

Arab Barometer VIII

Kuwait Report



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2024

Executive summary

Since the last Arab Barometer survey in Kuwait, conducted in 2022, major changes have taken place, significantly affecting political stability in the country. While political life in Kuwait was saturated with crises, and its indicators were clearly visible in the dissolution of the National Assembly (Parliament) repeatedly before completing its term, the shifts, changes, and political instability that dominated the public arena, between late 2022 and the current period of 2024, included even more severe events. Kuwait faced the unconstitutional dissolution of the National Assembly and the suspension of some articles in the constitution, now for the third time in Kuwait's history. The first two such crises were in 1967 and 1986.

To summarize the events that took place from June 2022 until the dissolution of the Parliament and the suspension of the constitution in May 2024, they are as follows: On August 3, 2022, the National Assembly was dissolved constitutionally, in response to the sit-in of a number of MPs inside the Parliament and their overnight stay there. The Crown Prince (the current Emir) gave a speech in which he emphasized adherence to the constitution, and also presented initiatives in electoral reform. He emphasized that the government would not vote for the candidate for the speaker of the National Assembly, and that the elections would be through the national ID card (effectively changing electoral circuits). The protesting MPs considered these reforms a victory. As a result, Ahmed al-Nawaf was appointed Prime Minister.

The elections were held on August 29, 2022. On October 6, the Crown Prince began the traditional consultations to form the government, which emerged with six ministers from the previous government. However, a number of MPs announced their opposition to the new cabinet and demanded that the Prime Minister reconsider the proposed names, so the latter met with the parliamentary blocs to defuse the crisis, and the government responded to parliamentary pressure by reconstituting the cabinet on October 17 with the exit of eight ministers, and it may have been one of the shortest-lived governments. The first session was held on October 19, and on November 29, an interrogation of the Minister of Public Works was submitted. The high volume of senior staff resignations and retirements was noticeable. It became clear that there is a major conflict between the priorities of the executive and legislative branches. The MPs' insistence on dropping the loans led to the government's withdrawal from the session on January 11, 2023. The government presented two conditions for its return to cooperation with the Parliament: withdrawing the interrogation of the Minister of Finance and returning the reports to the committees to reach consensus. In return, the parliamentary finance committee insisted on not withdrawing its reports. This forced the Speaker to adjourn the session until February 6, 2023. Another interrogation was submitted.

It turned out that the government was waiting for the Constitutional Court's ruling on the electoral process. At the same time, some MPs announced their rejection of the return of some ministers in the proposed cabinet. In the National Assembly's session scheduled for February 22, the government did not show up, which deprived the session of a quorum, and it was postponed to March 7, 2023. Then Ahmed al-Nawaf was reappointed Prime Minister, and he announced that the government would not attend – once again – the National Assembly session. In return, a number of MPs announced on March 8 that if the government was not formed, MPs would interrogate the Prime Minister. In the midst of this heated series of exchanges, the Constitutional Court ruled that the 2022 assembly was invalid in response to an appeal. The Constitutional Court also ruled that the dissolved 2020 assembly would return to complete its term. As a result, the Crown Prince dissolved the 2020 assembly and called for new parliamentary elections.

The elections took place on June 6, 2023, and Ahmed al-Nawaf was appointed again as head of the government with four deputy prime ministers. Divisions within the government began to emerge with the resignation of the Minister of Finance. In October, an MP submitted a new interrogation, and 40 MPs announced their demand for fulfilling an amnesty decision for a number of politicians. On October 20, seven judges were imprisoned and dismissed in corruption cases. The parliamentary escalation against the government continued. On November 10, a parliamentarian submitted an interrogation of the Prime Minister, and another interrogation of a minister on November 19.

On December 17, the death of Emir Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad was announced, and Crown Prince Sheikh Meshaal al-Ahmad became Emir, marking the beginning of a different era in governance, as the Emir was sworn in before the National Assembly on December 19, and on that day he delivered a strong speech. He attacked the Parliament and the government, describing both as harmful to the country and its people. He then began consultations to form a new government and announced his appointment of Sheikh Dr. Mohammed al-Sabah as Prime Minister, and he was widely welcomed. On January 18, the formation of the government was announced, with only two ministers from the ruling family. However, the escalation continued, as the government objected to a statement made by one of the MPs, which it considered an insult to the Emir, and therefore the government requested it removed from the session's minutes, but the MPs insisted on keeping the statement in the minutes, which led the government to announce that it would not attend the session until the statement was removed. Accordingly, the council was dissolved on February 16, not having completed nine months, and it was announced that elections would be called for April 4, 2024.

Notably, the government announced a move to revoke the Kuwaiti nationality

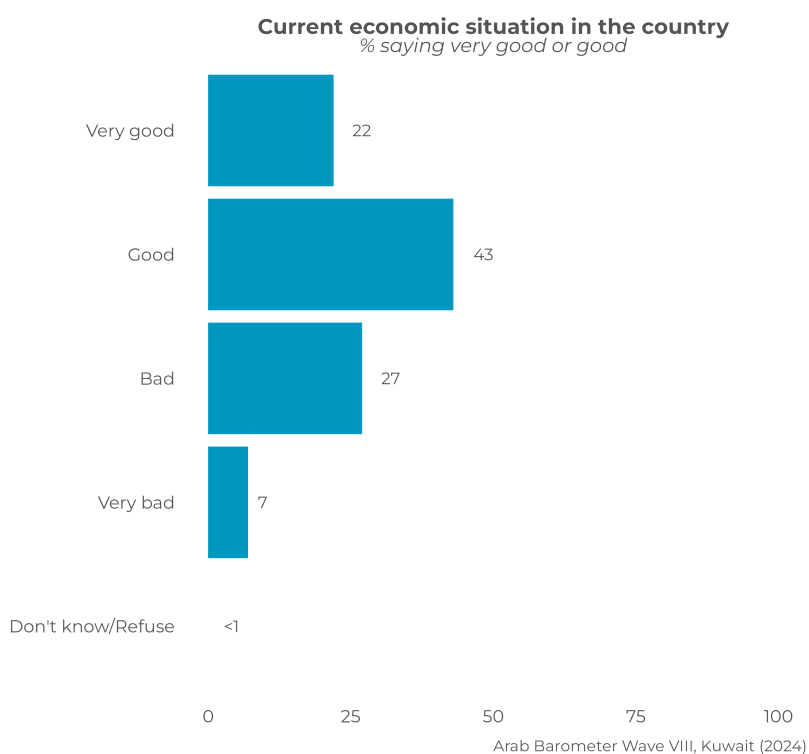
of citizens who had acquired them through fraud, citizens with dual citizenships, and on other grounds, as 30 withdrawal cases were seen through on March 12, and 231 cases on April 3, then the process continued in varying numbers at later dates. Elections did take place on April 4 with heavy voter turnout despite the hot weather and Ramadan. However, Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed al-Sabah turned down the Prime Minister position, until a decree was issued by the Emir to postpone the convening of the National Assembly. This in turn led to a parliamentary escalation and threats of interrogations of specific ministers, specifically the Minister of Interior, until Sheikh Ahmed al-Abdullah was appointed Prime Minister and began forming his new government.

The parliamentary escalation, however, continued with about 30 MPs announcing their refusal to the return of the Minister of Interior and other ministers to the new government, and even announcing interrogation of a number of ministers by virtue of their positions, and there were heated discussions on how the crown prince would be selected. In the context of this tense situation, the Emir issued an order, which he announced in a televised speech, where he declared the dissolution of the National Assembly and the suspension of some articles of the Constitution. He also declared intentions to revise the Constitution. The Emir, moreover, expressed his discomfort with what he described as the use of interrogation as a means of blackmail. He also stated that he would not allow democracy to be used to destroy the state, adding that “there are those who went too far and interfered with the prince’s right to choose his crown prince as well as the choice of the prime minister, two constitutional rights that belong to the prince alone.”

This extended crisis shows the deep political deadlock during which the survey was conducted. The Arab Barometer’s survey came at a time during which Kuwait suffered from severe domestic developments, the most prominent of which was the change in political leadership at the level of the head of state, as Emir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad died and was replaced by his brother Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad. This meant, among other things, imposing new choices for the position of crown prince, and swinging in a state of instability reflected in the choices of the prime minister. This was reflected also in the nature of other political interactions, which ended with the dissolution of the National Assembly (Parliament) on May 10, 2024, after the completion of the survey. Many of the opinions observed in the survey predicted what happened later, or were indicative of the degree of popular acceptance of radical measures such as dissolving the National Assembly and freezing some articles of the constitution, which we will address in some detail below, as these political crises are linked to the responses observed through the survey.

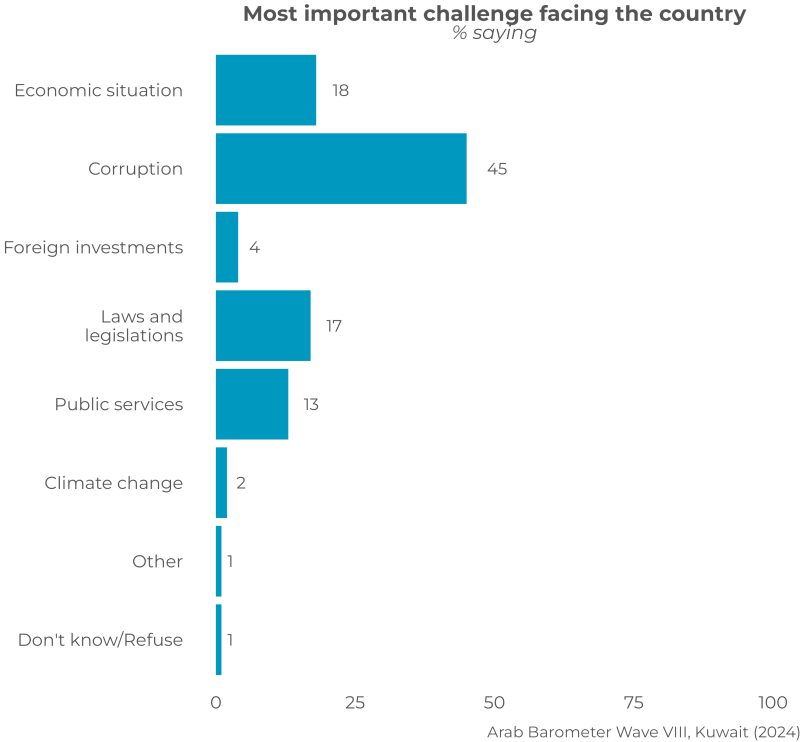
The Economy

It is notable that, despite what transpires from the general discussions in society about the bad economic situation, that a large majority of citizens consider the economic situation to be very good (22 percent) or good (43 percent). Only seven percent say that the situation is very bad, while 27 percent say it is bad. As such, those who view the economic situation positively are roughly two-thirds (65 percent) of the population, taking into account the pessimistic atmosphere raised by the public debate about the economic situation and general economic performance indicators.



