of the al-Youm media platform, critical of the government, and Abdullah Barghash, a former parliamentarian, along with his two brothers, his sister and their dependents.⁷¹ The GoK took this step as a part of an "iron fist policy" to quell socio-political unrest relating to the arrest of a prominent political figure. Prior to the authorities' revocation of his nationality, Abdullah al-Barghash had frequently criticized the government on Twitter [now X] and during media interviews, accusing it of corruption in June 2014 and urging people to reject the arbitrariness of the Interior Ministry.⁷²

On 29 September 2014, the authorities revoked the citizenship of Sa'ad al-'Ajmi, a political activist born in Kuwait. The spokesperson for the Popular Action Movement, opposed to the (then) government, on 22 April 2015, the GoK expelled him to Saudi Arabia, asserting that he was not a Kuwaiti citizen. While able to challenge the process in lower courts, on 12 October 2015, an Appeal Court ruled that it did not have jurisdiction as it was a sovereign matter (see Legal Framework).

The GoK used, in 2014, pre-existing provisions in the Nationality Law to revoke the nationality of those alleged of, amongst other things, trying to "undermine the stability" of the state. The GoK stripped the citizenship of 57 individuals from the al-Barghash family. As in all such cases, the decision stripped the impacted family members of state benefits, including public healthcare, education and housing.

In March and April 2024, over a month before the ruler, Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, issued the decree forming the Supreme Committee for the Investigation of Kuwaiti Nationality (the Supreme Committee), “the government issued 13 decisions and three decrees stripping citizenship from 63 people, including 23 women”, including political dissidents.⁷³ Below we set out a fuller timeline of revocation events.



The actions of the Supreme Committee for the Investigation of Kuwaiti Nationality may be considered to have violated 10-15 rights and freedoms set out in, amongst other treaties, the ICCPR and the CEDAW.

The January 2026 revocation of the citizenship of Kuwait's own ambassador to London exemplifies the arbitrariness and absurdity of Kuwait's citizenship revocation campaign. The GoK revoked the citizenship of (former) Ambassador Badr Mohammed al-Awadhi on intergenerational grounds (for more on this type of revocation, see Snapshot 2, below): the authorities posthumously revoked - apparently on the allegation of fraudulent acquisition - the nationality of his father, Mohammed Ibrahim al-Awadhi, a former security officer.⁷⁴

The GoK's 2024-5 citizenship revocation campaign has affected all strata of society.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that most Kuwaitis know a family that is affected: the number of wives impacted is many tens of thousands alone; with dependents, the total number rises exponentially. Every week between March 2024 and December 2025, the GoK published, seemingly on an ad hoc basis, vast lists of newly denaturalised people. Receiving no official communication from the GoK, Kuwaitis learned of their status by being denied access to their own bank accounts, being informed by their employer or a financial institution or sometimes by seeing their names on lists of revocations on Instagram. On other occasions, victims had to request access to the list of denaturalised people on Kuwait al-Youm, the Official Gazette. The government generally did not inform people; those impacted had to scan for their own names or those of friends and family in the lists published in the Official Gazette.⁷⁵

Exemplifying the character of the campaign, on 12 November 2024, the Kuwaiti media outlet, Kuwait Moments, published an article entitled “Kuwait to Revoke Citizenship of 930 in Record Action”.⁷⁶ It celebrated the “new” record, the revocation of 930 citizenships in a single day, with 1617 “in just 20 days”. It added: “*Fahd al-Yousef, Kuwait's acting prime minister and minister of defense and interior, who heads the committee, called the decision a ‘truly large number’ and emphasized the importance of rectifying past wrongdoings.*” Fahd al-Yousef reportedly stated that “the committee is committed to protecting Kuwait’s identity, [describing] the ongoing actions as addressing one of the biggest crimes against the country, which must be stopped.” To prove his point, he cited “two Syrian brothers who fraudulently obtained Kuwaiti nationality” and that “In total, about 132 other individuals acquired citizenship illegally, often through fraudulent methods.” The article stated that “Kuwait’s aggressive stance on citizenship integrity is intended to safeguard national identity and prevent fraud. With new policies in place, the government is sending a clear message that violations won’t be tolerated, and individuals found guilty will face consequences.”



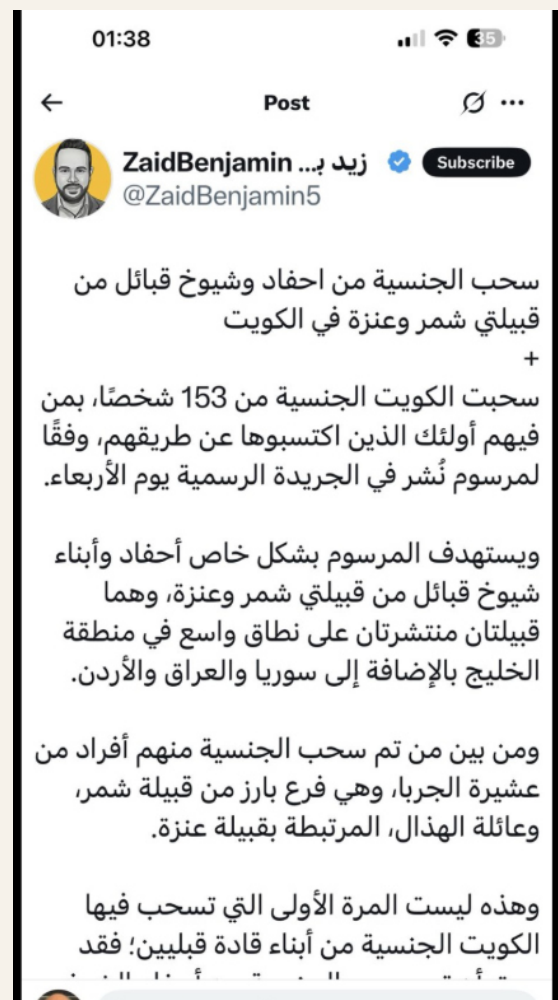
Despite being underway since March 2024, the GoK only established an appeals procedure from May 2025. Moreover, the article noted that “The committee will also establish a process for receiving grievances from those affected by the decisions.”

On 14 November 2024, a report in the Kuwait Times related a case in which “[...] The criminal court on Thursday heard a case of a Kuwaiti citizen who added a Syrian boy to his nationality file claiming the boy was his son. The man confessed in court that the boy was a Syrian citizen and a close relative of his wife, adding that he brought the boy to Kuwait in early 1990s when he was just two months old.”⁷⁷ The scope of such cases is significant but the processes for protecting impacted children appear, even at the time of writing, weak or opaque. On 2 June 2025, Gulf Center for Human Rights reported that approximately 681 of those stripped of their nationality - including dependents - had obtained it by state recognition under Article 1 of the 1959 Nationality Law, for acts deemed by the government of the day as meritorious or beneficial to the state, or noble deeds.⁷⁸

The GCHR cites one such revocation: renowned orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Muthana Al-Sartawi. He reportedly patented a technique called “*A Modified Intervastus Approach for Total Knee Replacement*” which reduces pain and enhances recovery in knee and hip replacement surgeries. His accomplishments earned him an audience with the previous Amir of Kuwait.⁷⁹

The GoK targeted well known actors - including after their deaths, thereby depriving their successors of Kuwaiti citizenship through no fault of their own. On 2 December 2024, a report citing Kuwait’s al-Qabas news platform stated that the GoK revoked the citizenship of actor Dawood Hussain and singer Nawal, who used the stage surname al-Kuwaitiya, the Kuwaiti.⁸⁰ The decree revoked the citizenship of their dependents, or successors. The report did not state the total number of people impacted. Former Amir, Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah (Amir between 1977-2006) granted both performers citizenship in October 2001, seemingly under Article 1 of the 1959 Nationality Law: as people who “*rendered valuable services to Kuwait*”, or the noble deed basis. On 18 August 2025, a report stated that the government “*revoked the citizenship of two celebrated actors, Abdulmohsen Al Suhaial and Abdulrazzaq Ibrahim Al Khalaf, better known as Burzaiqa, despite both men having died years ago*”.⁸¹ The former emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as part of the country’s formative generation of performers. His work in theatre and television helped establish Kuwait as an early Gulf leader in the performing arts, where Burzaiqa is remembered for comedic work. The government denaturalised their successors and stated that the total number of revocations that day was 365 people but it was not clear that all of these people were the descendents of the two actors.

Likewise, government action impacted Kuwait’s tribal communities. On 4 June 2025, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) journalist, Zaid Benjamin reported that the government revoked the citizenship of 153 people, comprising the descendents of leaders of the Shammar and Anza tribes (see image).⁸² He observed that “*The decree specifically targets the descendants and sons of tribal sheikhs from the Shammar and Anza tribes, two tribes widely spread across the Gulf region, as well as Syria, Iraq, and Jordan*” and that “*Among those whose citizenship was revoked were members of the Jarba clan, a prominent branch of the Shammar tribe, and the Al-Hathal family, linked to the Anza tribe.*” Zaid Benjamin added that it was not the first time that the GoK had revoked the citizenship of the children of tribal leaders, noting the revocation of the descendants of Sheikh Mahrot bin Fahd Al-Hathal, the former sheikh of the Anza tribe. The decree did not cite a specific reason for the revocation; Zaid Benjamin noted that previous such decisions cited dual nationality, such as that of Saudi Arabia.



**سحب الجنسية الكويتية من 130 إمراًة
وممن اكتسبها معهن عن طريق التبعية:**

91. روضة فرياح هاجس العنزي	46. صالحة حسين محمد العجوي	1. إيمان عدنان محمد الشهيبيات
92. هانا عبدالله عبدالرازق العبيد	47. الجوهرة راشد سليمان الشدوخي	2. شمس حسين علي
93. فيضة فهدول راشد التومسي	48. الهام دخيلب مطير	3. ناهد رضا إبراهيم عبدالله
94. مريم محمد محمد درداخ	49. زينة محمد عبد الباقي بدران	4. مبارك عبد القادر مياويل نايب
95. نادية محمد محمد زيدان	50. سكيطة سيد محمد علوي	5. الجازي فهد سلطان الخالدي
96. فاطمة أحمد الشنته	51. حميدة جبر عالمي نيسي	6. جوسيد بنصر صالح المطيري
97. ايمنين اومالي فراتيسيسكو	52. زهرا زعلان عامري نور	7. شمس حسن عبدالله الصديرات
98. ليلى الكسندر ميسياك	53. حميدة بنادر دائري	8. عبيد عبدالله محمد بوشوي
99. حصه مغير محمد الحربي	54. سهام عبدالعال حسن	9. عده خضير حسن العنزي
100. عائشة غلام حسين قريب	55. فاطمة زيد سعيد المطيري	10. مشاعل سعد داخل الجعني
101. مرفت احمد خليل غانم	56. فرياح بيجم احمد حسن	11. نوره بتال مبارك الدوسري
102. منى داود عوده سميرين	57. فقرة كمال سليمان	12. نواف صياح هيل الشمري
103. هاني محمد عيده	58. فاطمة عبدالله اوتانج	13. هيام يوسف حسين الفضيلي الشمري
104. نجلاء ناصر فرح العاصمي القحطاني	59. ضحية عتيان عزيزان	14. وهداء جزاء متعب المطيري
105. سوزان محمد السيد	60. إيمان كريم نور مومني	15. أميرة قاسم سمير
106. سلفه علي طيه لاشين	61. جليلة العلمي بنعوي	16. انتصار احمد عبد الكريم
107. صياح محمد عبدالله مبروك	62. انصاف عبدالمنعم خليفة	17. خديجة واسم محمد خضير الشمري
108. نضال ناصر خليل	63. ليلى محمد المعطي الشراقي	18. عواطف عدنان حسين خضير
109. ابرا خالد محمد مزروق فاضل	64. منيرة عباس البوشينه	19. ناجيه يعقوب الخليف
110. محليه مخلوق جريج عبدالله الشمري	65. كبرا غلام علي غلاوي	20. هويده محمد سمير فرائسي
111. منيرة فاضل بكر الشفلي	66. صفري حسن موسوي	21. سايو ثويني فرياح محمد العدواني
112. ياسمين محمد لطيف احمد احمد حويل	67. نعيمة احمد محمد الطاهر	22. صفيه طلحه حمود
113. سالي حسين بركات الجوهري	68. جميلة عبدالله سعد العازمي	23. وفاء محمد ذو الفقار كاوي
114. فاطمة حسين بنحشي	69. فاطمة محمود روكش	24. عصمت صلاح علي الخرطوطي
115. رانية المرسي محمد المرسي	70. مروة عبدالحليم مجاهد	25. كريم محمد عكاشي صالح
116. نجاة قمبر غلام باقر المازني	71. سائدة حسن عبدالرحمن ناصر الدين	26. فاطمة ابول كاكي
117. آمنه رضا ميرشاكور بور	72. زهرا صبحي جوالا	27. فادية ابراهيم ابو علوم
118. منيرة عوض عبيد المطيري	73. عفيفة فرح موسوي	28. سكوت سعود ناصر هليل
119. منيرة مبارك هلال المنصوري	74. نعيمة ابو مسلم عامر احمد بيلي	29. الزرقاء فائق حول فضل
120. فاطمة زيد سعيد المطيري	75. علي مساعد محمد الرشدي	30. الزرقاء فائق حول فضل
121. اختار محمد ابراهيم	76. نوير صالح عبيد الخفيري	31. مريم محمد عثمان
122. فاطمة سليم احمد	77. نادية محمد حبيب	32. حسناء محمد شامي
123. صالحة محمد عتيق ثاني	78. خولة صالح عبده بلال	33. كيت كين بودثاوي
124. ثرية عباس اسماعيل موهجي	79. أمية عبدالعزيز محمد حسين	34. النيرة نايف عويد المطيري
125. منيرة مبارك سمير المتنبوي	80. فوزية محمد صقر الصغير	35. خيرية علي عبد الله
126. عائشة سعد معتمد المطيري	81. اقبال عطوان صالح	36. محالي نمر فوضي المطيري
127. منيرة فلاح مفرح المطيري	82. طفاه صائل سمحي المتنبوي	37. صيتي راضي جمان المطيري
128. ولاء دناح عايض السبيهي	83. كلثوم امان اله زمكير	38. ماهرام بوبليت دي سيلفا
129. جواهر صالح سالم صالح	84. منى مجاهد علي العوم	39. بناء ناصر محمد العرجان
130. عزيزة عبد جبر الحسيناوي	85. انتصار محمود محمد خليل	40. زبيدة سيد عبدالله الحسين احمدي
	86. وضحة محمد مبارك الهاجري	41. جزاء وسمن عبدالله الدوسري
	87. نوال عبدالرحيم درامي نور	42. عرفات علي حسين الحز
	88. خيرية هادي هطل الخفيري	43. فاطمة حمود صالح الموسي
	89. أمل تركي سليمان المليشي	44. حبة احمد عارف
	90. راقية يوسف عبداللطيف الصالح	45. نصرة خليل الأحمد

