



**Middle East :: Kuwait**

**Introduction :: Kuwait**

**Background:**

Britain oversaw foreign relations and defense for the ruling Kuwaiti AL-SABAH dynasty from 1899 until independence in 1961. Kuwait was attacked and overrun by Iraq on 2 August 1990. Following several weeks of aerial bombardment, a US-led, UN coalition began a ground assault on 23 February 1991 that liberated Kuwait in four days. Kuwait spent more than \$5 billion to repair oil infrastructure damaged during 1990-91. The AL-SABAH family has ruled since returning to power in 1991 and reestablished an elected legislature that in recent years has become increasingly assertive. The country witnessed the historic election in May 2009 of four women to its National Assembly. Amid the 2010-11 uprisings and protests across the Arab world, stateless Arabs, known as bidun, staged small protests in February and March 2011 demanding citizenship, jobs, and other benefits available to Kuwaiti nationals. Youth activist groups - supported by opposition legislators and the prime minister's rivals within the ruling family - rallied repeatedly in 2011 for an end to corruption and the ouster of the prime minister and his cabinet. Opposition legislators forced the prime minister to resign in late 2011. In October-December 2012, Kuwait witnessed unprecedented protests in response to the Amir's changes to the electoral law by decree reducing the number of votes per person from four to one. The opposition, led by a coalition of Sunni Islamists, tribalists, some liberals, and myriad youth groups, boycotted the December 2012 legislative election, resulting in a historic number of Shia candidates winning seats. Since 2006, the Amir has dissolved the National Assembly on five occasions (the Constitutional Court annulled the Assembly once in June 2012) and reshuffled the cabinet 12 times, usually citing political stagnation and gridlock between the legislature and the government.

**Geography :: Kuwait**

**Location:**

Middle East, bordering the Persian Gulf, between Iraq and Saudi Arabia

**Geographic coordinates:**

29 30 N, 45 45 E

**Map references:**

Middle East

**Area:**

**total:** 17,818 sq km

**country comparison to the world:** 158

**land:** 17,818 sq km

**water:** 0 sq km

**Area - comparative:**

slightly smaller than New Jersey

**Land boundaries:**

**total:** 462 km

**border countries:** Iraq 240 km, Saudi Arabia 222 km

**Coastline:**

499 km

**Maritime claims:**

**territorial sea:** 12 nm

**Climate:**

dry desert; intensely hot summers; short, cool winters

**Terrain:**

flat to slightly undulating desert plain

**Elevation extremes:**

**lowest point:** Persian Gulf 0 m

**highest point:** unnamed elevation 306 m

**Natural resources:**

petroleum, fish, shrimp, natural gas

**Land use:**

**arable land:** 0.62%

**permanent crops:** 0.28%

**other:** 99.1% (2011)

**Irrigated land:**

86 sq km (2007)

**Total renewable water resources:**

0.02 cu km (2011)

**Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural):**

**total:** 0.91 cu km/yr (47%/2%/51%)

**per capita:** 441.2 cu m/yr (2005)

**Natural hazards:**

sudden cloudbursts are common from October to April and bring heavy rain, which can damage roads and houses; sandstorms and dust storms occur throughout the year but are most common between March and August

**Environment - current issues:**

limited natural freshwater resources; some of world's largest and most sophisticated desalination facilities provide much of the water; air and water pollution; desertification

**Environment - international agreements:**

**party to:** Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Ozone Layer Protection

**signed, but not ratified:** Marine Dumping

**Geography - note:**

strategic location at head of Persian Gulf

**People and Society :: Kuwait**

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**Nationality:**

**noun:** Kuwaiti(s)

**adjective:** Kuwaiti

**Ethnic groups:**

Kuwaiti 45%, other Arab 35%, South Asian 9%, Iranian 4%, other 7%

**Languages:**

Arabic (official), English widely spoken

**Religions:**

Muslim (official) 85% (Sunni 70%, Shia 30%), other (includes Christian, Hindu, Parsi) 15%