According to Kuwaitis, the biggest challenges facing their country are corruption (45 percent), the economic situation (18 percent), laws and legislation (17 percent), public services (13 percent), and, to a much lesser extent, climate change (two percent). Corruption continues to dominate as the most prominent challenge facing the country, despite the conviction of former ministers, ambassadors from the ruling family, judges, senior officials, military personnel, and merchants. The hypothesis was that public opinion might increasingly support anti-corruption measures, but the handling of these measures does not

seem to have created a public opinion convinced that a real war on corruption is being waged.

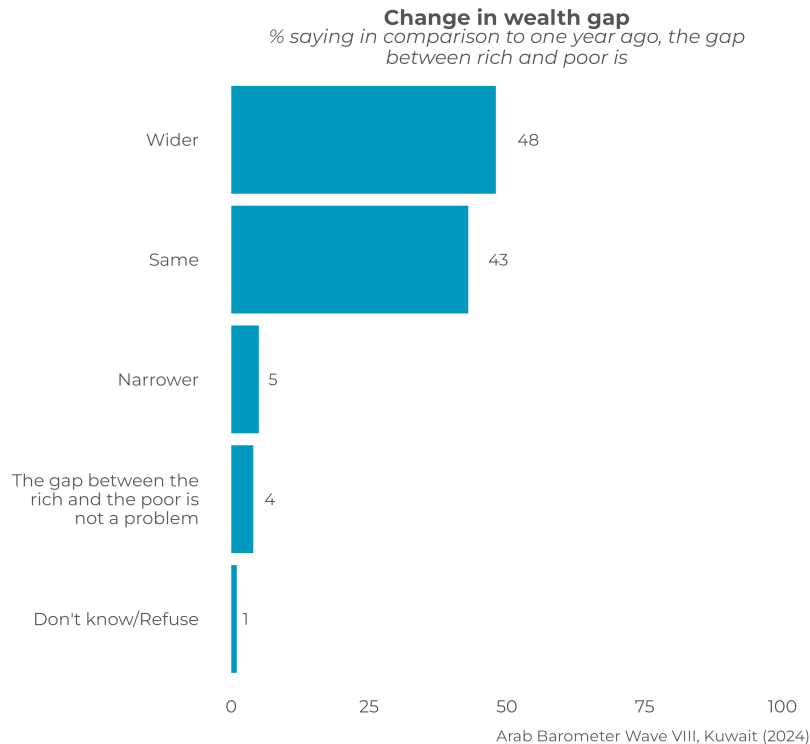


The most serious economic issues in the country are ranked by citizens as follows: inflation (34 percent), followed by low wages and salaries (17 percent), lack of jobs (17 percent), lack of affordable housing (17 percent), and, to a much lesser extent, socio-economic inequality (five percent) and lack of access to credit (six percent).

The outlook for the economy in the near future seems to be positive. In response to the question, “how will the economic situation be in the next two to three years?”, a fifth (19 percent) think it will be much better, 23 percent think it will be slightly better, a larger percentage (37 percent) think it will remain the same, while only five percent think it will be much worse and 15 percent think it will be slightly worse. This is consistent with the positive outlook for the economy mentioned above.

As for whether there has been a change in the gap between the rich and the poor compared to one year ago, 48 percent believe the gap has increased, 43

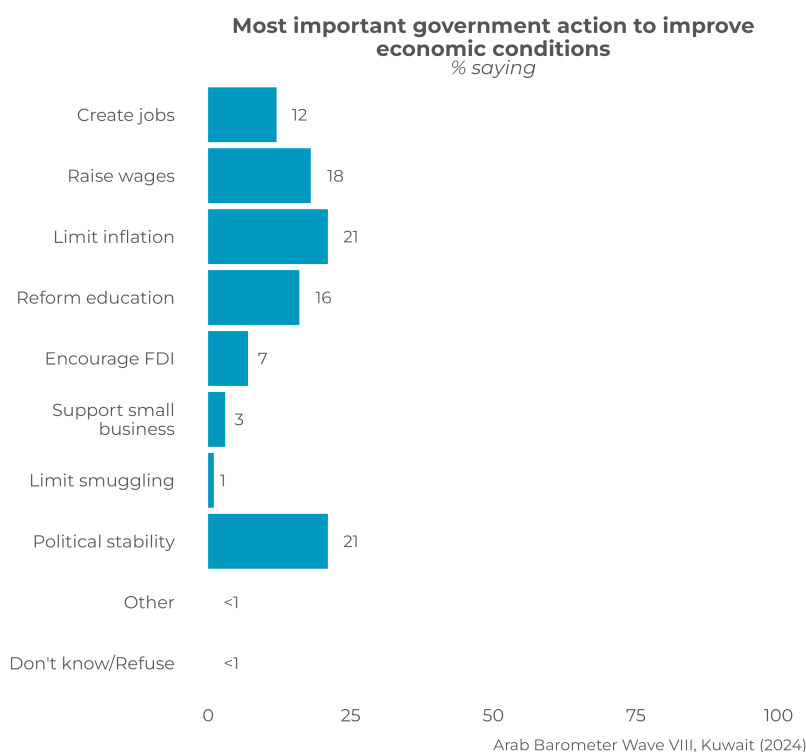
percent believe it has not changed, five percent believe it has decreased, and four percent believe that the gap is not significant at all.



The response to the statement “the food we bought has run out and we don’t have enough money to buy more” is as expected, with 80 percent saying the statement is not true at all, while only four percent think it is often true, and 16 percent think it is sometimes true. For food in particular, there is a governmental system to provide food at low prices through cooperatives.

The survey provides options on the most important things that the government should do to improve the economic situation. The answers are as follows: reducing inflation (21 percent), then notably political stability, which received a similar percentage as a requirement to improve the situation (21 percent), followed by raising salaries (18 percent), which is contrary to measures to reduce the inflation, followed by educational reform (16 percent), then creating new jobs (12 percent) and encouraging foreign direct investment (seven percent). Despite the funds allocated to support small enterprises, this option is chosen by only three percent, which may indicate the ineffectiveness of the government’s program to support these projects. It is worth noting that non-economic

measures are mentioned to improve the economic situation, such as political stability and educational reform, which shows that reforming the economy requires a comprehensive perspective, which is not limited to explicitly economic measures.



The picture becomes clearer when people are asked to rank priorities of governmental spending for the coming year, with opinions coming in the following order: Education systems (35 percent), followed by improving roads (21 percent), which is much more than national security (at five percent only), housing policy (ten percent), reducing pollution (two percent), subsidies (three percent), and again road repairs (nine percent), meaning that the issue of roads accounts for 30 percent overall. In fact, the issue of deteriorating roads situation has become a national concern, and the government has been forced to declare it a top priority, and that it will allocate the necessary financial resources to remedy the situation.

Trust and government performance

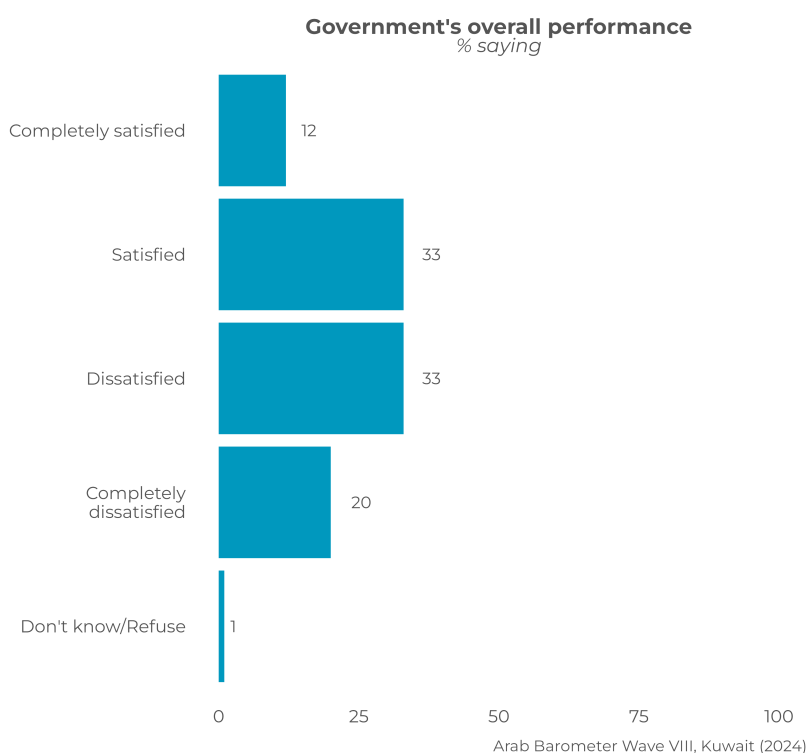
The battery of questions about trust and government performance begins with a personal question, “how much do you trust people in general?”. The over-

whelming majority (86 percent) answer that it is necessary to be careful in trusting people, while 14 percent say that the majority of people can be trusted. This means that there is a sense of caution in trusting people in general.

Also notable is the high degree of feeling safe, with 80 percent saying their neighborhood is very safe, 18 percent saying it is somewhat safe, and only two percent saying it is somewhat unsafe. This is also the case for the next question, about the frequency of thefts in the neighborhood, with 72 percent saying thefts in their neighborhoods never happen, happen rarely (21 percent), or sometimes (five percent). No one says they are frequent. Although social media publishes violent incidents on the streets, this is not reflected in the responses, as 62 percent say such incidents never happen, 26 percent say they are rare, ten percent say they happen sometimes, and only one percent say they are frequent.

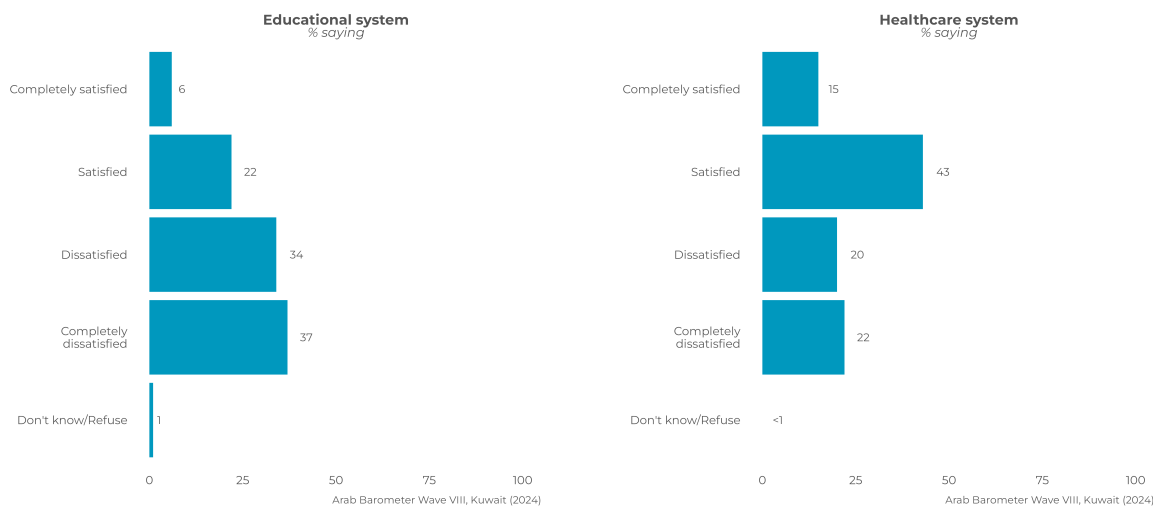
Satisfaction with government performance

It is clear from the survey that the percentage of dissatisfaction with the government's performance is higher, as the percentage of those who are completely dissatisfied with the government's performance is 20 percent. A third of Kuwaitis say they are dissatisfied, compared to the percentage of those who are very satisfied (12 percent) and satisfied (33 percent). In other words, a simple majority are dissatisfied with the government's performance (53 percent), while those who are satisfied stand at 45 percent.



