

# MP HAYEF URGES COLLABORATION AMONG COLLEAGUES

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** In a series of posts he made on his Twitter account, MP Mohammad Hayef stressed that MPs and the government belong to the same country and that they both serve the country's greater good regardless of any electoral benefits or gains. He also stressed that MPs have no fear of dissolving the current parliament because they have already done their part in so many issues such as citizenship withdrawals. Hayef urged his colleagues to be united and avoid making individual decisions about grilling motions or any other issues.

"The opposition must have one word," he said, adding that opposition members should cooperate and consult with each other. Hayef also noted that an opposition group consisting of 26 MPs (which was formed last December at MP Mohammed Al-Muttair's Diwan) met this week to discuss the grilling motion filed against Information Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, stressing that 'Shura' (consultation) is a main principle in Islam and that people are stronger together.

Commenting on the citizenships withdrawal issue, Hayef hailed the efforts of Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah in this regard, and stressed that MPs have the right to call for a meeting with all parties involved to discuss various issues. "The opposition is in pursuit of all means of reform in order to solve the citizenships issue and amend the elections law," he underlined, pointing out that each step forward made by the government in this direction will be met with two from MPs, which implies willingness for full cooperation.

### MPs' immunities

The parliament's legislative committee is scheduled



MP Mohammad Hayef

to meet at 9:30 am today in order to discuss lifting the immunity of four MPs; Dr Waleed Al-Tabtabae, Dr Jam'an Al-Harbash and Mohammed Barrak Al-Mutair in relation with investigating cases number 946/2011 and 383/2011 in which they are facing charges of breaking into the parliament's building. The committee will also discuss a fourth request to lift the immunity of MP Ahmad Al-Fadhli in relation to court cases. The committee will discuss amendments proposed to law number 111/2015 (the juveniles law) to raise the juvenile's legal age back to 18.

Meanwhile, the parliament's educational committee will meet to discuss the investigations made concerning unaccredited degrees and certificates. The discussion will be attended by Minister of Education and Higher Education Mohammad Al-Fares.

### Budgets

Separately, chairman of the parliament's budgets and final statements committee MP Adnan Abdulsamad said that the committee met recently in the presence of Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh to discuss the budgets of ministries and government bodies for 2017-2018. Abdulsamad added that the ministry explained that what was discussed was only a draft of the budgets because some data were incomplete, but stressed that the ministry will respect the deadline for sending the budget law by Jan 31, 2017.

The finance ministry is still studying international oil markets' developments to assess the ideal oil price to be used in the budget, especially since oil prices have improved after the OPEC recently decided to cut down oil production to increase oil prices. Accordingly, the price to be included in the new budget is likely to increase to over \$35 per barrel.

### Khor Abdullah

Iraqi political analyst Ehsan Al-Shemhari said that raising the subject of Khor Abdullah at the present time is considered a 'personal criticism' of Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar Al-Abadi because of the military victories he had been achieving in Mosul. "Raising this topic now is only a part of an early political and electoral conflict," he stressed, adding that many bodies were trying to distract public attention with certain topics and issues to divert attention from military victories in Nineveh and Western Mosul. Shemhari's statements were made after Abadi's office denied the Iraqi government's intention to give the Iraqi side of Khor Abdullah as a gift to Kuwait. Iraqi MP Alia Naseef had strongly criticized the Iraqi cabinet's vote on granting the body of water to Kuwait and described it as treason to Iraq.

### Local spotlight

## TRUMP AND GCC



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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In the past two weeks, the world was busy with the inauguration of Republican Donald Trump. The media published speculations and predictions that were often worrying and cynical about what the most powerful man in the world will do - fateful decisions over very important and delicate issues which the new administration may support or reject.

I have spent some time reading many reports and statements issued by Trump's advisors. We must admit that the American people chose their leader for the next four years, and whether we like it or not, we have no other choice but to accept this fact and deal with it.

It is very clear that every country in the world is considering the US presidency from the corner of their interests, and so I will look at the new US presidency from this angle as well. How the new US presidency will balance the equation of the strategic partnership and alliance with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in order to maintain mutual interests?

I came to the conclusion to not worry about the possible decisions by the new presidency with regards to the safety and security of the GCC. I agree that we are facing a new president who is different from others and may deal with some urgent issues in an unfamiliar way that may seem hasty and prejudiced, but there are rules and policies concerning the position of the United States which he will not be able to overcome or deny.

There is no doubt that there are urgent challenges facing Trump now, including relations with China, the Iranian nuclear file, the relationship with Europe and NATO, the shape of US-Russia relations, the Syrian issue, the Palestinian case and the Arab-Israeli conflict. So far, it seems that the new administration has not specified its priorities and is still studying all options.