The GoK likewise revoked citizenship of those where it appears the government sought to chill or otherwise restrict the exercise of freedom of expression. On 15 April 2025, a report stated that the GoK revoked the nationality of Islamic commentator, Nabil Al-Awadi, journalist Mubarak al-Omar, and possibly former national goalkeeper and Islamic commentator, Ahmad Al-Tarabulsi.⁸³ On 19 October 2025, the GoK stripped Islamic scholar and commentator, Mohammed al-Mail, of his citizenship.⁸⁴ Granted asylum in the UK in 2017 and repeatedly convicted in absentia, Mohamedal-Mail reportedly called it a “purely political act”, adding that

“What is truly astonishing is that it took them this long to make their move, when I have been an outspoken critic in exile for a decade.” On 7 December 2025, the GoK stripped “prominent Islamic author, speaker and businessman” Tareq (Tariq) al-Suwaidan of his citizenship.⁸⁵ This instance appears to have been one of the most significant revocations by the GoK: Tareq al-Suwaidan, the leader of the religiously-oriented political association, Muslim Brotherhood in Kuwait, undertook post secondary training in the United States. He is the chief operating officer and owner of a management training and consultancy firm, Gulf Innovation Group; the former general manager of Al Resalah TV, a platform for Islamic programming, from which he was reportedly dismissed in 2013 on account of links to the Muslim Brotherhood. He is also an author of over 50 books, usually with Islamic themes. On account of his “motivational and educational work”, advanced in part through educational institutions, including in the Gulf region, he has reportedly become “a figure of influence across media, education, and religious discourse”.⁸⁶

How do people find out that their citizenship has been revoked?

Kuwaiti law requires that the names of those stripped of their citizenship be published in the Official Gazette (see image). Yet awareness of this requirement is relatively poor. Even if some Kuwaitis are aware of where the information is posted, it is done so in a paid-subscription based service.

The process of citizenship revocation is opaque: the decisions appear to be taken by the Supreme Committee for the Investigation of Kuwaiti Nationality (the Supreme Committee).⁸⁷ However, reports cite both revocation by decree - such as by the Ministry of the Interior, as well as decisions taken by the Cabinet, or Council of Ministers.

Victims claimed they were never given a reason why they were stripped of their nationality by the GoK. They initially had no procedural protection or right to appeal. Although a GoK later established an appeal body, it is not independent. Families are collectively punished along with men.

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People who learned of their revocation from social media accounts on 2 November 2024.

The GoK used government-linked accounts on social media platforms, such as on Instagram, to convey revocation decisions, such as the image posted on 2 November 2024 on the Al-Majlliss site (see image).⁸⁸ A total of 130 people learned that the GoK revoked their citizenship in this manner.

British barrister Eric Fripp comparatively examines Kuwait's application of the principle of proportionality and consistency with international law and found Kuwait's conduct fundamentally flawed. He concludes that the muted response to it (see Conclusion, below) *"provides another worrying sign of declining confidence in the defence of important norms of international law."*⁸⁹

Samira (pseudonym; see below), formerly Iranian and naturalised through marriage, told SALAM DHR that as of August 2025, the authorities made no attempt to inform her of the specific reason or legal basis for the revocation of her nationality and that she *"[L]earned of the general justification via interviews with officials or accounts citing officials carried in the media."*

Iman (pseudonym; case also featured elsewhere) told SALAM DHR that in December 2024, her name appeared on an *"unpublished list [possibly Kuwait al-Youm, the Official Gazette]"*.

Taken together, testimony and other evidence indicates that the GoK conducted and concluded revocations without prior notice, clear reasons or providing any effective access to courts prior to or even once the person was notified or became aware. Judicial oversight was absent, and the GoK made no effort to inform those impacted in a dignified manner. If the impacted person believed that the GoK's decision was based on erroneous information, the person had no effective way to convey their concern or evidence to officials. Many individuals learned of the revocation only when their bank accounts were frozen, salaries stopped, or travel was denied.

While Article 13 sets out clear thematic bases for revocation, in practice, the evidence used by the GoK to prove fraud, forgery, illegal acquisition or other procedural defects has been opaque. It is not subject to independent scrutiny, say by a legal representative of the person impacted. While court cases have, in the past, taken place to challenge the process of citizenship revocation, as noted above, courts have not acted in a consistent manner.

SNAPSHOT 1

Article 8 revocations and gendered violations

“Dr. Anwar Al-Fuzaie, a professor at Kuwait University’s Faculty of Law, says revoking the nationality of mothers who have lived for decades as Kuwaitis tears apart the social fabric. Even if there had been an administrative error, he notes, the law clearly states that revoking an identity may strictly occur within 60 days after naturalization. Meanwhile, former MP and lawyer Mohammad Al-Dallal emphasizes that naturalization decrees issued since 1980 are legally valid, and arbitrary revocations breach constitutional protections. Former GCC Secretary-General Abdullah Yaquob Bishara describes the policy as a deviation from Kuwait’s humanitarian tradition, urging the authorities to revisit their decision to protect families and the country’s reputation. Punishing entire Kuwaiti families over legal technicalities, he adds, is ‘illogical’.”

By revoking the nationality of mothers who raised Kuwaiti children and spent their lives within Kuwaiti society, the state undermines its own claims of justice and humanity. National belonging cannot be reduced to an old document in an official archive. To punish mothers and families this way is to commit violence in the name of law and to slowly strip them of their dignity under the weight of bureaucracy.

Akhbar / Rakan Salem Al-Omairi - Stripped of Identity: Kuwait Revokes Women’s Nationality, 19 August 2025⁹⁸

Women from around 50 countries or origins comprise the largest single impacted group targeted by the GoK. On 12 December 2024, a Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) news report stated that the “Supreme Committee on Kuwaiti citizenship” (sic) had referred 3,043 revocation cases to the cabinet, of which 2,863 were under Article 8.⁹¹ According to a 26 May 2025 report, the Ministry of Interior stated that the GoK had granted citizenship to 38,505 between 1993 and 2020; the 2024 law is reportedly applicable to marriages dating from 1987.⁹² The impacted individuals include the wives of naturalised Kuwaiti men, via Article 7 of the Nationality Law, enabling their non-Kuwaiti wives to also acquire nationality. The December 2024 amendment “abolished the provision that allowed foreign women married to Kuwaiti men to obtain citizenship after five years of marriage. The retroactive part of the implementation is also very concerning as the amendment targets women who have been married for decades.”⁹³

تنظيم إجراءات تعديل أوضاع المسحوبة جنسياتهن وفق المادة الثامنة من قانون الجنسية الكويتية

انطلاقاً من حرص الجهات المعنية على تسهيل الإجراءات، وضماناً لاستمرار الاستفادة من كافة المزايا الممنوحة في إطار (معاملة الكويتية) نود الإحاطة بأنه سيتم السماح بالسفر بالجوازات الكويتية السابقة خلال الفترة من 2025/6/1 وحتى 2025/9/30 وذلك للمساعدة في تعديل أوضاعهن، كما يتوجب على المعنيين الالتزام التام بالتعليمات والإجراءات الموضحة أدناه.

1- قيام صاحبة الشأن بتعديل وضعها القانوني من خلال التنسيق مع سفارتها لاستلام الجواز الأصلي للجنسية السابقة التي كانت تحملها قبل حصولها على الجنسية الكويتية وفق المادة الثامنة أو أي جواز سفر رسمي يمنح من خلاله الإقامة القانونية في البلاد.

2- الالتزام بمهلة تعديل الوضع المحددة بسنة واحدة تبدأ اعتباراً من تاريخ 2025/6/1 وذلك لضمان استمرارية الاستفادة من المزايا المقررة، علماً بأنه بعد انتهاء المهلة لن يتم صرف المزايا لمن لم تقم بتعديل وضعها القانوني في البلاد خلال تلك المهلة، وعليها اتخاذ كافة الإجراءات اللازمة بمراجعة السفارة لاستخراجها جواز السفر ويتعين على صاحبة الشأن البدء في المعاملة خلال أول ثلاثة أشهر من بداية تلك المهلة وعليها تقديم ما يثبت ذلك، وإذا تبين عدم جديتها باتخاذ الإجراءات بتعديل وضعها خلال الأشهر الثلاثة الأولى تلغى عنها المزايا.

3- لا يمنع تعديل الوضع من تقديم التظلم لدى لجنة التظلمات الخاصة بسحب وإسقاط وفقد الجنسية الكويتية المشككة بقرار مجلس الوزراء رقم 207 لسنة 2025 وتعديلاته بالقرار رقم 493 لسنة 2025.

وتؤكد وزارة الداخلية أنه سيتم إصدار بطاقة مدنية جديدة بعد استكمال تعديل الوضع تتضمن عبارة (معاملة فرد كويتي وفقاً للضوابط المقررة) مع الإشارة إلى جنسية صاحبة العلاقة، وتهدف هذه الإجراءات إلى تنظيم الأوضاع القانونية بطريقة ميسرة ومنظمة، مع الحفاظ على المزايا المقررة لها.

While there may be legal or other shortcomings relating to a small fraction of the marriages, Decree Law 116/2024's removal of citizenship from this group alone represents a significant ethno-political act: a May 2025 report stated that within less than two years, *"Official figures show that at least 26,000 women have lost their nationality under the new policy..."*⁹⁴ Thousands of those denaturalised were born in or spent the better part of their lives in Kuwait, have no effective link with any other country, or whose children and grandchildren were born and raised in Kuwait and know only Kuwait.

"Overnight, I became stateless."

AMAL, A BUSINESSWOMAN WHO HAD HELD KUWAITI CITIZENSHIP FOR NEARLY 20 YEARS

One account states:

*Lama (pseudonym), originally from Jordan, discovered she was no longer Kuwaiti when she attempted to pay for a fitness session in Kuwait City: her credit card had been blocked and her bank account frozen. The 50-year-old, who had lived in Kuwait for many years, later learned that her citizenship—granted through marriage—had been revoked. Sharing her story, she said she was 'in shock: being a law-abiding citizen for 23 years and then waking up one day to find you're not anymore is simply unacceptable'.*⁹⁵

Since the pre-existing law required women to surrender their previous nationality, anecdotal evidence indicates that a strong majority of the women did exactly that.

The sudden, retroactive loss of citizenship forced women into a legal limbo or statelessness. In August 2025, the *"Interior Ministry ordered the affected women to issue original documents, long discarded under official orders, from the 1970s and 1980s to prove their former citizenship."*⁹⁶ Some of the states involved did not readily have the means to provide the impacted women with documentation, including the United Kingdom (in reportedly two cases) since the states from which they originated may not have had clear legal processes for the situation into which the GoK placed the women or those states. The affected women became invisible overnight.⁹⁷ A May 2025 report echoed the situation, quoting: "Amal, a businesswoman who had held Kuwaiti citizenship for nearly 20 years: *"Overnight,"* she remarked, *"I became stateless."*⁹⁸

LAYLA — FORMERLY A CITIZEN OF SAUDI ARABIA, NATURALISED IN 2004

Layla (pseudonym), a former citizen of Saudi Arabia, naturalised in 2004, was formerly married to a naturalised Kuwaiti citizen. She told SALAM DHR that the authorities instructed her to *"regain Saudi nationality [in order] to be treated like a Kuwaiti"* but the government of Saudi Arabia refused (at the time of writing) to reinstate her nationality, saying Kuwait is responsible. She added that only divorced or widowed women who return to Saudi Arabia and live there for at least two years can re-apply. Layla told SALAM DHR that she felt *"systematically targeted"* as a naturalised woman and that the absence of a clear route to any nationality; family and life rooted in Kuwait exposed her to blackmail and threats. She said that she had *"no rights left"* and faced severe legal and economic insecurity, risk of statelessness and forced displacement.

SAMIRA — FORMERLY AN IRANIAN NATIONAL, BORN AND RAISED IN KUWAIT

Samira (see above), formerly an Iranian national who was born and raised in Kuwait. She was naturalised through marriage to a Kuwaiti man. Samira contrasted her life as a citizen with her experience at the end of 2025; she can no longer access state health care and is subjected to verbal abuse and bullying, told to “go back to her country” when her country is, in fact, Kuwait. She asserted that she had no meaningful ties to Iran and described widespread suicidal thoughts among women in her situation. She told our organisations that she is “no longer herself,” living in legal and psychological limbo and that “[W]hen the authorities and media talk about revocations I experience it as discriminatory and arbitrary; that it excludes me from society.” At the time of writing, the Iranian authorities had refused to reinstate her nationality since her situation is not provided for in (Iranian) law and she faced becoming stateless.

AMIRA — FORMERLY AN IRANIAN NATIONAL, MINISTRY EMPLOYEE

Amira (pseudonym), formerly an Iranian national, learned of the revocations from television, not a formal notice. An employee in a government ministry, she complained her salary was suspended as of August 2025. She added that the ministry had since reinstated it but insisted that she start the process of obtaining Iranian identity documents in order “to be treated like a Kuwaiti”. Amira stated that she does not speak Farsi or have “real ties” there.

A woman - name withheld, a former Saudi Arabia national was naturalised through marriage.⁹⁹ Following her marriage she moved to Kuwait and surrendered her nationality documents in line with the then prevailing law. As of August 2025, she does not have any valid identification. She was, in effect, banned from traveling to visit her parents in Saudi Arabia. She cannot open a bank account, she was laid off from her place of work without explanation and cannot receive treatment in government hospitals. She told NASI that the GoK instructed her to obtain her “old” nationality documents, but these are held by the GoK itself. She cannot transfer the ownership of her car to anyone else or make bank transfers, including payments for goods or services in Kuwait. As a result, her family’s standard of living has decreased, as gendered disempowerment means they rely on only the husband’s income.