When it comes to evaluating the government's performance in specific sectors, there is a clear disparity. In the education system, only six percent say they are very satisfied, 22 percent say they are satisfied, 34 percent say they are dissatisfied, and 37 percent say they are very dissatisfied, meaning that those who are dissatisfied with the education system represent the majority.

The picture is different when evaluating the performance of the healthcare system, where 15 percent say they are very satisfied, compared to 43 percent satisfied, 20 percent dissatisfied, and 22 percent very dissatisfied. This means that the degree of satisfaction with the health system is better than the degree of satisfaction with the education system. As for the degree of satisfaction with the government's performance in terms of road quality, it receives a high percentage of dissatisfaction, especially absolute dissatisfaction (79 percent) and dissatisfaction (15 percent). Only a very small minority say they very satisfied (two percent) or satisfied (three percent). On the contrary, Kuwaitis are satisfied with trash collection, with 25 percent saying they are very satisfied and 42 percent saying they are satisfied, compared to 17 percent saying they are dissatisfied and 15 percent very dissatisfied.

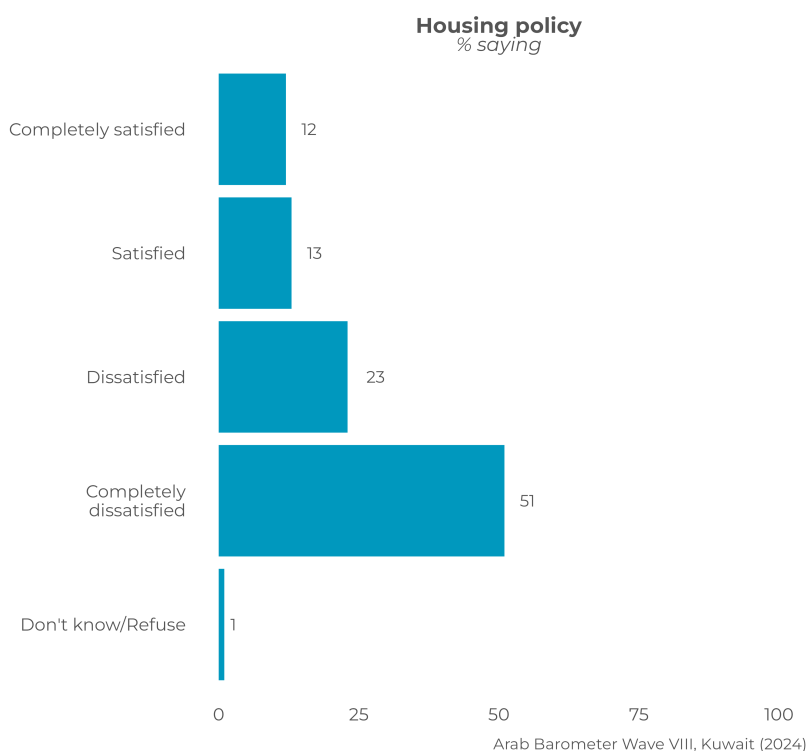


As for creating new jobs, only six percent say the government’s performance in this area is very good, 24 percent say it is good, 36 percent say it is bad, and 33 percent say it is very bad. This is somewhat similar to the assessment of the government’s performance in reducing the gap between the rich and the poor, where four percent emphasize that it is very good, 19 percent say it is good, 38 percent think it is bad, and 36 percent perceive it as very bad. This converges with the government’s performance in keeping prices low, where four percent think the government’s performance in that regard is very good, while 19 percent say it is good, compared to 33 percent who see it as bad, and 42 percent as very bad.

Interestingly, the perception of the government’s performance in providing electricity is positive even though, due to overloads, the Ministry of Electricity had to make programmed power cuts to residences. However, satisfaction with electricity comes in at 63 percent very satisfied, 29 percent satisfied, seven percent dissatisfied, and only one percent very dissatisfied. This is very close to the evaluation of the water supply service, with 62 percent very satisfied, 30 percent satisfied, seven percent dissatisfied, and only one percent very dissatisfied. To a large extent, this reflects the reality of water provision, perhaps more so than electricity, where water supply is rarely interrupted. This is also the case with the provision of internet service, where 65 percent say they are very satisfied, 29 percent say they are satisfied, while five percent are dissatisfied and only two percent are very dissatisfied. The same is true for the civil defense, where 61 percent are very satisfied, 33 percent are satisfied, four percent are dissatisfied, and two percent are very dissatisfied.

However, views are reversed when asked about the housing policy: 12 percent say that they are very satisfied, 13 percent satisfied, 23 percent dissatisfied, and

51 percent very dissatisfied, meaning that there is a substantial majority on the side of dissatisfaction, almost three-quarters of citizens. This is a reflection of reality. While the government provides housing services to citizens, those wishing to obtain housing wait for years, and their number is in the tens of thousands.



Corruption

It seems that the perception of corruption is high, with 72 percent saying that corruption exists in government institutions and official national bodies to a great degree, 21 percent indicating that corruption exists to a medium degree, and four percent saying to a small degree, while only one percent say that corruption does not exist. This reflects the high degree to which people believe that corruption is widespread and that there may be a need to focus more on this issue. This may have been reflected in the answer to the next question about the degree to which the government fights corruption, where the percentage of those who do not think the government is fighting corruption is more than the percentage of those who say the government is fighting corruption, as 13 percent believe that the government fights corruption to a great degree, while

those who see it doing so to a moderate degree are 26 percent of the population, compared to 36 percent who say to a small degree and 24 percent say the government is not fighting corruption at all.

Government Responsiveness

On the degree to which the government is responsive, one-in-ten Kuwaitis say it is very responsive, while a quarter say it is somewhat responsive (26 percent), four-in-ten say it is not responsive (42 percent), and a fifth say not at all responsive (21 percent) to what the people want. Yet, the central question aims to measure the degree of citizens' interest in politics, revealing their interaction with political topics. One-in-ten say they are very interested in politics, 16 percent are interested, 33 percent are not interested, and 40 percent are not interested at all. This recalls the need for reconsidering the extent to which people follow, and are interested in, politics. If it is indeed the case that people are not interested in politics, it begs the question of how to attract the public to the political life, especially since, contrary to the common belief that people are interested in politics, the results of this question show that three-quarters of citizens are not interested in politics.

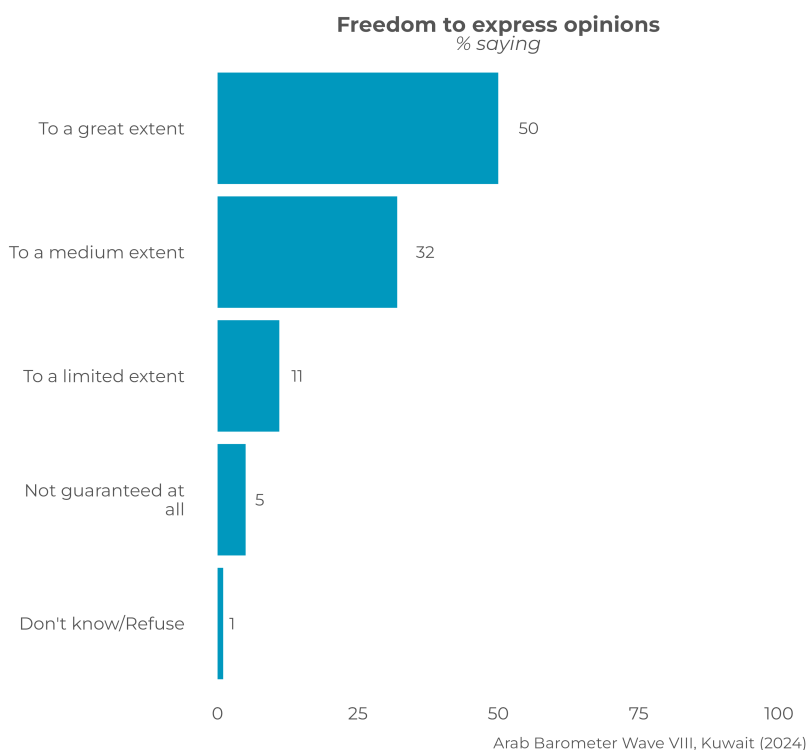
An important indicator is the question about the people's perception of their lives as compared to the lives of their parents. Six-in-ten Kuwaitis (61 percent) see their lives as better than their parents' lives, 16 percent say it is the same, and 23 percent believe their lives as worse than their parents' lives. When comparing a person's life with that of their children, 49 percent say their children's life would be better than theirs, 30 percent say it would be the same, and 18 percent say it would be worse.

Freedoms

Freedom of expression in Kuwait is one of the central issues in public debates, and in general, freedom of expression is relatively present in Kuwait, but several legislations have led to its decline. This decline reached its peak after the dissolution of the National Assembly in 1986, especially after the imposition of prior censorship on the press, a measure that was unprecedented and remained in place until 1991. In addition, a number of laws restrict these freedoms.

Half of Kuwaitis consider that freedom of expression exists to a great extent, despite the implementation of some measures that limit this freedom. Thirty-two percent say it exists to a medium degree, 11 percent think it exists to a small degree, and five percent say it is not guaranteed at all. When it comes to the freedom of the media to criticize the government's actions, percentages are

close, as 47 percent say that criticism of the government is allowed in the media to a great degree, 32 percent to a medium degree, 15 percent to a limited degree, and only five percent think it is not guaranteed at all. This may be due to the fact that the space for criticism of government agencies is tolerated, in the media and social media. In the same context, on the question about freedom of the press, 45 percent believe that it is guaranteed to a great degree, 34 percent to a moderate degree, 15 percent to a limited degree, and five percent believe that the freedom of the press is not guaranteed at all.