**Population:**

2,695,316 (July 2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 141

**note:** includes 1,291,354 non-nationals

**Age structure:**

**0-14 years:** 25.6% (male 358,415/female 330,467)

**15-24 years:** 15.4% (male 228,147/female 187,035)

**25-54 years:** 52.3% (male 896,693/female 514,196)

**55-64 years:** 4.5% (male 70,863/female 51,660)

**65 years and over:** 2.1% (male 27,995/female 29,845) (2013 est.)

**Dependency ratios:**

**total dependency ratio:** 37.2 %

**youth dependency ratio:** 34 %

**elderly dependency ratio:** 3.2 %

**potential support ratio:** 31.3 (2013)

**Median age:**

**total:** 28.8 years  
**male:** 30 years  
**female:** 26.6 years (2013 est.)

**Population growth rate:**

1.79%

**country comparison to the world:** 69

**note:** this rate reflects a return to pre-Gulf crisis immigration of expatriates (2013 est.)

**Birth rate:**

20.61 births/1,000 population (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 83

**Death rate:**

2.14 deaths/1,000 population (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 224

**Net migration rate:**

-0.59 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 137

**Urbanization:**

**urban population:** 98.3% of total population (2011)

**rate of urbanization:** 2.42% annual rate of change (2010-15 est.)

**Major urban areas - population:**

KUWAIT (capital) 2.23 million (2009)

**Sex ratio:**

**at birth:** 1.05 male(s)/female

**0-14 years:** 1.09 male(s)/female

**15-24 years:** 1.22 male(s)/female

**25-54 years:** 1.75 male(s)/female

**55-64 years:** 1.4 male(s)/female

**65 years and over:** 0.96 male(s)/female

**total population:** 1.43 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

**Maternal mortality rate:**

14 deaths/100,000 live births (2010)

**country comparison to the world:** 146

**Infant mortality rate:**

**total:** 7.68 deaths/1,000 live births

**country comparison to the world:** 159

**male:** 7.41 deaths/1,000 live births

**female:** 7.95 deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

**Life expectancy at birth:**

**total population:** 77.46 years

**country comparison to the world:** 66

**male:** 76.24 years

**female:** 78.75 years (2013 est.)

**Total fertility rate:**

2.56 children born/woman (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 79

**Contraceptive prevalence rate:**

52% (1999)

**Health expenditures:**

2.7% of GDP (2011)

**country comparison to the world:** 182

**Physicians density:**

1.79 physicians/1,000 population (2009)

**Hospital bed density:**

2 beds/1,000 population (2009)

**Drinking water source:**

**improved:**

urban: 99% of population

rural: 99% of population

total: 99% of population

**unimproved:**

urban: 1% of population

rural: 1% of population

total: 1% of population (2010 est.)

**Sanitation facility access:****improved:**

urban: 100% of population

rural: 100% of population

total: 100% of population (2010 est.)

**HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:**

0.1% (2001 est.)

country comparison to the world: 143

**HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:**

NA (2007 est.)

**HIV/AIDS - deaths:**

NA

**Obesity - adult prevalence rate:**

42% (2008)

country comparison to the world: 10

**Children under the age of 5 years underweight:**

1.7% (2009)

country comparison to the world: 122

**Education expenditures:**

3.8% of GDP (2006)

country comparison to the world: 120

**Literacy:**

**definition:** age 15 and over can read and write

**total population:** 93.9%

**male:** 95%

**female:** 91.8% (2008 est.)

**School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):**

**total:** 14 years

**male:** 13 years

**female:** 15 years (2004)

**Unemployment, youth ages 15-24:**

**total:** 11.3%

**country comparison to the world:** 102

**male:** 11.8%

**female:** 10% (2005)

**Government:: Kuwait**

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**Country name:**

**conventional long form:** State of Kuwait

**conventional short form:** Kuwait

**local long form:** Dawlat al Kuwayt

**local short form:** Al Kuwayt

**Government type:**

constitutional emirate

**Capital:**

**name:** Kuwait City

**geographic coordinates:** 29 22 N, 47 58 E

**time difference:** UTC+3 (8 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

**Administrative divisions:**

6 governorates (muhafazat, singular - muhafazah); Al Ahmadi, Al 'Asimah, Al Farwaniyah, Al Jahra', Hawalli, Mubarak al Kabir

