

Local

Major events connected with the Kuwaiti Cabinet in 2020



KUWAIT: This December 14, 2020 file photo shows His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with members of the new Cabinet after ministers took the oath of office. — KUNA

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Cabinet had its hands full during 2020, signing several agreements with Arab and foreign governments. The government's formation also saw a resignation of the Cabinet and the emergence of a new incarnation this year. The spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) also had an impact on the government's performance, which tried to handle the pandemic in the best way it saw fit. The following are the major activities and events involving the Cabinet:

Jan 6: Cabinet approved draft laws over Saudi-Kuwaiti neutral zone and nearby submerged area.
 Jan 8: The government communication center announced that the account of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) was hacked, stressing that the news item regarding the withdrawal of US forces was false.
 Jan 14: Cabinet approved the formation of a cooperation committee between Kuwait and Niger.
 Jan 14: Cabinet ratified a draft law concerning income and budget.
 Jan 16: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah attended and sponsored the 19th Asian men's handball tournament held at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah indoor sports stadium.
 Jan 20: Cabinet approved draft decree on aviation services between Kuwait and Rwanda.
 Jan 20: Cabinet passed a draft decree to appoint a number of Kuwaiti figures at the GCC's Consultative Authority for a period of three years.
 Jan 30: The Prime Minister attended and patronized the flag hoisting ceremony at the Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center (JACC), an event coinciding with Kuwait's national celebrations.
 Jan 30: A decree was issued approving the resignation of Minister of Social Affairs Dr Ghadeer Al-Aseeri. Waleed Al-Jassem was appointed as acting Minister.
 Feb 6: The Prime Minister attended, patronized the "Shamel 6" Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) exercise at Araifan area with the participation of 32 entities.
 Feb 13: The Prime Minister arrived in Germany to partake in Munich's 56th security conference.
 Feb 19: The Prime Minister attended and patronized "Henna Laha" celebration at Al-Shaheed Park.
 Feb 20: The Prime Minister inaugurated the new Jahra governorate building.
 Feb 24: Cabinet ordered the cancelation of all national celebrations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 Feb 26: Cabinet declared that studying in all educational facilities would be halted due to the coronavirus spread.
 Feb 26: Cabinet, upon a request from His Highness the Amir, named a historical monument after the late Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to honor his previous stances and support to Kuwait.
 Feb 26: Cabinet announced the arrival of a medical team from the World Health Organization (WHO) to assess Kuwait's response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
 March 2: Amiri decree issued approving the resignation of Minister of Water and Electricity Mohammad Bushehri. Minister of Oil Dr Khaled Al-Fadhel was appointed as acting Minister of the post.
 March 6: Cabinet approved, in an exceptional meeting, a weeklong suspension of flights to and from Bangladesh, Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt as a measure to counter the COVID-19 spread.
 March 9: Cabinet extended the suspension of study-

