



## Kuwait

### **Contribution to the list of issues in the context of Kuwait's second periodic report to the Human Rights Committee**

**8 August 2010**

1. The Political System
2. The Fight Against Terrorism
3. Judicial and Legislative Safeguards
4. Arbitrary Detention and Conditions of Detention
5. Torture
6. The Problem of the "Bedoun"
7. Right of Migrants
8. Freedom of Expression and Assembly

Alkarama recalls that it concentrates its work on four priority areas: arbitrary detention, enforced and involuntary disappearances, torture, and extrajudicial executions. We base our work primarily on the documented individual cases we submit to United Nations special procedures and Treaty Bodies, as well as our contacts with local actors including victims, their families, lawyers and human rights defenders.

As part of its consideration of the second periodic report of Kuwait by the Committee of Human Rights, Alkarama wishes to present some background information and express major concerns about the State party.

## **1. The Political System**

The country's political system allows for the Emir to appoint the Prime Minister and the Crown Prince. The Council of Ministers – or cabinet – must also be approved by the Emir. The ministries of defence, oil, interior, finance and foreign affairs are reserved for members of the ruling family.

Since 2006, legislative power has been exercised by the government and the national assembly, which is made up of five constituencies of ten members. The members are elected for a period of four years, but do not represent political parties. Political parties are given no legal status and members of government are not allowed to represent a political party. Parliament consists of 49 MP's and 16 ministers and may be dissolved by the Emir by way of a simple decree. A new election must be held within two months. In the last three years, the Emir has dissolved parliament three times.

Parliament is not consulted on the formation of government, but may challenge the appointment of elected members and motions of censure may be passed against the government.

Since 2005, women have had the right to vote and submit their nominations for elections.

Only Kuwaiti citizens have the right to vote, they represent about 385,000 voters, members of the police and army do not have the right to vote.

- 1. Is the State Party considering introducing political reforms in order to enable individuals other than members of the ruling family access to important ministerial roles, thereby giving citizens the opportunity for genuine participation, via elected members of parliament, in the determination of the make up of their government?*
- 2. Does the State Party intend to lift the restrictions on freedom of association by officially recognising the legality of political parties which today exist de facto?*

## **2. The Fight Against Terrorism**

Kuwait is one of the closest U.S allies in the region, and has U.S. military bases on its territory. Kuwait works closely with the U.S. in the ongoing fight against terrorism by providing support in military, diplomatic and intelligence fields as well as supporting the blocking of funding of humanitarian and charitable organisations deemed by the U.S. to be terrorist groups.<sup>1</sup> However, the U.S State Department regularly reports the shortcomings of the Kuwaiti effort against terrorism, attributing it mainly to insufficiencies in legislation and also to a "lack of will". Also noted is that the U.S. presence in the country increases the risk of terrorist attacks. This pressure on the Kuwaiti government has led to an action plan to the extent of 2.7 billion U.S. dollars for, among other things, the surveillance of "vital" facilities.<sup>2</sup> This pressure has created a hostile reaction by the Kuwaiti population to the state's cooperation with the U.S. Army. It is also one of the reasons that specific information about this collaboration is difficult to access, particularly in terms of extraordinary rendition<sup>3</sup>.

- 3. What practical cooperation does Kuwait have with the U.S in the fight against terrorism ?*

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<sup>1</sup> US State Department, *Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Background Note: Kuwait* (Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs : electronic information and publications office), 4 may 2010, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35876.htm> (accessed on 14 July 2010).

<sup>2</sup> US State Department, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2008, Kuwait* (Country Reports on Terrorism, Kuwait), 30 april 2009, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122433.htm> (accessed 14 juillet 2010).

<sup>3</sup> John S. Adams, *Foggy World of CIA 'Renditions' Might Include Jet with Local Ties*, Great Falls Tribune, 9 November 2009 - <http://www.expose-the-war-profiteers.org/archive/media/2009-5/20091109.htm> (accessed 14 July 2010).

