

Amir, Crown Prince meet Speaker, MPs returning from Iraq, Jordan



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem and National Assembly delegation members who participated in the 29th AIPU conference. —Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khaled Al-Saud hands His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah an invitation from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud to attend the final ceremony of King Abdulaziz Camel Festival.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem and National Assembly delegation members who participated in the 29th AIPU conference.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan palace National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem. His Highness the Amir also received National Assembly delegation members who had an official visit

to the Republic of Iraq and participated in the 29th conference of the Arab Inter-Parliament Union (AIPU) held in the Jordanian capital Amman. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received Ghanem and the delegation mem-

bers who participated in the AIPU conference.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received an invitation from Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud to attend the final ceremony of King Abdulaziz Camel Festival in Riyadh to be held

this month. The invitation was handed to His Highness the Amir by Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khaled Al-Saud. The reception was attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. —KUNA

Jordan's King stresses importance of intensifying Arab efforts

AMMAN: Jordan's King Abdullah II on Sunday stressed the need to intensify efforts to find political solutions to the crises experienced by some Arab countries. This came during King Abdullah's meeting with the heads of Arab parliaments participating in the 29th Arab Inter-parliamentary Union (AIPU) Conference held in Amman, Jordanian News Agency (Petra) said. King Abdullah II stressed the importance of the role played by the AIPU in seeking to unify the Arab positions on the regional challenges. He pointed out that the challenges facing the Arab nation require cooperation, unified positions in the interests of the Arab countries, to ultimately achieve security and stability in the region. The Jordanian King reiterated his country's position on the Palestinian issue, praising AIPU's positions in support of the Palestinian people's rights. Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem praised Jordan's support of the Syrian and Palestinian refugees' camps, Petra said. King Abdullah appreciated support of His Highness Kuwait's Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for Jordan and Arab issues.

Protection for Palestinians

Ghanem had called the AIPU to work on providing protection for the Palestinian people, pay extra attention to Palestinian conciliation and reject normalization of ties with Israel. Whoever wants to support the Palestinian cause should be ready for a "diplomatic and political battle" in a collective fashion, Ghanem said in a speech before an AIPU Conference in Amman. He asserted importance of coordination with all international partners to highlight the cause of occupied Jerusalem.

Ghanem rejected all attempts to tarnish historic facts surrounding Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine. He said Kuwait has always been a staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause, foremost through its non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council where Kuwait was acting upon instructions of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, "the wise Arab leader," to issue a resolution to providing protection for the Palestinian people. All Israeli attempts to abort this resolution failed, he said, "triggering an American veto to topple this resolution." This resolution was then tabled to the UN General Assembly and won the support of 122 countries.

Ghanem said Kuwait parliament would table to the Inter-Parliamentary Union's (IPU) conference in Doha, Qatar, next month an urgent motion to provide protection for the Palestinian people, urging AIPU members to support this move. He said Kuwait's National Assembly was ready to carry out any role to address differences among the Palestinian people. Ghanem called on AIPU to reject



AMMAN: Kuwaiti Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem speaks during the AIPU conference in Amman, Jordan. —KUNA

the normalization of relations with Israel. "We should, with one voice, reject normalization with an occupier and a criminal," he stressed. "No normalization with murderers of children and rapist of land."

Decisions approved

The AIPU Political and Parliament Relations Committee Affairs approved Sunday a number of decisions regarding the Palestinian issue, Jerusalem, and Israeli violations against the Palestinian people, and sacred Islamic and Christian sites. The committee, which included two members from the Kuwaiti Parliamentary delegation, Rakan Al-Nisf and Dr Ouda Al-Ruwaie, tackled activities within the Inter-Parliamentary Union, relations with international parliaments and other organizations, and coordination of the Arab Work Group in regional and international parliamentary unions, including Arab-African parliamentary cooperation in various fields.

Meanwhile, the committee announced opposition to all initiatives that do not heed Palestinian people's interests, especially much-anticipated US President Donald Trump's 'deal of the century.' The committee members had reiterated support to the Palestinian people and affirmed that the Palestinian cause would remain the core issue for the whole Arab nation, Chairman of the committee and Kuwaiti MP Dr Ouda Al-Ruwaie said following the committee meeting. They also concurred that no peace or stability could be achieved in the Mideast without a comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestinian cause based on the relevant UN resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, he pointed out.