ing at educational facilities in Kuwait for two more weeks due COVID-19.
 March 9: Cabinet ordered the closing of cinemas, theaters, and wedding halls until further notice due to the coronavirus pandemic. Funerals at the cemetery were still allowed in compliance with health regulations. Employees under quarantine were prevented from going to work and the exhibitions ground at Mishref area was handed over to the Health Ministry for use in COVID-19 screenings.
 March 9: Cabinet halted issuing of entry visas to Kuwait in an effort to curb the spread of coronavirus.
 March 11: Cabinet declared an official rest days on March 12- 29 to prevent COVID-19 from spreading.
 March 11: Cabinet halted all commercial flights to and from Kuwait until further notice as a COVID-19 prevention measure.
 March 11: Cabinet banned gatherings in gyms, restaurants and cafes to prevent coronavirus from spreading.
 March 12: The government of Kuwait launched a website to update the public on the spread of COVID-19.
 March 16: The Cabinet erected a temporary fund to receive institutional, corporate, and individual donations to help in the fight against COVID-19.
 March 21: Cabinet announced a curfew starting on March 22 until further notice to prevent the spread of coronavirus. It started at 05:00 pm local-time and ended at 04:00 am.
 March 26: Cabinet decided to continue providing a monthly salary for Kuwaiti students abroad. It also ordered the halt of press conferences, opting for virtual ones, and suspended taxi services nationwide.
 April 6: The Cabinet decided to enforce full lockdown on Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Al-Mahboula districts.
 April 6: The Cabinet decided to alter the curfew duration making it, indefinitely, effective as of 05:00 pm until 06:00 am.
 April 6: The Cabinet accepted a request by the Ministry of Health (MoH) to bring specialized medical teams from abroad to back up the frontline teams.
 April 6: The Cabinet tasked Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh with taking legal measures to bring into account persons responsible for non-productive workers and residencies' traders.
 April 6: The Cabinet approved a proposal by the Minister of Commerce and Industry, offering online dates' booking for visits to shopping stores to minimize mingling and stem infections with the novel coronavirus.
 April 9: The technological back-up committee of the novel coronavirus crisis launched the website "Ma'akom" including data about citizens abroad to facilitate their comeback.
 April 13: The Cabinet launched a five-phase plan for evacuating citizens abroad. Phase one (April 19-21): Patients who finalized treatment and their companions, also tourists and personnel on official assignments. Phase two (April 23): Patients in need of medical beds and life support apparatuses. Phase three (April 25-May 1): Students. Phase 4 (May 3-4): Diplomats and the fifth stage (May 6-7) for other segments.
 April 20: The Cabinet amended curfew duration setting it from 04:00 pm until 08:00.
 May 4: The Cabinet was informed about instructions

by His Highness the Amir donating \$40 million, half of the sum from Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) and the other half from Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences (KFAS). A total of \$100 million of the fund was allocated for the World Health Organization (WHO) as a contribution to combating the novel coronavirus and \$60 million also for WHO to aid limited income countries against the pandemic.
 May 10: Comprehensive curfew went into effect as of 04:00 pm and was set to remain until May 30 as part of the state measures against the pandemic.
 May 25: The Cabinet, upon Amiri instructions, approved a proposed mechanism for honoring civil servants and personnel tasked with facing the novel coronavirus between February 24 and May 31 (2020).
 May 30: Partial curfew indefinitely effected as of 06:00 pm until 06:00 am following the full lockdown enforced on May 10.
 May 28: The Cabinet decided to enforce full lockdown on Al-Farwaniya district and some sections of Khaitan, in addition to complete lockdown on Hawally, Nugra, Maidan Hawally while the full one on Al-Mahboula and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh would remain in effect.
 May 28: The Cabinet adopted a plan for staged restoration of normal life.
 June 3: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said — during a meeting with chief editors of local newspapers, the minister of information, and the chairman and director-general Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) — that Kuwait's financial solvency is excellent but economic reforms were slow, which required the restructuring of the economy.
 June 3: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah affirmed, during a meeting with the press chief editors, information minister, and KUNA chairman, his concern for tackling GCC rifts.
 June 25: The Cabinet decided to form a main committee, including the minister of health and ministries' undersecretaries, for following up on anti-COVID-19 measures.
 June 29: The Cabinet nodded a bill regarding the Arab protocol for combating human trade.
 June 29: The Cabinet blessed a bill on cultural cooperation with Sierra Leone.
 June 29: The Cabinet approved bills regarding cultural, economic, and aviation cooperation with Burkina Faso.
 June 29: The Cabinet nodded a bill approving an aviation cooperation accord with the Gambia.
 June 29: The Cabinet Okayed a bill approving an accord with Holland for cooperation in aviation services.
 June 30: Work was back at ministries and other government departments after the government declared an official and indefinite holiday as of March 12 due to repercussions of the novel coronavirus.
 Aug 9: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah declared, during an international conference for Lebanon, the contribution of \$41 million to aid the country in aftermath of the Beirut port bombing. The sum included \$30 million worth of a previous pledge by Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) and \$11 million worth of urgent medical and food aid.
 Aug 18: Fourth phase of restoring normal life began after a five-month closure of barber and tailor shops,