4. *Have U.S forces or the CIA placed suspects in custody in Kuwait ? if so, where ?*
5. *Are U.S troops present during the interrogation of those suspected of terrorist acts against U.S facilities?*

On 11 August 2009, the Kuwaiti authorities reported that they had arrested six people accused of plotting an attack on U.S. troops stationed at Camp Arifjan, their largest military base in the country.<sup>4</sup> This base is used primarily as a transit for troops departing to and returning from Iraq. Media reports stated that the suspects had confessed. The court however, questioned the confessions on the grounds that the suspects were tortured. The prosecutor ordered an investigation into this matter. A new hearing was scheduled for January 2010.

6. *Which security forces usually carry out arrests in relation to terrorism? If it is agents of the State Security (Amn al-Dawla: intelligence) do they do so in the capacity of police officers or are they empowered to do so by the law? Are the defendants being held in the State Security buildings during custody and investigation? Do the security forces act under the supervision of a judicial authority, where appropriate?*
7. *Is there any civil authority empowered to control the intelligence services?*

Six Kuwaiti prisoners in the American camp at Guantanamo have been repatriated to their country. The authorities have implemented a program of rehabilitation for these ex-detainees. A centre has been arranged for ex-detainees of Guantanamo but also for ex-prisoners involved in terrorism cases. However, to our knowledge, the detainees at Guantanamo have been acquitted and all charges against them were quashed. Does forcing them into a rehabilitation program not contribute to their stigmatisation when they should be compensated for the injustice and arbitrary detention they have suffered for years? This program, like the one established in Saudi Arabia is strongly criticized within the country because it is seen as implemented on U.S. recommendation, and because it has totally failed in the neighbouring country.<sup>5</sup>

Alkarama was informed of the persecution suffered by **Abd Al-Aziz Sayir Al-Shamri** (عبد العزيز سايير عوين الشمري) by the Kuwaiti authorities because he was a former Guantanamo Bay detainee. Back in 2005, he was re-tried by a criminal court for belonging to Al-Qaïda. Despite the acquittal, the Kuwaiti authorities continue to harass him by continually sending him summonses for questioning. Al-Shamri was subsequently arrested on 6 July 2009 and again accused of belonging Al-Qaïda. After spending five months locked in solitary confinement in inhumane and degrading conditions, the Court has once again acquitted him. During his detention, he was not even able to exercise the most basic rights, guaranteed by law, and was not even able to receive visits from his family.<sup>6</sup>

8. *What status do these ex-prisoners have on arrival in Kuwait?*
9. *What is the content of the rehabilitation program, and how long does it last?*
10. *What is the profile of ex-detainees for terrorist cases and when do they benefit from this program (after conviction? After serving their sentence?)*
11. *Which institution is responsible for this program and decides on the choice of beneficiaries?*

<sup>4</sup> Reuters, *Kuwait says foils Qaeda plan to bomb U.S. Army camp*, 11 August 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE57A35F20090811> (accessed 14 July 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Jihad Abou Al'ess, *مركز كويتي لتأهيل عاندي غوانتانامو، جهاد أبو العيس* (Kuwait Centre for the rehabilitation of former prisoners of Guantanamo), Al-Jazeera, 27 October 2009, <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/F88173D8-4665-4D81-A4EC-5D7FBD3D5880.htm>, (accessed 14 July 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Communiqué d'Alkarama, *Koweït : Abd Al-Aziz Sayir Al-Shamri, ex-détenu de Guantanamo, harcelé par les autorités, (Abd Al-Aziz Sayir Al-Shamri, former Guantanamo detainee, harassed by authorities)* 5 March 2010, [http://fr.alkarama.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=724](http://fr.alkarama.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=724).

12. *How many ex-detainees have been subjected to this program?*

13. *What happens to these people afterwards?*

### **3. Judicial and Legislative Safeguards**

Kuwait has ratified the main UN human rights conventions. The authorities affirm that they can be summoned before the tribunals.

14. *What efforts have the authorities made to implement and recognise the articles of the Conventions in the judiciary? Are there cases where these Conventions have been raised before national courts? How have the judges responded?*

The UN institutions regret the absence of State party's collaboration. Thus the request for a visit by the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Especially in Women and Children (2005, renewed in 2007) has yet to be planned.