A Kuwaiti Bidoon woman (see also below; name withheld) naturalised via marriage.¹⁰⁰ Now 57, she divorced from her Kuwaiti husband several years ago. Her three children maintain their Kuwaiti nationality since the father was Kuwaiti. However, on account of the stripping of her citizenship, she no longer has valid documentation. Lack of documentation means she has lost access to her post-divorce alimony. Additionally, she could no longer access state healthcare and must register with the Central System.

The GoK has asserted that thousands of women stripped of their nationality were dual nationals, formally prohibited under law.

IMAN — ACCUSED OF HOLDING DUAL NATIONALITY

Iman (pseudonym) was accused of holding dual nationality by the Ministry of Interior. Born in Kuwait and having married a Kuwaiti citizen at 22, she became a naturalised citizen in 2006, but divorced in 2013. She explained that the court recognised that domestic abuse occurred in her marriage. In December 2024, she said, her name appeared on an “*unpublished list [possibly Kuwait al-Yooum, the Official Gazette] and her nationality was revoked for alleged dual nationality and fraud.*” She spoke in an open, online public forum in February 2025 and asserted that she would regain her nationality “*through the law*”. The government accused her of “*insulting the state*” and “*challenging the government.*” We are not aware of her current legal status with regard to her nationality or possible criminal charges.

“anyone can threaten me, and I can’t defend myself.”

KARIMA, NATURALISED IN 2015, EFFECTIVELY STATELESS AS OF AUGUST 2025

Karima (pseudonym), born in Kuwait to Jordanian parents, was naturalised in 2015 and renounced her Jordanian citizenship, in line with the law: Jordanian officials placed a “cancelled” stamp on her passport and nullified her civil records. She found that following the revocation of her Kuwaiti citizenship, she became vulnerable to forms of exploitation and abuse. A man with whom she had a KD6,000 (US\$19,508) contract demanded immediate repayment, threatening her. She repaid him under duress, fearing deportation in the context of no effective legal redress. She said that she had become “*easy prey*”; and that “*anyone can threaten me, and I can’t defend myself.*” As of August 2025, she is effectively stateless, unable to leave Kuwait while reinstatement of her Jordanian nationality requires the intervention and support of a male relative - all of whom she said were deceased; continuous residency in Jordan for two years and a fee of 10,000 (not clear in Jordanian or Kuwait). The Kuwaiti authorities nevertheless required that she obtain a new passport within six months along with certificates of “*good conduct*”. She stated that this was “*near impossible*” and that it had induced thoughts of self-harm amidst despair over her fate.

On 29 May 2025 the government posted on X (formerly Twitter), a screenshot of the “Organising procedures for adjusting the status of withdrawn women who hold nationalities in accordance with Article Eight of the Kuwaiti Nationality Law”.¹⁸¹

It stated that the impacted:

- Would be able to “[T]ravel using previous Kuwaiti passports will be permitted from June 1, 2025, to September 30, 2025, to assist in adjusting their status.”

- Must “adjust her legal status by coordinating with her embassy to receive the original passport of the previous nationality she held before obtaining Kuwaiti citizenship [...]”
- Must resolve their status within “the one-year grace period for adjusting one's legal status, starting from June 1, 2025” (in order to maintain their benefits)

The statement also acknowledged that:

- The overall process “does not preclude submitting a grievance to the Grievance Committee for Withdrawal, Revocation, and Loss of Kuwaiti Citizenship, established by Cabinet Resolution No. 207 of 2025 and its amendments by Resolution No. 493 of 2025”
- The impacted person would be, during the process, “Treated as a Kuwaiti Individual in accordance with the established regulations”

In August 2025, the government reportedly promised that “these women will continue to live ‘dignified lives’”.¹⁸² Anecdotal reports suggest that: “affected women now face daily humiliation and a loss of basic rights, [...] a slow form of civil death, where identity is erased step by step under the cover of legality” in a context where - a report asserted - the “[...] policy has no legal, moral, religious, or patriotic justification.”

On 9 September 2025, at the close of her mission to Kuwait, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, Reem al-salem, having embarked on an “Official visit to the State of Kuwait” published Summary Preliminary Findings and Recommendations.¹⁸³ The Special Rapporteur reviewed the process and impact of the campaign and noted the incompatibility of women’s non-conferral of nationality with international human rights standards but she also highlighted secondary impacts, on children, whereby:

“Children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaiti men face systemic legal and social discrimination due to gaps in nationality and residency laws. Unlike children of Kuwaiti fathers, they do not automatically acquire citizenship and remain dependent on their mother’s legal status, which they lose upon her death. Under Kuwaiti law, they may inherit their mother’s movable assets, such as bank deposits, shares, and stocks. However, they are not entitled to inherit real estate or immovable property, including land and buildings.”¹⁸⁴

In relation to the withdrawal of nationality, Reem al-Salem noted that “as of August 2025, between 40,000 and 60,000 individuals have been affected” and that “women bear a disproportionate burden as the majority of those whose citizenship has been revoked [...]”, adding that during her visit she had “[...] come to understand the large-scale negative impact that these unprecedented measures have had on every aspect of the lives of these women and their families.” She asserted that “women who lost their nationality have become more vulnerable in their legal as well as social/marital status. The measures have left many in a profound state of shock and mental suffering. Their suffering has been exacerbated by the increase in bullying and harassment of their children due to this situation.”¹⁸⁵

On 26 June 2026, a social media commentator with nearly 51 thousand “followers”, Lulua al-Husseyan posted that people - seemingly women - in Britain, Switzerland, France, United States and Canada (her order), “[W]ill strive to restore their national identity and rights and entitlements, and they will take all legal steps and file complaints outside Kuwait, and they will submit complaints before United Nations institutions against figures in the state who assisted in the repression and brutality against those whose citizenship was withdrawn [...]”, adding that “[Y]ou [in reference to the government] will be held accountable by the will of God, and you will be barred from traveling the world; you will be pursued by international criminal courts [...]”¹⁸⁶

Intergenerational Injustice - Punishing Descendents

The December 2024 amendments forming part of Decree 116/2024 retained, amongst other features, Articles 1.1 and 5 whereby the GoK may grant nationality to “Any person who has rendered valuable services to Kuwait.” Despite this, the government has revoked the nationality of thousands of people to whom previous governments granted citizenship, including in previous decades. The retroactive application of citizenship revocation provided for in Decree 116/2024 is a statelessness multiplier of the GoK’s policies and a key new feature of law. It is provided for in Article 13, clauses 1,4 and 5.¹⁸⁷

The GoK has deployed this feature of the law: depriving entire patrilineal blood lines of citizenship, including adult children, grandchildren and family groups of citizenship. In single and multigenerational families, thousands of those impacted can reasonably be expected to have no effective or meaningful connection with any other country save Kuwait. Additionally, the GoK uses this feature to impose massive costs on those impacted, requiring them, in principle, to repay all benefits they may have derived since the acquisition of nationality. Our organisations do not have information on this aspect of the amended law’s implementation but anecdotal evidence suggests that the provision may be more of a symbolic, rhetorical threat than the kind of act that a government can pursue.

The ramifications are difficult to quantify: GCHR cites the case of **Moeedh Mohammed al-Ajmi** and his family: a 75-year-old retired Kuwaiti citizen who:

“[S]elflessly served his country for over 20 years in the military. He is the father of several Kuwaiti men and women and the grandfather of several grandchildren. He was humiliatingly arrested while on his way to Friday prayers and forcibly taken to the hospital. He was then forced to undergo a blood test against his will. He was later informed that the blood test allegedly showed that his DNA did not match his father’s. As a result, all of his children and grandchildren, both men and women, were stripped of their citizenship.”¹⁸⁸

20+

Years of military service given by Moeedh Mohammed al-Ajmi before the blood test that ended his family’s citizenship.

According to a message from 15 August 2025 - name of sender withheld - the GoK stripped the citizenship of a (another) male Kuwaiti, a person whose grandfather arrived in Kuwait in the 1950s and served in the military. In the 1970s, the government granted the grandfather citizenship on the basis of Distinguished Service.¹⁸⁹ With the 2025, retroactive annulment of the deceased grandfather’s citizenship, the government stripped the nationality of the sender’s husband, and, as a consequence, that of her children, despite her own Kuwaiti citizenship. She wrote that:

“Overnight, they became stateless, with my youngest being only a few months old! This decision has devastated our lives and cast a heavy shadow over our standard of living, our children’s education, and their future. My children, who were once Kuwaiti citizens, now face the loss of their basic rights of education and healthcare, living in a state of constant fear and insecurity, at an age when they should be surrounded by safety and stability.”

She added that as a result of the stripping of her husband's citizenship, along with gender-unequal property ownership laws, she and her husband had lost the right to purchase a home and that a previously agreed loan had to be rearranged with more onerous terms. She stated that:

“The government has left us hanging, giving us not many statements, no decisions, and no clarity about our rights, our entitlements, or our future in this country after stripping away my husband and children's citizenships. [...] [T]hey are pressuring my husband to rush and obtain the nationality that his grandfather gave up in the 1970's, or else be deprived of everything.”

Shuaib (name used by agreement) told our organisations that his father was naturalised as a Kuwaiti in 1968, at the age of 27. The government claimed that he had used a false name - that of a Kuwaiti friend - to acquire nationality. Shuaib told our organisations that the authorities knew of this fraud since 1971, but that it was not addressed. Shuaib claimed that he is a relatively well known media figure in Kuwait, whose links are only with Kuwait. He argues that he did nothing wrong: that he should not be held responsible for an act committed by his father, which has now impacted on all those dependent on his father's citizenship, and that it could have been addressed with a name change.

SNAPSHOT 3

Article 13 revocations, including retaliation linked to the exercise of freedom of expression and opinion¹¹⁰

For more on this issue, see some of the cases above, in Scope and operation of citizenship revocations in 2024-2025.

Revocations based on Article 13 and 21 bis A of the Nationality Law enabled the GoK to create a security narrative for its campaign. Authorities claim that they target criminals such as those who acquired citizenship through fraud, forgery or misrepresentation, where the person has been convicted of a crime of moral turpitude, dishonesty, or of crimes against the internal or external security, political leadership or religious figures.¹¹¹ As 13.4 states, it targets people where the “supreme interest of the State or its external security so requires” (see Appendix).

In practice, Article 13 revocations overlap and go hand-in-hand with corollary GoK measures meant to restrict freedom of expression and opinion. Article 13 was amongst the first bases the GoK cited: on 17 March 2024, a report related that they had stripped 26 people of their citizenship for forgery and fraud.

In scores of instances, the basis for the revocation of citizenship is unclear. In November 2024, **Zahra (pseudonym)** learned that the authorities revoked her citizenship, stating that it was granted by an “*administrative decision*” instead of Amiri decree. Born to an Egyptian father and Kuwaiti mother, with no effective link to any other country except Kuwait, she became a naturalised Kuwaiti in 2009. As a result of the decision, the authorities froze her bank account, making her own resources unavailable and stopped her from working, thus suspending her salary for seven months. Officials prevented her from seeking legal redress so she had, as at August 2025, no right of effective appeal. She told our organisations that the authorities “*terrorised*” those stripped of their citizenship, effectively restricting their right of expression, to publicly complain or seek redress.

On 9 May 2025, Ahmad Benswait set out the risks of speaking out about revocation of nationality. He explains that on 8 March 2025, Salwa al-Sayed “spoke out against racial and sexist slurs received online during her participation in a public Space event on the Article 8 issue hosted on X [...]”¹¹² He adds that:

“Less than 24 hours later, the official X account of Kuwait's Ministry of Interior posted the following statement: ‘A woman whose Article 8 Kuwaiti citizenship had been revoked was arrested after she criticized government decisions on social media. She was referred to the Deportation and Temporary Detention Affairs Department, pending deportation to her country of origin.’”

The government then used a clip of her X space in their own social media to characterise her speech as “challenging the state.” Salwa al-Sayed took part in further, public events on 14 March 2025, when she alleged that the Minister of Interior, Fahad al-Yousef al-Sabah and his officers verbally and physically harassed her; that the minister himself had interrogated her; that officials conducted an “invasive and humiliating” search of her person and “threatened to hang her by the legs.”¹¹³

On 10 March 2025, the GoK detained and ill-treated and summarily deported her to Egypt without any opportunity to see her (Kuwaiti) daughters.

As discussed above, under Scope and operation of citizenship revocations, the authorities appeared to use citizenship revocation as a proxy punishment for those who had expressed opposition to the government. In November 2025, the GoK revoked, on Article 21 grounds - fraud or false documents - the citizenship of former parliamentarian Mohammed Hussein al-Muhan and a number of his relatives, including father and uncles. The total number of revocations connected with his family was 169 persons.¹¹⁴ He and/or members of his family were likewise accused of holding dual nationality, that of another GCC (Gulf) country. In 2022-3, Mohammed Hussein al-Muhan, however, was a parliamentarian aligned with those who opposed the government. He lost the seat in 2024, before the suspension of the National Assembly.

In March and early April 2024 the authorities revoked the nationality of others, considered linked to parties perceived as opposition to the government, such as Ummah Party leader Hakem Al-Mutairi. In his case, the authorities “issued 13 decisions and three decrees stripping citizenship from 63 people, including 23 women.”¹¹⁵

SNAPSHOT 4

Those made stateless, re-made stateless or at risk of statelessness

The GoK’s restrictive and generalised approach failed to capture the double injustices that the pre-existing legal framework built: Aziza, a former member of the Bidoon community, acquired Kuwaiti citizenship by marriage. She had surrendered her (Bidoon-only) “Article 17” passport (a travel document issued to the Bidoon) for the passport of a full national. She worked in a government role for 15–16 years before finding herself, once again, stateless and Bidoon. After 26 years of government service, the GoK froze her pension. As a result, her bank removed access to her own funds. She stated that she was facing daily harassment, including at work: “Why are you still here?”

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Years of government service before Aziza’s pension was frozen and her bank access removed.