gyms, restaurants, cafes, and businesses in malls.
 Aug 30: Partial curfew was lifted effective 03:00 pm however some businesses remained shut according to a Cabinet decision on the 20th of the month.
 Sept 7: The Cabinet approved a bill for forming a joint committee with South Sudan and another draft law regarding the Arab protocol on barring and combating piracy at sea and armed robbery, as complementary to the Arab Convention on Combating Transnational Organized Crime.
 Sept 25: His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and the Prime Minister, declared in a statement during the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, allocating \$270 million to back up global efforts against the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).
 Sept 28: The Cabinet agreed to reopen Al-Abdali border checkpoint with Iraq for exports.
 Oct 19: The Cabinet approved a draft decree calling on constituents to partake in the National Assembly's elections for the 16th legislative term on December 5, and decided to refer it to His Highness the Amir.
 Oct 26: The Cabinet accepted the resignation of Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Nasser Al-Jabri.
 Nov 19: The Cabinet approved a draft decree appointing retired Lieutenant General Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah as Deputy Chief of the National Guard with a minister's degree, and decided to submit it to His Highness the Amir.
 Dec 2: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled announced in the second international conference to support Beirut and the Lebanese people that a sum of \$30 million will be allocated to repair the grain silos in Beirut port affected by the horrific explosion and also pledged \$11 million in humanitarian assistance.
 Dec 2: In his address to the fourth ministerial form titled 'achievements despite challenges', His Highness the Prime Minister said that 57 cases of public wealth infringement and 1,042 violations on state properties were sent referred by the Cabinet during its short-lived term.
 Dec 2: In his address to the fourth ministerial form titled 'achievements despite challenges', His Highness the Prime Minister said that 42 deaths and 9,000 infections were reported amongst frontline workers since the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in Kuwait. Some 154,000 frontline workers and 10,000 volunteers took part in the campaign to curb the spread of the virus.
 Dec 13: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled kicked off Kuwait's Achievers for Future Opportunities (KAFO), a project supporting youth talents and innovations.
 Dec 14: The Cabinet held a session headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled after swearing oath to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.
 Dec 15: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, in his address to the opening session of the 16th legislative term of parliament, said that the Cabinet believed in cooperation amongst constitutional institutes was the cornerstone of democracy.
 Dec 21: The Cabinet suspended commercial flights from and to Kuwait International Airport and also blocked traffic in land and sea borders until January 1, 2021. The decision will be reviewed after the term is concluded with a possibility of extension. Cargo operations were excluded from the decision. — KUNA

Major events connected with National Assembly in 2020

KUWAIT: The National Assembly saw several laws approved and interpellations against members of the Cabinet. The 15th legislative term concluded this year, paving the way to the 2020 elections and the opening of the 16th legislative term. Those are the major events and that happened in parliament this year:
 Jan 7: National Assembly refused the lifting of immunity of MP Riyadh Al-Adsani on the backdrop of an electronic media case.
 Jan 22: National Assembly approved a memorandum between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia concerning the neutral zone and nearby submerged area.
 Jan 30: Minister of Social Affairs Dr Ghadeer Al-Aseeri submitted resignation after MP Dr Adel Al-Dhamki is grilling motion.
 Feb 18: Finance Minister Mubarak Al-Sheetan and Minister of Electricity and Water Mohammad Bushehri swore constitutional oath at the National Assembly.
 Feb 19: The National Assembly approved a draft law connected with monetary policy, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK), and the banking jobs. The draft aimed at forming a supreme overseeing authority on a legal level.
 June 16: Finance Minister Barrak Al-Sheetan was grilled according to a motion filed by MP Riad Al-Adsani on June 4. The interpellation ended without recommendations or proposals.
 June 16: Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Saud Al-Harbi was grilled according to a motion submitted by MP Faisal Al-Kandari on May 13. The inter-