Ruwaie noted that the Arab lawmakers also condemned the repeated Israeli assaults on Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Israeli theft of Palestinian money through deducting sums from the Palestinian taxes money. The committee had also called for re-invigorating formerly approved plans and resolutions to back the struggle of the Palestinian people and as well as the AIPU Palestinian people steadfastness committee's plan intensify efforts to freeze the Israeli Knesset membership in the Inter-Parliamentary Union, he clarified. He, furthermore, stated that the committee had denounced the continued Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights. —KUNA

EU, Kuwait fluent partners in fighting terrorism: Official

KUWAIT: Kuwait and the European Union (EU) enjoy a very fluent partnership in terms of fighting terrorism, said a senior official yesterday. "We are in the process of developing ideas already discussed some months ago to identify many concrete projects to feed our partnership," said Gilles de Kerchove, Counter-Terrorism Coordinator at the EU on his visit to Kuwait. In an exclusive interview with, De Kerchove said the two-day visit came "because we want a strong and balanced relationship, especially in regards to counter-terrorism."

The EU, by definition, is in favor of multilateralism and regional cooperation. Thus, we would like to see the GCC conflict come to an end. If we see we can do something to help in the process, of course we will do it." On his meeting with Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, the EU official noted that it mainly focused on combating the threat of terrorism, "as the Global Coalition has nearly completely destroyed the physical 'caliphate of Daesh'". Daesh is the Arabic acronym of the so-called Islamic State (in Iraq and the Levant and/or Sham). He elaborated saying "we are also concerned with dealing with the remains of Daesh, addressing the legacy and ideology of the group, which is still very strong and active. This can be addressed and detected in various ways, like through inspection of prisoners charged with terrorism, access to evidence, as well as aviation security, document fraud and terrorism-financing."

Therefore, Kuwait, currently a member of the UN Security Council, is seen by the EU as a "fluent partner" in this regard, noted De Kerchove. On the degree of terrorism prevalence in the Middle East region, especially in Iraq and Syria, he said "I have been to Iraq recently. They are confronted by many difficult challenges, including the huge number of those arrested on terrorism charges, the reconstructing of the security sector and politically help justice and reconciliation processes triumph, especially in post IS-Mosul." In Syria, the current situation is different, according De Kerchove, "especially after the US announcement of withdrawing its troops... its impact is difficult to predict with the existence of many major regional players like Turkey."

In Europe, "we have reduced significantly our vulnerabilities," he said. "The EU worked a lot in the last 3-4 years to address the challenge, and I think that explains why all security services are in a position to foil plots, to stop, and detect people who are close to the 'tipping points'; when they are likely to commit attacks." The Global Coalition did a great job in destroying the physical caliphate of Daesh, which reduces the ability of Daesh to plan attacks from their territory, but that doesn't mean there is no threat anymore. "The main threat, as we see it, is now 'home-grown': people that have not travelled to Iraq and Syria, who have no link with either Daesh or Al Qaeda, but are inspired by these ideologies. And those challenges for the security services, for several reasons," he said. First of



Gilles de Kerchove

these challenges is the number of people believed to be intensely radicalized, which is quite significant, he noted. "Being radical is not an offence in itself nor a crime," he indicated. "What is criminal is when one starts preparing a terrorist attack. And it's not easy to detect this tipping point. We still have a number foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), who went to Syria and Iraq and have not returned yet. So we have to be extra vigilant because some of them might want to return."

As for the other side of the coin, De Kerchove said that the far-right in Europe is also an issue to tackle, as it is "on the rise" yet still "marginal." Such political parties and populist movements do have followers and could as well have a negative impact on Muslim communities throughout Europe through the exploitation and justification of Islamophobia. "It is worrying... because we want to ensure societal cohesion, and that Europe remains open for migrants and asylum seekers," he said.

On what he termed "virtual caliphate", De Kerchove travelled to Silicon Valley in March 2017 to discuss with the IT industry how to tackle online extremism. At the European Council of June 2017, EU leaders called on the industry to help combat terrorism and crime online. Leaders expect the IT industry to establish a forum and to improve the automatic detection and removal of terrorist-related content, complemented by relevant legislative measures at EU level, if necessary. In September 2018, the Commission proposed new rules to stop the spread of terrorist content online. The measures include amongst others a one-hour deadline for content to be removed following a removal order from national competent authorities.

The EU leaders adopted a declaration on combating terrorism following the terrorist attacks in Madrid on March 11, 2004, agreeing to create an EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator as part of the measures foreseen in this declaration. In his capacity as Coordinator, De Kerchove of Belgium was appointed in September of 2007, and is in charge of coordinating the work of the Council in combating terrorism, presenting policy recommendations and proposing priority areas for action to the Council, monitoring the implementation of the EU counter-terrorism strategy, ensuring the EU plays an active role in the fight against terrorism and improving communication between the EU and other countries, among other duties and tasks. —KUNA