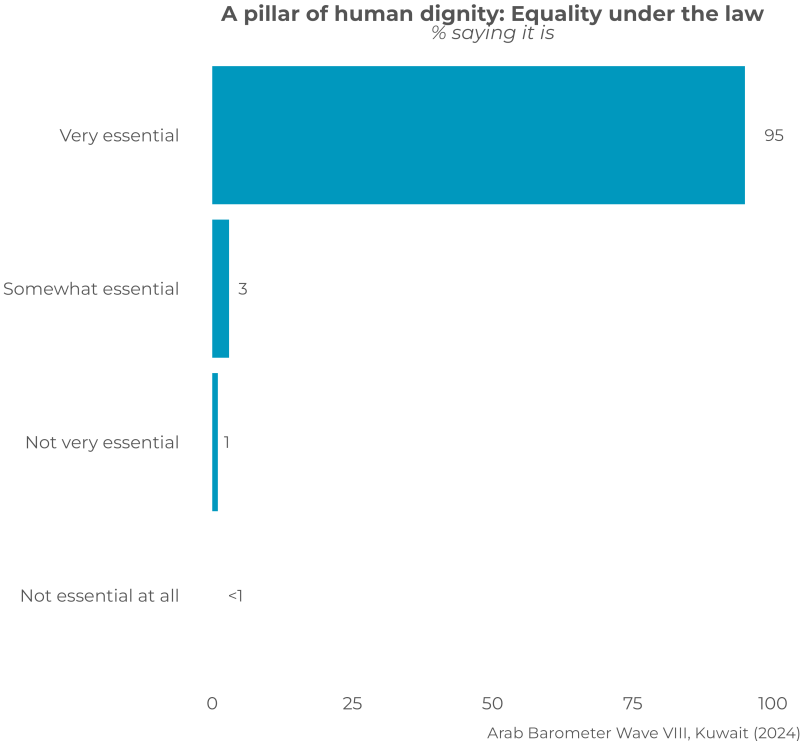


Political Reform

The term political reform is a broad term and may mean different things to different people, but a large majority (61 percent) think it should happen gradually, while 37 percent say it should happen all at once and only one percent say there is no need for reforms at all.

Pillars of Human Dignity

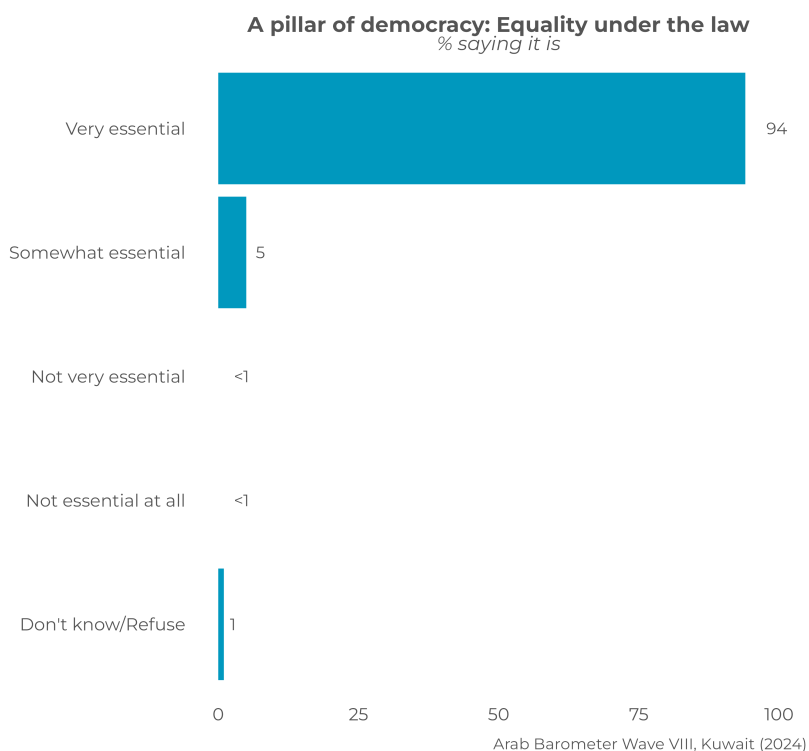
The questions on perceptions of the concept of human dignity seeks to look at it from many perspectives. For the first question, on the extent to which equality before the law is a pillar of human dignity, 95 percent emphasize that it is very essential, compared to three percent who say it is somewhat essential and one percent who think it is not essential. The next question asks whether the absence of corruption is a pillar of human dignity: 84 percent say it is, while one-in-ten say it is somewhat essential, three percent say it is not essential, and one percent say it is not essential at all. As for whether the provision of basic human needs, such as water, food, clothing and shelter, is a pillar of human dignity: 89 percent say it is absolutely essential and one-in-ten think it is somewhat essential to the definition of human dignity, while one percent believe it is not essential at all. On the other hand, for the question of whether the free choice of political leaders through elections is one of the pillars of human dignity, the answers come in the same direction, where 79 percent confirm that it is essential, 15 percent that it is to some extent, while four percent say it not essential, and not at all essential (two percent). This means that free choice through elections is strongly present in the Kuwaitis' perceptions of human dignity.



At another level, the next question asks if feeling safe from any physical danger is among the pillars of human dignity. Nine-in-ten (91 percent) consider it essential, seven percent consider it somewhat essential, and two percent say it is non-essential. When asked whether the provision of basic civil rights is among the pillars of human dignity, 92 percent say it is essential, seven percent believe it as somewhat essential, and one percent consider it non-essential. Thus, it is clear that the general context of the responses about the pillars of human dignity is consistent across all of the pillars in the questions.

Pillars of Democracy

This set of questions aims to measure how far pillars of human dignity are also considered pillars of democracy. The answers show close association between the two concepts for Kuwaiti citizens. The first question on whether equality before the law is a pillar of democracy: 94 percent say it is very essential and five percent consider it somewhat essential. As for the absence of corruption, the answers reflect the same trend, with 87 percent saying it is essential, while nine percent considering it somewhat essential, two percent believing it is not essential, and only one percent considering it not essential at all. The provision of basic needs is considered an essential pillar of democracy (83 percent), somewhat essential (13 percent), not essential (three percent), and not at all essential (one percent). As for whether the free choice of political leaders through elections is one of the pillars of democracy, 82 percent of people consider it so, while 13 percent say it is somewhat essential as a pillar of democracy, while two percent considered it not so and two percent consider it not at all essential. On whether feeling physically safe from any threat is one of the pillars of democracy, it is considered essential by 88 percent of Kuwaitis, somewhat essential (nine percent), not essential (two percent), and not at all essential (one percent). Regarding whether guaranteeing basic civil rights is among the pillars of democracy, 92 percent say it is very essential, five percent say it is somewhat essential, one percent believe it is not essential, and one percent say it is not essential at all.

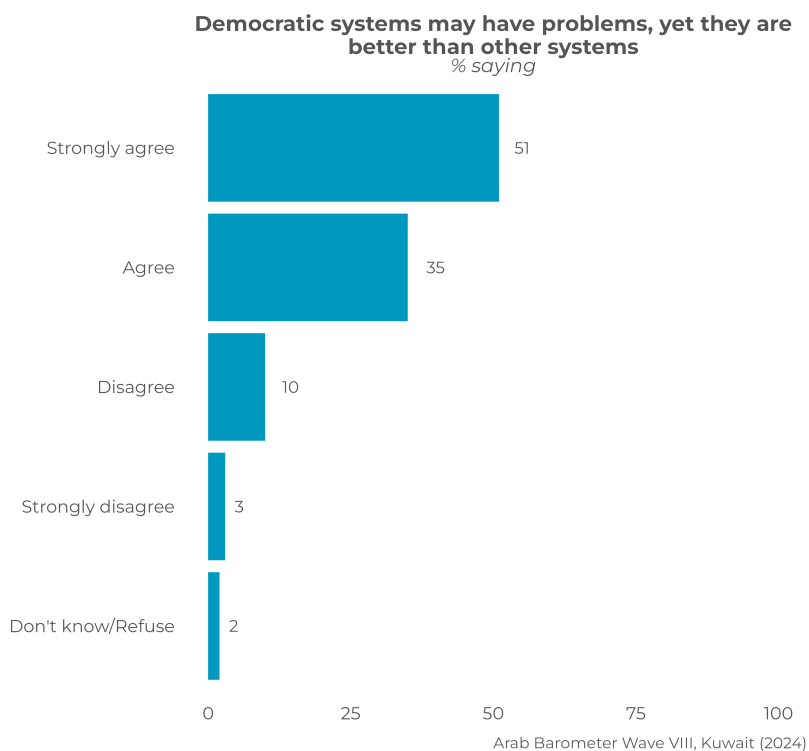


When asked to rank the pillars of human dignity, citizens rank equality before the law first (33 percent), followed by the absence of corruption (19 percent), access to basic needs (17 percent), guaranteeing civil rights (16 percent), feeling safe from physical threats (nine percent), and freely electing political leaders (five percent). It is not very different in relation to the pillars of democracy. A third (33 percent) rank equality before the law as the most important pillar of democracy, compared to 28 percent who prioritize the absence of corruption, 11 percent say the free choice of political leaders, 11 percent guaranteeing civil rights, eight percent providing basic needs, and eight percent for feeling safe from physical danger. Thus, it is clear that the pillars of human dignity and democracy are closely related and associated in the perceptions of Kuwaitis, without marked differences between the two.

To further examine attitudes towards democracy, several questions are asked as part of an integrated package, where the following statement, about whether “the state’s economic performance is weak under a democratic system,” is posed. A fifth of Kuwaitis say they strongly agree with another fifth (19 percent) saying they agree, while 34 percent disagree, and 24 percent strongly disagree. As such, the majority disagree with the statement.

In response to the statement “democratic systems are indecisive and are full of trouble,” 21 percent strongly agree, 20 percent agree, 36 percent disagree, and 20 percent strongly disagree. On whether democratic systems are ineffective in maintaining order and stability, 20 percent strongly agree, 17 percent agree, 35 percent disagree, and 25 percent strongly disagree.

The response to the statement “democratic systems may have problems, but they are better than other systems,” is as follows: half of Kuwaitis (51 percent) say they strongly agree, a third (35 percent) say they agree, one-in-ten disagree, and only three percent say they strongly disagree, indicating a preference for democracy over other forms of governance.



Asking about perceptions of democracy in other way with the statement “under undemocratic regimes, economic performance is poor”. Responses are as follows: 26 percent say they strongly agree, 26 percent say they agree, 29 percent say they disagree, and 13 percent say they strongly disagree. By reversing an earlier question, we asked if non-democratic regimes are not decisive and suffer from many problems. The answers are 27 percent strongly agree, 25 percent agree, 28 percent disagree and 16 percent strongly disagree. When

asked whether non-democratic regimes are ineffective in maintaining order and stability, 26 percent say they strongly agree, 26 percent agree, 28 percent disagree, and 16 percent strongly disagree. To the question on whether non-democratic regimes have problems but are better than others, 19 percent strongly agree, 17 percent agree, 30 percent disagree, and 30 percent strongly disagree. We conclude that the public attitude towards democratic regimes is more positive.

