

# KUWAIT

## Party Portrait

Despite its size, Kuwait plays a key role in Arab and Gulf affairs given its geo-strategic importance, alliances, and large amounts of oil reserves. Like its GCC neighbors, it is a monarchy, though it is also the most politically open Gulf state. It was also one of the first Gulf states to industrialize, establish a directly elected parliament, and adopt a liberal constitution. The most critical event that has defined modern Kuwait is undoubtedly the 1990 invasion by Saddam Hussein's Iraq. The war led to a more balanced power-distribution system that gave more power to the parliament (National Assembly), arguably becoming the strong legislative body in the GCC. However, this has also led to significant internal political conflicts.

### Key Interests

- Maintaining its role as one of the world's largest oil producers. Currently oil revenues comprise a significant portion of government revenue, which is in turn key to continuing its rentier social contract with citizens.
- Diversify its economy and attract investment. Given low oil prices, the country has sought to increase foreign direct investment and diversify to other industries
- Maintaining regional security, given the existential threat they encountered in 1990 during the first Iraq War.

### Sources of Leverage

**Political** - Kuwait's alliance with the United States, as well as with other Western partners affords it a powerful role within the Gulf.  
**Economic** - In addition to its political partnerships with Western powers, Kuwait's large oil reserves provide it with a critical voice in regional fora such as the GCC or OPEC.

## Regional Strategy

As a strong ally of the United States in the region, Kuwait seeks to support regional security measures. To this end, it continues to host a large contingent of US troops on its soil. In addition, Kuwait has sought closer political and military relations with Western allies, both bilaterally as well as through multilateral fora in NATO, for example.

### Powerful Individuals

Emir Sabah Ahmad al-Sabah, Crown Prince Nawaf Ahmad al-Sabah, Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanim, Prime Minister Jaber Mubarak al-Sabah

### Potential Negotiation Moves

**Support regional stability** - By allowing the US to station additional troops that could be deployed in the fight against ISIS, Kuwait could help the US regain power in the region and maintain regional stability.

## Internal Conflicts

Tensions between the National Assembly and the Emir persist due to members of parliament fiercely questioning cabinet members, as well as issues relating to the electoral system. This has led the Emir to dissolve parliament on a multitude of occasions since the founding of the state, including various times in the past few years.

### Memberships

ARAB LEAGUE, GCC, IAEA, ISTANBUL COOPERATION INITIATIVE, OIC, OPEC, UN

### Allies

UAE, SAUDI ARABIA, UNITED STATES

### Partners

QATAR, IRAN, UNITED KINGDOM

### Rivals

N/A

### Adversaries

N/A

### Active Armed Opponents

N/A

### Proxy

N/A

### External Sponsor

N/A

### Aid Recipient

SYRIA Other Opposition Groups, YEMEN Government, PALESTINE Fatah

### Aid Donor

N/A