

OFFICIAL NAME: State of Kuwait

CAPITAL: Kuwait City

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Constitutional Monarchy

AREA: 17,818 Sq Km (6,880 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION 1,636,200



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: Kuwait is located in the northeastern corner of the Arabian Peninsula and at the head of the Persian Gulf. It is bound by Iraq to the north and west, Saudi Arabia to the south and the Persian Gulf to the east. Its territory includes the mainland and nine offshore islands including, Faylakah and Bubiyan. The country is almost entirely flat desert except for the Jal az Zor escarpment to the west of Kuwait Bay. The central part of the country is separated from the coastal plain by the high Ahmadi Ridge. The country is drained by numerous wadi systems and the terrain is generally stony with sparse vegetation cover consisting of shrubs and grasses. Major Cities (pop. est.); al-Jahra 139,500, as-Salimiyah 116,100, Hawalli 84,500, al-farwaniyah 47,100, Kuwait City 31,200 (1993). Land Use; forested 0.1%, pastures 7.7%, agricultural-cultivated 0.3%, other 91.9% (1993).

CLIMATE: Kuwait has an arid subtropical climate characterized by extremely hot and dry conditions during summer from May to October. Winter from November to April is generally pleasant with occasional night temperatures nearing freezing point. Average annual precipitation varies from 30 mm (1 inch) to 220 mm (9 inches) with most rainfall occurring between November and April. The Shamal, a strong sand and dust storm occurs frequently in summer. Average temperature ranges in Kuwait City range from 8 to 18 degrees Celsius (46 to 64 degrees Fahrenheit) in winter to 29 to 45 degrees Celsius (84 to 113 degrees Fahrenheit) in summer.

PEOPLE: The majority of native-born Kuwaitis, who account for around 52% of the population, are Arab descendants of the Anaiza tribe from Saudi Arabia. Around 45% of the population are other Arabs, 5% are Indian and Pakistani while 4% are Iranian. There is also a small number of Black Africans and Asians.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 114 persons per sq km (294 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 95.6% urban, 4.4% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 56.5% male, 43.5% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 72.0 years male, 76.0 years female (1989). Age Breakdown; 35.5% under 15, 25% 15 to 29, 27% 30 to 44, 10% 45 to 59, 2% 60 to 74, 0.5% 75 and over (1990). Birth Rate; 24.5 per 1,000 (1992). Death Rate; 2.2 per 1,000 (1992). Increase Rate; 22.3 per 1,000 (1992). Infant Mortality Rate; 14.8 per 1,000 live births (1989).

RELIGIONS: The official religion is Islam with 63% of the population Sunni Muslims while around 27% are Shiite Muslims. Around 8% of the population are Christians and 2% are Hindu.

LANGUAGES: The official language is Arabic, although English is taught as a second language and is used for commerce purposes.

EDUCATION: Aged 15 or over and having attained: no formal schooling 44.4%, primary 9.2%, incomplete secondary 19.6%, secondary 18.2%, higher 8.6% (1985). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 73.0% (1990).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: In 1961 Kuwait gained full independence from Britain while Iraq pressed its territorial claim over Kuwait. In 1962 under Emir Abdullah al-Salim al-Sabah the constitution was inaugurated. In 1967 Kuwait sent troops to Egypt during the Middle East crisis, however, they did not take part in the Arab-Israeli Six Day War. In 1973 a small number of Kuwaiti troops took part in the next Arab-Israeli war and in Oct. 1973 Kuwait and other Arab oil exporting nations stopped shipments of oil to the United States and some other Western nations. In May 1973 Iraq invaded Kuwait and occupied the border post of Samitah, a conflict ensued and Iraq later withdrew in 1974. In 1979 fundamentalist Islamic revolutionaries gained control of Iran, northeast of Kuwait and in 1981 during the Iran-Iraq War, Iran bombed two Kuwaiti border areas. In 1982 Iranian Jets attacked an oil refinery while Kuwait's support of Iraq led to a number of terrorist attacks in Kuwait by Shiite Muslims, which included the suicide bomb attack on the Emir's motorcade in 1985. In 1986 Iran began attacks on Kuwaiti oil tankers because of Kuwait's financial support of Iraq and in 1987 Kuwait asked the US to provide Naval escorts for its shipping, which they provided. In August 1988 Iran and Iraq agreed to a ceasefire and in Aug. 1990 after Iraq's military build up, Iraq invaded and annexed Kuwait claiming it as their 19th Province. The Emir and his leadership narrowly avoided capture fleeing to Saudi Arabia. The Iraqis looted the capital as well as murdered, raped and tortured the trapped civilians during their occupation. In the last week before the liberation of Kuwait the retreating Iraqis embarked on their "scorched earth" campaign setting ablaze 70% of Kuwait's 1000 oil wells. On Feb. 27, 1991 the US-led coalition liberated Kuwait and ended the seven month occupation of its territory by Iraq. On Mar. 4, 1991 Crown Prince Sheik Saad returned to Kuwait to act as the administrator of martial law. On Mar. 14, 1991 the Emir returned to Kuwait and on Mar. 20, 1991 accepted the government's resignation. On April 20, 1991 Sheik Saad formed a new Cabinet and in May 1991 announced that individual reprisals by Kuwaitis against Palestinians and other pro-Iraqi Arabs would not go "above the law" and promised a crackdown. By May 1991, 400,000 exiles had returned home to Kuwait and the Kuwaiti authorities had arrested large numbers of Palestinians who were suspected of collaborating with Iraq during their