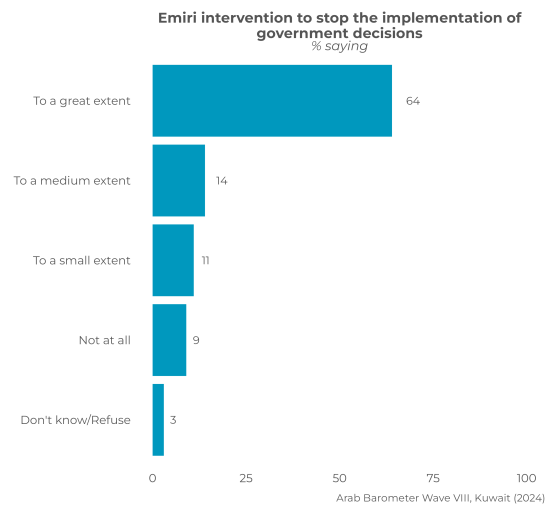
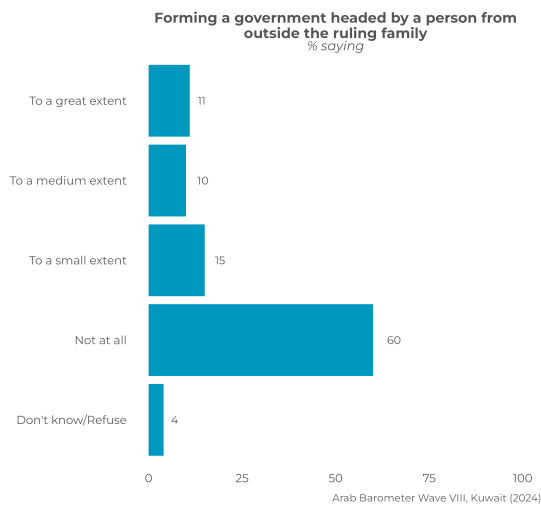
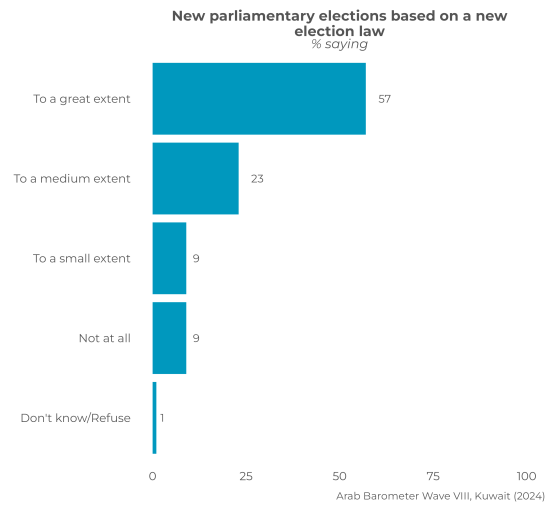
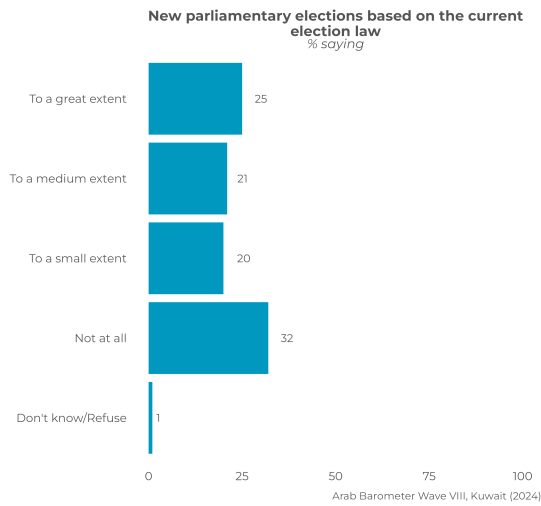
The most recent elections and the responsibility for instability

Since the Kuwaiti political situation has long been suffering from instability, the pivotal question here is about who bears responsibility for the instability in the country. It turns out that citizens blame the government and the parliament, with the parliament bearing more responsibility in their opinion, as a fifth of the population (19 percent) say it is the responsibility of the parliament, while the government is cited by one-in-ten (11 percent). It turns out that people hold both entities (at 69 percent) responsible for the instability in the country.

In an attempt to find out the general trends on possible ways for getting out of the ongoing crisis, a quarter of citizens believe that the solution lies largely in holding new elections, with the same applicable law, while 21 percent somewhat agree to this solution, and 20 percent believe it is the solution to a small degree; however, a third (32 percent) believe that this is out of the question.

On the other hand, 57 percent think that the solution lies largely in holding new elections but with a new election law, 23 percent agree with the same approach but to a medium degree, nine percent to a small degree, and nine percent do not agree that this is a solution. Meanwhile, 11 percent think that the way out of the crisis lies largely in the formation of a new government headed by someone from outside the ruling family. Only one-in-ten Kuwaitis agree to this solution to a medium degree, and another minority (15 percent) agree to a small degree. But the majority (60 percent) reject this outright.

It is notable that a large majority (64 percent) agree with the phrase “Emiri intervention to stop government decisions,” is the solution, while 14 percent somewhat agree, 11 percent to a small extent. Only nine percent disagree with this intervention as a solution for the political crisis. This statement is related to a set of decisions taken by the Emir to freeze some governmental decrees, related to employment policies, among other areas.



The important question is whether or not to dissolve the National Assembly, which is what happened after the survey was conducted. Four-in-ten Kuwaitis say they are strongly in favor of this solution, a third (34 percent) say they are somewhat in favor, 14 percent somewhat oppose, and only nine percent strongly oppose. This is an important indicator that shows that the dissolution of the National Assembly is welcomed.

Commenting on the extent of acceptance of the statement “pardon convicts and give them a chance for a new start in the new era,” it is notable that those who strongly support it represent 12 percent, while a quarter say they support it to some extent. Meanwhile, those who oppose the statement to some extent are 19 percent and those who strongly oppose it are a sizable 42 percent, meaning that there is a noticeable majority that does not support pardoning

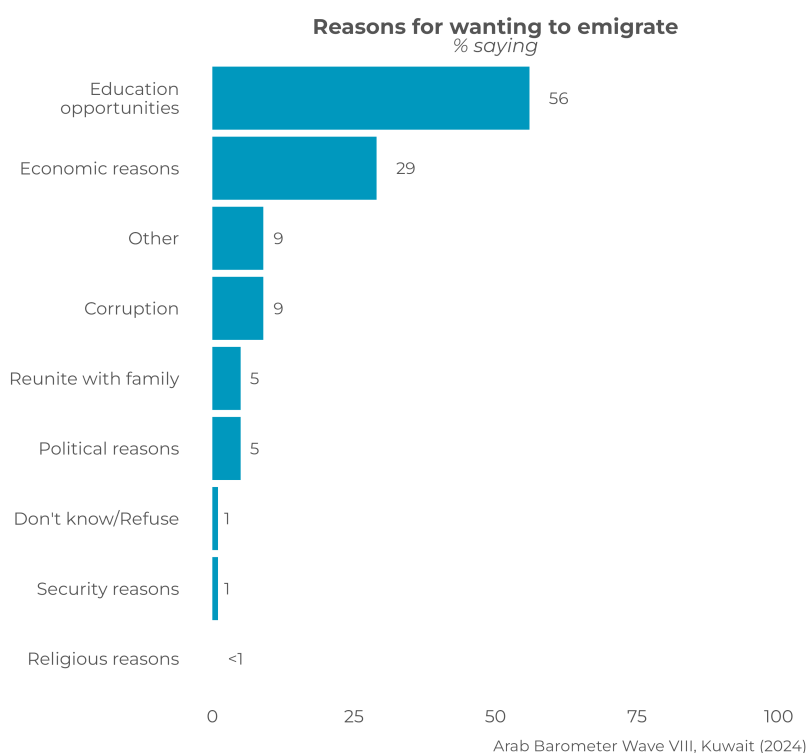
convicts, a matter that deserves scrutiny.

In the same context of debating controversial issues, the responses to the statement “restoring citizenship to all those whose citizenship was revoked because they do not pose a security threat” are as follows: strongly in favor (12 percent), somewhat in favor (18 percent), somewhat opposed (16 percent), and strongly opposed (51 percent). Notably, since the dissolution of the National Assembly in May 2024, the government has embarked on measures to revoke the nationality of hundreds of people, and amended the Nationality Law in September 2024 to make it easier to revoke citizenship, making the issue of nationality a hot topic.

When asked if pardoning convicts would give them a chance to start a new page in life, which is different from the previous question on the same topic, 14 percent strongly support it, 30 percent somewhat support it, 18 percent somewhat oppose it, and 36 percent strongly oppose it. Although the percentages have changed slightly from positions on the former statement, opposition to pardoning convicts is still the majority opinion.

Migration

In response to the question “have you considered emigrating?”, 16 percent of Kuwaitis say yes, while 84 percent say they do not think of leaving their country. The latter is a high percentage and an indication of a lack of desire to emigrate, which is probably related to perceptions of stability in Kuwait. For potential migrants, the reason for the wish to leave the country vary: to pursue educational opportunities (56 percent), economic reasons (29 percent), corruption (nine percent), family reunion (five percent), political reasons (five percent), and security reasons (one percent).



As for the preferred destination for those wishing to migrate, the United States ranks first (38 percent), followed by the United Kingdom (19 percent), Saudi Arabia (11 percent), the United Arab Emirates (ten percent), Germany and Canada (nine percent, each), and other countries to a lesser extent.

Regarding the extent to which immigrants from Arab countries are subjected to discrimination, 12 percent say that this happens, 28 percent think that this happens to some extent, while three-in-ten say that this does not happen usually, and 29 percent say that this does not happen at all. As for whether migrants from sub-Saharan Africa are discriminated against, 17 percent report that this happens, 22 percent report that this happens to some degree, 31 percent say that this does not usually happen, and 27 percent report that this does not happen at all. In the same context, for the case of immigrants from South and Southeast Asia, 24 percent report that discrimination against them occurs, 23 percent say that it occurs to some extent, while 30 percent say that there is no discrimination usually occurs, and 23 percent report that it does not occur at all.

The laws guaranteeing the rights of domestic workers are part of a controversial issue, and given its importance, a set of questions are formulated on this topic. The first question is about the extent of support or opposition to domestic workers keeping their passports, and the answers came as follows: strongly

in favor (23 percent), somewhat in favor (16 percent), somewhat opposed (17 percent), and strongly opposed (43 percent). On allowing domestic workers to enjoy one day off per week, 56 percent strongly support this statement, 28 percent somewhat support it, eight percent are somewhat opposed, and another eight percent are strongly against it. Regarding the acceptability of opening a bank account for domestic workers to receive their salaries, 65 percent strongly support the statement, 28 percent somewhat support it, three percent somewhat oppose it, and three percent strongly oppose it.