**Independence:**

19 June 1961 (from the UK)

**National holiday:**

National Day, 25 February (1950)

**Constitution:**

approved and promulgated 11 November 1962

**Legal system:**

mixed legal system consisting of English common law, French civil law, and Islamic religious law

**International law organization participation:**

has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration; non-party state to the ICCT

**Suffrage:**

21 years of age; universal; note - males in the military or police are by law not allowed to vote; all voters must have been citizens for 20 years

**Executive branch:**

**chief of state:** Amir SABAH al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah (since 29 January 2006); Crown Prince NAWAF al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah (born 25 June 1937)

**head of government:** Prime Minister JABIR AL-MUBARAK al-Hamad al-Sabah (since 30 November 2011); First Deputy Prime Minister KHALID al-Jarrah al-Sabah; Deputy Prime Ministers MUHAMMAD AL-KHALID al-Hamad al-Sabah, SALIM al-Abd al-Aziz al-Saud al-Sabah, Mustafa al-Jassim al-SHAMALI

**cabinet:** Council of Ministers appointed by the prime minister and approved by the amir; new cabinet formed in February 2012

(For more information visit the **World Leaders website** <sup>(en)</sup>)

**elections:** none; the amir is hereditary; the amir appoints the prime minister and deputy prime ministers

**Legislative branch:**

unicameral National Assembly or Majlis al-Umma (65 seats - 50 members elected by popular vote plus 16 cabinet ministers, one of whom is also an elected MP, appointed by the prime minister as ex officio voting members; elected members serve four-year terms)

**elections:** last held 27 July 2013 (next to be held in July 2017)

**election results:** percent of vote - NA; seats won - tribal and liberal groups 27, Shiite 8, Sunni 7, other 8

**Judicial branch:**

**highest court(s):** Constitutional Court (five judges); Supreme Court or Court of Cassation (organized into several circuits, each with five judges)

**judge selection and term of office:** all Kuwaiti judges appointed by the Amir upon recommendation of the Supreme Judicial Council, a consultative body comprised of Kuwaiti judges and Ministry of Justice officials

**subordinate courts:** High Court of Appeal; Court of First Instance; Summary Court

**Political parties and leaders:**

none; while the formation of political parties is not permitted, they are not forbidden by law

**Political pressure groups and leaders:**

**other:** Islamists; merchants; political groups; secular liberals and pro-governmental deputies; Shia activists; tribal groups

**International organization participation:**

ABEDA, AfDB (nonregional member), AFESD, AMF, BDEAC, CAEU, CD, FAO, G-77, GCC, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC (national committees), ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), LAS, MIGA, NAM, OAPEC, OIC, OPCW, OPEC, Paris Club (associate), PCA, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNRWA, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WFTU (NGOs), WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

**Diplomatic representation in the US:**

**chief of mission:** Ambassador SALIM al-Abdallah al-Jabir al-Sabah (since 10 October 2001)

**chancery:** 2940 Tilden Street NW, Washington, DC 20008

**telephone:** [1] (202) 966-0702

**FAX:** [1] (202) 364-2868

**consulate(s) general:** Los Angeles

**Diplomatic representation from the US:**

**chief of mission:** Ambassador Matthew H. TUELLER (since 9 September 2011)

**embassy:** Bayan 36302, Block 13, Al-Masjed Al-Aqsa Street (near the Bayan palace), Kuwait City

**mailing address:** P. O. Box 77 Safat 13001 Kuwait; or PSC 1280 APO AE 09880-9000

**telephone:** [965] 2259-1001

**FAX:** [965] 2538-0282

**Flag description:**

three equal horizontal bands of green (top), white, and red with a black trapezoid based on the hoist side; colors and design are based on the Arab Revolt flag of World War I; green represents fertile fields, white stands for purity, red denotes blood on Kuwaiti swords, black signifies the defeat of the enemy

**National symbol(s):**

golden falcon

**National anthem:**

**name:** "Al-Nasheed Al-Watani" (National Anthem)

[▶ PLAY ANTHEM](#)