One woman - name redacted - wrote to NASI on 14 August 2025, explaining:

“I am a Kuwaiti woman, divorced, with original citizenship, and I have children who are stateless. They suffer severe injustice, as they have no civil rights, no passports, no civil ID cards, no work, and no rights. Kuwaiti women suffer severe injustice and oppression under the new Kuwaiti government laws. Although the Kuwaiti constitution guarantees equality between men and women, all our rights are being taken away. Please do justice for our children, whose future is uncertain and dark.”¹¹⁶

In this instance, the children of a Kuwaiti woman, where the non-Kuwaiti father is no longer present in Kuwait, sets out concern for her stateless children who have no rights, while vague constitutional assertions of equality provide no remedy when the Nationality Law prohibits conferral of nationality.

Another woman of Iranian heritage, where the nationality or status of the husband is not disclosed, but naturalised by marriage, explained to NASI that in November 2024, the government revoked her citizenship without due process:

“...[L]eaving me and my 18-year-old daughter at risk of statelessness and severe hardship. I have been a resident of Kuwait since 1994. My daughter, a Kuwaiti by birth, suffers from a serious immune deficiency that is aggravated by stress. The threats and pressure from the Kuwaiti authorities have already caused her severe health relapses, including gastrointestinal bleeding. She lost her scholarship and fell behind in her studies due to this situation. We have been explicitly threatened that unless I obtain an Iranian passport by August 2025, all our rights will be revoked, our bank accounts frozen, and we will be deprived of all benefits.”¹¹⁷

SNAPSHOT 5

Psychological and social harm

Taken together, the mainly women - married or divorced from Kuwaiti men - interviewed for this report described increased vulnerability arising from the revocation of their nationality. Revocation presaged social stigmatisation, loss of identity, community and security.

Many felt the decision rendered them invisible, due to their loss of legal, economic and social standing. Economic and material deprivation, compounded by harassment led to acute mental health crises. Unable to own property, have a bank account, employment or access state health care, they became totally reliant and dependent upon their husbands. Scores, though it is impossible to gauge the scale, faced exploitation (even by acquaintances, who knew they have “no rights left”), blackmail and coercion, such as having to transfer ownership of family homes completely to their husbands, arising from the loss of legal protection concomitant with having citizenship.

Karima related an account from an unnamed woman, background undisclosed, who transferred sole ownership of her entire house to her husband to avoid a legal battle she was no longer able or allowed to fight. This and countless other cases exemplify how loss of nationality strips women of bargaining power, enabling blackmail and coerced property transfers under threat of legal action.

An unnamed woman spoke of “no longer” feeling oneself; having one’s life “turned black” or “erased from the map.” Samira (pseudonym; see elsewhere in this section) said that she had suicidal thoughts: “each one of us says it: I want to kill myself”. Karima (pseudonym; see elsewhere) spoke of being coerced into a KD6,000 (US\$19,480) repayment when its maturity was years later, and how that contributed to her “wishing for death; thinking of ending [her] life” Another - a woman who did not even want to be named said she was “too ashamed even to talk about” abuses.

SALAM DHR spoke to four women impacted by the Article 8 revocation and who had sought to obtain temporary government documents aimed at lessening the impact of the revocation, affording the bearer rights and privileges of citizens. Yet some women interviewed by SALAM DHR said they will not seek new Kuwaiti IDs out of principle. Those who have made their cases public claimed they are being pressured to write a Letter of Sympathy to the Minister of Interior, officially apologising for failing to produce their “*original passports*”, and promising to acquire their former nationality.¹¹⁸ One interviewee stated that the GoK instructed agencies to seize their pensions if officials deemed they were resisting.¹¹⁹

What concerned most were reforms to Law No. 38/1980 promulgating the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law in tandem with the denaturalisation campaign. Reforms to Law 38/1980 allow for individuals who cannot pay their debts to be arrested.¹²⁰ Denied access to employment, pensions, bank accounts and their properties, these newly stateless Kuwaitis have limited or no means to pay such agencies or creditors, placing them at risk of arrest.

The accounts of acute vulnerability are compounded by reports of threats, both direct and otherwise, from the GoK. One interviewee, a Lebanese naturalised Kuwaiti, who has lived in Kuwait since she was five, claimed the names and civil IDs of denaturalised Kuwaitis are published by the government, which tacitly encourages campaigns of harassment online.¹²¹ Other impacted persons said they have kept silent because “*Anyone who speaks about Article 8, man or woman, can be taken by the authorities and beaten.*”¹²² One lamented, “*I don’t leave my home. I’m scared of what will happen.*”¹²³ Trapped, yet resilient, victims interviewed expressed desperation, but also hope, that international attention towards their tribulations can bring them justice and relief.

SNAPSHOT 6

Lack of redress and intersectional impacts

Scores of cases exemplify the intersectional and intergenerational impacts of the citizenship stripping campaign and its multiple injustices: one woman - name redacted - wrote to NASI on 14 August 2025 and explained:

*I am a Kuwaiti woman, divorced, with original citizenship, and I have children who are stateless. They suffer severe injustice, as they have no civil rights, no passports, no civil ID cards, no work, and no rights. Kuwaiti women suffer severe injustice and oppression under the new Kuwaiti government laws. Although the Kuwaiti constitution guarantees equality between men and women, all our rights are being taken away. Please do justice for our children, whose future is uncertain and dark.*¹²⁴

In this instance, the children of a Kuwaiti woman, where the non-Kuwaiti father is no longer present in Kuwait, sets out concern for her stateless children who have no rights, while vague constitutional assertions of equality provide no remedy when the Nationality Law prohibits conferral of nationality.

As noted above, a woman of Iranian heritage, where the nationality or status of the husband is not disclosed, but naturalised by marriage, explained to NASI that in November 2024, the government revoked her citizenship without due process [...]:

*“[L]eaving me and my 18-year-old daughter at risk of statelessness and severe hardship. I have been a resident of Kuwait since 1994 (over 30 years). My daughter, a Kuwaiti by birth, suffers from a serious immune deficiency that is aggravated by stress. The threats and pressure from the Kuwaiti authorities have already caused her severe health relapses, including gastrointestinal bleeding. She lost her scholarship and fell behind in her studies due to this situation. We have been explicitly threatened that unless I obtain an Iranian passport by August 2025, all our rights will be revoked, our bank accounts frozen, and we will be deprived of all benefits.”*¹²⁵

Text box 5 - Examples of types of populations targeted for citizenship revocation and sample impacts

IMPACTED GROUP / LEGAL BASIS	CORE IMPACT (S)	COROLLARY IMPACT (S)
Women married to a man who is a naturalised Kuwaiti / Article 7	Actual or risk of statelessness of women or children; forces other governments to accommodate for Kuwait's changes.	Loss of benefits, social and financial precarity; possible social abuse, possible impact on children and access to specific education or healthcare
Women naturalised via marriage to a Kuwaiti / Article 8	Actual or risk of statelessness of woman or children; forces other governments to accommodate for Kuwait's changes	Loss of benefits, social and financial precarity, possible social abuse, possible impact on children and access to specific education or healthcare
Originally non-Kuwaiti woman, divorced or widowed under Articles 7 or 8, according to December 2024 repeal of Article 9	Actual or risk of statelessness of woman or children; forces other governments to accommodate for Kuwait's changes	
Those deemed to have obtained citizenship by fraud, forgery (13.1); convicted of moral turpitude or national security crime (13.2); dismissed from government position due to disciplinary process (13.3); those whom authorities deem in the interest of the state to lose citizenship (13.4); those deemed to be promoting principles counter to social order (13.5) and their dependents	Those deemed to have performed a 'valuable act' or 'service' to Kuwait in the past, but retrospectively stripped of citizenship, along with dependents; who risk or face statelessness	Stripping of nationality from dependents who may have no real or effective connection to any other state; the socio-financial impact of stripping, including access to healthcare, bank account, property ownership; including retroactive application of benefits. Where the authorities have not stated a clear basis for revocation, the ill-defined catch-all of 'state interest' appears applicable.
Those in receipt of benefits from the granting of citizenship up to the time of the revocation of nationality / amended Article 16	In theory, the requirement to return monies to the state, including any disbursed to dependents	In theory, bankruptcy, including possibly intergenerationally.

Measures taken to lessen the impact of the citizenship revocation campaign

Amidst a growing public outcry from Kuwaitis made stateless and a small degree of media attention, the GoK implemented some measures to address aspects of the impacts of statelessness (see also Snapshot 1, in relation to government measures in relation to women).

On 16 December 2024, a report stated that the government “has implemented protective measures for affected individuals”, noting that “Women married to Kuwaiti men, divorcees, and widows who lose citizenship will keep their employment and current salaries. [and that] those already retired will continue receiving their pensions.”¹²⁶

On 11 March 2025, it announced the creation of “Grievance Committee for Citizenship Cases”¹²⁷ Cabinet Resolution No. 207/2025 stated that it would (like the Supreme Committee for the Investigation [Verification] of Kuwaiti Citizenship) operate under the Council of Ministers. Charged with addressing and evaluating “grievances from individuals affected by the loss or annulment of citizenship”. It is empowered “to invite experts to assist in its work”, at which decisions will be made on the basis of a majority of accredited members. Our organisations do not know the composition of this body nor the basis on which members were selected.¹²⁸

On 1 May 2025 - two months after the formal announcement of the Grievance Committee - the Kuwait Times reported that the “appeals will be accepted in two phases” corresponding to specific dates and that impacted individuals had 60 days from 4 May 2025 to submit their appeals via the Council of Ministers’ website: www.cmgs.gov.kw¹²⁹ The head of the committee, Ali Al-Dhubaibi stated that the impacted had to submit their grievances via the platform, using the required forms, on working days, between specific hours and that “appeals submitted outside the specified method will not be considered”.¹³⁰

On 8 May 2025, the Grievance Committee announced that it had received 5148 grievances. In light of this, the head of the committee announced that it would “receive applications daily and around the clock, including official holidays”.¹³¹

On 26 January 2026, the link to the Grievance Committee did not work; it was empty, blank and did not provide any information at all: a white screen.

On 29 May 2025, the GoK circulated regulations in relation to Article 8 women (see the detailed assessment in Snapshot 1, above). For example, the GoK continued to offer a new ID and passport to some wives and former wives of Kuwaiti citizens whose nationality they revoked, officially classifying them “to be treated as Kuwaiti”.¹³² This extended to women rights and access to state services, as well as the ability to travel abroad, as they previously had. The Ministry of Interior established an Office of Affairs specifically for women whose citizenship they revoked via Article 8 of the nationality law.¹³³ The GoK created hotlines for women with questions or concerns regarding enaturalisation and steps they can take.¹³⁴ Several women interviewed, however, claimed the new system is coercive and flawed. In order to obtain the new documentation, women must provide proof that they are in the process of applying for another nationality. In instances this has been impossible: some states have residency requirements in order to apply or re-apply for citizenship. Women who were stateless Bidoon prior to naturalisation have no other country to return to, excluding them from the process. Several interviewees claimed the Article 8 Affairs Office only exists to pressure stateless individuals into applying for a new nationality. “If you call the hotline, their answer to everything is ‘apply for your old passport.’”¹³⁵

On 12 July 2025, the Ministry of Interior appeared to extend its grace period by providing for one year, from 20 July 2025, “a structured framework of rights, responsibilities, and limitations for those affected, allowing them to retain select benefits while mandating compliance with administrative procedures”.¹³⁶

Scale of Revocations: general timeline and key moments



On 4 March 2024, the GoK announced the first wave of citizenship revocations; on 16 March 2024 the Ministry of Interior established a hotline for reporting “crimes related to Kuwaiti citizenship and passports”. Callers created over 5,000 reports on its first day.

Some of the first revocations, in March and April 2024, were individuals seen as opposed to the government, including Hakim al-Mutairi, the Secretary-General of the Umma Conference, and the leader of the National Ummah Party, as well as Sarah al-Ajmi, Abdulrahman al-Essa, Zafer al-Ajmi, and Jameela al-Otaibi.¹³⁷ At the end of May 2024, the GoK created the Supreme Committee for the Investigation of Kuwaiti Citizenship.¹³⁸

On 10 May 2024, the Amir dissolved the elected National Assembly for up to four years. He also suspended key elements of the Kuwaiti Constitution which provided an enduring basis to implement policies that avoided scrutiny by elected representatives and which would have likely been illegal or subject to court challenge under normal circumstances.

On 27 May 2024, the Amir, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, issued a decree to form the Supreme Committee for the Investigation of Kuwaiti Nationality, which perpetuated the practice of arbitrarily revoking the nationality of many citizens; early March 2024, the Kuwaiti authorities had begun a campaign to revoke the nationalities of citizens for various reasons, including forgery.

Exemplifying the character of the campaign, on 21 November 2024, the Kuwaiti news outlet, Al-Qabas, published an article entitled Citizenship withdrawn and revoked from 1647 people.¹³⁹ It lauded the efforts of “*Acting Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, (Fahad al-Yousef al-Sabah) [...] to examine and scrutinize Kuwaiti citizenship files to uncover forgers and dual nationals [...]*” and that at its most recent meeting, the Supreme Committee for the Investigation of Kuwaiti Nationality had announced that “*it decided to withdraw and revoke Kuwaiti citizenship from 1,647 people in preparation for presenting it to the Council of Ministers.*”

It also stated that:

- A total of 4112 revocations were imposed in November 2024, up to the 21 November publication date of the report;
- 1535 revocations on 14 November 2024 alone;
- 930 revocations were announced on 7 November 2024, that
- “*[...] the majority of those whose citizenship was withdrawn by the committee’s decision yesterday were divorced expatriate women who obtained it for personal gain, and did not complete the required conditions due to the leniency of some*”;
- “*Fahd Al-Yousef (Fahad al-Yousef al-Sabah) follows up on every case in the committee and personally supervises any decision*”
- That “*only a limited number of people appealed the decisions of the Supreme Committee for Citizenship Investigation, which means that the committee’s work is accurate and proceeds in accordance with the law*”, and
- It reminded readers that “*many benefits suspended from them, including the withdrawal of government houses or farms allocated to them, or the cancellation of their role in granting them government houses through a joint committee [...]*”

The article concluded with statistics on the total number of revocations on specific dates:

- **1647 - 21 November 2024**
- **930 - 7 November 2024**
- **489 - 31 October 2024**
- **198 - 19 October 2024**
- **133 - 3 October 2024**
- **112 - 19 September 2024**
- **90 - 12 September 2024**
- **78 - 29 August 2024**

The pace continued to the end of 2024:

- 23 November 2024 - Reports surface that 4,280 people were stripped of their Kuwait nationality within 3 weeks, and 5,212 within 3 months, including 1,145 women.
- 3 December 2024 - 1,145 women and 13 men have their citizenship revoked. The women are primarily foreign wives naturalised through marriage.
- 5 December 2024 - 2,162 people, including two prominent entertainers (actor Dawood Hussein and singer Nawal Al-Kuwaitiya), have their citizenship reported revoked by the Supreme Committee for forgery or violations of the Kuwait Nationality Law.
- 12 December 2024 - 3,043 citizenships are reported stripped of their Kuwait nationality by the Supreme Committee.
- 16 December 2024 - Analysis finds that more than 12,000 citizenships have been denaturalized since August 2024. The primary targets are dual nationality holders, along with naturalised women and their families.

