

# Minister, MPs, KES and residents discuss solutions to housing crisis

‘We must devise new solutions’

By Majd Othman

**KUWAIT:** The Volunteer Committee of the People of South Saad Al-Abdullah on Wednesday held its third seminar in cooperation with Kuwait Economic Society titled “Housing crisis, challenges and solutions”, in the presence of the housing minister and a number of Kuwaiti personalities. Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs and the Minister of State for Housing and Urban Development Ammar Al-Ajmi stressed the housing issue faces many challenges and will be a crisis for the Kuwaiti family if efforts are not combined to resolve it, indicating that if the current policy continues, implementation processes will be hindered.

“Therefore, we must devise new solutions without detracting from citizens’ right to decent housing,” he said. Ajmi said the political leadership has taken the housing issue into consideration and supports all new solutions to address the housing issue realistically and tangibly, stressing efforts made to take decisions that contribute to resolving the housing issue and establishing a team to develop short, medium and long-term plans to address the issue radically.

He added that the South Saad Al-Abdullah City project has six suburbs and contains 24,000 housing units distributed over five suburbs, for which 4,591 vouchers were distributed, indicating that approval was taken from concerned authorities to send a tender for the infrastructure of the city, as the standards and conditions that must be met by the companies are currently being prepared and expected to be completed by Dec 2022.

Head of Kuwait Economic Society Khaled Al-Mutairi said that the society is keen to raise issues of interest for the citizen, and there is no doubt that the challenges of housing are exacerbating, and the legislative and executive authorities must address

this crisis and develop appropriate solutions for it. General Coordinator of the Volunteer Committee of the People of South Saad Al-Abdullah Fahaid Al-Mulhim said the committee exerted strenuous efforts to meet officials and representatives to present the concerns of the people of the city and keep up with the requirements of the city’s completion, calling on Minister Ajmi to develop a clear time plan for offering infrastructure contracts for the city.

Head of the Municipal Council Abdullah Al-Mahri said the housing issue is a priority for members of the Municipal Council, as it is a continuity and sustainability for every Kuwaiti family, while he referred to the issue of high rents faced by 92,000 existing housing applications, stressing the need to find solutions to this problem. He added the issue is not a land issue, but rather an issue of firm decisions, referring to the role of the Municipal Council in freeing many plots and allocating them for housing, and contributing to removing obstacles in South Saad Al-Abdullah.

Rapporteur of the Housing Committee in the National Assembly, MP Abdulaziz Al-Saqabi, stressed words are not enough over this issue, and clear practical steps must be taken by the two authorities so that a bold political decision is issued to resolve the housing issue. “We are optimistic about the reform approach that exists in the government and its cooperation to address existing issues, and accordingly there must be an actual decision to implement the proposed solutions,” he said.

Saqabi pointed out the solution to the issue proceeds through three stages, as 90 percent of the treatment of the housing issue is to increase the housing supply in light of increasing housing demand and promote real estate developers. “But we have had negative experiences with this in Kuwait and the victim is the citizen,



**KUWAIT:** Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs and Minister of State for Housing and Urban Development Ammar Al-Ajmi, Kuwait MPs and other top officials are pictured during the seminar.

so accordingly we sought to establish joint stock companies that would be for the government while the citizen has a share in it, in addition to a share for a strategic partner.

Through this company, the real estate developer enters with us for land reclamation,” he said, adding, “We are in the process of finalizing this law, and it will be presented in three weeks.” Regarding resolving the housing crisis, Saqabi said: “There must be a real estate authority that organizes everything related to real estate to organize the current chaos and follow up and monitor the real estate market in Kuwait and issue reports, statistics, etc, in addition to controlling the chaos in the real estate documentary cycle so that payment of fees, real estate registration, issuance of licenses, etc is not repeated.”

“We tried in the budgets committee to overcome all obstacles to pass the current budget, as everything related to the budget is a precedent with which many projects were stalled.” Head of the Budgets Committee at the National Assembly, MP Adel Al-Damkhi, said, indicating the state does not have priorities in

determining budgets. Damkhi pointed out the budget allocated KD 2.5 billion for infrastructure, wondering why it was not used in building new cities.

Chairman of the Priorities Committee in the National Assembly, MP Abdullah Fahad Al-Enezi, said the housing problem is a problem of will and decision, stressing the continuation of obstacles will not contribute to resolving the crisis. He added a lack of transparency has made citizens hesitate in their choices of housing cities. MP Hamad Al-Obaid said the people’s voluntary committees have a positive role in urging a solution to the housing issue.

“The administrative regulations at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare must be developed and the decision to deprive those who received an inheritance of 200 square meters of their right to housing care should be amended. The issue of withdrawing the deceased’s house and not issuing a document must also be overcome. Obstacles in contracting with international companies, delaying distributions and preparing infrastructure must be addressed, along with the Kuwait Credit Bank’s budget problems,” he said.

## Taking stand against domestic violence

**CAIRO:** Protecting the Arab household, and taking a stand against domestic violence are issues of great importance, said Ahmad Lari, a Kuwaiti MP and member of the social, educational, cultural, woman and youth affairs committee of the Arab Parliament. This came in Lari’s statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), following conclusion of committee meeting on Thursday.

The committee concluded discussions of its work plan in preparation of submitting a host of recommendations, proposed by its members, to the Arab Parliament’s public session on Saturday. Main axis of committee discussions revolved around the Arab family and mechanisms of protecting it, the Kuwaiti MP indicated, adding that the discussions culminated in draft law regarding domestic violence.

He also noted that the committee tackled issue of foreign phenomena, commending what transpired in Qatar’s 2022 World Cup, saying that reaffirmed principles benefiting societies and humanity as a whole. Modes of reinforcing athleticism in Arab world were also a focal point of committee discussions, especially considering its vitality to the fabric of society and to the youth specifically. Further on the committee’s agenda were topics of rising divorce rates, Arab World social status report of 2021, as well as recommendations reinvigorating the Arabic language. —KUNA



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