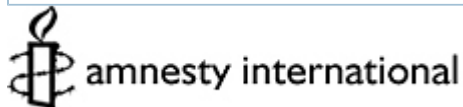


[EN](#) | [DE](#)

- **Source:**
AI - Amnesty International
- **Title:**
Amnesty International Report 2013 - The State of the World's Human Rights - Kuwait
- **Publication date:**
23 May 2013
- **ecoi.net summary:** Annual report 2013 (covering 2012) [ID 247987]
- **Countries:**
Kuwait
- **Original link** <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/kuwait/report-2013>

Recommended citation:

AI - Amnesty International: Amnesty International Report 2013 - The State of the World's Human Rights - Kuwait, 23 May 2013 (available at [ecoi.net](http://www.ecoi.net))
http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/247987/358278_en.html (accessed 12 August 2013)



Amnesty International Report 2013 - The State of the World's Human Rights - Kuwait

Head of state

al-Shaikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah

Head of government

al-Shaikh Jaber al-Mubarak al-Hamad al Sabah

Riot police used excessive force against peaceful demonstrators as part of a crackdown on freedoms of expression and assembly. Thousands of stateless Bidun continued to be denied Kuwaiti nationality and thus access to health care, education and employment on the same basis as citizens. Women continued to face discrimination in law and practice. Migrant domestic workers were exploited and abused by their employers. At least one person who died in custody may have been tortured or otherwise ill-treated. Nine death sentences were passed, four of which were commuted. No executions were reported.

Freedoms of expression, association and assembly

The authorities increased restrictions on freedoms of assembly and expression, including by prosecuting some social media users. Riot police used excessive force, tear gas and stun grenades against peaceful demonstrations by government opponents and Bidun.

In the run-up to the 1 December parliamentary elections, a series of demonstrations called "March of Dignity" was organized by government opponents, in part to protest against proposed amendments to the parliamentary election law.

Following a large gathering in October, the authorities invoked a 1979 law banning gatherings of more than 20 people. While some demonstrations were allowed to take place, others, including one on 27 December, were forcibly dispersed.

Former parliamentarians, activists and children were among those arrested during demonstrations. Most were released within a few days; some faced charges.

A proposal to amend the law on blasphemy to make "insulting God, his prophets and his messengers" a capital offence was vetoed by the Amir.

- Prisoner of conscience Hamad al-Naqi, a member of the Shi'a Muslim minority, was arrested in April and sentenced in June to 10 years in prison with hard labour. He was convicted of posting Twitter messages criticizing the leaders of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, and for "insulting" Islam. His appeal was ongoing at the end of the year.
- Musallam al-Barrak, an opposition leader and former MP, was arrested on 29 October and charged with "undermining the status of the Amir" for statements he made during a demonstration on

- 15 October. He was released on bail on 1 November. His trial was ongoing at the end of the year and he faced up to five years' imprisonment if convicted.

Torture and other ill-treatment

Legislation halving the maximum period of police custody without a court order from four days to two was enacted in July.

Reports suggested that torture or other ill-treatment may have been a factor in the death of Nawaf al-Azmi, one of five reported cases of deaths in custody.

- On 24 December, an Appeal Court upheld the sentences, including two life sentences, of police officers involved in the death in custody of Mohammad Ghazzai al-Maimuni al-Mutairi in 2011. Two other officers were fined; all were dismissed from the police.

Discrimination – Bidun

More than 100,000 stateless Bidun, long-term residents of Kuwait, continued to be denied nationality. Hundreds held regular, peaceful demonstrations. Security forces occasionally forcibly dispersed these demonstrations, arbitrarily arresting dozens. Over 150 Bidun demonstrators faced trial.

On 18 October, the Prime Minister told Amnesty International that the government would extend Kuwaiti nationality to 34,000 Bidun and resolve the remaining cases within five years.

In February, the CERD Committee recommended that the Kuwaiti authorities issue civil documents to all people in Kuwait and give the Bidun access to adequate social services, education, housing, employment, property and business registration rights, among other things.

Women's rights

Women continued to face discrimination in law and practice. In September, the Supreme Judicial Council announced that women could apply for various posts in the Public Prosecution and judiciary. This followed lawsuits brought against the Ministry of Justice by women law graduates in 2011, after the Ministry advertised certain jobs as open to men only.

Migrant workers

Migrant domestic workers remained unprotected by Kuwait's labour laws and continued to face exploitation and abuse by employers. The labour sponsorship (kafala) system did not adequately protect migrant workers, and non-Kuwaitis were prohibited from forming collective bodies.

The CERD Committee recommended that Kuwait adopt specific labour legislation to protect foreign and domestic workers and guarantee their rights according to international standards, including the ILO conventions to which Kuwait is a party.

Death penalty

Nine death sentences were passed, four of which were commuted. Others were upheld by the Appeals Court. Three other death sentences imposed in 2011 on two Iranians and a Kuwaiti for "espionage for Iran" were reduced to life imprisonment on appeal. Three people facing execution for murder were pardoned by their victims' relatives. No executions were reported.

Country Reports

- [Kuwait: Joint open letter to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait regarding the Bidun](#)

Country Visits

- Amnesty International delegates visited Kuwait in May. In October, Amnesty International's Secretary General met the Prime Minister, former parliamentarians, opposition activists, members of the Bidun community and human rights activists in Kuwait.

© Amnesty International

published on  European Country of Origin Information Network