**lyrics/music:** Ahmad MUSHARI al-Adwani/Ibrahim Nasir al-SOULA

**note:** adopted 1978; the anthem is only used on formal occasions

**Economy :: Kuwait**

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**Economy - overview:**

Kuwait has a geographically small, but wealthy, relatively open economy with crude oil reserves of about 102 billion barrels - about 7% of world reserves. Petroleum accounts for nearly half of GDP, 95% of export revenues, and 95% of government income. Kuwaiti officials have committed to increasing oil production to 4 million barrels per day by 2020. The rise in global oil prices throughout 2011 and 2012 is reviving government consumption and economic growth. Kuwait has experienced a 20% increase in government budget revenue, which has led to higher budget expenditures, particularly wage hikes for many public sector employees. Kuwait has done little to diversify its economy, in part, because of this positive fiscal situation, and, in part, due to the poor business climate and the historically acrimonious relationship between the National Assembly and the executive branch, which has stymied most movement on economic reforms. In 2010, Kuwait passed an economic development plan that pledges to spend up to \$130 billion over five years to diversify the economy away from oil, attract more investment, and boost private sector participation in the economy.

**GDP (purchasing power parity):**

\$150.9 billion (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 61

\$142.1 billion (2011 est.)

\$133.7 billion (2010 est.)

**note:** data are in 2012 US dollars

**GDP (official exchange rate):**

\$182 billion (2012 est.)

**GDP - real growth rate:**

6.2% (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 41

6.3% (2011 est.)

-2.4% (2010 est.)

**GDP - per capita (PPP):**

\$39,900 (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 26

\$38,600 (2011 est.)

\$37,300 (2010 est.)

**note:** data are in 2012 US dollars

**Gross national saving:**

59% of GDP (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 1

57.3% of GDP (2011 est.)

51.1% of GDP (2010 est.)

**GDP - composition, by end use:**

**household consumption:** 21.8%

**government consumption:** 14.7%

**investment in fixed capital:** 14%

**investment in inventories:** 0%

**exports of goods and services:** 73.4%

**imports of goods and services:** -23.9%  
(2012 est.)

**GDP - composition, by sector of origin:**

**agriculture:** 0.3%

**industry:** 49.9%

**services:** 49.8% (2012 est.)

**Agriculture - products:**

fish

**Industries:**

petroleum, petrochemicals, cement, shipbuilding and repair, water desalination, food processing, construction materials

**Industrial production growth rate:**

9.3% (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 18

**Labor force:**

2.304 million

**country comparison to the world:** 116

*note:* non-Kuwaitis represent about 60% of the labor force (2012 est.)

**Labor force - by occupation:**

**agriculture:** NA%

**industry:** NA%

**services:** NA%

**Unemployment rate:**

2.2% (2004 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 15

**Population below poverty line:**

NA%

**Household income or consumption by percentage share:**

**lowest 10%:** NA%

**highest 10%:** NA%

**Budget:**

**revenues:** \$115.8 billion

**expenditures:** \$58.08 billion (2012 est.)

**Taxes and other revenues:**

63.6% of GDP (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 5

**Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):**

31.7% of GDP (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 1

**Public debt:**

6% of GDP (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 149

7.5% of GDP (2011 est.)

**Fiscal year:**

1 April - 31 March

**Inflation rate (consumer prices):**

2.9% (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 94

4.7% (2011 est.)

**Central bank discount rate:**

1.25% (31 December 2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 105

3% (31 December 2009 est.)

**Commercial bank prime lending rate:**

5% (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 156

5.2% (31 December 2011 est.)

**Stock of narrow money:**

\$27.55 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 61

\$22.85 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

**Stock of broad money:**

\$109.4 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 52

\$99.89 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

**Stock of domestic credit:**

\$89.13 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 54

\$90.64 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

**Market value of publicly traded shares:**

\$100.9 billion (31 December 2011)

**country comparison to the world:** 39

\$119.6 billion (31 December 2010)

\$95.94 billion (31 December 2009)

**Current account balance:**

\$80.33 billion (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 4

\$67.14 billion (2011 est.)

**Exports:**

\$121 billion (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 35

\$102.9 billion (2011 est.)