occupation, although in late June 1991 the government commuted the death sentences of 29 convicted of collaboration. In July 1991 Kuwait had again begun the export of oil and was underway in the rebuilding of their economy and country. On Aug. 24, 1991 the government opened 500 schools and on Sept. 19, 1991 Defense Minister Sheik Ali Sabah signed a 10-year defense cooperation agreement with the US that allowed US military equipment to be stored on its territory and joint military operations. On Jan. 7, 1992 Iraq detained two Kuwaiti policemen who strayed into Iraqi territory while during the year Iraq also sentenced four westerners to seven years imprisonment for allegedly entering Iraq from Kuwait illegally. On Feb. 11, 1992 Kuwait signed a bilateral defense cooperation agreement with Britain. On April 16, 1992 a UN Iraq-Kuwait border commission awarded six Iraqi oil wells and part of the Umm Qasr port to Kuwait. In May 1992 the Emir traveled throughout Latin America and Australasia to thank governments for their support as well as publicize the plight of several hundred Kuwaiti hostages still being detained by Iraq. On Oct. 5, 1992 elections resulted in success for Islamic candidates and independents who supported the return of Islamic (Shariah) law. On Oct. 17, 1992 Prime Minister Sheik Saad formed a new Cabinet that included six antigovernment ministers. In Feb. 1993 the government passed ;legislation requiring full disclosure of investments by government owned enterprises. In March 1993 the military chief of staff, Gen. Sheik Jabir, resigned over continued criticism that he had failed to defend Kuwait against Iraq's 1990 invasion. On April 26, 1993 fourteen Iraqi terrorists were arrested with arms and explosives near the Kuwaiti border and in the same month the National Assembly speaker, Jassem as-Saadoun, claimed he was attacked by two Iraqi delegates in India while attending a parliamentary conference. In June 1993 the government relaxed its business restrictions on Kuwaiti firms so they could deal with foreign firms who dealt with Israeli businesses, although they could not deal direct with Israeli firms. In the same month the exiled Iranian-based leader, Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim of the Supreme Assembly for Islamic Revolution in Iraq received full diplomatic honors during a visit to Kuwait. Also during 1993 the government continued the development of its weapons buildup with the purchase of 236 US tanks and patriot missiles, and also started the fortification of its borders with the deployment of 1.3 million land mines recovered from the Gulf War.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Dinar (KD) divided into 1,000 Fils.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$34,120,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$792,000,000 (1991). Imports; KD 1,988,200,000 (1994). Exports; KD 3,311,000,000 (1994). Tourism Receipts; USD \$83,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; KD 1,331,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 722,495 or 37.2% of total population (1990). Unemployed; 1.9% (1988).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are the EU, Japan and the USA.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Dates and other Fruits, Fish, Goats, Oil and Natural Gas, Sheep, Vegetables.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Ammonia, Boat Building, Cement, Chemicals, Fertilizers, Fishing, Oil and Gas Production and Refining, Processed Foods, Sea Water Desalination.

MAIN EXPORTS: Crude Oil and Oil Products, Natural Gas.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; nil. Roads; length 4,273 km (2,655 mi) (1989). Vehicles; cars 499,388 (1990), trucks and buses 110,663 (1990). Merchant Marine; vessels 225 (1990), deadweight tonnage 2,943,929 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 1,908,264,000 (1,185,740,000 passenger-mi) (1991), cargo ton-km 288,526,000 (197,611,000 short ton-mi) (1991).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 9 with a total circulation of 480,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 1,000,000 (1994). Television; receivers 800,000 (1994). Telephones; units 358,000 (1993).

MILITARY: 16,600 (1995) total active duty personnel with 69.8% army, 15.1% navy and 15.1% air force while military expenditure accounts for 12.2% (1994) of the Gross National Product (GNP).