

# **KUWAIT: SUBMISSION TO THE UN COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION**

## **ISSUES RELATED TO THE DETENTION OF MIGRANT WORKERS**

**SUBMITTED: JULY 2026**

## **ABOUT THE GLOBAL DETENTION PROJECT (GDP)**

The Global Detention Project (GDP) is committed to ending arbitrary and harmful migration-related detention practices around the world, and to ensuring respect for the fundamental human rights of all migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. To achieve this, we seek to:

- Increase public knowledge and awareness of immigration detention policies.
- Expand coverage of immigration detention by human rights monitoring bodies and other international agencies.
- Expand partnerships with local and international civil society organisations working to end arbitrary and harmful immigration detention practices.
- Strategically target research and advocacy so that it effectively challenges arbitrary and harmful detention laws and policies.

## **ABOUT THE MIGRANT RIGHTS RESEARCH OPEN REPOSITORY (MRRORS)**

MRRORS (Migrant Rights Research Open Repository) aims to advance the rights of migrant workers in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and its corridors of migration through rigorous research, documentation, and advocacy.

MRRORS builds on nearly two decades of work documenting migrant narratives, sparking local debate, and driving change in attitudes, policies, and practices toward migrant workers.

Operating since 2007 as [Migrant-Rights.org](https://migrant-rights.org) under the umbrella of a wider human rights organisation, we are now an independent association under Swiss law. Our new name reflects our belief that migration is a lens through which wider social, economic, and political structures can be understood. Like a mirror to society, the MRRORS platform reveals the realities often made invisible while holding up the possibility of accountability and change.

**Kuwait: Issues Related to the Detention of Migrant Workers**  
**Submission to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial**  
**Discrimination (118<sup>th</sup> Session)**

**Submitted July 2026**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Global Detention Project (GDP) and the Migrant Rights Research Open Repository (MRRORS) welcome the opportunity to provide information relevant to the review of Kuwait's combined twenty fifth and twenty sixth periodic reports during the 118<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.
- 1.2 This submission focuses on Kuwait's detention and removal of migrants on immigration status related grounds. An important consideration for making this submission has been the Committee's position on immigration detention and border policies, laid out in its Joint General Recommendation (No.39/No.8) issued with the UN Committee on Migrant Workers (2025). In particular, we recall the following:

*“The Committees recall that immigration detention is always harmful and disproportionate as an interim measure during administrative procedures or in response to an administrative irregularity or infraction. The Committees strongly recommend that States Parties take all appropriate measures without delay to progressively abolish migration-related detention policies and practices.”*

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Kuwait is an important destination for migrant workers, particularly from South and Southeast Asia, and more recently from East Africa. As of January 2025, 68 percent of the population was non-Kuwaiti.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.2 While the country relies heavily on migrant workers, it has adopted a policy of labour “nationalisation”—“Kuwaitization”—in which it has sought to reduce its dependence on migrant labour and increase the employment of Kuwaiti nationals in the public and private sectors. Authorities have introduced quotas for Kuwaiti hires within specific sectors, and authorities

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<sup>1</sup> Central Statistical Bureau, “Population Estimates in Kuwait by Age, Nationality and Sex at 1-1-2025,” accessed 30 June 2026, [https://www.csb.gov.kw/Pages/Statistics\\_en?ID=67&ParentCatID=1](https://www.csb.gov.kw/Pages/Statistics_en?ID=67&ParentCatID=1)

have sought to cap migrant worker arrivals from specific countries. Egyptians, for example, have been amongst those targeted, with new conditions introduced in 2022 such as requiring them to pay 100 USD entry fee, increased work permit fees, and the requirement for a medical evaluation from specific health centres.<sup>2</sup>

- 2.3 Simultaneously, authorities have carried out a series of enforcement actions in recent years, targeting non-citizens for arrest and deportation, in particular those without valid residence papers or work visas. Successive crackdowns have led to the expulsion of tens of thousands of non-nationals, as well as over-crowding in detention centres and prisons.
- 2.3 Like many Gulf States, Kuwait maintains an employer-tied visa system (*kafala* system), which exposes migrant workers to a variety of abuses such as passport and wage confiscation, movement restrictions, labour exploitation, and physical, sexual, and psychological violence. Those who seek to change or leave their employer are left vulnerable to arrest, detention, and deportation for illegal stay. Under this sponsorship system, the migrant's work and residence permit is linked to the employer (*Kafeel*), with no recourse to renew their visas independently.
- 2.4 Additional protection concerns have also arisen within the context of recent hostilities involving Iran, with migrant workers facing heightened risks of arrest, detention, and deportation, as well as concerns regarding their safety and access to protection while in detention.

