

## Local

# Selling blood to expats in Kuwait a violation of human rights: Lawyer

## Citizens split between supporting, abhorring new regulation

By Majd Othman

**KUWAIT:** Recently, the health ministry announced it will start charging expats KD 20 per unit of blood, which caused a huge controversy not only among expats, who were shocked by the decision, especially since they are major blood donors, but also among citizens, who consider it as discriminatory. Kuwait Times asked Lawyer Thamer Al-Sanea about the legal point of view on this issue, and whether someone can submit a grievance to stop this decision.

Sanea said this decision is legal and does not violate any legislations according to Kuwaiti law, but at the same time it violates international human rights standards which Kuwait has signed on. He added according to the laws in Kuwait, this issue is considered a ministerial decision. Therefore, it is seen as an independent decision that the government does not interfere in. But Sanea said the ministry of health has no logical or acceptable reason for applying this decision, as it is considered inhumane, adding anyone can file a grievance to try to stop this decision.

Kuwait Times also asked the opinion of citizens regarding this issue — some rejected this decision, but others think this is the best way to reduce crowding caused by expats. Journalist Dahem Al-Qahtani tweeted his objection. "Regarding the MoH decision to sell blood bags to expats for KD 20, what if the patient undergoes urgent surgery or faces a shortage of blood? What if they cannot pay? Will they let them die?" he asked. "This is a very offensive decision for Kuwait and who suggested and approved it damaged the country's

reputation inside and outside," he added.

"Raising the fees for dispensing blood bags in this way may make us face a process of selling blood for cash, which is prohibited by the country's laws and Islamic legislations. Forcing a patient to provide a donor to the blood bank in exchange for blood bags, from a legal point of view, means the country is forcing a barter process, which is also prohibited," lawyer Riyadh Al-Fadhli tweeted.

"In the name of the great Hippocratic oath, I hope officials at the ministry of health completely cancel blood transfusion fees for patients without any restrictions or conditions. And I call on everyone to donate quickly to the blood bank so that the strategic stock does not run out," consultant cardiologist Farida Al-Habib tweeted.

On the other hand, a Kuwaiti woman commented on other citizens' position on this decision. "Why those people who defend expats don't talk about the price of a blood bag that is sold to citizens at private hospitals for KD 50, and the citizen is forced to buy it due to need," she tweeted, adding, "expats are the reason private hospitals in Kuwait are asking mon-



Thamer Al-Sanea



ey for blood bags. They are using all the stock," she claimed. Another female citizen thinks this decision is due to visitors who come to Kuwait to undergo major surgeries and use most of the blood stock, alleging they don't pay anything, although they pay thousands in their countries without any questions.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Society for Human Rights (KSHR) issued a statement denouncing the decision, saying the ministry has disregarded international ob-

ligations that Kuwait has to uphold with regards to respect for human rights, including health rights, pursuing the highest level of healthcare and seeking to implement the right to healthcare through a non-discriminatory approach. The KSHR statement affirmed its rejection of discriminatory treatment between citizens and resident patients, as these decisions represent violations of health rights stipulated in international conventions and treaties.



VENICE: Ambassador Nasser Al-Qahtani and NCCAL's Mohammad Al-Jassar welcome guests and curators of Kuwait pavilion at Biennale Architettura 2023. — KUNA

## Kuwait 'rethinks' its urban design at Venice exhibition

**ROME:** Kuwait's pavilion opened Saturday at the Biennale Architettura 2023 — the 18th International Architecture Exhibition held in Venice, Italy. Stressing significance of Kuwaiti presence in the venue, Ambassador in Rome Nasser Al-Qahtani said in a key note speech that the Biennale mirrors modern creativity within the global cultural movement, as

it attracts a mix of architects to discuss visions and solutions for contemporary urban dilemmas, according to an embassy copy to KUNA.

Dr Mohammad Al-Jassar, Assistant Secretary General of National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), was also present at the event. Curators of "Rethinking Rethinking Kuwait" pavilion for La Biennale di Venezia say it explores new methods for architectural and urban design that emerges from the intersections of space and time.

The project is an ongoing investigation attempting to rectify the effects of modernist urban planning that led to the erasure of most of Kuwait's historic-built fabric. The NCCAL-sponsored pavilion also delves into the ideas of "decolonization and decar-

bonization" by rethinking means of transportation and accessibility. It looks at Kuwait on a national scale with a focused study on Kuwait City as a prototypical condition.

