



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Information received from Kuwait on follow-up to the concluding observations on its sixth periodic report*

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



The State of Kuwait reaffirms its commitment to continuing to promote and protect women's rights and to taking the necessary legislative and institutional measures to fulfil its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and national legislation, as well as its relevant international obligations. Several important legislative and institutional developments occurred in the period following the adoption of the Committee's concluding observations, most notably the issuance of Decree-Law No. 11 (2026) on protection against domestic violence, the repeal of articles 153 and 182 of the Penal Code pursuant to Decree-Laws Nos. 9 (2025) and 70 (2025) and the raising of the minimum age for marriage to 18 years, pursuant to Decree-Law No. 10 (2025). The following updated information is being provided by Kuwait on follow-up to the recommendations that were made.

I. Reply to the observation in paragraph 36, concerning violence against women and domestic violence

1. Kuwait has recently taken significant legislative and institutional measures in this regard, most notably the issuance of Decree-Law No. 11 (2026) on protection against domestic violence, which established a comprehensive legal and institutional framework to enhance the prevention of and protection against domestic violence, provide support, care and shelter to victims, and strength intervention and protection mechanisms for groups that are most likely to face violence.

2. The Decree-Law was enacted to address the practical shortcomings revealed by experience and to develop the family protection system by defining the various forms of violence, systematizing preventive and remedial measures and strengthening legal protection for women, children and other family members, as well as enhancing coordination among the relevant authorities responsible for protection, care and follow-up. The Decree-Law also includes a number of safeguards and measures aimed at strengthening legal, social and psychological protection for beneficiary groups, including emergency protection orders, shelter and psychosocial support mechanisms, and guarantees relating to confidentiality and protection of victim data at various stages of reporting, follow-up and related procedures.

3. In addition, the Decree-Law addresses family mediation mechanisms in a manner that takes into account the social and psychological circumstances of the parties, and provides that consent to the terms of the settlement must be voluntary and that experienced specialists must be involved, thereby striking a balance between preserving family cohesion and ensuring legal protection for vulnerable groups. Moreover, the Decree-Law strengthens intervention and protection mechanisms for groups that are most likely to face violence and establishes an integrated system for protection, care and follow-up.

4. As part of these efforts, the competent national authorities continue to implement awareness-raising and family counselling programmes, coordinate among the relevant agencies and monitor legislative developments and policies related to the rights of women, children and families, and they also help to prepare and follow up on national reports on human rights and family matters.

5. During that same period, several complementary legislative reforms aimed at strengthening legal protection for women and consolidating the principles of equality before the law and no impunity from criminal accountability were adopted. Most notably, articles 153 and 182 of the Penal Code were repealed. That action reflects the commitment of Kuwait to reviewing and developing its national legislation in

order to enhance the protection of women from violence and discrimination and ensure that they enjoy their legal rights.

6. National statistics for 2025 indicate that 924 complaints and reports related to domestic violence and violence against children were addressed, and that shelter was provided in 19 cases involving 17 women and 2 children. In the first three months of 2026, a total of 81 specialized psychological and social support sessions and consultations were held, including new and follow-up cases, in-person counselling sessions and telephone and emergency consultations, reflecting the ongoing development of the family protection and support system in Kuwait.

7. Kuwait continues to implement the National Family Protection Programme, which was approved by the Cabinet. The Programme includes 83 initiatives that were developed and implemented collaboratively by more than 12 government agencies and national institutions. Kuwait has also implemented awareness-raising programmes and community initiatives aimed at combating gender-based violence and fostering a culture of respect for human dignity and the rule of law; strengthened family and social protection for women and girls; supported centres that offer protection and shelter and provide psychological and social services to women victims of violence; taken part in discussions and followed up on legislation and policies related to the protection of women and families; and monitored the implementation of international recommendations related to women's rights.