In relation to the 21 November 2024 revocations, when 1,647 people had their citizenships removed in a single day, one report stated that the cases included divorcees and widows of Kuwaiti citizens who had obtained citizenship through Article 8 of the Kuwaiti Nationality Law (see Legal Framework), which permits women married to a male Kuwaiti citizen to acquire citizenship if she was married to him for 15 years or gave birth to a child through their spouse.¹⁴⁰ In some cases, widows were informed their citizenship was revoked the day their husbands died.¹⁴¹ The GoK continued with purpose into 2025. A 13 February 2025 Instagram post by commentator Zaid Benjamin stated that revocations reached 33,200 over six months (see image).

A media report on 22 May 2025 indicated that the pace and breadth of the revocations has not slowed.¹⁴² It spoke of 1292 cases, comprising 967 revoked in the “national interest”; 189 for acquisition through fraudulent means; 73 for misrepresentation and document falsification; another 50 for “national interest”; eight for dual nationality; four under Article 8 and one “for actions considered to undermine allegiance to the state”

On 29 May 2025, in response to the scale of the revocations, the UN human rights officials criticised the scale of the campaign.¹⁴³ UN officials reportedly “voiced concern”, after “tens of thousands of Kuwaitis were stripped of citizenship, many of them women”. The New Arab news platform cited AFP estimates that “more than 37,000 people, including at least 26,000 women, have lost Kuwaiti nationality since August 2024. UN Human Rights Office spokesperson Seif Magango said that “We are deeply concerned about Kuwait's recent nationality revocations, particularly of individuals who renounced previous citizenships, and about the extension of such revocations to their dependents,” adding that “Stripping people of their nationalities has a serious impact on their economic, social, cultural, and political rights [and] “retroactively revoking citizenship... and extending this to their descendants, raises serious human rights concerns.” While, by 29 May 2025, more than 14,000 people had filed appeals with the relevant committee, Seif Magango said that “Their inability to challenge these decisions in court also raises serious concerns.” The UN office has urged Kuwait to “review the nationality law to ensure it complies with international human rights standards and consider sustainable solutions to prevent statelessness.”

Some of the notable moments or developments in 2025 included:

- February 2025- After participating in an X Space addressing the mass revocations, “Iman”, a victim of denaturalization, is targeted by a smear campaign online, followed by a criminal investigation for “insulting the state”. She is summoned to a police station, interrogated, subjected to ill-treatment and deported.
- 16 February 2025 - Mass denaturalisation of more than 9,000 people. The group primarily consists of naturalized women and their dependents, including some security-related cases.
- 1 May 2025 - The Supreme Committee announces the revocation of citizenship from 434 people, 154 of which were previously naturalized for “great services” to Kuwait or had pre-1965 residence, and were officially denaturalised in the “supreme interests of the state”.
- 22 May 2025 - Ministry of Interior announces that more than 1,292 people are stripped of citizenship. 967 of which are on grounds of “national interest”.
- 11 August 2025 - It is reported that nearly 50,000 people have been stripped of their citizenship during the campaign.
- August 2025 - Facing increased criticism and pressure, the Ministry of Interior pledged to treat married women who were naturalised like Kuwaitis, to once again receive their salaries. The Ministry temporarily allowed them to travel using Kuwaiti passports that marked them as non-citizens, under the condition they begin the process to obtain their original nationality. Under “citizenship”, the passport stated “married to a Kuwaiti”.
- September 2025, the Kuwaiti government ceased the routine publication of statements on revocations, despite the practice continuing, reflecting the normalisation of the policy, though news reports have continued on and off into 2026.

For example, on 13 June 2026, the Al Qabas news platform reported that the government had stripped 2193 individuals of their citizenship, noting, additionally, that “[C]itizenship [will] be withdrawn from anyone who acquired it by dependency from these individuals.”¹⁴⁴

50,000+

people have been stripped of their citizenship during the campaign, as reported on 11 August 2025

In the 10 June 2026 report of the visit of the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, the Special Rapporteur noted that “as of August 2025, between 40,000 and 60,000 individuals have been affected by these decisions, with women being disproportionately affected, particularly women who had naturalized through marriage to Kuwaiti men under Article 8 of the Nationality Law [...]”¹⁴⁵

She also noted that the GoK retroactively withdrew the nationality of 2,176 adult children as a result of Decree-Law 22/2026, adding that “The vast majority of these children were born in Kuwait and had lived in Kuwait all their lives.”¹⁴⁶

At the time of writing, the citizenship revocation campaign continues apace. A July 2026 report set out the details of a complex, fraud-linked case relating to a deceased man whose name - and personal, legal status - had reportedly been added to that of a Kuwaiti citizen. Since the government revokes the nationality of descendants of those stripped retroactively of their nationality, the GoK reportedly revoked the nationality of 520 people linked to the individual. The complexity of the case rests on the mix of fraudulent conduct by at least one person, but otherwise lawful conduct by others, involving also children. The individuals involved include “a former member of parliament and a former government adviser.”¹⁴⁷

Conclusion: whither **accountability** for placing thousands in a state of exception?

Amir Mishal al-Ahmad al-Sabah and the GoK’s citizenship stripping campaign of 2024-2026 violated and continues to violate Kuwait’s international human rights obligations. Decree laws 116/2024 and 158/2024, issued on 23 and 31 December 2024, amending the 1959 Nationality Law, along with the 5 April 2026, Decree-Law No. 52 of 2026. Regarding the amendment of certain provisions of Amiri Decree No. 15 of 1959 concerning the Kuwaiti Nationality Law created statelessness and increased the risk of statelessness. Legal revisions enacted in 2024 and 2026 locked in citizenship revocation patterns that are discriminatory and arbitrary in their application; that have violated the human rights and dignity of tens, if not hundreds of thousands.

As of July 2026, the government had not implemented a meaningful, independent appeals mechanism; while Kuwait’s courts have adjudicated state procedures in nationality cases, and (rarely) ruled against the government, the 2024 and 2026 revisions remove, wholesale, court oversight of nationality-related decisions, classifying such matters as sovereign decisions. As a result, the GoK has violated its own constitutional provision of a right to a remedy, along with a swathe of treaty obligations.

Reports suggest that a great many of those stripped of their citizenship acquired it through fraud, forgery or misrepresentation. Fair and robust procedures to deal with such instances are in order to combat illegality, but must comply with international human rights standards.

Cases relating to national security and other complex situations must be considered carefully, transparently and be based on objectively verifiable evidence; they, too, must comply with Kuwait's obligations.

Article 9 of Kuwait's Constitution states that "The family is the foundation of society". The retroactive application of citizenship revocation, depriving nationality from those who are now dead, and upon whom successor generations, including young families and children depend for their own citizenship violates the principle that a person not be held responsible for an act s/he did not do. Such families and their children invariably have no meaningful or effective links to any other country save Kuwait. GoK conduct on this point alone violates Kuwait's own Constitutional guarantee to support the family, along with a tens of rights guaranteed by treaty.

Gender discrimination has been at the heart of the Amir's policies: over the 2024-2026 period, the GoK has deprived thousands of women of all their rights by making them stateless or putting them in at least temporary limbo despite them having obeyed relevant laws in becoming Kuwaiti in previous years and decades. And they have done so amidst GoK misdirection that the Amir's government has advanced the place of women in Kuwaiti society.

Kuwait is a prosperous country. Its funding of various humanitarian and philanthropic bodies and agencies insulates the Amir, Mishal al-Ahmad al-Sabah, and his government from outright condemnation. For example, on 24 May 2025, amidst industrial-scale citizenship stripping by the GoK, Filippo Grandi, the then United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, took part in the first "*strategic dialogue*" with the GoK and "*praised the State of Kuwait's leading support for refugees throughout the world [...]*".¹⁴⁸ Filippo Grandi spoke of "enhancing the long-term partnership between the two sides" at which "*The two sides underscored [...] the depth of the humanitarian partnership dating back to decades ago and the State of Kuwait's keenness on backing international aid for the refugees and the needy throughout the globe.*"¹⁴⁹ Perhaps emboldened by that lack of global approbrium, the GoK has continued to violate a catalogue of human rights. Can they ever be held accountable?

In short, the government has escaped accountability for enacting policies that have deprived, on the basis of a supposed national or ethnic origin, a whole class of women and their children of rights.

Scholar C3man Kenny's 2020 article, *Legislated Out of Existence: Mass Arbitrary Deprivation of Nationality Resulting in Statelessness as an International Crime* suggests that mass arbitrary deprivation of nationality leading to statelessness could constitute a crime against humanity, as a form of persecution or "other inhumane acts."¹⁵⁰

Finally, our organisations conclude that the Amir, Mishal al-Ahmad al-Sabah and the GoK, are either not aware of or have chosen to ignore or reject the 2013 report by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, addressing Human rights and arbitrary deprivation of nationality.¹⁵¹ For that reason, we re-iterate a selection of its Conclusions and recommendations:

38. The right of every individual to a nationality is clearly regulated in international human rights law, which provides for the explicit recognition of that right. International human rights law also explicitly provides for the prohibition of arbitrary deprivation of nationality.

39. In regulating the loss and deprivation of nationality, States must ensure that safeguards to prevent statelessness are incorporated in their domestic law. States should carry the burden of proving that loss or deprivation of nationality will not result in statelessness. Where international law recognizes, as a matter of exception, that loss or deprivation of nationality may lead to statelessness, these exceptions must be narrowly construed. States

40. Even where loss or deprivation of nationality does not lead to statelessness, States must weigh the consequences of loss or deprivation of nationality against the interest that it is seeking to protect, and consider alternative measures that could be imposed. Under international law, loss or deprivation of nationality that does not serve a legitimate aim, or is not proportionate, is arbitrary and therefore prohibited.

41. States should review the grounds under which individuals may lose or be deprived of their nationality with a view to removing any such grounds that are not in compliance with international law. States should remove legislative or administrative measures for loss or deprivation of nationality on the basis of a change in civil status or in response to a serious criminal offence and reconsider the appropriateness of providing for the loss or deprivation of nationality in response to long-term absence. In all cases, States must refrain from automatically extending the loss or deprivation of nationality to a person's dependents.

Recommendations

TO THE

Government of Kuwait

The GoK has selectively adhered to the international human rights obligations to which it is a state party. Its reservations and interpretive declarations on legally binding, multinational human rights treaties restrict the application of international law and the current government appears, regrettably, disinclined to end these rights restrictions.

For this reason, we call on the GoK to act in good faith and retrospectively accept and implement recommendations made by at least 10 of the 16 states in the 4th Cycle of the UPR, in 2025 (see Appendix 5).

Furthermore, we urge the GoK to:

- 01** End statelessness in Kuwait by 2030, ensuring that no person in Kuwait can be considered, under international standards and practice, as stateless;
- 02** Pro-actively work with UNHCR and civil society to develop and implement a concrete programme for ending statelessness;
- 03** Immediately suspend the revocation of citizenship until the Nationality Law be aligned with international human rights standards and international best practice, including by working with the OHCHR and UNHCR in order to ensure compliance
- 04** Ensure that those affected by citizenship revocation can fulfill their basic needs, such as education, healthcare, housing, the right to dispose of their personal bank accounts, manage property, and obtain identity and travel documents;
- 05** Reinstate the nationality to all those stripped in the absence of any wrongful or illegal act, such as children or any other individual who does not have any meaningful, effective or legal connection to any other state;
- 06** Reinstate the nationality of all those whose citizenship the government revoked in the absence of an independent or effective review and due process, including the possibility to challenge the withdrawal before a court;¹⁵²
- 07** Reverse all nationality-related decisions based on the rendering illegal of previously permitted and legal conduct, such as in relation to passing Kuwaiti nationality from a male Kuwaiti to a non-Kuwaiti wife, as highlighted by, amongst others, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences;¹⁵³
- 08** Ensure a transparent and carefully considered mechanism with an objectively verifiable independent appeal mechanism - beyond the existing Grievance Committee - to ensure fairness, justice, and compliance with the law in cases of citizenship revocation, without official interference to use the revocation against opponents or critics, and to give those affected a full opportunity to file complaints before a fair judiciary.

We remind the GoK, a member of the Human Rights Council to at least the end of 2026 and, under arrangements in place in July 2026, due to remain so until 2029, to align itself with actions set out in a 2023 resolution, namely:¹⁵⁴

To develop and implement national plans of action to end statelessness, in consultation with organizations led by those affected by statelessness and wider civil society, and encourages the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other concerned United Nations agencies to provide technical assistance to support these efforts, if requested and as appropriate.

Our organisations call on the GoK to pledge to implement this recommendation as part of its bid to serve on the 2027-2029 cycle of state membership to the Human Rights Council. If it cannot commit to this, the GoK must withdraw its candidacy for membership in favour of another state in the Asia Pacific group.

TO THE

EU and its member states and the United Kingdom

The European Union External Affairs Action Service (EEAS) maintains a Delegation - an EU “embassy” - in Kuwait; Brussels-based EEAS regional staff regularly engage with Europe-based civil society in order to inform EEAS engagement with Kuwaiti counterparts. There is, however, limited EU or Kuwaiti will to address, with any seriousness, difficult human rights issues impacting both parties.