### 3. Key Concerns Regarding Kuwait's Compliance with the Convention

#### 3.1 Legislative Concerns

- 3.1.a The legal status of migrant workers in Kuwait is governed by the Foreigners' Residence Law (Amiri Decree No. 114 of 2024) and the Private Sector Labour Law No. 6 of 2010 (Labour Law). Domestic workers are excluded from the Labour Law and instead fall under Law No.68 of 2015 Concerning Domestic Workers.
- 3.1.b According to Article 20 of the Foreigners' Residence Law, the Ministry of Interior can deport any foreigner, even if they hold a residence permit, according to broad, and vague grounds: i) if they lack a legitimate income source; ii) if they violate provisions of Article 19 (such as working for an organisation without prior permission from their previous employer); and iii) if the Minister of Interior determines their deportation is necessary for the public interest, security, or morals.

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<sup>2</sup> Middle East Monitor, "Kuwait Sets New Conditions for Accepting Egyptian Workers," 7 December 2022, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20221207-kuwait-sets-new-conditions-for-accepting-egyptian-workers/>

- 3.1.c Article 22 of the 2024 Foreigners' Residence Law provides for the detention of migrants for the purposes of their deportation for thirty days—although this can be extended if needed to implement their removal. Importantly, there are no provisions requiring assessment of whether detained migrants are victims of trafficking or labour abuse by their sponsors, or determination of specific vulnerabilities or risks, or judicial authorisation or court oversight.
- 3.1.d Of additional concern, the Foreigners' Residence Law does not provide any right to appeal a deportation decision or establish any procedural mechanisms for challenging such decisions. This is reinforced by Article 1(5) of [Law No. 61 of 1982](#) (amending the law establishing an administrative circuit within the Court of First Instance to hear administrative disputes). This article expressly excludes decisions relating to the residence and deportation of non-Kuwaitis from the jurisdiction of that court, effectively denying non-Kuwaitis the ability to access judicial review of administrative deportation decisions. The exclusion of this group raises significant concerns under Article 5 of the Convention.
- 3.1.e Although Kuwait was the first country in the region to introduce a Domestic Workers Law in 2015, the scope of its coverage and implementation is limited—and domestic workers are not afforded the same level of labour protection as private sector workers. For example, domestic workers' regular working hours are set at 12 hours per day, compared to 8 hours for private sector workers, and they are excluded from important protections, including labour inspection and provisions on occupational health and safety, and compensation for work-related injuries.
- 3.1.f In 2026, Kuwait's Interior Ministry issued a circular restricting the recruitment of domestic workers to ten approved countries (South Africa, Benin, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, India, Vietnam, Nepal, and Senegal), while banning recruitment from 27 others (all but one of which are countries in Africa).<sup>3</sup>
- 3.1.g Kuwait's Social Insurance Law (Amiri Decree No. 61 of 1976) expressly applies only to Kuwaiti citizens, providing coverage for risks such as old age, disability, and other forms of social insurance protection. Migrant workers, who make up the majority of the country's workforce, are excluded from this government social insurance framework.