Except for the US decision to set up safe zones around Syria, which means preventing Syrians from leaving their country, there is no solid opinion over how to end the bloody war there. I believe the civil war in Syria will not end any time soon, which means the Gulf region has to keep fighting IS, terrorists and extremists to preserve internal security and borders. Personally, I am in favor of the safe zones. The question now is how to implement this resolution in coordination with Turkey, Russia and financial support from the Gulf states.

I do not support Syrians migrating to America or Europe or anywhere else because it is not logical to offload citizens from a country and expect them to integrate in a different culture and foreign Western lands. Some media reports published a debate about whether the United States should classify the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization and impose sanctions. This is a sensitive resolution, because the Muslim Brotherhood in some countries, including Kuwait, has no terrorist or criminal activities, while this is not the case in Egypt for example. I believe that such a classification of the entire organization will complicate relations with Turkey, which is a key US ally in the war against IS and terrorism in Syria.

Trump's decision to stop issuing visas to citizens of Syria and six other countries - Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen - is a purely security decision. Kuwait also bans the entry of several nationalities as well. This is required to maintain the security of states, which is a red line.

The new president is a businessman who has significant commercial ties with Gulf states, and I don't think he will even try to jeopardize his commercial interests for no reason. He is not against Muslims, but extremist Muslims. For example, Islamist parties in Syria kill Muslims daily - are we supposed to support this criminality? This extremism is unacceptable, whether from Trump or others. Gulf states are historic allies of America but faced a lot of apathy and indifference in dealing with US foreign policy, especially since the previous US administration was allied with Iran and Russia.

I believe the US-GCC relationship will not be affected by electoral statements and the strategic partnership will remain constant.



## COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE COMPANY SPONSORS 61 GRADUATION PROJECTS FOR ENGINEERING AND PETROLEUM COLLEGE STUDENTS

**KUWAIT:** The Commercial Real Estate Company is considered one of the main sponsors for Kuwait University students sponsoring 61 graduation projects that were displayed in the recently concluded 31st Engineering Exhibition which was held in Crowne Plaza Hotel on the 18th of January.

Rawan Adnan - Marketing and Leasing Department Manager, at the Commercial Real Estate Company (Al-Tijaria) stated that "the Company is constantly supporting youth education, especially the students from

College of Engineering and Petroleum by financially supporting them all year around, encouraging them to do research, be creative and come up with graduation projects which can have an impact on the urban and social development in the State of Kuwait." It is worth mentioning that the Commercial Real Estate Company had sponsored more than 2,300 students since the year 2006.

The Commercial Real Estate Company has always been proactive on developing youth and encouraging

them to give their best as part of its social responsibility contribution and commitment to apply and enhance corporate governance principles. 'Al-Tijaria' understands the importance of developing the youth considering them to play key roles in developing economic and social wellbeing and representing future leadership positions. Rawan further stated that "the Commercial Real Estate Company is dedicating its efforts and care towards the youth and is liaising all of its resources to support them throughout their education and career."



## KUWAIT'S PHILANTHROPY REACHES OUT TO THOSE IN NEED

**KUWAIT:** Throughout this past week, Kuwait's philanthropic initiatives have reached many parts of the world and touched more hearts, cementing the GCC country's UN-bestowed status as an 'International Humanitarian Center'. During the week, in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, the Kuwaiti Society for Relief provided medical supplies and medications to a number of health centers offering services to displaced Iraqis, as part of the 'Kuwait beside you' campaign. Medication was offered for various diseases, mainly chronic ones.

In Irbil, Kuwait distributed 15 tons of medical supplies to hospitals in areas that have been liberated south of Iraq's war-torn city of Mosul. The supplies are part of an incessant flow of Kuwaiti medical aid that has trickled into Iraq, including the construction of medical centers in refugee camps located in Iraq's autonomous region of Kurdistan. Moreover, the State of Kuwait has allocated \$10 million for Syrian refugees in Iraq's Kurdistan province.

Sheikh Ahmad Ali Al-Sabah, member of Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) mission visiting Iraq's Kurdistan, said the financial aid would be used to carry out projects for Syrian refugees in collaboration with UNHCR, the UN refugee agency. He added that the financial assistance would be used to improve public services in three camps in Dohuk and Irbil.

In Yemen, the Kuwaiti-Yemeni relief association earlier in the week inaugurated a number of projects for renovating educational facilities in the Yemeni Governorate of Dalea. The ventures include rehabilitating two schools, named Kuwait High School and

Kuwait School. The project is part of the second phase of a Kuwaiti funded \$23 million campaign, also aimed at securing food, water and dwelling for Yemenis in several provinces of the country.

