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Key Characteristics and Future Prospects**  
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## **Kuwait 2022 Parliamentary Elections: Key Characteristics and Future Prospects**

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### *Introduction*

The Kuwaiti National Assembly is the oldest and most authoritative legislative chamber in the GCC context. Its 50 members are directly voted for by Kuwaiti citizens, prior to registration, every four years. However, only eight out of 21 elected chambers since 1963 lasted for the expected four years. The remaining ones were dissolved in advance by the Emir, with the exception of the Assembly elected in December 2012, who were dissolved by Constitutional Court Decision.

Following the [dissolution](#) of the parliament on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, the elections to renew the chamber were held on 29<sup>th</sup> September. A total of 305 candidates, including 22 women, competed in the five 10-seat constituencies based on a single non-transferable vote formula. Article 82 of [the 1992 Kuwaiti constitution](#) stipulates that candidates should (1) be originally of Kuwaiti nationality in accordance with the law, (2) fulfil the voter's qualifications in accordance with the Electoral Law, (3) be older than 30 and (4) be fluent in reading and writing in Arabic.

The elections took place in the context of the long-lasting [parliamentary stalemate](#) in the country. The previous administrations often had to confront similar frictions that ended with the dissolution of parliament and government resignation. They include the [sit-in](#) by more than 16 MPs at the parliament building to call for a new government, which took place in mid-June. According to a [report](#), this sit-in led Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al-

Sabah to issue a royal decree to dissolve the National Assembly in August. The [decree](#) stated, “to rectify the political scene which involved lack of harmony and non-cooperation, differences and disputes, giving precedence to personal interests and...undertaking practices and actions that undermine national unity...it became necessary to resort to the people...to rectify to the course in a way to achieve their national interests”.

What distinguishes this particular parliamentary election is the decision of some of the remaining opposition figures that were still refusing to join the polls to end their decade-long boycott. It had started amid the parliamentary crisis during the so-called Arab Spring in 2012. Their decision to return to the electoral competition was preceded by Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal's [pledge](#) for no government intervention in the elections. He [stated](#) that the authority would not interfere in the people's choice of representatives, nor would it interfere with the election of the new National Assembly's speaker or its committees.

These were the first elections in which voters were required to use their Civil IDs at the polling stations to identify themselves and their place of residence . This new document [was implemented in August](#) as an added measure to prevent electoral fraud. These were also the second one conducted during the reign of the current Emir Nawaf Al Sabah in just two years.

**Results**

The 29<sup>th</sup> September elections produced the following results:

**1<sup>st</sup> Constituency**

Candidates: 48, Voters: 100185

	<b>Winners</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>2020 MP</b>	<b>Sect</b>	<b>Political Group</b>
1	Abdullah Al-Mudhaf	6375	Yes	Sunni	
2	Hasan Johar	6332	Yes	Shia	
3	Osama Al-Zaid	5764		Shia	
4	Ahmad Lari	4104		Shia	
5	Issa Al-Kanderi	3683	Yes	Sunni	
6	Adel Al-Damkhi	3403		Sunni	
7	Osama Al-Shaheen	2889	Yes	Sunni	Islamic Constitutional Movement (Hadas)
8	Saleh Ashour	2867		Shia	
9	Hamad Al-Medlej	2826		Sunni	
10	Khaled Al-Amairah	2228		Sunni	

**2<sup>nd</sup> Constituency**

Candidates: 48, Voters: 90478

	<b>Winners</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>2020 MP</b>	<b>Sect</b>	<b>Political Group</b>
1	Bader Al-Mulla	7285	Yes	Sunni	
2	Mohammad Al-Mutair	4364	Yes	Sunni	
3	Shuaib Shabaan	3394		Shia	
4	Hamed Al-Bathali	3374		Sunni	
5	Khalil Al-Shalih	2949	Yes	Shia	
6	Falah Al-Hajri	2921		Sunni	Islamic Constitutional Movement (Hadas)
7	Aliya Al-Khaled (female)	2472		Sunni	
8	Hamad Al-Mutar	2460	Yes	Sunni	Islamic Constitutional Movement (Hadas)
9	Abdulwahab Al-Issa	2056		Sunni	
10	Abdullah Al-Anbaie	1922		Sunni	

**3<sup>rd</sup> Constituency**

Candidates: 47, Voters: 138364

	<b>Winners</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>2020 MP</b>	<b>Sect</b>	<b>Political Group</b>
1	Ahmed Abdulaziz Al-Saadoun	12239		Sunni	
2	Muhalhal Khaled Al-Mudhaf	7005	Yes	Sunni	

3	Abdul Karim Abdullah Al-Kandari	6915	Yes	Sunni	
4	Muhannad Talal Al-Sayer	5998	Yes	Sunni	
5	Abdulaziz Tariq Al-Saqabi	5329	Yes	Sunni	Islamic Constitutional Movement (Hadas)
6	Jenan Bushehri ( <i>female</i> )	4301		Shia	
7	Ammar Muhammad Al-Ajmi	3784		Sunni	
8	Hamad Adel Al-Obeid	3376		Sunni	Islamic Salafi Alliance
9	Faris Saad Al-Otaibi	3189	Yes	Sunni	
10	Khalil Abdullah Abel	2963		Shia	