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<sup>3</sup> Gulf News, "Kuwait Restricts Domestic Worker Recruitment to 10 Countries," 9 June 2026, <https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/kuwait/kuwait-restricts-domestic-worker-recruitment-to-10-countries-1.500568209>

## Recommendations:

The GDP and MRRORS encourage the Committee to urge the State party to:

- Amend the 2024 Foreigners' Residence Law to ensure that deportation decisions are based on narrowly defined legal grounds, and are supported by individualised assessments and subject to the principles of necessity and proportionality. Broad grounds such as “public interest” and “morals” must not be applied in a manner that permits arbitrary and discriminatory removal of non-Kuwaitis.
- Revise the 2024 Foreigners' Residence Law to establish mandatory procedures to identify and protect migrants who may be victims of trafficking, forced labour, abuse, or other forms of vulnerability before detention or deportation proceedings are initiated.
- Amend the Foreigners' Residence Law and Law No. 61 of 1982 to ensure that non-Kuwaiti nationals subject to deportation decisions have access to an effective remedy, including the right to challenge such decisions before an independent and impartial judicial body.
- Amend Law No. 68 of 2015 Concerning Domestic Workers to ensure that domestic workers enjoy the same labour protections afforded to workers covered by the Private Sector Labour Law.
- Ensure that restrictions on the recruitment of migrant domestic workers do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, on the basis of nationality, ethnicity, or country of origin.

### 3.2 Vulnerability to Detention Under the *Kafala* System

- 3.2.a Despite frequent recommendations from international rights monitoring bodies that Kuwait amend its national legislation to abolish all aspects of its *kafala*-like system<sup>4</sup>, the 2024 Foreigners' Residence Law, which replaced a 1959 law, maintains a sponsorship-based system, under which migrants' legal residence and right to work are tied to an individual employer or “sponsor.” Under this framework, employers exercise significant control over workers' mobility, including their ability to change employment or renew residency permits.
- 3.2.b Within this system, migrant workers who leave employment without their employers' permission—such as those leaving abusive or exploitative employment—or whose employers withdraw sponsorship or file absconding charges, lose their residency and become “irregular”—and therefore become vulnerable to arrest, detention, and deportation. Article 14, for example, requires employers to notify the Ministry of Labour within two weeks if a domestic worker “absconds” from their

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, UN Human Rights Committee, “Concluding Observations on the Fourth Periodic Report of Kuwait,” CCPR/C/KWT/CO/4, 22 November 2023, <https://docs.un.org/en/CCPR/C/KWT/CO/4>

employment, and their residency permit is subsequently to be cancelled from the date of their departure. These vulnerabilities are significantly exacerbated during periods of crisis, as demonstrated by the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrant workers (see **3.4 Disproportionate Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Migrant Workers**). In practice, immigration detention is thus used as an enforcement mechanism linked to labour and sponsorship regulation, rather than as a measure of last resort.

- 3.2.c The GDP and MRRORS have documented numerous cases in which migrant workers have been arrested and detained after leaving abusive or exploitative employment. In early 2026 for example, Kuwaiti authorities deported nearly 3,500 migrant workers as part of a nationwide crackdown on residency and labour law violations. Those deported included workers who had absconding charges registered against them.<sup>5</sup>
- 3.2.d Although Kuwaiti law prohibits passport confiscation (Article 12 of Law No.68 of 2015 Concerning Domestic Workers), the practice remains prevalent<sup>6</sup> and, when combined with employer-tied residence status and limited ability to change employment, may severely restrict workers' freedom of movement and ability to leave exploitative situations. For migrant domestic workers confined to employers' homes and prevented from leaving or threatened with immigration consequences, these practices may amount to conditions of de facto deprivation of liberty.
- 3.2.e In another step backwards, on 1 July 2025 Kuwait reintroduced the exit permit system. As per a [ministerial circular](#), migrant workers now also need to request permission to leave the country via the Sahel app—providing employers with yet another tool of control. Without approval, migrants cannot lawfully exit the country.<sup>7</sup> Not only is this development another step towards entrenching, rather than dismantling, the *kafala* system, but it is also a clear violation of Article 5(d)(ii) of the Convention.