During the relevant period, three communications were sent to the authorities (two of them were cases submitted by Alkarama). Kuwait has not responded to any of them. In regards to the questionnaires sent by 21 Special Procedure Mandate-holders, Kuwait has only responded to two.

Since 2008, a Minister presides over the High Committee on Human Rights at the Ministry of Justice. The High Committee offers advice and is intended to raise awareness in human rights through the media, training of staff and to give their advice on the international human rights conventions.<sup>7</sup> It has several subcommittees including "the Monitoring Subcommittee" which "receives complaints by authorities or institution for human rights violation; set up committees to investigate these crimes and demand information and explanation to those authorities and institutions"<sup>8</sup>.

15. *Will the State Party consider improving co-operation with the UN bodies and in particular with the special procedures?*

16. *Which institutions can submit requests to the Monitoring Subcommittee? Has this Subcommittee received any requests? How many times has this occurred and from whom, for what motive and what were the results of the requests? What actions will the Committee have undertaken as part of its mission? What is the impact of its intervention in the institutions concerned by the allegations?*

17. *Has the State Party considered creating a national human rights institution in conformity with the Paris Principles?*

The independence of justice and the right to a fair trial is enshrined in law. On the legislative front, important safeguards are established in the law. The law provides an independent and impartial judiciary to ensure a fair trial. However, the Emir nominates judges personally, and the appointment of the judges must be approved by the government. Many judges are not Kuwaiti citizens and have two to three year renewable employment contracts. This employment uncertainty does not allow judges to exercise their functions in a sincere manner or have complete independence and limits the separations of powers doctrine and judicial independence.

18. *The State Party intends to pass a statute of judiciary enshrining the doctrine of separation applying to all judges in the country, including judges on contract, to ensure a real judicial independence.*

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<sup>7</sup> State Report presented according to paragraph 15 a) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 (in the context of the Universal Periodic Report), 22 February 2010, (A/HRC/WG.6/8/KWT/1).

<sup>8</sup> The second periodic report of Kuwait submitted to the Human Rights Committee pursuant to Article 40 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Kuwait City, 26 October 2009, (CCPR/C/KWT/2), para 28.

#### **4. Arbitrary Detention and Conditions of Detention**

Article 60 of the Penal Code provides that detention may not exceed 4 days during which they can contact their families. While lawyers may begin judicial proceedings during this period, they cannot visit their clients.

Article 69 provides that the length of pre-trial detention may not exceed three weeks. Before the expiry of this period, the accused must be brought before a judge who decides the possibility of extending it for further investigation. The maximum duration of such detention is six months from the date of arrest.

It can be extended for thirty more days by the court of competent jurisdiction after hearing the accused and examining the progress of the investigation.

According to the U.S. State Department, about 3,500 people are detained and awaiting trial, including 150 in the State Security Headquarters. Approximately 10% of prisoners are in pre-trial detention.<sup>9</sup>

*19. What types of offenses are persons detained at the headquarters of State Security prosecuted for? Do the local police see themselves controlled by a judicial authority?*

*20. What is the average length of detention?*

Among the long-term detainees are people of various nationalities accused of collaborating with Iraqi forces during their invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Some of them have served their sentence without having been released. Despite several hunger strikes in 2005 and 2006 to apply for release on humanitarian grounds, some detainees continued to be detained. The authorities did not take into account the fact that the trials of these people were not fair.

The Human Rights Committee retained the same position it had adopted in its previous concluding observations by expressing its concern about the number of prisoners detained for sentences handed down in 1991 by court-martials which did not meet minimum standards of proceedings. It recommended that these cases be examined by an independent and impartial organ and that they may be compensated, if necessary.

*21. How many people have been convicted by court-martials in 1991? Does the State party intend to liberate those who have served their sentence? Has it implemented the Committee's recommendation on this?*

The KAEHR (Kuwaiti Association for Basic Evaluators of Human Rights) has reported on in its report to the UPR that people have been detained indefinitely without charge or trial.<sup>10</sup>

*22. How many people are affected? Has the State party taken steps to remedy this situation?*

Conditions of detention are of concern in many prisons. Issues include overcrowded, poorly ventilated cells, and lack of care, adding to the fact that legal proceedings often drag on.<sup>11</sup> KAEHR reports the death of a prisoner in custody during 2009 because of his deteriorating health. According to KAEHR, persons awaiting deportation are detained in a specific prison sometimes for long periods.