For that reason, our organisations call on the EU to assist the GoK where it is unwilling or unable to help stateless and other human rights activists in Kuwait or those facing statelessness-like circumstances. Namely, we urge the EEAS to:

- 01** Include formal meetings with businesses, educational establishments and human rights activists from the stateless community in Kuwait and, where possible, other GCC member states, at successive EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial and EU-GCC Business Forum meetings in order to promote the recognition and legitimacy of the stateless community in the GCC and their socio-economic development, noting that such engagement may need to be in private, confidential online meetings on account of possible reprisals or other human rights violations stateless human rights activists in the region face.

Like the EU, while the Government of the United Kingdom (UK) has long and deep relations with Kuwait, there is no independently, objectively verifiable evidence that its diplomats have raised any meaningful or enduring issues relating to human rights with their counterparts.

Nevertheless, as a member of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness, following every engagement with Kuwaiti counterparts, UK officials should provide a public report on the GoK’s conduct towards stateless people.

For example, in the course of the 1 October 2025 conversation with the Crown Prince of Kuwait, at a peak time of the citizenship stripping campaign, the UK’s Prime Minister did not appear to reference this matter, despite it impacting directly on former UK nationals.¹⁵⁵ For that reason the UK should:

-
- 02** Include arbitrary deprivation of nationality, statelessness risks, and the treatment of affected communities as standing agenda items in ministerial and FCDO engagement with Kuwaiti counterparts

On account of its human rights record, including in relation to the mass, collective and arbitrary stripping of citizenship, EU member states that are members of the Human Rights Council, and the UK:

- 05** Should advocate the participation of other Asia Pacific states and an open, competitive, slate in respect to the election for regional representation at the Human Rights Council (in respect to all regions). If the Asia Pacific regional slate remains closed, the UK and EEAS should not vote for Kuwait in order to reflect international concern over the conduct of the government and its legitimacy in terms of representing international human rights standards.
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TO THE

OHCHR and UNHCR

In light of the longstanding challenge of statelessness represented by Kuwait's stateless Bidoon community, along with the impact of the 2024-2026 citizenship revocation campaign and its impacts, bearing in mind the indivisibility of the human rights framework, our organisations call on the OHCHR to:

- 01** Organise a meeting of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, including, as needed, state and civil society participation, to address generalised, but in particular, Kuwait's chronic disregard for core elements of its human rights obligations, whereby the HRC issues, pursuant to paragraph 78 of section (C) Functions, of its foundational resolution, "specific guidelines for the Advisory Committee" so that the latter may, in turn propose (under paragraph 76) "advice [on the] promotion and protection of all human rights".¹⁵⁶
-
- 02** Publicly acknowledge that the structure and character of the GoK's chronic violations in respect to nationality, and its impact on the indivisible character of the international human rights regime has not adequately, as required under paragraph 87f - addressing admissibility for a complaint to the HRC - "already [been] dealt with by a special procedure, a treaty body or other United Nations or similar regional complaints procedure in the field of human rights"; and that, as per paragraph 87g "Domestic remedies have been exhausted".¹⁵⁷
-
- 05** Propose the creation, for a limited time, a working group or other body that reports to the High Commissioner and/or to the HRC itself, in respect to the current human rights impact of statelessness and citizenship stripping, building on dedicated HRC assessments of statelessness in 2013 and a 2023 resolution as well as assessing the impact of state reporting on statelessness in the third cycle of the UPR.¹⁵⁸
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- 04** Build upon the September 2025 visit by the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls to Kuwait by pressing for a similar visit by the Special Rapporteur on minority issues.
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Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Kuwait - Various and select population characteristics at a glance

Note: On account of differing sources, presumed difference of definitions of categories, assessment methodologies and timeframes, the numbers cited here should be considered estimates

CHARACTERISTIC	FIGURE
Total population in the State of Kuwait (2021 ¹⁵⁹)	4,385,717 (4.8 million in 2025 ¹⁶⁰)
Number of citizens (2021)	1,488,716 ¹⁶¹ – 33% of the total population
Number of non-citizens (2021)	2,897,001 – 66% of the total population
Number of “regular migrants” (2021, <i>understood as, mainly, migrant workers</i>)	3,344,362
Number of “irregular migrants” (2021; <i>exact meaning or scope not clear</i>)	144,000 ¹⁶²
Longstanding stateless population (2025): <i>generally understood to be the Bidoon</i>	92,000 or more ¹⁶³
Estimated total number of impacted persons as a result of the GoK measures in 2024/2025	10,000 (this report’s estimate)
Estimated percentage of migrant workers (2025)	79% of total employment ¹⁶⁴
Regional origin of legal / regular migrant workers (2021)	(i) Arab region – 27.9%; (ii) South Asia – 37.8%; (iii) Africa – 1.9%; (iv) Other countries – 1.1%, where “The single largest expatriate community in Kuwait is comprised of Indians at 32%, whereas Egyptian nationals at 21% are the second largest and constitutes the largest foreign Arab population.” ¹⁶⁵

APPENDIX 2

Kuwait - Select chronology of citizenship-related measures up to March 2024 and the initiation of the citizenship revocation campaign¹⁶⁶

DATE	MEASURE
1959	The nationality law defines categories of Kuwaiti nationality and a range of criteria and limitations.
1961	Kuwait declares independence from the United Kingdom.
1962	Kuwaiti constitution is finalised. Nomads continue to enter and leave Kuwait freely. Some settle in Kuwait.
1965	Census establishes government baseline for citizenship.
1967	A range of tribal communities are enfranchised.
1980	Amendment to the nationality law strips Kuwaiti women of the right to bestow citizenship on their children, even when the children cannot take their father's nationality.
1981	Some tribal communities settled in Kuwait are given political rights, enabling them to vote.
1985/6	A government decision strips the Bidoon of most rights, including free healthcare and education, and classifies them, for the first time, as "non-Kuwaitis".
Late 1980s	GoK expels some Bidoons. A court overturns the application of the Alien Residence Act as the Bidoon cannot be defined as "aliens", but its ruling is largely ignored.
1990-91	Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. International military action restores Kuwaiti rulers and sovereignty, but thousands of Bidoons who fled Kuwait are not allowed to return. Post-war IDs are issued, but many Bidoon IDs are not renewed.
1999	A government decree allows stateless people to apply for citizenship if they can prove their family has lived in Kuwait since 1965. Up to 6,000 are naturalized.
2000	Law No. 20 facilitates the naturalisation of people registered in the 1965 census and descendants, limited to 2,000 per year. It is suspended before completion.
2006	The Kuwait Society for Human Rights holds a ground-breaking conference on the Bidoon situation.
2010	Government Decree No.467 established the (so-called) Central Apparatus for Illegal Residents' Affairs.

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APPENDIX 2 — CONTINUED

DATE	MEASURE
2010–11	The GoK proposes to create different categories of Bidoon registration.
2011	Demonstrations by Bidoons gather pace and are met by increased repression.
Sep 2019	The legal status of Kuwait's stateless community reemerges in national and parliamentary debate and discourse.
Oct 2019	The Kuwait Bar Association sets out proposed legislation relating to the stateless community, followed by legislation tabled by parliamentarian Thamer al-Thufairi.
Nov 2019	Parliament speaker, Marzouq al-Ghanim tables draft legislation supported by the GoK, on the status of the stateless Bidoon community.
Feb / Mar 2020	emergence of Covid-19 in Kuwait
20 Sep 2020	Parliament ordinary session no. 4, meeting 19 : (page 15), under item No. 48: Committee of Human Rights, Women's Rights, and Family, [discusses a bill which] seeks to: define "stateless persons" based on international treaties; replace "illegal residents" with "stateless persons" in all governmental bodies; compel the Central Agency to quantify and limit the number of names applicable under their (and several other governmental) jurisdictions; compel the Public Authority of Civil Information to release their documentation cards with up to 5 years' validity subject to renewal; incorporate stateless people under the same Labour Law as that applicable to GCC-nationals under law no. 1/2016 of the private sector; implement executive regulations relative to the protection and performance of the bill.
6 Nov 2022	Amiri decree issued to form The Supreme Committee for the Verification of Kuwaiti Citizenship, chaired by the Minister of Interior, with membership from the Ministers of Defense and Justice.
16 Dec 2023	Mishal al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah becomes Amir of Kuwait, following the death of Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah.
Jan 2024	Kuwait elected to the 47-member United Nations' Human Rights Council for the January 2024 — December 2026 cycle.
10 May 2024	The Amir suspends the National Assembly, citing breaches of the Kuwaiti constitution, including the use of "offensive and inappropriate" language towards the Amir.

APPENDIX 3

Civil society condemnation of the GoK's citizenship stripping campaign up to July 2025

International human rights bodies, notably civil society organisations, have repeatedly alerted the international community to Kuwait's 2024-2025 human rights crisis. These alerts include the following publications:

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- 01** **10 September 2024** — The Gulf Center for Human Rights (GCHR) warned in a statement that “Authorities continue arbitrary citizenship revocation policy”.¹⁶⁷
-
- 02** **11 October 2024** — GCHR and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), addressing Kuwait's review under the Universal Periodic Review, called on the GoK, in relation to the longstanding stateless community, to grant citizenship to the Bidoon community members who reside in Kuwait and ensure that equal access to education, health care and employment for the Bidoon population is enshrined in legislation.¹⁶⁸
-
- 03** **23 November 2024 and 3 December 2024** — Three organisations, Salam for Democracy and Human Rights (SALAM DHR), Hawiati — the MENA Statelessness Network (HAWIATI) and Rights Realization Centre (RRC), sent a memorandum to the GoK. The organisations requested the specific and objectively verifiable criteria that the GoK was using to conduct their citizenship revocation campaign, and information as to how the campaign adhered to international law. Its questions and concerns became the basis for a [20 December 2024 statement](#). On 20 December 2024, the organisations publicised their communication with the GoK. It denounced the mass citizenship stripping campaign and warned of the retroactive application of new legislation that rendered thousands stateless;¹⁶⁹
-
- 04** **10 February 2025** — GCHR flagged that Amendments to the Kuwaiti Nationality Law pose serious threats to human rights, and set out a systematic analysis of Decree-Law 116/2024 (see above) and related measures. GCHR noted that the government had stripped the citizenship of tens of thousands and provided an assessment of the violations of Kuwait's constitution and international standards to which it is a state party;¹⁷⁰
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APPENDIX 3 — CONTINUED

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- 05** **11 February 2025** — MENA Rights Group, MENA Statelessness Network (Hawiati), SALAM DHR, Minority Rights Group, HuMENA, DAWN, Rights Realization Centre, Global Movement Against Statelessness and ALQST called on the GoK to end the campaign of mass citizenship stripping and repeal amendments to the Nationality Law;¹⁷¹
-
- 06** **18 February 2025** — The Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR), in its pre-sessional briefing to the working group on the UPR in relation to Kuwait, drew attention to those ‘recently’ deprived of their citizenship, notably women married to Kuwaiti men. As a result of the changes, *“They found themselves without access to documentation for basic travel or services, the ability to maintain employment, banking services, or the ability to own their property or run their businesses. Some were disabled individuals in need of proper medical care, or patients who needed to travel for care.”* GCHR called on the GoK to suspend and reverse *“all decisions to strip naturalised people of their Kuwaiti nationality”*;¹⁷²
-
- 07** **4 June 2025** — GCHR asserted that *“Citizens’ rights continue to deteriorate as government escalates stripping of nationality”*, and set out the escalation of the denationalisation campaign and wider deterioration in citizens’ rights;¹⁷³ and
-
- 08** **13 July 2025** — SALAM DHR, Hawiati, and RRC called on the authorities to *“Stop destroying Kuwaiti families and society with mass, arbitrary citizenship revocations that fly in the face of human dignity; Kuwaiti and international law”*.¹⁷⁴
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APPENDIX 4

(Unscientific or proxy) Sample selection of citizenship revocation events based on open source reporting, **March 2024 - December 2025**

Observation: Our organisations collated, from overwhelmingly, but not exclusively, English-language sources, reports of GoK citizenship revocations. As we do not have access to the Official Gazette, *Kuwait al-Youm*, the data collected was only ever intended to be symbolically representative of overall GoK conduct and in order to develop a proxy for impact assessment.

We uploaded the data - around 114 pages of media platforms' reports - to ChatGPT5.2. These reports are cited throughout this text. We 'asked' ChatGPT5.2 that it structure the information in a chronological event table, with (by column) number impacted; reason (s) cited for the revocation, including by generating a typology or category list of those reasons where there is significant degree of correlation; source details, including the URLs of the reports. We requested an observations column to which we added additional material.

THE *taxonomy* GENERATED FROM THE SAMPLE NEWS REPORTS

CATEGORY	DEFINITION
FRAUD_FORGERY	fraud/forgery/false statements/misrepresentation; incl. certificate withdrawals for fraud, ie Arts 13 and 21
DUAL_NATIONALITY	dual/multiple nationality grounds, usu Art 13
MARRIAGE_ART8	marriage-based naturalisation / Article 8-related
NATIONAL_INTEREST	"higher interest of the state" / public order / services to the state; broad discretion
SECURITY_TERRORISM	security/terrorism/undermining allegiance/subversive affiliations
LEGAL_POLICY	where source does not cite specific reason save for the decision or measure enacted, eg by committees, decree-laws, appeals procedures
UNKNOWN	not clearly stated in the excerpt/source context

CONTINUES OVERLEAF →

APPENDIX 4 — CONTINUED

Since the data was not controlled in any meaningful way, it must be interpreted loosely, bearing in mind the following caveats:

- **Numbers** — The news reports cite both cumulative and individual cases, therefore a meaningful cumulative figure cannot be derived from this information. In other words, a report of cumulative number on one day may comprise one or more individual reports of specific cases from previous days; in some reports, the numbers were approximations.
- Where possible, we have tried to differentiate between individual and batch reports.
- **Date or dates of revocation events** — the dates given relate to date reported, not the specific date or time frame when the revocation took place.