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<sup>5</sup> Arab Times, “Kuwait Expels 127 Bangladeshi Workers Following Wage Protest,” 7 August 2025, <https://www.arabtimesonline.com/news/kuwait-expels-127-bangladeshi-workers-following-wage-protest/>

<sup>6</sup> Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain, “Despite Reforms, Migrant Workers in Kuwait Continue to Endure Unfair and Abusive Practices,” 12 November 2025, <https://www.adhrb.org/2025/11/despite-reforms-migrant-workers-in-kuwait-continue-to-endure-unfair-and-abusive-practices/>

<sup>7</sup> MRRORS, “Kuwait Reinstates Exit Permit, Tightening the Grip of Kafala,” 29 October 2025, <https://www.mrrors.org/2025/10/kuwait-reinstates-exit-permit-tightening-the-grip-of-kafala/>

## Recommendations

The GDP and MRRORS encourage the Committee to urge Kuwait to:

- Abolish all aspects of the *kafala* system, ensuring that employer sponsorship is replaced by government overseen residency permits. The State party must ensure that migrant workers are not subjected to arrest, detention, and/or deportation as a consequence of employment termination, sponsorship withdrawal, or allegations of absconding, and instead guarantee that immigration detention is only used as a measure of last resort.
- Ensure the effective implementation of Article 12 of Law No. 68 of 2015 by preventing and sanctioning passport confiscation and other practices restricting migrant domestic workers' freedom of movement.
- Remove the new exit requirements for migrant workers and ensure that migrant workers are able to leave the country without restrictions.

### 3.3 Targeting of Non-Nationals for Deportation

- 3.3.a Kuwait regularly conducts large-scale enforcement campaigns targeting irregular migrants. In the first half of 2025, some 19,000 were arrested and deported.<sup>8</sup> In 2024, the Director of the country's Deportation Department (within the Ministry of Interior) claimed that Kuwait had deported more than 595,000 people over 33 years, including 354,168 men and 230,411 women.<sup>9</sup> These enforcement cycles are closely linked to Kuwait's broader "Kuwaitisation" (nationalisation of the labour market) policy, which prioritises increasing the proportion of Kuwaiti nationals in the workforce and reducing reliance on migrant labour.
- 3.3.b Often, these campaigns—presented as “cleaning the labor market”<sup>10</sup>—occur after regularisation campaigns, with authorities announcing that remaining undocumented migrants would be subject to deportation.<sup>11</sup> In March 2020 for example, amidst the growing Covid-19 crisis, Kuwait announced an amnesty for irregular migrants between 1 – 30 April, permitting those who had overstayed their visas or who had otherwise

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<sup>8</sup> The Times, “Security Campaigns in 2025 Lead to Arrest and Deportation of Thousands,” 4 August 2025, <https://timeskuwait.com/security-campaigns-in-2025-lead-to-arrest-and-deportation-of-thousands>

<sup>9</sup> The Times, “Kuwait Deports Over 595,000 People in 33 Years; 25,000 More Sent Out Since Start of 2024,” 20 October 2024, <https://timeskuwait.com/kuwait-deports-over-595000-people-in-33-years-25000-more-sent-out-since-start-of-2024/>

<sup>10</sup> The Times, “42,000 Violating Expatriates Deported in 2023,” 6 January 2024, <https://timeskuwait.com/42000-violating-expatriates-deported-in-2023/>

<sup>11</sup> 1 Arabia, “Kuwait Ends Amnesty Program for Undocumented Migrants,” 3 June 2024, <https://www.1arabia.com/2024/06/kuwait-ends-amnesty-program-for.html>

become undocumented to leave without paying fines. However, those who did not leave would be deported and banned from re-entry.<sup>12</sup>

3.3.c Operations typically include workplace and residential raids, with migrants stopped on the spot to show their documents and limited procedural safeguards in place. These have commonly targeted migrant-dense neighbourhoods, like Jleeb al-Shuyoukh and Mahboula.<sup>13</sup> Violence has been documented in these raids.<sup>14</sup> In line with Article 20 of the Foreigners' Residency Law, deportees are not guaranteed a right to challenge the legality of their removal.

3.3.d Such campaigns have frequently been accompanied by hate speech and xenophobic rhetoric. While Decree-Law No. 19 of 2012 prohibits hate speech, authorities have continued to propagate hate speech and discrimination against migrant workers since the Committee's last review of the State party in 2017. Notably, in 2019 the government launched the 'Be Assured' campaign targeting low-income, unaccompanied male migrant workers. Billboards were erected across the country, encouraging nationals to report 'bachelors' in residential areas, and authorities evicted hundreds of migrant workers, often shutting off water and electricity to force workers out of their accommodation.<sup>15</sup> Similar discriminatory narratives were evident during the Covid-19 pandemic (see **3.4 Disproportionate Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Migrant Workers**).