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<sup>9</sup> US Department of State, *2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 25 February 2009 - <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/nea/119119.htm> (accessed 5 August 2010).

<sup>10</sup> Kuwaiti Association for basic Evaluators of Human Rights (KAEHR), *Report presented in the UPR Working Group*, 1 November 2009, p.4, [http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session8/KW/KAEHR\\_UPR\\_KUW\\_S08\\_2010\\_KuwaitiAssociationforbasicEvaluators%20HumanRights\\_A.pdf](http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session8/KW/KAEHR_UPR_KUW_S08_2010_KuwaitiAssociationforbasicEvaluators%20HumanRights_A.pdf) (accessed 5 August 2010).

<sup>11</sup> Kuwaiti Association for basic Evaluators of Human Rights (KAEHR), *Report presented in the framework of the UPR Working Group*, 1 November 2009, p.4, [http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session8/KW/KAEHR\\_UPR\\_KUW\\_S08\\_2010\\_KuwaitiAssociationforbasicEvaluators%20HumanRights\\_A.pdf](http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session8/KW/KAEHR_UPR_KUW_S08_2010_KuwaitiAssociationforbasicEvaluators%20HumanRights_A.pdf) (accessed 5 August 2010).

23. *The Attorney General is the supervisory authority of prison staff. Does he carry out checks or unexpected visits to places of detention? Is the Red Cross effectively authorised to visit all detention centres?*

24. *Does the government intend to establish a programme to renovate old, substandard detention facilities?*

## 5. Torture

In recent years the media have reported many cases of people tortured by Kuwaiti security forces; particularly those of Egyptian nationality including 'Alaa Ahmed As-Sayed Muhamad, living in Kuwait for nearly three years, who admitted torturing, raping and killing a young Pakistani girl whose body was never found, and raping 16 other girls. Arrested by police in January 2010, he was subjected to severe torture including electric shock at the police station before being presented to a psychiatrist who declared him mentally unstable.<sup>12</sup> A new hearing was held because of new evidence (including the reappearance of the girl, allegedly raped and murdered, who testified that she does not know the suspect), and the suspect was acquitted after 55 days of detention, on 7 March 2010.

Already in 2007, several similar cases had been reported by the media including an officer who had arrested two Egyptian nationals on 24 July 2007 and tortured them on charges of falsifying their work permits. According to one victim, she was beaten and burned with boiling water. The prosecutor did not want them released when it turned out that the charges could not be sustained because of signs of torture. Authorities said it was an individual case which would be sanctioned.

Alkarama has listed several cases of torture. In the case of **M. Khalif Amer Al-Anzi** (عامر خليف العنزي), Alkarama lodged a complaint with the Special Rapporteur on Torture on 11 and 16 February 2005 and with the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions on 24 April 2005. During the month of January 2005, more than twenty-five suspects from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were arrested. Seven of them were prosecuted on charges of assassination attempts or refusal to provide information on planned attacks. On 9 February 2005, the Kuwaiti authorities announced the death of Mr. Khaleel Amer Al Anzi, following a "sudden drop in blood pressure", according to the official announcement. Mr. Al-Anzi, a Kuwaiti citizen, aged 29 had voluntarily surrendered to the security services in Kuwait. The family, who saw the body of the deceased, said he died under torture: the hands and face bore deep wounds and mutilations. The authorities have refused to allow an autopsy to be performed by medical examiners chosen by the family. It should be noted that even the President of the Kuwaiti National Assembly did not accept the official version because on 10 February 2005, he publicly mentioned that Kuwait had ratified the Convention Against Torture, implying that the death of Mr. Al Anzi is a prime example of extrajudicial execution while in detention.

The authorities claim that investigations are conducted on all cases of abuse and those who are found responsible are sanctioned. The problem however, is that the results of these investigations are not made public.