(Unscientific) Sample selection of citizenship revocation events based on open source reporting, March 2024 - December 2025

EVENT DATE	NUMBER AFFECTED	TAXONOMY	'RAW' REASON	SOURCE	OBSERVATIONS
2024-03-17	26 batch	FRAUD_FORGERY DUAL_NATIONALITY LEGAL_POLICY	Interior Ministry measures against dual citizenship and fraud / forgery	Kuwait Launches Hotline to Combat Dual Citizenship Fraud Kuwait Moments · Media	Source describes policy/enforcement focus; source states 26 in total, 6 revoked by decree; 20 by cabinet decision
2024-05-27	None mentioned	FRAUD_FORGERY LEGAL_POLICY	Institutional step; committee to review nationality; references reasons including forgery.	Amiri decree forms Supreme Committee for Investigation of Kuwaiti Nationality KUNA (Kuwait News Agency) · Official	Creates the investigative committee that later issues/raises revocation decisions but source notes that revocations for forgery started in March.
2024-08-29	78	UNKNOWN		Kuwait strips citizenship of 78 more people KUNA · Media	Measure referred to cabinet (for approval);
2024-09-10	912 batch	FRAUD_FORGERY UNKNOWN	Arbitrary revocations; cites official reporting; mentions reasons include forgery.	Authorities continue arbitrary citizenship revocation policy (912 cumulative; 78 on 29 Aug 2024 per KUNA) Gulf Centre for Human Rights · NGO	Civil society cumulative estimate; references KUNA report of 78 revocations on 29 Aug 2024 as highest single-day figure at that time.
2024-10-24	11	UNKNOWN	Only a list of names on an Instagram post	An Instagram post Al-Majalliss · Media	Names of 11 people stripped of citizenship
2024-11-12	930 and 1617 "in just 20 days"	FRAUD_FORGERY DUAL_NATIONALITY	Highlights fraud	Kuwait to Revoke Citizenship of 930 in Record Action MSN / Kuwait moments · Media	Set "a new record"; "aggressive stance on citizenship integrity is intended to safeguard national identity and prevent fraud."

CONTINUES OVERLEAF →

APPENDIX 4 — CONTINUED

EVENT DATE	NUMBER AFFECTED	TAXONOMY	'RAW' REASON	SOURCE	OBSERVATIONS
2024-11-21	see observations →	LEGAL_POLICY FRAUD_FORGERY	Fraud, forgery highlighted	سحب وفقد الجنسية من 1647 شخصاً / (or: Citizenship withdrawn and revoked from 1647 people.) Al-Qabas · Media	Number affected: Article cites: 1647 - 21 November 2024 1535 - 14 November 2024 930 - 7 November 2024 489 - 31 October 2024 198 - 19 October 2024 133 - 3 October 2024 112 - 19 September 2024 90 - 12 September 2024 Arabic article
2024-11-14	see observations →	UNKNOWN FRAUD_FORGERY		Commission strips Kuwaiti citizenship of 1,535 individuals Kuwait Times · Media	Number affected: 1535 individuals; around 3000 "in past two weeks" - batch; and "well over 4,000 since campaign started about six months ago"; also "Since the end of August, the commission has decided to revoke the citizenship of over 3,500 Kuwaitis." States that Commission's decision only effective "after they are approved by the Cabinet. There were no reports that the Cabinet had rejected any of the commission's decisions".
2024-12-02	see observations →	MARRIAGE_ART8		Kuwait withdraws citizenship from two entertainers amid hundreds of revocations / The Kuwaiti interior ministry has set up a hotline to receive reports about holders of dual citizenship, or those who obtained the nationality through forgery The Arab Weekly · Media	Number affected: Article states 1758; and separately, 3,053 more individuals, including 3,035 women and their dependents Al-Qabas reported that GoK revoked citizenship of actor Dawod Hussain and singer Nawal, who has been using the stage surname, al-Kuwaitiya, the Kuwaiti, as well as their successors. Also cites Al-Majilliss.
2024-12-03	1158	UNKNOWN	Reason not specified in the excerpted headline/context in the running file.	Kuwait revokes citizenship of 1,145 women, 13 men (headline) Asharq Al-Awsat (English) · Media	Headline provides gender split; the running file excerpt does not state the legal ground.
2024-12-05	2162	FRAUD_FORGERY	People found guilty of forgery or violations of nationality law (decision pending Cabinet approval).	Kuwait revokes citizenship of 2,162 individuals Gulf News · Media	States the revocation is part of an ongoing effort; cites forgery/violations.
2024-12-12	3043	FRAUD_FORGERY DUAL_NATIONALITY	164 cases: fraud/false statements; 16 cases: fraud; 2,863 cases: holding nationalities of 54 countries.	Commission: 3,043 individuals stripped of Kuwaiti citizenship (with breakdown) KUNA (Kuwait News Agency) · Official	Official breakdown by category in the KUNA report.

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APPENDIX 4 — CONTINUED

EVENT DATE	NUMBER AFFECTED	TAXONOMY	'RAW' REASON	SOURCE	OBSERVATIONS
2024-12-19	2899	FRAUD_FORGERY DUAL_NATIONALITY MARRIAGE_ART8	2 cases: dual nationality (Arts 9–10); 408 cases: certificate withdrawals under Art 21bisA (fraud/false statements); 2,489 cases linked to 54 countries (reported under Art 13(4)/Art 8 references in the excerpt).	Supreme Committee decides to withdraw/lose nationality from 2,899 cases (with breakdown) KUNA (Kuwait News Agency) · Official	Official press statement summarised in running file; includes category breakdown.
2024-12-23		MARRIAGE_ART8 NATIONAL_INTEREST SECURITY_TERRORISM LEGAL_POLICY	Legal amendments: spouse acquisition removed; revocation grounds include higher interests, subversive affiliations, certain crimes, and public-sector dismissal for dishonesty, etc.	Kuwait Gazette publishes decree-into-law amending citizenship law (No. 116/2024) – excerpts KUNA (Kuwait News Agency) · Official	Legal framework change; describes potential grounds for future revocation/withdrawal.
2024-12-31		LEGAL_POLICY	Legal amendment on consequences/benefits after revocation; Council of Ministers discretion; decisions not subject to appeal (as described).	Decree issued amending Article 16 of Kuwaiti nationality law The Times Kuwait · Media	Procedural/consequences change rather than a revocation count.
2025-01-18	5838 <i>see observations →</i>	DUAL_NATIONALITY UNKNOWN	Not stated; 4 dual nationals	Kuwait to revoke citizenship of 5,838 people MEMO - Middle East Monitor, citing Al-Qabas · Media	Number affected: 5838 of which 4 dual nationality; Total number cited: 35,548 between 29 August 2024 and 16 January 2025 Report: “some countries gave Kuwait important information, which contributed to uncovering many cases of duality, forgery and fraud”
2025-05-01	434	FRAUD_FORGERY DUAL_NATIONALITY NATIONAL_INTEREST	5 cases: dual nationality; 275 cases: fraud/forgery; 154 cases: higher interests / services to Kuwait / pre-1965 (as reported).	Appeals process to open as citizenship of 434 more revoked (with breakdown) Kuwait Times · Media	Also describes creation of grievances committee and appeals window/procedure.
2025-05-22	1292	FRAUD_FORGERY DUAL_NATIONALITY MARRIAGE_ART8 NATIONAL_INTEREST	8 cases: dual nationality; 189: fraud docs; 73: misrepresentation 1: undermining allegiance; 50 and 967: national interest/higher interest; 4: Article 8 (marriage-related) (as reported).	Sweeping move: 1,290+ citizenship revoked in Kuwait (with breakdown) Shafaq News · Media	Provides one of the most granular public breakdowns in the running file.

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APPENDIX 4 — CONTINUED

EVENT DATE	NUMBER AFFECTED	TAXONOMY	'RAW' REASON	SOURCE	OBSERVATIONS
2025-05-25	37000	FRAUD_FORGERY MARRIAGE_ART8	Media synthesis: large-scale revocations, often affecting women naturalised through marriage; reasons commonly framed as fraud/regularisation and nationality-law enforcement.	AFP story: mass denationalisation; mostly women; 'stateless overnight' framing The New Arab (AFP) · Media	Estimate/synthesis; cross-check with primary official announcements for precise totals.
2025-08-19	363 Apparently individual	LEGAL_POLICY	Official gazette reportedly published decrees; detailed reasons not provided in most cases (per article).	Kuwait revokes citizenship of 363 individuals Shia Waves · Media	Secondary reporting; notes limited explanation for grounds.
2025-09-09	see observations →	FRAUD_FORGERY DUAL_NATIONALITY LEGAL_POLICY	UN SR discusses nationality revocations' disproportionate impact on women..	End of mission statement: UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women (nationality issues, impact on women) OHCHR / UN Special Rapporteur (Reem Alsalem) · UN	Number affected: Statement says: "as of August 2025, between 40,000 and 60,000 individuals have been affected" Provides qualitative assessment and an affected-population range elsewhere in SR materials/press. Makes preliminary recommendations.
2025-02-13	33200 batch, over 6 months	UNKNOWN		Instagram post (see image) Zaid Benjamin on instagram · Media	Instagram post
2025-02-16	9464 batch, but also individuals cited	DUAL_NATIONALITY, FRAUD_FORGERY LEGAL_POLICY		More than 9,000 people lose their citizenship in Kuwait at once. Arabi21	Includes acquisition via family dependency; inc 9418 women via dependency; 38 and 3 identified separately but no details; and "decisions were also issued to revoke the citizenship certificates of four men and one woman." "; 5 identified separately, on basis of dependency
2025-04-09	Since Sept 2024, approx 42,00 cited			Mass citizenship stripping in Kuwait cements authoritarian turn, critics say Peninsula Amwaj (opinion piece) · Media	States that "Supreme Committee to Investigate Kuwaiti Citizenship [...] operates in the absence of any judicial oversight or appeals process.
2025-05-22	More than 1292			Sweeping move: 1,290+ citizenship revoked in Kuwait Shafaq · Media	Inc.: 8 dual nationality; 189 for acquisition through fraudulent means, including false statements and forged documents, including dependents; 73 for misrepresentation and document falsification, with dependents; 1 for actions considered to undermine allegiance to the state; 50 for 'national interest'; 967 also 'national interest'; 4 Article 8.

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APPENDIX 4 — CONTINUED

EVENT DATE	NUMBER AFFECTED	TAXONOMY	'RAW' REASON	SOURCE	OBSERVATIONS
2025-06-04	153 NB -tribal communities	DUAL_NATIONALITY	Tribal communities	Post on X X / Zaid Benjamin · Media	Decree targeted leaders and descendents of the Shammar and Anza tribes, and noted that "large-scale campaign that began in August 2024, during which the citizenship of more than 42,000 people was revoked."
2025-08-18	365 including 2 deceased actors	NATIONAL_INTEREST		Kuwait revokes citizenship of two prominent actors years after their deaths / Decision raises questions over why names of artistes who died years ago appeared on list Gulf News (UAE) · Media	Article: "The Supreme Committee for Nationality Affairs said [...] that the late Abdulmohsen Al Suhail and Abdulrazzaq Ibrahim Al Khalaf had their Kuwaiti citizenship revoked, along with that of their dependents."
2024-11-02	130 individual	UNKNOWN	Instagram post	Instagram post Al-Majaliss · Media	
2024-11-08	930 Apparently individual	UNKNOWN		Kuwait Revokes Record Number of 930 Citizeships in One Day Al-Shargh al-Awsat	Supreme Committee took decision; for cabinet to review.
2024-12-12	3043 as a batch	FRAUD_FORGERY DUAL_NATIONALITY LEGAL_POLICY		Commission: 3,043 individuals stripped of Kuwaiti citizenship KUNA · Media	164 for fraud; 16 via fraud of Article 7, naturalised via the naturalisation of a non-Kuwaiti husband; 2863 admitted under Article 8 had dual nationalities of 54 countries
2024-12-16	12000 in 3 months / since August 2024; batch	DUAL_NATIONALITY FRAUD_FORGERY		Kuwait Revokes 12,000 Citizeships in Three Months IMI Daily · Media	Article states 2,863 individuals across 54 countries, per 13 December 2024 announcement
2024-12-19	2899; batch/ individual	DUAL_NATIONALITY, FRAUD_FORGERY LEGAL_POLICY		The Supreme Committee for Nationality Investigation decides to withdraw and lose Kuwaiti nationality from 2,899 cases KUNA · Media	Of which: 2 for dual nationality; 408 under Art 21 bis A, for false statements; 2489 under Articles 8 and 13.4

APPENDIX 5

Overview of Kuwait's international human rights commitments and recommendations under the Theme: **Rights related to name, identity & nationality**, from the 4th Cycle of the UPR, 2025

A catalogue of human rights violations - some longstanding - shaped Kuwait's 2024-2026 citizenship stripping campaign.

The Government of Kuwait voluntarily became a state party to the United Nations' (UN) (1) International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in 1968; (2) Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 and (3) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1994. In 1996 it acceded to the (4) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), (5) Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), (6) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

In 2024, the last independent, United Nations treaty body to which the GoK reported was the Committee against Torture. It set out recommendations in relation to the criminalisation of torture, fundamental legal safeguards, incommunicado detention, pretrial detention and conditions of detention.¹⁷⁵ In August 2026, the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination will assess Kuwait's implementation of its obligations under that treaty.

Addressing events in 2025, Amnesty International stated that the GoK “[R]epressed the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and subjected their critics to arbitrary arrest and detention” and that the “[S]tateless (Bidun) population remained subject to systematic discrimination”. It noted that “Parliament remained suspended” [so that] legislative changes were introduced by executive decree without parliamentary oversight.” It added that “Women and girls faced discrimination. Tens of thousands of people, mostly women, had their Kuwaiti nationalities revoked. Migrant workers faced abuse, including mass summary deportations.”¹⁷⁶

In May 2025, the 4th Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a state-to-state peer review of other countries' human rights records was conducted in relation to Kuwait. The GoK received 290 recommendations. In September 2025, it accepted 206, partially accepted four, and ‘took note’ (or, ‘rejected’) of 80, including recommendations to protect freedom of expression, reduce statelessness, eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, safeguard the rights of migrant workers and abolish the death penalty.¹⁷⁷

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APPENDIX 5 — CONTINUED

Representatives from 16 states made recommendations relating to nationality and identity. Taken from the Matrix of recommendations relating to the UPR of Kuwait (4th Cycle — 49th Session), under Theme: Rights related to name, identity & nationality, pp 57-60, these are set out below. The original and complete document is accessible via the OHCHR dedicated UPR page on Kuwait: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/kw-index>

In the UPR, where a government states that it has “noted” a recommendation, it tends to mean that it rejects the recommendation and will take no action. The GoK, in effect, rejected all recommendations to address statelessness and issues relating to it.