## Recommendations:

We urge the Committee to recommend that Kuwait:

- Cease mass arrests of suspected irregular migrants, and instead ensure that the people are arrested on the basis of individual warrants, ensuring compliance with the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality, and non-discrimination.

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<sup>12</sup> MRRORS, "Kuwait Announces Amnesty for Irregular Migrants," 27 March 2020, <https://www.mrrors.org/2020/03/kuwait-announces-amnesty-for-irregular-migrants/>

<sup>13</sup> Kuwait Times, "394 Arrested in Mahboula, Jleeb Amid MOI Crackdown," 14 August 2022, [https://kuwaittimes.com/uploads/imported\\_images/pdf/2022/aug/14/kt.pdf](https://kuwaittimes.com/uploads/imported_images/pdf/2022/aug/14/kt.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> MRRORS, "Op-Ed: Kuwait's Backtracking on 'Pay-For-Amnesty' Policy Fails to Protect Rights of Migrants," 20 February 2024, <https://www.mrrors.org/2024/02/op-ed-kuwaits-backtracking-on-pay-for-amnesty-policy-fails-to-protect-rights-of-migrants/>

<sup>15</sup> MRRORS, "Forced Evictions: Kuwait's Dehumanising Campaign Targets Male Migrants," 19 September 2019, <https://www.mrrors.org/2019/09/forced-evictions-kuwaits-dehumanising-campaign-targets-male-migrants>

- Given that a lack of guaranteed judicial review contributes to a risk of arbitrary removal, particularly in the context of large-scale enforcement campaigns, Kuwait must ensure that any non-national subject to removal is guaranteed access to an effective remedy.
- Immediately adopt measures to prevent and combat racist and xenophobic hate speech against migrant workers, including by ensuring that public officials refrain from promoting discriminatory narratives against migrants. The State party should strengthen the implementation of Decree-Law No. 19 of 2012 by investigating, prosecuting, and sanctioning acts of incitement to hatred, discrimination, and violence.

### 3.4 Disproportionate Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Migrant Workers

- 3.4.a The Covid-19 pandemic both exposed, and intensified, the structural discrimination experienced by migrant workers in Kuwait.
- 3.4.b The migrant population experienced particular vulnerabilities as a result of the *kafala* system. Indeed, many lost employment as businesses closed or shrank staff amidst the crisis, leaving workers without legal status and vulnerable to detention and deportation. Although authorities declared an amnesty for irregular migrants in April 2020, allowing those who had overstayed their visas or who had otherwise become undocumented to leave the country without paying fines,<sup>16</sup> many remained irregular—leading to increased arrests and detentions. Given the limited flights available to return detainees to their home countries, numerous reports indicated that the (now-closed) Talha Deportation Centre suffered from extensive overcrowding.<sup>17</sup> As international flights resumed and Covid-19 cases dropped, Kuwait—like other GCC states—escalated its deportation efforts: 18,221 were deported in 2021 alone.<sup>18</sup>
- 3.4.c Migrants also experienced a surge in xenophobic hate speech. Thousands of posts on social media propagated hateful rhetoric and incited violence against migrants,<sup>19</sup> and public figures frequently used the pandemic to

<sup>16</sup> MRRORS, “Kuwait’s Amnesty Provides a Risky Reprieve for Some Migrant Workers,” 10 April 2020, <https://www.mrrors.org/2020/04/kuwaits-amnesty-provides-a-risky-reprieve-for-some-migrant-workers/>

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, U.S State Department, “2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Kuwait,” 2022, <https://2021-2025.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/kuwait/?safe=1>

<sup>18</sup> MRRORS, “Gulf States Ramping Up Deportation Campaigns Despite Rising Covid-19 Cases,” 23 January 2022, <https://www.mrrors.org/2022/01/gulf-states-ramping-up-deportation-campaigns-despite-rising-covid-19-cases/>

