



Kuwaiti women flash their passports as they arrive to cast their votes at a polling station.



KUWAIT: Officials count votes after polling stations closed their doors yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



A Kuwaiti policewoman bodychecks a woman voter as she arrives to cast her vote at a polling station.

## VOTERS OPTIMISTIC NEW PARLIAMENT WILL BE MORE PRODUCTIVE

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** The first hours at the polling stations for the 2016 parliamentary elections yesterday saw a moderate turnout of all age groups. Senior citizens were seen casting their ballots in the first hours of the day in all main and sub-committees compared with previous elections.

In Salwa in the first constituency, Mansour Al-Mansour, a 56-year-old retiree, voted for former opposition MP Adel Al-Damkhi, who he believes will win. "I always participate in the elections - my whole family is voting. I feel this is a national responsibility and I want to vote for an MP who will present a good performance. I was disappointed with the performance of the previous parliament, but I'm optimistic that the new parliament will be more productive, which will improve the situation in the country," he told Kuwait Times.

Many candidates have agents representing them in committees at polling stations

to monitor the voting process. Talal Al-Hamadi is an agent of candidate Roudhan Al-Roudhan at the Rawda polling station in the third constituency. "Voter turnout has been great - they are coming since morning. We expect more voters to come in the evening. According to a survey we did, our candidate is leading here in Rawda, and is in fifth place overall in our constituency. I'm sure he will win," he pointed out.

Mahmoud Al-Khalif from Egypt is a judge at the main committee in Rawda, and this is his first experience here in Kuwait. "I have been judging elections in Egypt for the past 30 years. Compared to Egypt, the elections here in Kuwait are much more organized. I'm glad to work on these elections, and the voters are disciplined and cooperative. We haven't faced any problems, and the majority of voters till now have been younger people," he stated.

Mohammed Al-Jaber, a 30-year-old employee at the ministry of awqaf, said he

was voting for the first time. "I voted for former MP Ali Al-Omair, as I believe he was productive and had achievements for the benefit for our country. I wasn't satisfied with the performance of the previous Assembly, so I decided to vote this time, hoping for a better parliament. I feel that Omair will win, and I hope he will resolve some of the problems we face," he said. Female voters at the Adailiya polling station were unwilling to speak to Kuwait Times.

The number of ballot papers voters use to mark the name of their candidate is the same as the number of registered voters. "There are no spare or additional ballot papers, so each voter can only use one paper. If he makes a mistake, he won't get another one and can tell the judging committee about his case. But we haven't faced any such cases yet. After the voter receives his ballot paper, we stamp his citizenship document," explained judge Hani Al-Hamdan at the main committee in Khaldiya in the third constituency.



A Kuwaiti woman writes on her ballot paper before casting her vote for the parliamentary elections at a polling station yesterday.



KUWAIT: Kuwaitis head to the polls to choose parliamentary representatives, in Kuwait City, yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat and AP

## CANDIDATES WHO CARE FOR PEOPLE WILL WIN: VOTERS

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Several citizens from the fourth constituency expressed confidence that candidates who care for the people will win, adding they expect a good number of opposition MPs to be victorious, with a 70 percent turnover in the constituency. They said some tribal candidates have a good chance to win, and they intend to defend citizens and their issues that were ignored in the past. They said the most important issues that interest them include revocation of nationalities, housing, education and bedoons.

Fahd Al-Dhafiri, who works for the social affairs and labor ministry, said housing is very important and must be tackled strongly, because most youth are suffering because of it. He added bedoons' rights have been ignored "although they have been living among us for more than 50 years", and the upcoming Assembly should serve them justice.

Hind Al-Harbi, who works for the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) as an engineer, said projects like roads and bridges should be built quickly to avoid problems. She urged the coming Assembly to pay attention to issues that concern citizens. She said new residential areas need planning that is parallel to the construction

activity to avoid burdening the old roads network. Meanwhile, in the fifth constituency, several young voters expressed optimism about electing the best among the candidates among men, but said it was difficult for women to succeed in this constituency. They said there is a heavy presence of tribes in this area, especially the Awazem, from whom a good number of candidates are expected to win. Their concerns include nationality withdrawals, housing, health and education.

Meanwhile, a judge in the fourth district cancelled the vote of a man because he is mentally disabled and did not know whom he wanted to vote for. He had arrived at the polling station with his brother. Another vote of a woman was scrapped after she attempted to photograph her ballot paper by phone. On the other hand, the education ministry warned school administrations not to celebrate if a candidate who is a relative of one of the employees wins. The ministry asked administrations not to get involved in such matters and concentrate on educational affairs.