RECOMMENDATION AND RECOMMENDING STATE	POSITION	THEMES AND GROUPS
31.64 Ensure that decisions on the revocation of citizenship are subject to transparent legal procedures and judicial oversight, especially for human rights defenders (Kingdom of the Netherlands); Source of Position: A/HRC/60/17/Add.1	NOTED	— Rights related to name, identity & nationality — Administration of justice & fair trial GROUPS OF PERSONS — Human rights defenders & activists — Non-citizens
31.157 Amend the Nationality Act to ensure that all women can transmit their nationality to their spouses and children on an equal basis with men (Mexico); Source of Position: A/HRC/60/17/Add.1	NOTED	— Rights related to name, identity & nationality — Equality & non-discrimination — - Constitutional & legislative framework — - Discrimination against women GROUPS OF PERSONS — Children — Women & girls — Non-citizens
31.158 Amend the Nationality Act to ensure that Kuwaiti women can pass on their nationality to children and spouses in the same way as men can (Costa Rica); Source of Position: A/HRC/60/17/Add.1	NOTED	— Rights related to name, identity & nationality — Equality & non-discrimination — - Constitutional & legislative framework — - Discrimination against women GROUPS OF PERSONS — Children — Women & girls — Non-citizens

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APPENDIX 5 — CONTINUED

RECOMMENDATION AND RECOMMENDING STATE	POSITION	THEMES AND GROUPS
31.219 Guarantee that any child, boy or girl, born in the territory of Kuwait can register their birth, regardless of their nationality or legal status, and that all children in the territory have access to basic rights and services, such as healthcare, education, and a nationality (Uruguay); Source of Position: A/HRC/60/17/Add.1	NOTED	— Rights related to name, identity & nationality — Equality & non-discrimination — Right to health — Right to education GROUPS OF PERSONS — Children — Stateless persons — Non-citizens
31.220 Ensure the protection of the rights of stateless children, including by giving them access to birth registration, free education and acquiring nationality (Costa Rica); Source of Position: A/HRC/60/17/Add.1	NOTED	— Rights related to name, identity & nationality — Right to education GROUPS OF PERSONS — Children — Stateless persons
31.278 Maintain efforts to decrease and eliminate statelessness (Türkiye); Source of Position: A/HRC/60/17/Add.1	NOTED	— Rights related to name, identity & nationality GROUPS OF PERSONS — Stateless persons
31.279 Strengthen effective access to public services and legislation to prevent statelessness (Plurinational State of Bolivia); Source of Position: A/HRC/60/17/Add.1	NOTED	— Rights related to name, identity & nationality — Constitutional & legislative framework GROUPS OF PERSONS — Stateless persons
31.280 Adopt the necessary legal measures to ensure that women and men have the same rights to transmit nationality to their children and to guarantee other necessary safeguards to prevent statelessness, in line with international standards (Uruguay); Source of Position: A/HRC/60/17/Add.1	NOTED	— Rights related to name, identity & nationality — Discrimination against women GROUPS OF PERSONS — Children — Stateless persons — Women & girls
31.281 Fully implement obligations under international law to prevent statelessness, with reference to the revocation of Kuwaiti nationality, and resolving the ongoing legal status of the Bidoon (Australia); Source of Position: A/HRC/60/17/Add.1	NOTED	— Rights related to name, identity & nationality — Constitutional & legislative framework — Scope of international obligations GROUPS OF PERSONS — Indigenous peoples — Stateless persons
31.282 Improve the status of the stateless population (so-called Bidoons) and refrain from creating new stateless persons as part of the wave of citizenship revocations (Czechia); Source of Position: A/HRC/60/17/Add.1	NOTED	— Rights related to name, identity & nationality — Constitutional & legislative framework GROUPS OF PERSONS — Indigenous peoples — Stateless persons

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APPENDIX 5 — CONTINUED

RECOMMENDATION AND RECOMMENDING STATE	POSITION	THEMES AND GROUPS
31.283 Take steps to address the issue of statelessness, particularly in relation to the Bidoon, and to ensure that all people have access to essential services such as health, education and formal employment (Holy See); Source of Position: A/HRC/60/17/Add.1	NOTED	— Rights related to name, identity & nationality — Equality & non-discrimination — Labour rights and right to work — Right to health — Right to education — Right to an adequate standard of living GROUPS OF PERSONS — Indigenous peoples — Stateless persons — Non-citizens
31.284 Improve access for Bidoon individuals to the public services they are entitled to, including by simplifying the procedures for issuing identity documents and accessing documentation (Brazil); Source of Position: A/HRC/60/17/Add.1	NOTED	— Rights related to name, identity & nationality GROUPS OF PERSONS — Indigenous peoples — Non-citizens
31.285 Review the Nationality Act in compliance with international law, including international human rights law, in light of the recent massive revocation of Kuwaiti citizenship, and ensure that no person is rendered stateless (Austria); Source of Position: A/HRC/60/17/Add.1	NOTED	— Rights related to name, identity & nationality — Scope of international obligations GROUPS OF PERSONS — Stateless persons — Non-citizens
31.287 Consider implementing a clear and transparent legal framework for the deprivation of nationality in Kuwait, ensuring that individuals facing such actions are afforded fair due process in accordance with international human rights standards (Vanuatu); Source of Position: A/HRC/60/17/Add.1	NOTED	— Rights related to name, identity & nationality — Constitutional & legislative framework GROUPS OF PERSONS — Stateless persons — Non-citizens
31.288 Create a more transparent process through which stateless people can appeal against loss of citizenship, and mitigate the adverse effects of statelessness on freedom of movement, particularly for women (Germany); Source of Position: A/HRC/60/17/Add.1	NOTED	— Rights related to name, identity & nationality — Freedom of movement — Constitutional & legislative framework — Discrimination against women GROUPS OF PERSONS — Stateless persons — Women & girls — Non-citizens
31.290 Ensure legal security and safeguard the rights of those who may have been harmed by the withdrawal of nationality, in line with current international conventions (Spain). Source of Position: A/HRC/60/17/Add.1	NOTED	— Rights related to name, identity & nationality — Scope of international obligations GROUPS OF PERSONS — Stateless persons — Non-citizens

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4. Al Wasat / Rawda Samy - Kuwait New Nationality Law 2026 Decree Issued Regarding Foreign Marriage and Dual Citizenship, 14 April 2026, at <https://en.alwast.net/arab/kuwait-new-nationality-law-2026/> accessed 15 July 2026.
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9. The Economist - Gulf rulers are desperate to prove they are in fact strongmen / Unable to control external threats, they are squeezing their own people, 4 June 2026, at <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2026/06/04/gulf-rulers-are-desperate-to-prove-they-are-in-fact-strongmen> (paywall protected), accessed 16 July 2026

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12. Ibid. See Principle 4.
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33. See Appendix 3 - Civil society condemnation of the GoK's citizenship stripping campaign.
34. Constitute Project - (Constitution of) Kuwait, 1962 (reinst. 1992), at https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Kuwait_1992, accessed 1 May 2025. Article 4 asserts that Kuwait is a “hereditary Amirate” based on the rulership of Mubarak al-Sabah (1837-1915), while Article 6 asserts that the “system of government is democratic” and that sovereignty is “vested in the nation”. Article 7 states that “Justice, freedom and quality are the pillars of society [...]”, which Article 8 bolsters by asserting that the State shall “Preserve the pillars of society and shall guarantee security, tranquility and equal opportunity to all citizens.”
35. Aziz Abu-Hamad / Human Rights Watch - The Bidoons of Kuwait / Citizens without Citizenship, August 1995, <https://www.hrw.org/reports/1995/Kuwait.htm> , accessed 19 June 2022. The report adds:
“It cites international instruments such as the Hague Conventions of 1930 as granting states full discretion in determining who should be their nationals. However, while this principle is accepted as a general rule¹⁶⁷, it has been also widely accepted that certain limits do pertain to this discretion.¹⁶⁸ For example, limitations are set on involuntary termination of nationality, both to prevent statelessness and in recognition that denationalization can be an instrument of discrimination based on race, color, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status.¹⁶⁹”
36. Aspects of the engagement with the then Prime Minister are reflected in Amnesty International - Kuwait: The ‘Withouts’ of Kuwait: Nationality for stateless Bidun now, 16 September 2013, at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde17/001/2013/en/>, accessed 26 November 2025
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38. The Times / Kuwait - Decree issued amending Article (16) of Kuwaiti nationality law, 31 December 2024, <https://timeskuwait.com/decreed-issued-amending-article-16-of-kuwaiti-nationality-law/>, accessed 16 December 2025
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43. In relation to 116/2024, see Arghaam - Amendment to the Nationality Law, 24 December 2024, <https://www.argaam.com/ar/article/articledetail/id/1777940> and in relation to 158/2024, see Times (Kuwait) - Decree issued amending Article (16) of Kuwaiti nationality law, 31 December 2024, <https://timeskuwait.com/decreed-issued-amending-article-16-of-kuwaiti-nationality-law/> , accessed 20 December 2025
44. In Kuwait, the age of majority/suffrage is 21.
45. According to the Civil Code, while both men and women can marry at the age of 18, for the purposes of financial guardianship, or full autonomy in financial matters, it is 21.
46. Decree Law 116/2024 repealed the option of discretionary naturalisation of (5.2) a person born to a Kuwaiti mother and divorced or deceased, non-Kuwaiti father who has maintained residence in Kuwait upon reaching majority; and (5.3) being an Arab, continuously resident in Kuwait since 1945 to the time of the decree; (5.4) birth and continual residence in Kuwait prior to 1930 in the case of a non-Arab.
47. Decree Law 116/2024 repealed, in Article 7, the optional naturalisation of a non-Kuwaiti wife where her non-Kuwaiti husband, himself, is naturalised and the automatic consideration as Kuwaiti of their children, with an express opt out for another nationality within a year after reaching majority.
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49. The points set out in this section are derived from: Arghaam - Amendment to the Nationality Law, 24 December 2024, <https://www.argaam.com/ar/article/articledetail/id/1777940> accessed 23 December 2025. See also Kuwait News Agency (KUNA). Kuwait Gazette Publishes Decree-Into-Law Regarding Citizenship, 23 December 2024. <https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=3212164&language=en#> accessed 2 June 2025
50. Arghaam - Or: Amendment to the Nationality Law, 24 December 2024, <https://www.argaam.com/ar/article/articledetail/id/1777940> accessed 23 December 2025, accessed 24 December 2025.
51. While the Nationality Law as of December 2024 addressed the same thematic areas, the December 2024 amendments applied revocation of nationality to dependents in all sub-clauses and removed the 15 year limit previously applied in 13.2.

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54. Additionally, the law states that “This decision shall specify the benefits and rights to be retained, along with the conditions and duration of their retention, provided that, in all cases, the right to health care, education, and decent living is guaranteed. This decision shall not be subject to appeal under any circumstances”. See The Times / Kuwait - Decree issued amending Article (16) of Kuwaiti nationality law, 31 December 2024, <https://timeskuwait.com/decreed-issued-amending-article-16-of-kuwaiti-nationality-law/>, accessed 24 December 2025. That is where, inter alia, (10) a Kuwaiti woman voluntarily acquires the nationality of a non-Kuwaiti husband; (11) a male Kuwaiti acquires another nationality; (11 bis) being in transition of citizenships; as per 116/2024, (13.2) subject of a relevant conviction; (13.3) the person was dismissed for reasons of ‘honor’ or ‘integrity’; (13.5) the person is deemed to undermine state order, and (14) the person was dismissed on recommendation of security officials.

55. Library of Congress - Kuwait: Cabinet Approves Amendments to Law on Citizenship, October 7, 2024. <https://www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2024-10-07/kuwait-cabinet-approves-amendments-to-law-on-citizenship/> accessed 2 June 2025.

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57. Arab Times. ‘Kuwait Amends Article 16 of Nationality Law with New Decree.’ Arab Times, December 31, 2024. <https://www.arabtimesonline.com/news/kuwait-amends-article-16-of-nationality-law-with-new-decree/>, accessed 25 May 2025

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61. See a translation of the relevant article, East Laws - Kuwait: Decree-Law No. 52 of 2026, issued 5 April 2026; published in Kuwait al-Youm (the Official Gazette) 13 April 2026, issue No. 1786, Supplement 2, 72nd Year, entitled Regarding the amendment of certain provisions of Amiri Decree No. 15 of 1959 concerning the Kuwaiti Nationality Law, <https://www.eastlaws.com/legislation-full-text/ar/kuwait/law-decree/13-04-2026/no-52?type=1&id=5595308&sub=16275296> accessed 19 July 2026
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65. Alziadi, on 9 October 2016, published the Court of Cassation's ruling. See <https://alziadiq8.com/216140.html> , accessed 29 December 2025.
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107. This article provides for the revocation of nationality where: (13.1) it was obtained by fraud, forgery, or based on false statements, providing for revocation of dependents in this instance; (13.4) it relates to national security or the interests of the state; and (13.5) the authorities have evidence that those targeted undermine social order.

108. Gulf Center for Human Rights (GCHR) - Citizens' rights continue to deteriorate as government escalates stripping of nationality, 2 June 2025, <https://www.gc4hr.org/citizens-rights-continue-to-deteriorate-as-government-escalates-stripping-of-nationality/>, accessed 5 January 2026

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110. Article 13 states:

13.1 - it was obtained by fraud, forgery, or based on false statements, providing for revocation of dependents in this instance; or

13.2 - it was obtained by conviction of a crime involving moral turpitude, dishonesty, or of a crime against the internal or external security, political leadership or religious figures.#

13.3 - the person (s) was (were) dismissed from a government position for disciplinary reasons related to moral turpitude or dishonesty within 10 years of being granted Kuwaiti citizenship;

13.4 - the interest of the state and its security requires it, including their dependents; and

13.5 - the GoK has "evidence" of the promotion of "principles that could undermine the economic or social order of the country, or that he belongs to a foreign political entity.", including in relation to their dependents.

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117. Case 26 from Appendix (i) in the joint NASI-SALAM DHR Report on Violence and Discrimination against Women and Girls Resulting from Arbitrary Deprivation of Nationality in Kuwait, submitted to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls' for her visit to Kuwait, 02-09 September 2025. She wrote in English.
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