

Local Spotlight

FOR THE SAKE OF LOVE



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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All religions forbid murder and many set extremely harsh punishments for those who break this basic human taboo. But extreme emotions can often override societal taboos, especially in the case of love and violence. Such seems to have been the case recently in Kuwait, when a woman killed her husband's alleged paramour. In the end, neither will get what they want as the killer will end up in jail and possibly facing the death penalty and the other lady has lost her life.

The killer was reportedly to have said that the woman was destroying her family. The details of this sad affair will now be heard before the court. Violence is never an answer for affairs of the heart. According to the accused she was also beaten by the husband, a fact she blamed on his girlfriend.

Whatever the truth of this particular case, it reflects a sad reality in much of the world and especially in the Arab regions. Women are too dependent on men for their survival. There are few options for women in abusive relationships, almost no support from government or health care authorities and society almost always tends to turn a blind eye. In fact, it's considered a social taboo to talk openly about domestic abuse - physical, verbal or psychological. And yet many women in Kuwait and elsewhere in the region suffer from abusive relationships.

Kuwait needs to establish a hotline and more support for abused women. It is our right and our duty to protect those most vulnerable in our communities and to provide them sanctuary and support. There have been some efforts in recent years to raise awareness about this important issue in Kuwait but more needs to be done and more concrete actions taken to help women and children living in abusive situations.

in my view

KUWAITIS FACE DISCRIMINATION TOO

By Dhari Al-Rashed

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It may surprise some to learn that Kuwaitis face a range of discriminations in their own country. These range from not being able to rent an apartment, hotel room to being discriminated against over jobs.

Kuwait is a great country. It benefits its nationals and non-nationals arguably more than any other country on the globe. What other country has 70 percent of its population being foreigners? What other country hands out cash to its nationals for no reason? What other country hands out huge amounts of money to other nations when they need help? Kuwait is a great country and there is no doubt about that. However there is a lack of laws that protect its citizens from discrimination. And that is something I find mind-boggling.

As a Kuwaiti citizen I have certain limitations placed on me. The first one and I believe this is the most important one, since it restricts a basic life necessity is that I cannot rent any apartment or even house I choose. That is due to various laws that put certain restrictions on landlords if they choose to rent to Kuwaitis. If it was a non-Kuwaiti they were renting to, they would not have those limits. Therefore the majority if not all landlords in Kuwait will not rent to Kuwaitis. A small amount of property owners will rent out to Kuwaitis only if they are married. That is due to their fear that single Kuwaitis will have parties all the time on their property. Some would also not rent out to single foreign individuals, due to the same party fear.

No hotel room for you

Another limitation on us is that hotels will not give Kuwaitis a room if they are single. If you are married you can get a room but only after providing your marriage certificate. This rule I do not understand what so ever. What purpose does this rule serve?

I sometimes like to change my environment and get away from my house. I don't necessarily want to travel

outside of Kuwait. My need for a change would be satisfied if I get a hotel room for a couple of days. But due to the law prohibiting hotels from renting out to Kuwaitis, they are limited to hotels that have cameras in the corridors. Those cameras are monitored 24/7. And if a guest invites someone to the room that is of the opposite sex I will be asked to leave immediately. Again I ask what is the purpose of this limitation? Morality is instilled by parents and kids can engage in illicit activities without being inside a hotel room.

The private sector

Some private sector companies in Kuwait also discriminate against us in our own country. Due to the financial aid that citizens receive from the government, if they work in the private sector. Employers have been paying Kuwaitis less than foreigners doing the exact same job as they are. Their excuse is that a citizen will get paid more in total once you factor in the government aid. I'm sorry is that money coming from the employers own pocket? No. I'm sorry that non-nationals don't get the aid. But, how could you rationalize paying your employee less because his government provides them with such benefits? I am all for team spirit, and I do understand how the aid can cause resentment in the work place. However, it should be up to the citizen to accept a pay cut not up to the employer to decide.

Discrimination laws are implemented all over the world. We need them here to protect Kuwaitis for all the reasons mentioned above. We need a law that prohibits landlord from discriminating against us. The hotel law should be abolished. And finally there should be a law that forbid employers from paying Kuwaitis less, unless they agree to it. Like I said Kuwait is a great country. Let us make it greater by protecting its citizens and also non-citizens from discrimination here and let us not make pride stop us from admitting that there is a problem and deal with it head on.

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: There are both a national ice hockey team in Kuwait and private teams.
— Photo by KUNA/ Ghazy Qaffaf