25. *Have the authorities ordered an autopsy and investigated into the case of Al Anzi who seems to have died under torture? What action has been taken to requests for investigation submitted by the family of the victim?*

26. *Please provide information on cases in which members of the security forces were prosecuted for acts of torture and the number of complaints that have resulted in prosecution.*

27. *What are the measures taken to ensure that an investigation takes place when there are reasonable grounds for believing that torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment have been inflicted on detainees in the prisons?*

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<sup>12</sup> Al Wardani Abdelhafez, *حوادث ومحاكم، حوالتى عبد الحاف*, (Trial News), Ad-Dostor, 23 February 2010, <http://dostor.org/crime/10/february/22/7332> (accessed 5 August 2010).

The State says it does not carry out deportations of political refugees or foreigners to countries where they are at risk of torture. However, Alkarama presented the case of **M. Zhiya Kassem Khammam Al Hussain** (ضياء قاسم خمام الحسين), an Iraqi national who had been living in Kuwait for many years, who was arrested in his home 15 January 2007, without a judicial warrant and without being given the reasons for his arrest. Brutally tortured for one week at the headquarters of State Security Services, he was then transferred to an administrative centre for retention and was then forcibly removed by 31 January 2007 on a flight to Riyadh in Saudi Arabia.

In recent months, supporters of the Egyptian opposition presidential candidate Dr Mohamed El Baradei who was living in Kuwait were expelled to Egypt while they were peacefully expressing their political views. On 8 April 2010, three Egyptians were expelled, and more than 30 others suffered the same fate as they gathered to discuss the fate of the first three. However, it is established that torture is practiced on a large scale in Egypt, as supporters of Mr El Baradei have been arrested and prosecuted in the country,<sup>13</sup> some of whom are tortured by intelligence agencies.

## 6. The Problem of the "Bedoun"

Approximately 100,000 people did not get the nationality of the country to which they are indigenous. They are designated by the term "bedoun" (stateless). This condition leads to countless violations of their rights including the rights health, education, employment and housing. Over the years, the Kuwaiti authorities have created different categories of "bedouns" who are subject to different treatment by the government: some have certain rights while others are treated as undocumented aliens. Thus, a number of them have been recruited for positions, particularly in the police or government, and others get special passports in order to seek medical treatment abroad for example.

A bill intended, not to grant such persons the Kuwaiti nationality, but to improve their civil, legal and political rights has been withdrawn in early January 2010 by the government before it was debated in Parliament<sup>14</sup>. Previously, on 10 December 2009, a debate in Parliament about this project was cancelled as the required quota of members was not reached. The question therefore remains open.

*28. Does the State plan to take the necessary measures to combat situations of statelessness in accordance with the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 30 August 1961?*

## 7. Right of Migrants

To work in Kuwait, immigrants must have a "kafil" (guardian) of Kuwaiti nationality who is often also the employer. This condition increases their dependence on their employer and limits their freedom of movement, especially as in many cases, their passports are confiscated upon arrival in Kuwait.

A new Labour Code was adopted in December 2009 which has lifted some restrictions but upheld others, especially the sponsorship system, which is at least partly responsible for the working conditions. There was, indeed, introduction of a minimum wage for certain jobs, increased annual leave, prohibition of unfair dismissal and penalties for trafficking of workers. However, it seems that domestic workers, who are mostly women, are not affected by this new code.

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) reported numerous cases of violence against domestic workers in its report in 2010. "These workers continue to be exploited even if the government has sought to improve their legal protection. In November alone, 13 cases of suspected suicides or attempted suicides of domestic workers in Kuwait have been identified. In June, a delegation of trade unions in Indonesia condemned the Indonesian embassy in Kuwait for not taking action against employers suspected of raping and torturing some 350 Indonesian migrant workers. In

<sup>13</sup> Al-Jazeera, *أبناء عن ترحيل الكويت أنصارا للبرادعي*, (Information concerning the expulsion of supporters of El-Baradei by the Kuwaiti authorities), 10 April 2010, <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/DF085904-0B32-46BD-AB45-131D81619A9E.htm> (accessed 19 July 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Sa'ed Al Su'idi, *البرلمان الكويتي يسحب قانون البدون* (The Kuwaiti parliament removed the law of the « bedouns »), Al-Jazeera, 8 January 2010, <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/658BA24E-3990-47AA-A671-575CE752F085.htm> (accessed 5 August 2010).



