

# National assemblies of kuwait

[History](#)



National Assemblies of Kuwait The first National Assembly in Kuwait was elected in 1963. The first National Assembly from 1963 to 1967 included a vibrant opposition led Ahmad al-Khatib, an Arab nationalist leader vital in the push for national representation, which was focused on censuring the government. The political effectiveness of al-Khatib and fellow nationalists in forming a credible opposition to the government necessitated government interference in the 1967 election. The National Assembly of 1967-1971 saw the removal of major opposition nationalists, including al-Khatib, and was marred by widespread alleged fraud, which made it unpopular but compliant with the wishes of the government (p. 97). The subsequent National Assembly election was conducted in 1971, and it also produced an assembly that was deemed compliant with the wishes of the ruling family. Most of the former nationalist leaders, including al-Khatib, failed to re-enter the assembly. However, the 1971-1975 National Assembly made its voice heard during negotiations with major oil companies. It was during this session of the National Assembly that the opposition to Kuwaiti participation with the KOC began, starting Kuwait's path towards nationalizing oil resources (p. 97).

Nationalization of oil happened under the National Assembly of 1975, which also enthusiastically opposed other policies of the Amir. Finally, wary of the impact that a vibrant opposition would have on the ruling family, as well as with relations between Kuwait and other Arab states that disapproved of assemblies and the resulting Arab nationalist opposition groups, the Amir dissolved the assembly in 1976 (p. 97). Kuwait remained without an assembly until elections were held in 1981. While they were relatively free and fair, the government subtly supported Islamist leaders as a counter-

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balance to the nationalists the government was still uncomfortable with. This meant that opposition pioneer al-Khatib was unable to rejoin the assembly again. Islamists formed the opposition core, while pro-administration Bedouins also made gains. The assembly was vocal in its opposition to the government to various government policies, including legislative-executive relations (p. 98). The next assembly elections in 1985 saw the government encourage nationalists and Bedouins to run so as to reduce the Islamist influence. This assembly resulted in the formation of nationalist and Islamist opposition blocks that coordinated to block government bills. So effective was this assembly in opposing the government that, yet again, it was dissolved in 1985.

In my opinion, this last assembly of 1985 was the most interesting, particularly due to the fact that it was deemed so dangerous to the ruling family and the cabinet that it only lasted a few months. Additionally, the ability of the nationalists and Islamists to work in coordination as opposition was un-foreseen by the Amir (p. 99), as it would have been for most political analysts. This National Assembly of 1985 can be analyzed as having been the result of continued government interference. By trying to pit the Islamists against the Nationalists in 1981 and the nationalists against the Islamists in 1985, the Amir created two forces that felt betrayed and, in turn, worked together to form a formidable opposition. So powerful was this opposition that they began to probe cabinet ministers loyal to the Amir for financial irregularities, including the Justice Minister, who resigned. In addition, important ministers like those in the ministries of Oil, Communications, and Education were also under attack from the National Assembly of 1985 (p. 99). It is not surprising that the Amir decided to <https://assignbuster.com/national-assemblies-of-kuwait/>

dissolve this assembly after they begun to pursue actively the Ministers for Internal Security and Oil, contending that they resign, despite the fact that these were members of the Amir's ruling family.