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Constituency**

Candidates: 80, Voters: 208971

	<b>Winners</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>2020 MP</b>	<b>Sect</b>	<b>Political Group</b>
1	Shuaib Al-Muwaizri	9676	Yes	Sunni	
2	Mubarak Al-Tasha	7459		Sunni	Islamic Salafi Alliance
3	Mohammad Hayef	7381		Sunni	
4	Mubarak Al-Hajraf	6196	Yes	Sunni	
5	Thamer Al-Suwait	5447	Yes	Sunni	
6	Saad Al-Khanfour	5317	Yes	Sunni	
7	Marzouq Al-Khalifa	5091	Yes	Sunni	
8	Obaid Al-Wasmi	5087	Yes	Sunni	
9	Abdullah Fahad Al-Enezi	4737		Sunni	Islamic Constitutional Movement (Hadas)
10	Yosif Al-Bathali	4269		Sunni	

#### **5<sup>th</sup> Constituency**

Candidates: 82, Voters: 257913

	<b>Winners</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>2020 MP</b>	<b>Sect</b>	<b>Political Group</b>
1	Hamdan Al-Azmi	11394	Yes	Sunni	
2	Saud Al-Hajri	10373		Sunni	
3	Khalid Al-Otaibi	10114	Yes	Sunni	
4	Al-Saifi Mubarak Al-Saifi	7341	Yes	Sunni	
5	Mohammad Al-Huwaila	6928	Yes	Sunni	
6	Hani Shams	6787		Shia	
7	Majed Al-Mutairi	5925		Sunni	
8	Mohammad Al-Mahan	5485		Sunni	
9	Marzouq Al-Hubaini	4799		Sunni	
10	Faisal Al-Kanderi	4624		Sunni	

Sources: Arab Times Online ([2022](#)), Kuwait News Agency ([2022a](#), [2022b](#), [2022c](#), [2022d](#), [2022e](#)) and Kuwait Politics Database ([2022](#)). Compiled by the authors.

According to a [media report](#), voter turnout, calculated on registered voters, reached around 50 percent across the country, the lowest since the December 2012 elections.

The results show that only 23 MPs succeeded in retaining their parliamentary seats. The remaining 27 are occupied by either newcomers or members of pre-2020 assemblies. Among the elected members are two women: Aliya Al-Khalid (daughter of the former Deputy-Prime Minister Mohammad Al-Khalid Al-Sabah) and Jenan Bushehri (former Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Housing Affairs in 2018). Two candidates, Hamed Al-Bathali and Marzouq Al-Khalifa, won their seats while being imprisoned for the [allegation](#) of holding illegal by-elections. In accordance with Kuwaiti law, they were able to run for parliamentary seats because their cases were not related to issues of honesty or honour.

It was also [reported](#) that arguably the opposition groups won 28 parliamentary seats. This includes the return of some of the prominent opposition figures that ended the boycott. Among them is the former Speaker of the National Assembly Ahmed Al-Saadoun who won the [highest number](#) of votes (12,239) across all constituencies.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> October, the Emir issued a [decree](#) calling on the newly elected members of the National Assembly to hold the first parliamentary session on 11<sup>th</sup> October, in line with Article 87 of the country's [constitution](#) which stipulates that the first meeting should happen within two weeks of the elections. On the same day, the Crown Prince accepted Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Sabah's [cabinet resignation](#). On 5<sup>th</sup> October, he issued a [decree](#) to reappoint Shaikh Ahmad as the Prime

Minister and task him to nominate a cabinet for approval.

### *Conclusion*

The 29<sup>th</sup> September elections resulted in welcoming some of the new faces, including two female members, to the National Assembly. However, the state authority and the new National Assembly will face a set of political challenges in the following days.

First, the dominance of the opposition forces in the new National Assembly makes the government formation a difficult task. In accordance with Article 56 of the [constitution](#), the Emir appoints the Prime Minister and the council of ministers, among the MPs or from other quarters. Being the discrepancies between the executive and legislative powers the main reason for the assembly dissolution, the re-appointment of the same Prime Minister precludes a cabinet that would be equally clashing with the new elected chamber, driving to a renewed crisis.

Second, from the National Assembly's standpoint, they will be tasked to approve a state budget for the fiscal year 2022-23 along with other economic reforms by November. The approval of the state budget was delayed due to the stalemate in the previous parliament. Members of the new National Assembly are expected to cooperate on this task, yet the stronger presence of opposition forces will fuel the parliamentary debate.

Whether the state authority and the new National Assembly can overcome the "[lack of harmony and non-cooperation](#)" seen during the previous parliamentary term is yet to be observed. Nevertheless, the return of opposition figures such as Ahmed Al-Saadoun, may lead to even deeper division both at authority-parliament and intra-parliament levels. If that is the

case, Kuwait may witness a new political deadlock and, eventually, a new assembly dissolution in the short term.

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### **About the author**

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