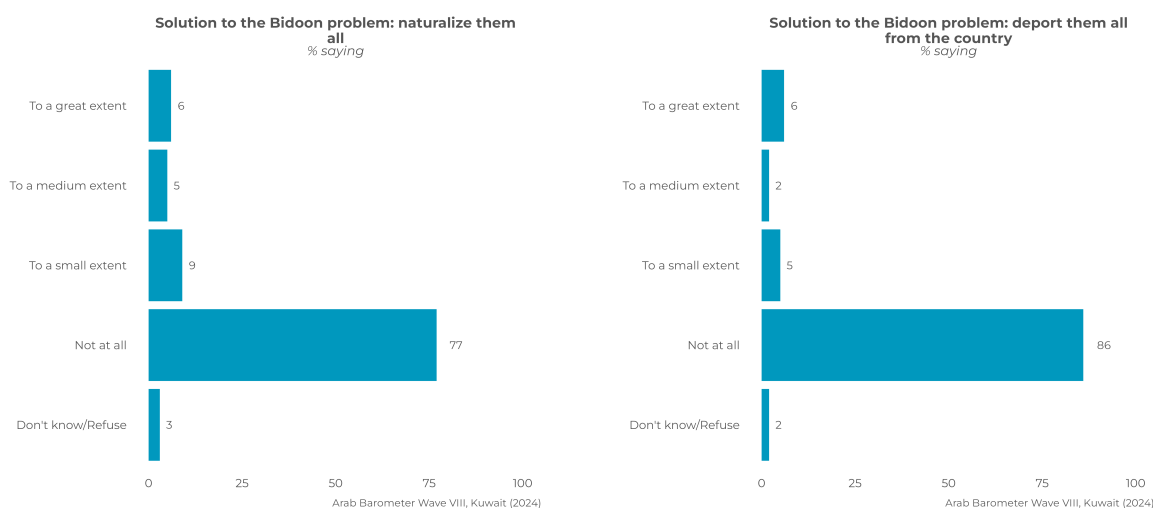
The Bedoon Problem and its Consequences

The first question in a set of questions on the Bedoon aims to determine the degree to which Kuwaiti citizens know when the Bedoon issue began, based on the hypothesis that a major part of the problem is based on a lack of knowledge about it. Thus, the question is about when the Bedoon phenomenon started, which actually started after the issuance of the Nationality Law in 1959, but it seems that the hypothesis is correct, as 39 percent say it started after the issuance of the Nationality Law in 1959, 16 percent say it started after 1985, while a large percentage (37 percent) say it started after the liberation of Kuwait in 1991, and seven percent admit they do not know. This indicates that the hypothesis is correct, as about six-in-ten Kuwaitis do not know when the Bedoon issue started, which adds another dimension towards solving the issue by raising awareness about it.

Commenting on the statement “the Bedoon issue threatens national security,” 42 percent say it does to a great degree, a fifth (19 percent) say to a medium degree, while 21 percent say it threatens it to a small degree, and 17 percent do not think it threatens national security at all.

As for how it is possible to solve the Bedoon problem, regarding the proposal to naturalize all Bedoons, six percent say that they support it to a large extent, while five percent support it to a medium degree, and nine percent to a small degree. A large majority say that this is not possible at all (77 percent). When the solution to the Bedoon problem was broken down, with the proposal to naturalize those whose birth was proven in Kuwait, naturalization is supported to a large extent by 23 percent, to a medium degree by 18 percent, and to a small degree by 26 percent of the population. Meanwhile, this solution is rejected by three-in-ten Kuwaitis (31 percent). When presented with the proposal to solve the Bedoon problem by naturalizing those who are eligible and deporting the rest, the answers are: agree to a large degree (18 percent), to a medium degree (15 percent), and to a small degree (25 percent). Four-in-ten (41 percent), however, reject the idea. As for the proposal for a solution by naturalizing those eligible and granting permanent residency to the rest, the answers are: agree to a large degree (42 percent), to a medium degree (19 percent), to a small

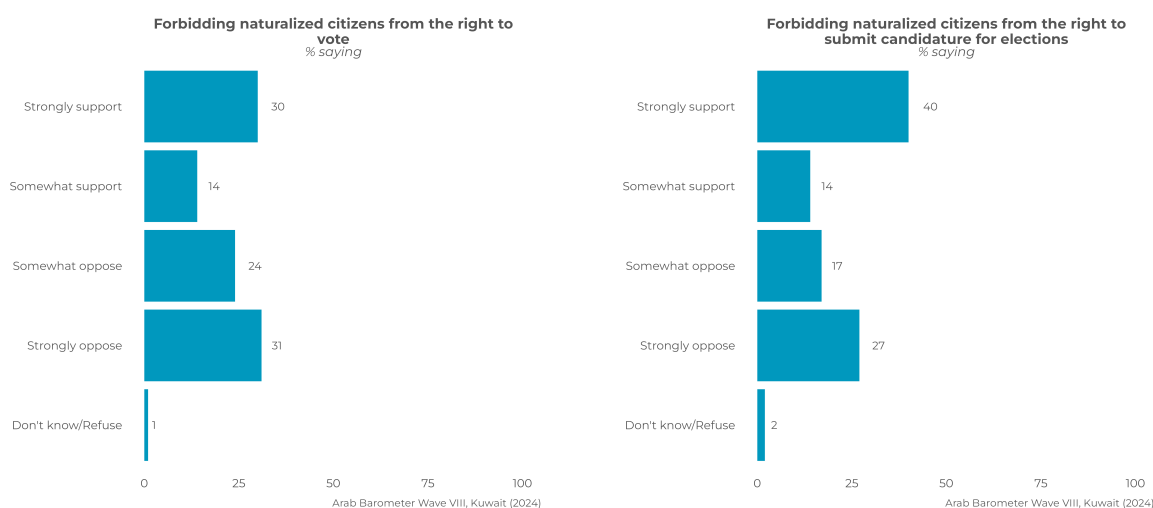
degree (18 percent), and not at all (21 percent). As for the solution proposal based on granting all Bedoon permanent residence and closing the file permanently, it is supported to a large degree by 26 percent, to a medium degree by 14 percent, to a small degree by 14 percent, and it is rejected by a plurality of 46 percent. As for the other proposal to solve the Bedoon problem, which included deporting them all from the country, the answers are as follows: supportive to a large degree (six percent), to a medium degree (two percent), and to a small degree (five percent), and an overwhelming majority rejects it (86 percent). The last proposal for a solution is to keep the situation as it is: support it to a large degree (one percent), to a medium degree (two percent), and to a small degree (eight percent), then the great majority (87 percent) rejects it. We conclude from this that there is no societal consensus on the Bedoon issue, and that extreme solutions are undesirable.



Naturalization and Elections

Regarding the inclusion of naturalized citizens in the elections, and since the question of citizenship has become a hot topic, due to the government withdrawing a number of naturalizations, the matter ended with the government issuing basic amendments to the citizenship law, which indicates an official desire to tighten naturalization and facilitate its withdrawal from naturalized persons. Multiple ideas were raised in this context, most of which are in the direction of supporting being strict with naturalized people. We asked Kuwaitis whether they support preventing naturalized citizens from voting in elections, and the answers are as follows: strongly support (30 percent), somewhat support this position (14 percent), oppose it to some extent (24 percent), and strongly

oppose it (31 percent). In other words, the majority opposes this measure. As for preventing naturalized citizens from running for elections, four-in-ten Kuwaitis say they strongly support it, 14 percent say they support it to some extent, and those who oppose it to some extent are 17 percent. Meanwhile, those who strongly oppose this measure are 27 percent of the population. As such, this measure receives absolute majority. However, this issue now, after dissolving the Parliament and freezing articles in the constitution, becomes more hypothetical than realistic.

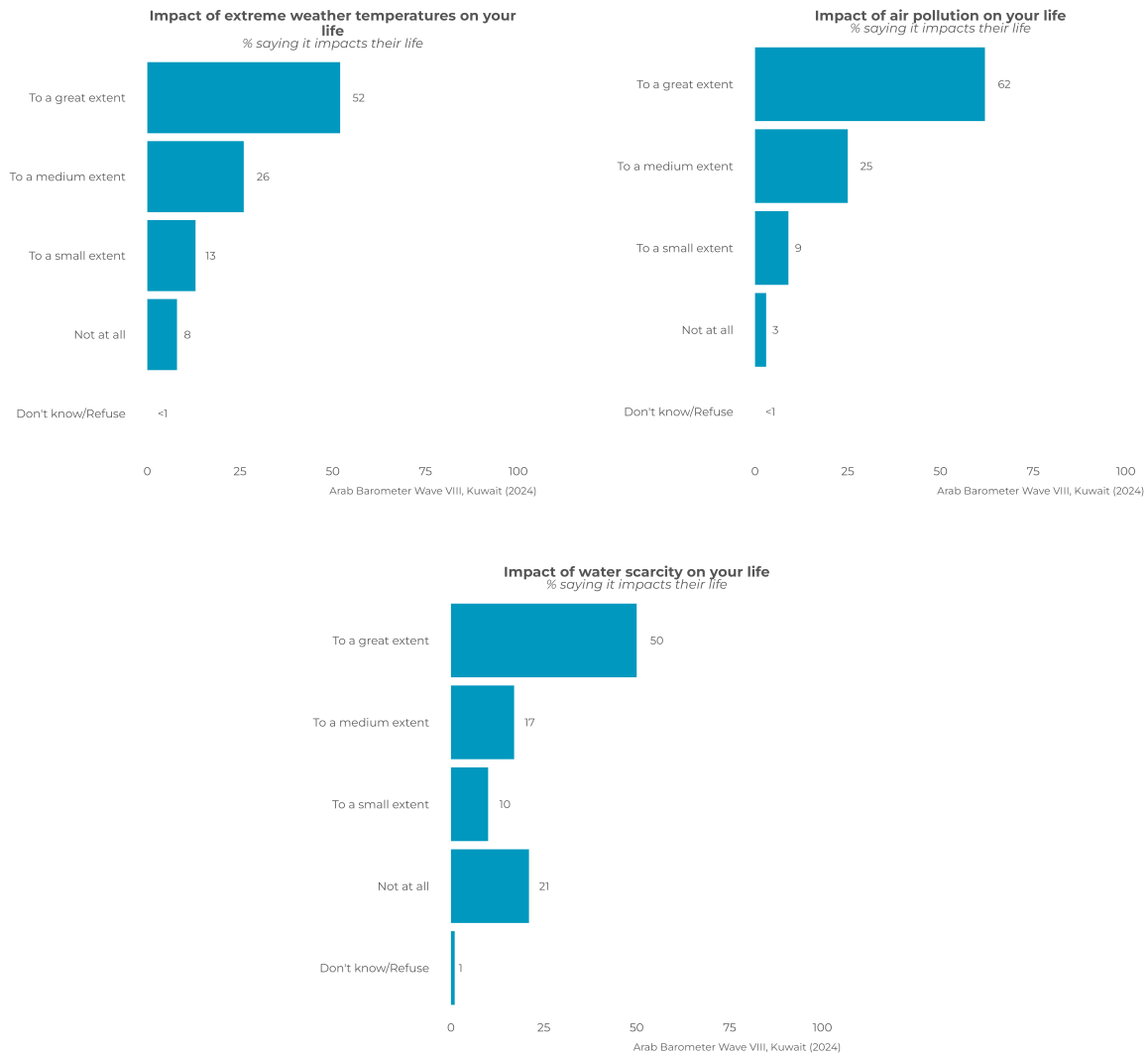


The Environment and Climate Change

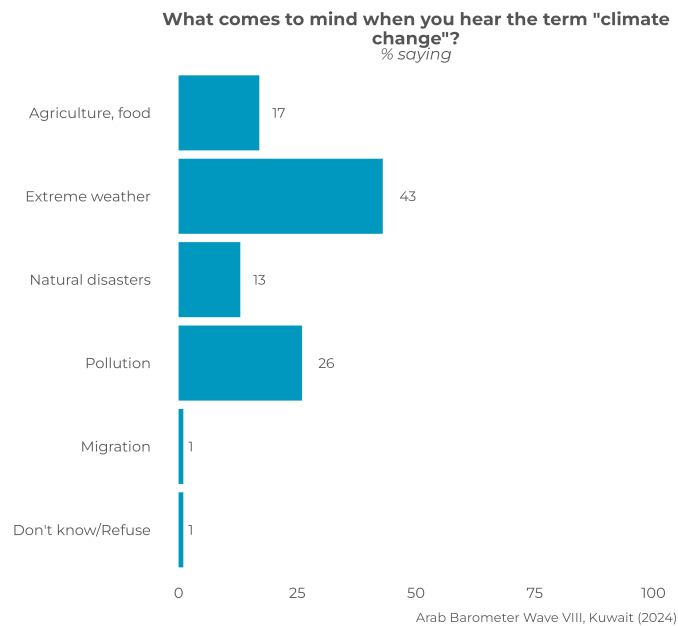
When asked about the biggest environmental challenges facing the country, a fifth of the Kuwaiti population cites air quality (21 percent), followed by pollution of water bodies (16 percent), climate change (seven percent), inefficient energy use (six percent), waste management (five percent). For the options of hazardous waste poisoning, lack of water resources, and pollution resulting from pesticides, fertilizers, and waste, each are the choices of three percent. In addition, the option of "all of the above are considered challenges" is chosen by more than a quarter of Kuwaitis (28 percent).

As for the impact of extreme weather temperatures on their life, the majority in Kuwait (52 percent) say that it impacts their life to a great degree, 26 percent to a medium degree, and 13 percent to a small degree, while eight percent say that it is not influential at all. Regarding the impact of air pollution on the quality of life, the percentage is larger, with 62 percent saying that it has an impact

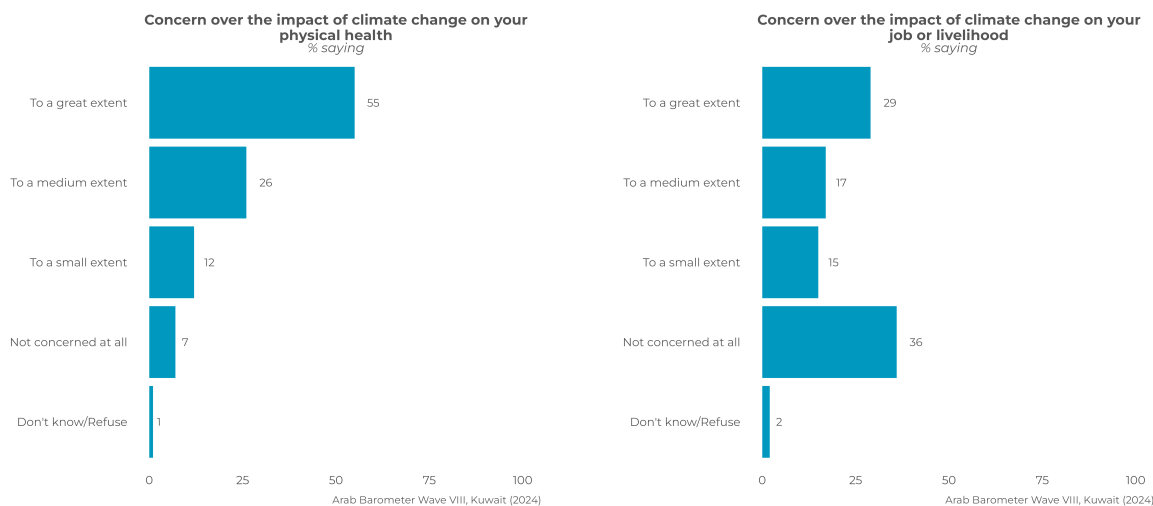
to a large degree, 25 percent choosing "to a medium degree", nine percent to a small degree, and no impact at all at three percent. Regarding the impact of water scarcity on people's lives, half of Kuwaitis say that it impacts their life to a great degree, 17 percent to a medium degree, one-in-ten say to a small degree, and a fifth (21 percent) say not at all. These numbers present no surprises since there are few water interruptions in general, as the country relies on water distillation plants.



In response to the question, "what comes to mind when you hear the term climate change?" the answers are as follows: weather temperatures (43 percent), pollution (26 percent), agricultural production (17 percent), and natural disasters (13 percent).



In response to the question, “are you concerned about your physical health due to the impact of climate change?”, more than half of the population (55 percent) express that they are concerned to a great extent, and 26 percent say they are concerned to a medium degree, compared to 12 percent saying they are concerned to a small degree. Meanwhile, seven percent say they are not worried at all. In the same context, the next question is about feeling concerned about the impact of climate change on mental health. In response, 42 percent express their concern to a great degree, 30 percent to a medium degree, 12 percent to a small degree, while 15 percent say they are not concerned at all. Regarding whether there is concern for the impact of climate change on the people’s personal safety, 48 percent say they are very concerned, three-in-ten (29 percent) say they are concerned to a medium degree, and 12 percent to a small degree. No more than one-in-ten (nine percent) say they are not concerned at all. Likewise, regarding the extent to which people are concerned about the impact of climate change on their livelihood, three-in-ten (29 percent) say to a large degree, 17 percent to a medium degree, and 15 percent to a small degree. Meanwhile, 36 percent say that they are not concerned at all. It seems that even with this moderate level of concern over climate change in Kuwait, it is less clear how this concern manifests itself.



In response to the question about the extent to which citizens contribute to climate change, 23 percent believe that they contribute to a large extent, 19 percent to a medium degree, and 35 percent say that citizens contribute to a small degree. Meanwhile, 23 percent believe that citizens do not contribute, and that the statement is not correct. Regarding whether the people of Western countries contribute to climate change, a third (33 percent) say that they contribute to a large extent, 22 percent to a medium degree, and 26 percent to a small degree, while 19 percent say that they do not contribute at all.

As for the contribution of governments of Western countries, the percentage has increased significantly to double, which indicates that citizens realize the difference between people and governments. Two thirds of Kuwaitis (66 percent) say that Western governments contribute to a large extent to climate change, while 22 percent say to a medium degree, five percent to a small degree, while only six percent say Western governments do not contribute to climate change at all. In the same context, the answers regarding the extent to which private sector companies in Western countries contribute to climate change are as follows: 67 percent see them as contributing significantly, 19 percent to a medium degree, and eight percent to a small degree. In comparison, a small minority say companies do not contribute to climate change at all (five percent).

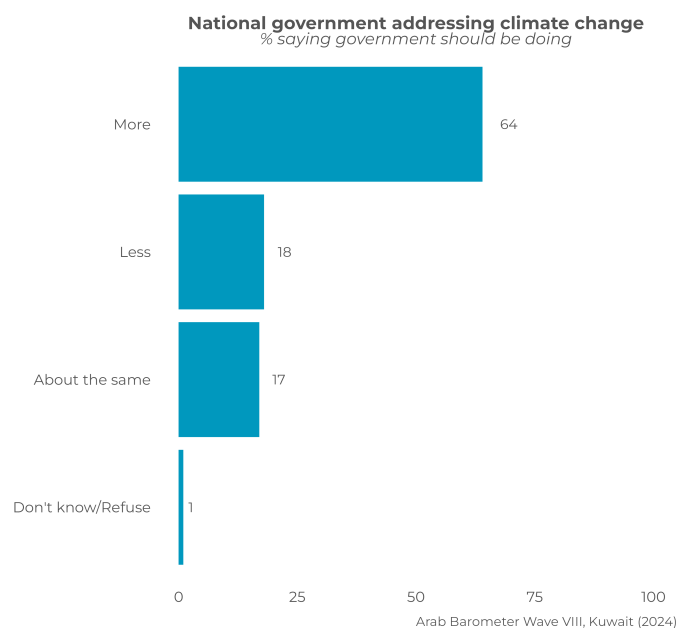
In answer to the question: “Do you find that citizens of Western countries are responsible for addressing climate change?”, 38 percent see that they are responsible to a great extent, while 25 percent see it to a medium degree, 25 percent to a small degree, while 12 percent say they are not responsible. Likewise, when talking about whether the governments of Western countries are

responsible for addressing climate change, 74 percent believe that they are responsible to a great extent, 17 percent to a medium degree, and five percent to a small degree, compared to only three percent who see them as not concerned at all.

But does the Kuwaiti government contribute to climate change? More than half the population (54 percent) believe that it contributes to a large extent, 20 percent to a medium degree, and 17 percent to a small degree. Meanwhile, one-in-ten Kuwaitis (nine percent) believe that the Kuwaiti government does not contribute at all to the problem of climate change. What about the private sector in Kuwait? The answer is 56 percent saying that it contributes to a large extent, 22 percent to a medium degree, and 12 percent to a small degree, while nine percent believe that it does not contribute at all.

In the same context, came the question about whether citizens in Kuwait are responsible for addressing climate change. More than a third of Kuwaitis (37 percent) believe they are responsible to a great extent, 20 percent to a medium degree, and 32 percent to a small degree, while 11 percent believe that they are not responsible at all. This differs when dealing with the government, as 77 percent saw it as responsible to a great degree, 15 percent to a medium degree, six percent to a small degree, and only one percent saying it is not responsible at all. Likewise, three quarters (74 percent) of Kuwaitis believe that the private sector in Kuwait is responsible for addressing climate change to a great extent, 18 percent to a medium degree, and five percent to a small degree, while only three percent believe that it is not responsible.

Meanwhile, 64 percent believe that the government should do more to address climate change, compared to 18 percent who say the government should in fact do less, and 17 percent think what the government does now in addressing climate change is enough.



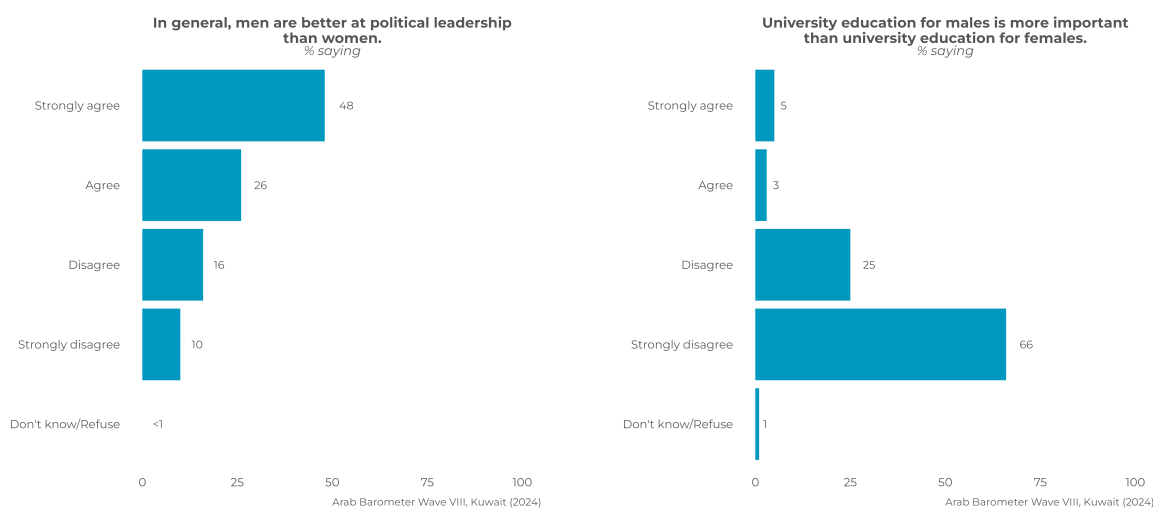
When asked the question, “do you support your government setting as a priority the development of alternative energy?”, eight-in-ten Kuwaitis (79 percent) say they strongly agree, 17 percent agree to some extent, two percent say they oppose to some extent, and only one percent say they strongly oppose. As for gradually phasing out fossil fuels consumption, those who support the idea strongly are 33 percent. Those who support it to some extent are 21 percent, and those who oppose it to some extent are 16 percent, and those who oppose it strongly are 28 percent. As for gradually ending the production of fossil fuels: a quarter say they support it strongly (26 percent), a fifth say they support it to some extent (20 percent), another fifth oppose it to some extent (20 percent), and a third say they strongly oppose it (33 percent). As for whether or not to support setting a date to stop using polluting cars: the plurality say they support it strongly (42 percent), a quarter support it to some extent (25 percent), and one-in-ten say they oppose it to some extent (11 percent), while those who strongly oppose it are 20 percent. Regarding the degree of concern about the possibility of natural disasters occurring in the country, 29 percent express that they are very concerned, 36 percent express moderate concern, 14 percent say they are somewhat unconcerned, and 20 percent are not concerned at all.

Gender

Responding to the statement "men are better than women in political leadership positions", roughly half of Kuwaitis (48 percent) say they strongly agree

with this (65 percent of males and 31 percent of females), while 26 percent agree (19 percent males and 33 percent females), 16 percent disagree (ten percent males and 22 percent females), and one-in-ten strongly disagree (five percent males and 14 percent females).

However, the position on education is completely different. On the statement “university education for males is more important than for females,” reactions are as follows: strongly agree (five percent), agree (three percent), disagree (25 percent), strongly disagree (66 percent). In the same context, when asked if “men and women should have equal opportunities at work”, half say they strongly agree (51 percent), a quarter say they agree (26 percent), while 14 percent disagree and eight percent say they strongly disagree.



Moving to the social realm, in response to the statement: “a woman can refuse to marry whomever her family chooses for her without her consent,” the answers are as follows: more than half of Kuwaitis say they strongly agree (58 percent), three-in-ten say they agree (30 percent), while small minority say they disagree (seven percent) or strongly disagree (four percent). Meanwhile, when it comes to the statement, “men and women should have an equal say in deciding who they marry,” the majority of Kuwaitis say they strongly agree (62 percent) or agree (28 percent), while only one-in-ten say they disagree (six percent) or strongly disagree (four percent).

In response to the statement that “the man should get the final say in family decisions”, 31 percent of the population strongly agree (52 percent of males and 14 percent of females), while 22 percent agree with the statement, and 30 percent disagree (19 percent of males; 39 percent of females), while 16 percent

strongly disagree (five percent of males and 25 percent of females). It is worth noting that there is a noticeable difference in these answers between the opinions of males and the opinions of females, and they have statistical significance, while there is not a significant gender difference in the case of the other questions.

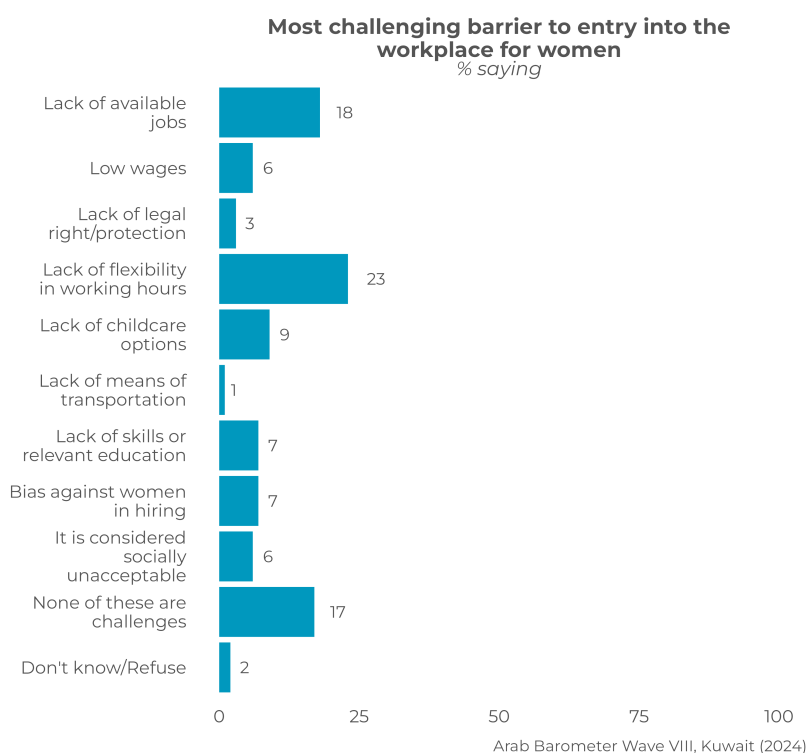
The next question is in the same context, as it examines the statement “men and women should have an equal say in family decisions”. Those who strongly agree are 39 percent (34 percent males and 45 percent females), a quarter (27 percent) say they agree (23 percent males and 32 percent females), and a fifth (19 percent) say they disagree (22 percent males and 16 percent females), while those who strongly disagree are 13 percent (20 percent males, and 6 percent females). Here, majorities support women, but on occasion there are variations between the answers of female and male citizens.

Perhaps this becomes clearer with the question of allocating seats for women in parliamentary elections, or what is known as the quota system. In the answers to the statement “a minimum number of seats must be allocated to women in Parliament,” a third (34 percent) say they strongly agree (16 percent males and 49 percent females), 38 percent say they agree (31 percent males and 43 percent females), while 14 percent say they disagree (24 percent males and six percent females), and another 14 percent say they strongly disagree (28 percent males and three percent females). As for allocating seats in the government, responses are consistent with the trend in the previous question, with 30 percent strongly agreeing with the statement (16 percent males and 45 percent females), four-in-ten (39 percent) saying they agree (34 percent males and 44 percent females), 16 percent saying they disagree (23 percent males and seven percent females), and 15 percent saying they strongly disagree (25 percent males and four percent females). From this, it seems that the statement repeatedly heard in politics, that women refuse to get their rights, is only a patriarchal viewpoint, which became widespread with the absence of women rights. This can be seen in the gaps between the opinions of males and females.

Regarding the topic of mixed education, although it is a different topic, it points to a similar direction. Commenting on the statement, “it is acceptable for female and male university students to attend lectures together,” a fifth say they strongly agree (14 percent males and 25 percent females), 23 percent agree (21 percent males and 25 percent females), 19 percent disagree (23 percent males and 16 percent females), and 37 percent strongly disagree (41 percent males and 34 percent females).

Barriers to entry into the workforce

On the question of the obstacles for women entering the workforce, Kuwaitis cite the following answers: inflexible working hours (23 percent), lack of jobs (18 percent), lack of childcare (nine percent), lack of required skills (seven percent), bias against women (seven percent), social unacceptability (six percent), low wages (six percent), lack of legal protection (three percent), and 17 percent say that none of the above factors are valid to explain the obstacles against women’s work. On obstacles to the work of men, we have the following answers: lack of jobs (38 percent), low wages (16 percent), lack of educational skills (16 percent), inflexible working hours (four percent), discrimination against men in employment (three percent), lack of legal protection (two percent), and the above reasons are not valid (17 percent).



Regarding problems associated with childcare options, the responses are as follows: care is not widely available (24 percent), its cost is high (38 percent), its quality is poor (30 percent), and it is socially unacceptable (two percent).

Regarding the distribution of responsibilities in the family, and who should be primarily responsible for the task of spending on food, Kuwaitis choose the mother

(26 percent), the father (23 percent), and "both of whom are equally responsible" (50 percent), with differences in answers between men and women. As for choosing the types of food to be purchased, the responsibility falls on the mother (33 percent) and the father (16 percent), and "both are equally responsible" (47 percent).

When it comes to women in political leadership, and whether this enhances the advancement of women's rights, there seems to be general acceptance of that statement: women political leadership promotes women rights to a large degree (39 percent), supports it to a medium degree (34 percent), and supports it to a small degree (14 percent). Meanwhile, only 12 percent think that it does not contribute to promoting women rights.



ABOUT ARAB BAROMETER

Arab Barometer is a nonpartisan research network that provides insight into the social, political, and economic attitudes and values of ordinary citizens across the Arab world.

We have been conducting rigorous, and nationally representative public opinion surveys on probability samples of the adult populations across the Arab world since 2006 across 15 countries.

We are the longest-standing and the largest repository of publicly available data on the views of men and women in the MENA region. Our findings give a voice to the needs and concerns of Arab publics.



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