**Exports - commodities:**

oil and refined products, fertilizers

**Exports - partners:**

South Korea 16.1%, India 15.7%, Japan 13.4%, US 11.7%, China 9.2%, Singapore 4.2% (2012)

**Imports:**

\$22.79 billion (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 74

\$22.08 billion (2011 est.)

**Imports - commodities:**

food, construction materials, vehicles and parts, clothing

**Imports - partners:**

US 11.8%, China 9.2%, Saudi Arabia 8.6%, Japan 8.2%, South Korea 6.9%, Germany 5.1%, Italy 4.7%, India 4.6%, UAE 4.4% (2012)

**Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:**

\$29 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 52

\$25.91 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

**Debt - external:**

\$29.76 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 71

\$32.02 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

**Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:**

\$5.212 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 87

\$3.361 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

**Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad:**

\$52.59 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 37

\$45.03 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

**Exchange rates:**

Kuwaiti dinars (KD) per US dollar -

0.28 (2012 est.)

0.28 (2011 est.)

0.29 (2010 est.)

0.29 (2009)

0.27 (2008)

**Energy :: Kuwait**

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**Electricity - production:**

55.55 billion kWh (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 47

**Electricity - consumption:**

46.71 billion kWh (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 48

**Electricity - exports:**

0 kWh (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 92

**Electricity - imports:**

0 kWh (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 208

**Electricity - installed generating capacity:**

12.68 million kW (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 50

**Electricity - from fossil fuels:**

100% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 19

**Electricity - from nuclear fuels:**

0% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 119

**Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:**

0% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 177

**Electricity - from other renewable sources:**

0% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 189

**Crude oil - production:**

2.797 million bbl/day (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 10

**Crude oil - exports:**

1.395 million bbl/day (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 13

**Crude oil - imports:**

0 bbl/day (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 205

**Crude oil - proved reserves:**

104 billion bbl (1 January 2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 6

**Refined petroleum products - production:**

915,900 bbl/day (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 23

**Refined petroleum products - consumption:**

339,000 bbl/day (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 36

**Refined petroleum products - exports:**

656,100 bbl/day (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 11

**Refined petroleum products - imports:**

0 bbl/day (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 212

**Natural gas - production:**

13.53 billion cu m (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 36

**Natural gas - consumption:**

12.62 billion cu m (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 43

**Natural gas - exports:**

0 cu m (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 130

**Natural gas - imports:**

688 million cu m (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 64

**Natural gas - proved reserves:**

1.798 trillion cu m (1 January 2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 21

**Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:**

82.37 million Mt (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 44

**Communications :: Kuwait**

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**Telephones - main lines in use:**

510,000 (2012)

**country comparison to the world:** 96

**Telephones - mobile cellular:**

5.526 million (2012)

**country comparison to the world:** 105

**Telephone system:**

**general assessment:** the quality of service is excellent

**domestic:** new telephone exchanges provide a large capacity for new subscribers; trunk traffic is carried by microwave radio relay, coaxial cable, and open-wire and fiber-optic cable; a mobile-cellular telephone system operates throughout Kuwait, and the country is well supplied with pay telephones

**international:** country code - 965; linked to international submarine cable Fiber-Optic Link Around the Globe (FLAG); linked to Bahrain, Qatar, UAE via the Fiber-Optic Gulf (FOG) cable; coaxial cable and microwave radio relay to Saudi Arabia; satellite earth stations - 6 (3 Intelsat - 1 Atlantic Ocean and 2 Indian Ocean, 1 Inmarsat - Atlantic Ocean, and 2 Arabsat) (2011)

**Broadcast media:**

state-owned TV broadcaster operates 4 networks and a satellite channel; several private TV broadcasters have emerged since 2003; satellite TV available with pan-Arab TV stations especially popular; state-owned Radio Kuwait broadcasts on a number of channels in Arabic and English; first private radio station emerged in 2005; transmissions of at least 2 international radio broadcasters are available (2007)

**Internet country code:**

.kw

**Internet hosts:**

2,771 (2012)

**country comparison to the world:** 156

**Internet users:**

1.1 million (2009)

**country comparison to the world:** 96

**Transportation :: Kuwait**

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**Airports:**

7 (2013)