October, the Indonesian Ministry of Labour suspended the deployment of domestic workers in Kuwait until 600 cases of abuse against domestic workers in Indonesia are resolved. In November 2009, the Indonesian government announced the repatriation of 1,750 Indonesian workers employed in the region, including Kuwait."<sup>15</sup>

*29. What are the legal measures and practical steps taken by the State to protect domestic workers from mistreatment by employers?*

*30. In the case of a complaint, can the State guarantee an impartial investigation and, where appropriate, prosecute the employer? Please provide statistics about these complaints, prosecutions and penalties imposed.*

The new Labour Code prohibits public employees from striking. Foreign workers who are often poorly paid and exploited, rarely strike, knowing they will be brutalized and punished, including by being deported. In 2009 nearly 7,000 Bengali workers protested against working conditions in the cleaning and waste collection company Al-Jawhara Al-Shyoukh to Jleeb. After a week of strike, hundreds of strikers were arrested by police on 29 July in Kuwait City – 200 were deported. The protests followed the withholding of wages by their employer for more than nine months, and inhumane housing conditions.

*31. What measures has the government taken in order to ensure control over working conditions and employment contracts as well as the accommodation of workers?*

## **8. Freedom of Expression and Assembly**

It seems that freedom of expression and assembly have been reduced in recent years. For example, several prominent people were prevented from entering the country, where they were supposed to be speaking publicly, in 2009 and early 2010; among them were Madawi al-Rasheed, Muhammad al-'Uraifi and Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd.

As mentioned above, supporters of Dr. Mohammad El Baradei, who wanted to create a local representation of his party in the Egyptian community in Kuwait, were imprisoned and deported. Some have seen their employment contracts terminated and their right of residence cancelled under the pretext of wanting to preserve good relations between Kuwait and Egypt.<sup>16</sup> These gatherings and this planned association did not violate Kuwaiti law.

*On what legal basis is the prohibition of such gatherings and ongoing repressive measures sanctioning Egyptian nationals resident in Kuwait founded?*

As for freedom of the press, it has been somewhat restricted in recent months. In 2006, legislation concerning the press was reformed and prison sentences were removed so that only a decision of a court may order the closure of a newspaper. The Penal Code, for its part, contains provisions that provide prison sentences for offences such as "defamation" or "offences against religion". Mr. Mohammad Abdelqader Jassem has recently experienced the effects of these changes. A complaint was filed against him by the Cabinet Minister of the Emir, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad, for his critical articles against the State, published on his website as well as in three of his books on politics. He was arrested on 11 May, 2010 and not released on bail until 28 June 2010. He was finally acquitted by the Court of Appeal in Kuwait on 12 July 2010. According to the Kuwaiti Journalists' Association, more than ninety defamation cases are being tried.

Amendments to the Code of Publications proposed by the Minister of Information should have been adopted by the National Assembly in early 2010. They provided for the criminalization of editors in the

<sup>15</sup> The International Trade Union Confederation, *Annual Survey of Violation of Trade Union Rights 2010*, 9 June 2010, <http://survey.ituc-csi.org/+Kuwait+.html> (accessed 5 August 2010).

<sup>16</sup> Al-Jazeera, *أنباء عن ترحيل الكويت أنصارا للبرادعي*, (Information relating to the expulsion of supporters of El-Baradei by the Kuwaiti authorities), 10 April 2010, <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/DF085904-0B32-46BD-AB45-131D81619A9E.htm> (accessed 19 July 2010).



case of press offenses. However, protests by the press union have meant that the changes have not been introduced to date. Among other clauses envisaged, it will impose a prison sentence of two years and fines of up to 200,000 dinars for insulting members of the royal family.<sup>17</sup>

*32. Will the State Party remove this draconian Bill to preserve relative freedom of the press existing in Kuwait?*

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<sup>17</sup> Jihad Abou Al `aynien, رفض الكويت لتعديل قانون الإعلام (Kuwait's refusal to amend the Media Act), Al-Jazeera, 29 January 2010, <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/1B87E00B-75BC-4D87-B545-25F063C847A2.htm> (accessed 19 July 2010).