II. Reply to the observation in paragraph 36 (d), concerning the repeal of article 153 of the Pena Code

1. Kuwait responded to this recommendation by issuing Decree-Law No. 9 (2025), dated 16 March 2025, repealing article 153 of the Penal Code, which was promulgated by Act No. 16 (1960). The repealed provision established a mitigating legal justification for a man who kills his wife upon catching her in the act of adultery, or who kills his mother, daughter or sister upon catching her in the act of having sexual relations with a man.

2. Following the repeal, the perpetrator of such acts is now subject to the general provisions relating to murder and cannot benefit from any mitigating legal justification, just like any other defendant who has been charged with murder. This amendment is based on the provisions of the Constitution of Kuwait, in particular article 29 thereof, which establishes equality among all people in respect of human dignity and general rights and duties, and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. It is also consistent with the international human rights obligations of Kuwait, in particular those arising from the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

3. Article 153 was repealed in the context of the complementary legislative reforms that were implemented by Kuwait in order to strengthen legal protection for women and consolidate the principles of equality before the law and no impunity from criminal accountability. This action reflects the commitment of the State to reviewing and developing its national legislation in order to enhance the protection of women from violence and discrimination and ensure that they enjoy their rights that are guaranteed under the law.

4. The relevant national authorities are continuing their efforts to raise public awareness of the dangers of gender-based violence and to foster a culture of respect for human dignity and the rule of law through awareness-raising and counselling programs and related community campaigns. In that connection, the issuance of Decree-Law No. 11 (2026) on protection against domestic violence further

strengthens the national protection system through the introduction of mechanisms for protection, shelter, psychosocial support and community awareness-raising, thereby helping to combat all forms of violence against women, protect victims and foster a culture of respect for human rights and human dignity.

III. Reply to the observation in paragraph 36 (e), concerning the repeal of article 182 of the Criminal Code

1. The State of Kuwait responded to this recommendation by issuing Decree-Law No. 70 (2025), dated 18 May 2025, repealing article 182 of the Penal Code. Following the repeal, marrying the victim is no longer grounds for exemption from punishment or criminal liability. The perpetrator of the offence is now criminally accountable and subject to the penalties prescribed by law, in accordance with the general provisions in force.

2. This has legally eliminated any possibility that the perpetrator can evade criminal liability by marrying the victim, thereby ensuring compliance with the principles of criminal justice, the provisions of the Constitution and the relevant international human rights obligations, and strengthening the legal protection of women and girls against crimes of violence, exploitation and coercion.

3. This change was part of the complementary legislative reforms that were implemented by Kuwait in order to strengthen legal protection for women and consolidate the principles of equality before the law and no impunity from criminal accountability. This action reflects the commitment of the State to continue reviewing its national legislation in order to enhance the protection of women from violence and discrimination and ensure that they enjoy their legal rights.

4. The competent national authorities continue to implement awareness-raising programmes and initiatives aimed at fostering a culture of respect for human dignity and rejecting all forms of violence, exploitation and coercion, and to raise community awareness of the dangers of violence and aggression and the importance of providing a safe and supportive environment for victims, while continuing to develop mechanisms for protection, counselling and family and community awareness-raising, in cooperation with the relevant agencies.

5. Kuwait reaffirms that it is continuing its efforts to develop its legislative and procedural framework, in order to strengthen the protection of women and entrench the principles of justice and the rule of law, while taking into account constitutional principles and human values that reject all forms of violence or coercion.

IV. Reply to the observation in paragraph 54 (a), concerning reproductive health and abortion

1. Kuwait reaffirms its commitment to providing comprehensive and equitable healthcare for women and ensuring that they are able to have to access healthcare services without discrimination, in accordance with national legislation governing the healthcare sector, in particular Act No. 70 (2020) concerning the practice of medicine and allied health professions, patients' rights and healthcare facilities and the Mental Health Act (No 14 of 2019).

2. All public and private healthcare facilities are required to implement policies and procedures that ensure the patient's right to receive healthcare without discrimination. The Ministry of Health provides an integrated system of healthcare services for women through primary healthcare centres and general and specialized

hospitals, including women's and maternal healthcare clinics, maternity hospitals and related specialized healthcare services.

3. The competent healthcare authorities are committed to providing medical and psychological care in cases of violence against women, including conducting the necessary medical examinations and providing psychological and physical follow-up services. In addition, several doctors and healthcare workers have received training on how to deal with the physical health and psychological consequences of domestic violence and gender-based violence.

4. Abortion is regulated by article 17 of Act No. 70 (2020), under which it is prohibited to carry out an abortion for a pregnant woman except in specific exceptional cases, namely, if the abortion is necessary to save the mother's life, or if continuing the pregnancy would cause serious and certain harm to the mother's health, or if it has been scientifically established, on the basis of certified medical reports, that the fetus will be born with a severe physical deformity or severe mental disability from which there is no prospect of recovery.

5. Work is under way to finalize and introduce regulations that govern abortion, including in cases of urgent medical necessity, in accordance with established legal and medical frameworks and with a view to striking a balance between protecting the mother's health and adhering to the provisions of the law and professional standards.

6. Kuwait affirms that matters relating to abortion and reproductive health are regulated within a constitutional, legislative and public health framework that is aimed at protecting women's health and safety, while taking into account relevant legal, health and social considerations. Moreover, these matters are subject to ongoing review and evaluation in the light of applicable national legislation and the mandates of the competent authorities.

7. In that connection, the competent national authorities continue to promote and protect women's health and ensure that women can obtain the necessary healthcare services and counselling, in cooperation and coordination with various stakeholders. They also continue to support reproductive health and family and mental health awareness-raising initiatives and programmes and to promote awareness of the importance of providing healthcare and social support to women and girls, in accordance with relevant national legislation and international obligations.

V. Reply to the observation in paragraph 64, concerning marriage and family relations

1. Kuwait reaffirms that it is continuing to develop its national legislative framework pertaining to the family and children in a manner that balances the State's international obligations, the provisions of the Constitution and national legislation, and societal norms.

2. Kuwait has taken an important legislative measure in that regard by issuing Decree-Law No. 10 (2025), which prohibits the registration or certification of a marriage contract for any person who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of registration. A similar amendment was also made to the Ja'fari Personal Status Act in order to strengthen child protection and ensure that national legislation is in line with relevant international requirements.

3. The aim behind this amendment is to ensure that couples are sufficiently mature before entering into a marriage contract, thereby supporting family stability and promoting the best interests of the child. It is consistent with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which defines a child as any person under the

age of 18, and it is also in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women with regard to the principle of the free and full consent of both spouses when entering into a marriage contract.

4. In addition, the relevant national authorities continue to review and monitor legislation and policies related to personal status and family relations through the applicable national legislative mechanisms, with the participation of legal and technical experts and the relevant entities, in order to keep abreast of legislative developments and strengthen protection of family members' rights.

5. The issuance of Decree-Law No. 11 (2026) on protection against domestic violence has helped to strengthen the legal regime that protects families by introducing several legal safeguards, including emergency judicial protection orders, requiring the abuser to stay away from the victim or to leave the family home when necessary, providing alternative housing, allowing for judicial review of protection measures, establishing a mechanism for interim maintenance and requiring the abuser to cover the costs of medical treatment and security protection services.

6. The Decree-Law also establishes a legal obligation to report cases of domestic violence and provide legal protection for and ensure the anonymity of those who report such cases, and it prohibits the withdrawal of charges or settlements in serious domestic violence crimes, thereby strengthening victim protection and limiting the pressure victims face to withdraw their reports or drop their legal cases.

7. Kuwait reaffirms that it continues to support family awareness-raising and guidance initiatives and programmes; promote a culture of dialogue and understanding within the family and a balance in the rights and duties of family members; mitigate the social, psychological and economic consequences of family conflicts and divorce; and develop policies and programmes that support the family, which is the fundamental unit of society.