**country comparison to the world:** 168

**Airports - with paved runways:**

**total:** 4

**over 3,047 m:** 1

**2,438 to 3,047 m:** 2

**914 to 1,523 m:** 1 (2013)

**Airports - with unpaved runways:**

**total:** 3

**1,524 to 2,437 m:** 1

**under 914 m:**

2 (2013)

**Heliports:**

4 (2013)

**Pipelines:**

gas 261 km; oil 540 km; refined products 57 km (2013)

**Roadways:**

**total:** 6,608 km (2010)  
**country comparison to the world:** 148

#### **Merchant marine:**

**total:** 34  
**country comparison to the world:** 82  
**by type:** bulk carrier 2, carrier 3, container 6, liquefied gas 4, petroleum tanker 19  
**registered in other countries:** 45 (Bahamas 1, Bahrain 5, Comoros 1, Libya 1, Malta 3, Marshall Islands 2, Panama 12, Qatar 6, Saudi Arabia 4, UAE 10) (2010)

#### **Ports and terminals:**

Ash Shu'aybah, Ash Shuwaykh, Az Zawr (Mina' Sa'ud), Mina' 'Abd Allah, Mina' al Ahmadi

### **Military:: Kuwait**

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#### **Military branches:**

Kuwaiti Land Forces (KLF), Kuwaiti Navy, Kuwaiti Air Force (Al-Quwwat al-Jawwiya al-Kuwaitiya; includes Kuwaiti Air Defense Force, KADF), Kuwaiti National Guard (KNG) (2013)

#### **Military service age and obligation:**

17-21 years of age for voluntary military service; conscription suspended (2012)

#### **Manpower available for military service:**

**males age 16-49:** 1,002,480  
**females age 16-49:** 616,958 (2010 est.)

#### **Manpower fit for military service:**

**males age 16-49:** 840,912  
**females age 16-49:** 523,206 (2010 est.)

#### **Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:**

**male:** 17,653  
**female:** 16,232 (2010 est.)

#### **Military expenditures:**

3.7% of GDP (2012)  
**country comparison to the world:** 28

### **Transnational Issues:: Kuwait**

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#### **Disputes - international:**

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia continue negotiating a joint maritime boundary with Iran; no maritime boundary exists with Iraq in the Persian Gulf

#### **Refugees and internally displaced persons:**

**stateless persons:** 93,000 (2012); note - Kuwait's 1959 Nationality Law defined citizens as persons who settled in the country before 1920 and who had maintained normal residence since then; one-third of the population, descendants of Bedouin tribes, missed the window of opportunity to register for nationality rights after Kuwait became independent in 1961 and were classified as bidun (meaning without); since the 1980s Kuwait's bidun have progressively lost their rights, including opportunities for employment and education, amid official claims that they are nationals of other countries who have destroyed their identification documents in hopes of gaining Kuwaiti citizenship; Kuwaiti authorities have delayed processing citizenship applications and labeled biduns as "illegal residents," denying them access to civil documentation, such as birth and marriage certificates; 2011 bidun demonstrations for the recognition of their Kuwaiti nationality led to several arrests

#### **Trafficking in persons:**

**current situation:** Kuwait is a destination country for men and women subjected to forced labor and, to a lesser degree, forced prostitution; men and women migrate from India, Egypt, Bangladesh, Syria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Nepal, Iran, Jordan, Ethiopia, and Iraq to work in Kuwait, most of them in the domestic service, construction, and sanitation sectors; although most of these migrants enter Kuwait voluntarily, upon arrival some are subjected to conditions of forced labor by their sponsors and labor agents, including nonpayment of wages, long working hours without rest, deprivation of food, threats, physical or sexual abuse, and restrictions on movement, such as the withholding of passports or confinement to the workplace

**tier rating:** Tier 3 - Kuwait does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making sufficient efforts to do so; the government enacted comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation in 2013 but did not report any arrests, prosecutions, convictions, or sentences of traffickers for either forced labor or sex trafficking in the last year; Kuwait's victim protection measures remain weak, particularly due to its lack of proactive victim identification procedures and continued reliance on the sponsorship system, which causes victims of trafficking to be punished for immigration violations rather than protected (2013)