pellation concluded with a number of recommendations.
 June 17: The National Assembly agreed to delay payment of due installments of defaulters fund for six months as of the first due payment in April 2020.
 June 17: The National Assembly agreed to amend the law of the Public Institution For Social Security (PIFSS) to lower retirees' monthly pensions from 25 percent to 15 percent.
 June 17: The National Assembly approved a bill allowing individuals and companies to solicit permits online.
 June 17: The National Assembly agreed to modify some provisions of the commercial and civil lawsuits' law for setting up a system where judges and public prosecution personnel can be indicted.
 June 17: The National Assembly approved a bill amending some provisions of criminal proceedings allowing petitions against final verdicts in some cases.
 June 17: The parliament nodded bills to amend the decree-into-law regarding commercial and civil lawsuits in relation to digital advertisements.
 Aug 5: The National Assembly approved a law stipulating stricter safety precautions against fires.
 Aug 5: The parliament blessed bills for property rents protecting tenants' rights against evacuation.
 Aug 5: The National Assembly approved bills concerning the right to have access to information to boost transparency and

integrity in economic and administrative transactions.
 Aug 12: The National Assembly renewed confidence in Finance Minister Barrak Al-Sheetan with 32 votes in favor in the interpellation spearheaded by MP Riad Al-Adsani. Ten MPs proposed no confidence.
 Aug 19: The parliament approved a bill stipulating that employees in the private sector are entitled for end of service compensation based on the full salary.
 Aug 19: The National Assembly passed a law regarding domestic violence.
 Oct 7: The National Assembly blessed a bill for protecting competition, in tandem with rapid developments in this respect, globally and regionally.
 Oct 7: The National Assembly approved a bill with respect to practicing medicine, back-up professions, patients' rights and health facilities, with aim of promoting the level of the medical services.
 Oct 7: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem declared voting on a non-cooperation motion submitted by ten MPs against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah would not be held during a parliamentary session after these legislators withdrew it.
 Oct 7: The National Assembly approved a bill specifying financial allocations for the 'Head of State' and referred it to the Cabinet. It stipulated that these allotments would be projected in the state budget, along with specifying terms for payments to members of the ruling family, ways of their specification and disbursement, in line with an Amiri Order.
 Oct 8: The National Assembly unanimously declared allegiance to His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber al-Sabah as Crown Prince.



KUWAIT: This December 5, 2020 file photo shows voters outside a school turned into a polling station on the National Assembly's election day. — KUNA

Oct 8: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem declared the conclusion of the National Assembly's fourth regular session of the 15th legislative term and said the parliament would re-convene on October 20.
 Oct 20: The National Assembly endorsed a bill amending the law of special needs' citizens, stipulating continuous care for this segment and those caring for them as well as securing all comfort accommodations in an equal manner with other members of society.
 Oct 20: The National Assembly approved a bill for regulating the demographic status, tackling defects, specifying proportions of persons of various countries that are allowed to be present in the country in a manner that would not overburden economic, social, and services sectors.
 Oct 20: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem wrapped up the fifth follow-up regular session of the 15th legislative term.
 Nov 4: Nomination for parliamentary

elections for the 16th legislative term closed with tally of candidates standing at 395, including 362 males and 33 females. Registration for the candidates kicked off on October 26.
 Dec 5: Polling stations opened for 567,694 eligible voters to elect 50 MPs for the 16th legislative term of parliament.
 Dec 15: National Assembly elected Marzouq Al-Ghanem as speaker of parliament during the opening session of the 16th legislative term. Eight individuals held the title since the first legislative term in 1963.
 Dec 15: National Assembly elected MP Ahmad Al-Shuhomi as Deputy Speaker of parliament during the opening session of the 16th legislative term.
 Dec 15: National Assembly elected MP Osama Al-Shaheen as observer of parliament during the opening session of the 16th legislative term. National Assembly elected MP Farz Al-Daihani as secretary of parliament during the opening session of the 16th legislative term. — KUNA