### Jordan

In Jordan, the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) handed a financial aid to a number of Syrian families at refugee camps in the Jordan Valley area, in cooperation with Jordan National Red Crescent Society. KRCS has dispatched its 23rd convoy to Jordan, including 14 trucks loaded with various aid and necessities for the Syrian refugees, said Anwar Al-Hasawi, KRCS' Deputy Chairman.

In Amman, KRCS delivered aid to 200 families of Syrian refugees. The International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO); another active Kuwait-based organization, also carried out the second phase of an urgent relief program for thousands of Syrian refugee families.

IICO official Ziyad Abu Taleb said that the current campaign comprises the winter installment of aid, earmarked for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Moreover, he noted that the aid campaign is a donation from Chairman of Kuwait's National Security Bureau His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, which encompasses refugee families across the Hashemite Kingdom. The aid included necessities such as food, heaters and sums of money to cover housing expenses.

### Gaza

In Gaza, Palestinian Minister of Public

Works Mufeed Al-Hasayneh announced the authority there has received \$9 million from Kuwait, part of the Arab Gulf state's grant to rebuild the Palestinian southern governorates.

The new donation, he said in a statement, would be distributed to 1,055 Palestinians who suffered damages caused by the Israeli aggression on Gaza Strip in 2014. Al-Hasayneh expressed gratitude for Kuwait, His Highness the Amir and the people for their "huge" support for the Palestinian people.

The KFAED and the Palestinian government signed, in March 2015, a \$200 million grant agreement for the reconstruction of the southern governorates. Kuwait had pledged the grant during a donor conference for rebuilding Gaza, held in Cairo in October 2014. The donation will be used to rebuild 1,500 housing units, installing water pipeline, supporting economic sectors, animal resources and infrastructure.

### Turkey

Moving on to Turkey, where earlier in the week, Kuwait's Al-Rahma International Charity announced that a convoy carrying medical aid earmarked for Syrian refugees crossed into southern Turkey.

Head of Al-Rahma International's office in Syria Waleed Al-Suwailem said that a contingent of doctors from Kuwait Medical Association has tended to around 625 patients at Emel Hospital in the town of Reyhanli in the southern province of Hatay. Moreover, he noted that the aid is part of a campaign launched by Al-Rahma International to provide relief for the peo-

ple of the war-torn Syrian city of Aleppo. According to Al-Suwailem, Al-Rahma International has delivered \$70 million worth of aid since the start of the Syrian conflict.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Al-Najat Charity distributed humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees in the province of Hatay, which included food baskets, heaters and pecuniary assistance. In Helsinki, Kuwait's acting assistant foreign minister for international organizations affairs appreciated efforts by Syria's neighbors, UN aid agencies and other international donors to alleviate suffering of Syrian people.

Aware of the scale of the humanitarian disaster in sisterly Syria, the State of Kuwait rushed to rescue the Syrian refugees and the internally displaced people, and lobbied for responding to this crisis, Minister Plenipotentiary Nasser Abdullah Al-Hayyen said.

He was addressing the Conference on Supporting Syrians and the Region, being held in Helsinki, Finland, at the request of the United Nations. Hayyen renewed Kuwait's support to the intra-Syrian talks that took place in the Kazakh capital of Astana on January 23-24, voicing hope that outcomes of the talks would help build confidence among the negotiating parties and prepare the ground for the coming round of political dialogue, due in Geneva in February. The conference aims to present the UN's humanitarian priorities for Syria in 2017 and launch the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) for 2017-18, which extends to Syria's neighbors. — KUNA

## BLUE-COLLARS SLAM HASHEM'S 'IRRESPONSIBLE' STATEMENTS

By Meshal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Chairman of Kuwait Assistant Engineers and Technicians' Syndicate Adel Al-Doukhi criticized what he described as the 'provocative' and unfair statements concerning a large segment of the Kuwaiti people, when MP Safa Al-Hashem denied in a recent statement the presence of any Kuwaiti blue-collars. "This irresponsible statement reflects lack of knowledge about the work nature of Kuwaiti assistant engineers and technicians," he said, noting that a similar statement was previously made by Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh, when she referred to Kuwaiti laborers as 'unskilled'.

"How can a government official make such statements without backing them up with proof or studies?" he wondered, noting that over 25,000 Kuwaiti technicians are working under harsh conditions without having their full rights guaranteed. Doukhi urged Hashem to review Kuwaiti technicians' numbers and specialties "as they have been unfairly marginalized by state officials who prefer foreigners over them."

### Inspections

The Ministry of Electricity and Water's inspection teams are due to launch inspection campaigns within the coming few days to track down violators and illegal users of electricity and water supplies around Kuwait.



MP Safa Al-Hashem