### Development

Social Affairs and Labor Minister Hind Al-Subaih lauded security efforts to ease the voting

process after she cast her vote at Yousuf bin Essa School in Abdullah Al-Salem in the second constituency. She hoped the coming Assembly will concentrate on development and work together for the sake of Kuwait. Meanwhile, Dr Fayeza Al-Kharafi, voting in the same school, asked voters to vote for competent candidates, adding "we should elect 50 candidates who work for the country's development and tackle issues such as housing and education and stay away from conflicts and disputes".

The interior ministry's relations and security information director general Brig Adel Al-Hashash said 15,000 security personnel are participating in securing the elections. Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Faisal Al-Humoud Al-Malik Al-Sabah toured several election committees in various areas of the governorate. He said he is satisfied with the election process and optimistic about its success.

Meanwhile, State Minister of Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah said Kuwait is witnessing a highly-organized democratic festival, which means the society wants to participate and make its voice heard. "We in the government hope that we succeed in organizing the voting process through coordination by various departments," he said.



KUWAIT: Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah is seen inside a polling center yesterday.

## GOVERNORS URGED VOTERS TO ELECT CANDIDATES TO SERVE NATION BEST

**KUWAIT:** Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday urged voters to choose the candidates who can best represent them at the National Assembly. People's choice of the 'best' representatives is likely to support development in the country, as well as contributing to the implementation of the Fourth Structuring Plan 2040, Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khaled said in a press statement.

He added that the new parliament would play a significant role in order to realize these expectations. The Governor congratulated the Kuwaiti political leadership on the "democratic celebrations", that crown the march of one of the oldest and well-established democracies in the region.

He also highly appreciated the efforts by the ministries and other state bodies involved in the process to guarantee smooth elections, the Interior Ministry and the Ministries of Information, Justice, Education, and Health, besides the Kuwait Municipality and the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD). According to Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khaled, Ahmadi officials made sure that all the requirements of the 'aspired electoral process' were provided.

Meanwhile, Al-Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Faisal Al-Humoud Al-Malek Al-Sabah had an inspection tour in several polling centers in the governorate. In a press statement, Sheikh Faisal Al-Humoud expressed satisfaction over the pace of the elections that proceeded so easily and smoothly. He commended the integration of roles by all the parties involved in the process, representatives of state bodies, as well as the voters, males and females.

Sheikh Faisal Al-Humoud also expressed optimism that the elections would be crowned with calm and suc-

cess amid a climate of honest competition, integrity and transparency. The Governor urged the voters to choose nominees capable of meeting requirements of the future stage.

Participation in the elections and voting is a national duty, to carry on with the democratic march in Kuwait, the country of freedoms, law and constitution, Faisal Al-Humoud said. He wished success for all those who can best serve the nation.

Governor of Mubarak Al-Kabeer retired General Ahmad Abdullatif Al-Rejabb reiterated the importance of taking part in this democratic process for the best interest of the homeland. Speaking during his tour to a number of polling stations for the parliamentary elections 2016, he praised cooperation between voters and candidates with the judges and security personnel as well as their adherence to instructions in this regard. Rejabb also hailed efforts exerted by the interior ministry for the well preparations to ensure smooth electoral process. In the meantime, Capital Governor Lt Gen Thabet Al-Muhanna said that Kuwait's longtime democracy is among the oldest in Arab region, proving success over the years. Muhanna made the statement during a tour that included a host of polling stations in the various areas of the governorate where voters cast their votes in the National Assembly (parliament) elections for the 15th Legislative Term.

He said that the huge turnout reiterates the strong sense of responsibility of the Kuwaiti people and their keenness to elect the candidates who can best fulfill expectations of the nation. The Governor highly appreciated the efforts exerted by the various ministries and other government bodies to secure a smooth election process. — KUNA



A disabled Kuwaiti man is helped to the polls.



Kuwaiti men wait outside a polling station.

## VOTERS BRAVE THE COLD TO ELECT NEW PARLIAMENT

**KUWAIT:** Amid the notable drop in temperature in Kuwait and rain showers, atmosphere of competition for the 2016 National Assembly elections yesterday, added a distinctive and warm atmosphere which blended in with the colors of candidates' slogans. Voters were

eager in the early hours to wear heavy clothing where candidates erected fixed and mobile umbrellas amid expectations for more rain later in the day. Kuwait's sky saw intermittent clouds accompanied by scattered showers in several areas. — KUNA