It features various studies that explore transitional spaces in the city that ranges in scope and scale. Meanwhile, Roberto Cicutto, President of Exhibition expressed belief that Biennale's true task is as an institution, and not only for architecture. The Biennale's "Laboratory of the Future" program is enriched by Carnival — a six-month-long cycle of events, lectures, panel discussions, films, and performances. It will be open to the public until Sunday, November 26, 2023 at the Giardini and the Arsenal and at Forte Marghera. It's curated by renowned architect Lesley Lokko. — KUNA



MUSCAT: Health care professionals and officials attend the Middle East Federation of Medical Physics (MEFOMP) conference. — KUNA photos



People tour one of the booths at the conference.

## Kuwaiti medical physicist leads Oman conference

**KUWAIT:** Head of Middle East Federation of Medical Physics (MEFOMP) Dr Meshari Al-Nuaimi stressed the importance of the role medical physicists play in the health care system. Nuaimi who

is head of Kuwait Cancer Control Center (KCCC) told KUNA, Sunday, on presiding over the presidency of the MEFOMP Conference in Muscat that the conference was launched with the participation of 40 international speakers in the field of radiation therapy, nuclear medicine and diagnostic radiology. The event also hosted experts and legislators in radiation protection from International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the International Organization for Medical Physics, he added.

The conference discusses the latest developments in medical imaging and radiotherapy, such as artificial

intelligence, in addition to providing professionals and scientists with an in-depth vision of future innovations and technologies in this field, he said. More than 100 scientific papers have been received in various fields of medical physics, which will be presented at the conference, he added. An award will be allocated for the best research for an academic student, in order to encourage students. The conference is an opportunity to exchange experiences on recent developments and technological breakthroughs, build networks to communicate with experts and academics from all over the world to raise the level of job performance. — KUNA

### News in Brief

#### Labor strike won't affect travel: Kuwait Airways

**KUWAIT:** A strike planned by the Kuwait Airways labor union on Monday will not affect travel, the airline said in a statement on Sunday. Travelers are urged to follow flight timings as normal, Kuwait Airways said. Head of Kuwait Airways Workers Syndicate Talal Al-Hajeri confirmed that the strike is scheduled for Monday from 8:00 am to 10:00 am will not cause a halt to air traffic or delay passengers boarding at T4 building. He said employees will deliver their message in a civilized manner and explain their demands that includes low salaries and lack of allowances for all company employees. He criticized the alleged lack of clarity in the company's stance towards deciding whether the company belongs to the government or private sectors, "which caused the lack of approving the national labor support allowance for company employees".

#### Kuwait to hold Pan-Arab talks on disaster reduction

**NEW YORK:** The chief of Kuwait's fire department Khaled Al-Mekrad held talks on Sunday with the United Nations' (UN) Secretary General's Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction Mami Mizutori, focusing efforts to reduce the likelihood of global disasters. Praising bilateral cooperation over disaster risk management, the Kuwaiti official said in a statement that his country has agreed to host pan-Arab talks on the matter in the coming year. The UN official acknowledged Kuwait's contributions towards keeping global disasters at bay, saying she appreciated the country's initiative to host the aforementioned talks slated for 2024. — KUNA

#### Coast Guard cautions of shooting drills in the north

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Interior said on Sunday that the General Directorate of the Coast Guard will carry out shooting with live ammunition at the Alfa Naval Shooting Range tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, from 8 am until 3 pm. The ministry said in a press release that the shooting area is located southeast of Boubyan Island and northeast of Failaka Island. The ministry warned all seafarers not to approach the shooting site during the mentioned period of time, stressing that all maritime patrols will prevent anyone who tries to approach for the sake of everyone's safety. — KUNA

#### French Embassy suspends French visa application

**KUWAIT:** The French Embassy in Kuwait announced the suspension of the official visa application "France-visa", during the period from May 26-30, for technical reasons and to improve the processing of applications. The embassy called for visa applications to be submitted before May 26.

#### Detectives catch man who shot father

**KUWAIT:** Farwaniya detectives have arrested the man who made headlines Sunday for murdering his father in Ferdous. The detectives were also able to find the weapon used in the crime, a Kalashnikov. The suspect is now under interrogation. Preliminary investigation has revealed that the man, who was reported as stateless, had obtained citizenship of another country. He has been referred to the Public Prosecution for further legal action.



KUWAIT: Turkish nationals living in Kuwait vote for the presidential elections at the Turkish embassy in Kuwait City, on May 20, 2023. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat