

Air pollution in kuwait

[Environment](#), [Pollution](#)



Air pollution is one of the problems facing the international communities. Air pollution is known to have devastating effects on the environment. Kuwait has a long history of air pollution since the era of the Gulf War. During the Gulf War, more than 600 oil wells were set on fire leading to loss of 6 million barrels of oil everyday and devastating air pollution. There were large pools and lakes of oil that led to water and land pollution.

The burning oil wells of Kuwait, which were equated to Chernobyl disaster, emitted tons of green house gases like sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, and oxides of nitrogen leading to devastating effects on plant and animals. Although the oil fires were put out, the imprint on the environment are still evident many more years after the Gulf War. Since the massive air pollution during the Gulf War, Kuwait has made progress in cleaning the environment but air pollution is still rampant.

Policy Challenge

Since the Gulf War, air pollution is still a major problem in Kuwait. The government has embarked on a massive program to clean the air but the policies adopted have not provided total solution to the problem.

Kuwait Environment Public Authority has been on the frontline in fighting the air pollution problems which dates back to the Gulf War era. However, most of the environmental policies that were formulated by the government then were aimed at reversing air pollution effect of the Gulf War and most of them have not been able to tackle the current problems (Al Jeran and Khan, 2009).

There has been tremendous growth in population in the country and the business environment has also grown in different ways. Large settlement in

cities and towns has led to increased air pollution mainly from increase number of vehicles emitting tons of pollutant gases every day. Kuwait oil industry which is the mainstay economic activity in the country has also contributed to air pollution.

Analysis of the problem

According to the results of a study that was published in Al-Qabas Newspaper in June 2006, more than 86.9% of Kuwait population considers air pollution as the biggest environmental challenge they have to deal with (Al-Mutairi and Koushki, 2009). This is evidence of increased air pollution which shows that there has been little progress to reverse the effect of the Gulf wars more than a decade later.

Air pollution in Kuwait has been contributed by two main sources including transport and oil industry. Studies have reveals that automobiles are the main mode of transport in the country with an average employed person making more than 6.1 trips every day with a mean length of 13.6 km.

Studies also show an average individual is likely to be delayed for more than 68 minutes everyday in traffic congestion (Koushki, 2007). A study carried out in 2005 revealed that an average Kuwait resident traveling to and from work generated about: (Al-Mutairi and Koushki, 2009)

- a) 31, 275 tons of Volatile Organic Compounds
- b) 247, 764 tones of carbon monoxide
- c) 19, 594 tons of oxides of nitrogen
- d) 1, 703 tons of sulfur dioxide

e) 6 million tons of carbon dioxide

Traffic has been rated as the leading cause of air pollution in Kuwait urban areas.

However, in the rural and urban areas, power stations and oil refinery plants makes a huge contribution to air pollution as well. Kuwait is one of the oil rich countries and oil contributed a large part to the country GDP. However, oil exploration has come with serious effects on the environment, notably grey clouds of smoke from oil refineries that goes up the sky.