<sup>19</sup> The United Nations Office at Geneva, “In Dialogue with Kuwait, Experts of the Human Rights Committee Commend the State’s Support for Victims of Domestic Violence, Raise Issues Concerning Xenophobic Hate Speech and the Resumption of Executions,” 17 October 2023,

incite fears of “demographic imbalance” and to call for efforts “to purify the country from illegal workers.”<sup>20</sup> On one occasion, Kuwaiti actress Hayat Al-Fahad called for migrants to be deported to the desert in order to save hospital beds for Kuwaiti nationals who tested positive for Covid-19.<sup>21</sup> A 2020 poll by Kuwait University found that 64.77 percent of Kuwaiti citizens believed migrant workers were to blame for spreading the virus in the country, and 76.25 percent agreed to deporting them.<sup>22</sup>

- 3.4.d The Kuwaiti government's response to the pandemic also exemplified the entrenched discrimination between citizens and non-citizens embedded in government policies. In April 2020, the government fenced off Jleeb al-Shuyoukh, a district predominantly inhabited by low-income migrants, preventing residents from entering or leaving the area for several months. While imposing these restrictions, the government took limited measures to ensure that those confined within the lockdown zone could effectively practice social distancing or access adequate health care. Given the already overcrowded and substandard housing conditions in these migrant-populated neighbourhoods, the lockdown created conditions that facilitated the rapid spread of Covid-19. Comparable restrictions were not imposed on neighbourhoods predominantly inhabited by Kuwaiti citizens.<sup>23</sup>
- 3.4.e These disparities also extended to Kuwait's vaccination campaign. When the Ministry of Health began rolling out Covid-19 vaccines, Kuwaiti citizens were prioritized for vaccination, while migrant workers were initially excluded from the campaign, even when they belonged to high-risk groups. By February 2021, reports indicated that Kuwaiti citizens were being vaccinated at approximately six times the rate of migrant workers, despite migrants constituting the majority of the country's population.<sup>24</sup> The unequal impact of these policies is reflected in

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<https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/meeting-summary/2023/10/examen-du-koweit-devant-le-comite-des-droits-de-lhomme-la>

<sup>20</sup> MRRORS, “The COVID-19 Crisis is Fueling More Racist Discourse Towards Migrant Workers in the Gulf,” 5 April 2020, <https://www.mrrors.org/2020/04/the-covid-19-crisis-is-fueling-more-racist-discourse-towards-migrant-workers-in-the-gulf/>

<sup>21</sup> MRRORS, “The COVID-19 Crisis is Fueling More Racist Discourse Towards Migrant Workers in the Gulf,” 5 April 2020, <https://www.mrrors.org/2020/04/the-covid-19-crisis-is-fueling-more-racist-discourse-towards-migrant-workers-in-the-gulf/>

<sup>22</sup> Kuwait Times, “65% of Kuwaitis Blame Expats for Spreading COVID,” 25 August 2020, <https://kuwaittimes.com/65-of-kuwaitis-blame-expats-for-spreading-covid/>

<sup>23</sup> London School of Economics, “COVID-19 in Kuwait: How Poor Urban Planning and Divisive Policies Helped the Virus Spread,” 16 September 2020, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/covid19/2020/09/16/covid-19-in-kuwait-how-poor-urban-planning-and-divisive-policies-helped-the-virus-spread/>

<sup>24</sup> Bloomberg UK, “Kuwait Puts Citizens Before Expats as Vaccine Push Stirs Anger,” 18 February 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-02-18/kuwait-puts-citizens-before-expats-as-vaccine-push-stirs-anger>

mortality data: a study by physicians and public health researchers estimated that excess deaths during the pandemic increased by 71.9% among migrant workers, compared with 32.4% among Kuwaiti citizens.<sup>25</sup>

- 3.4.f Beyond its COVID-19 response, the Kuwaiti government has continued to pursue health care policies that discriminate against non-citizens. In December 2022, the Ministry of Health introduced new fees for the dispensing of prescription medicines to non-Kuwaiti residents covered by the public health insurance system, while prescription medications remained free of charge for Kuwaiti citizens. Under the new policy, non-citizens were required to pay a flat fee of 5 Kuwaiti dinars for medicines dispensed at primary health care centres and hospital emergency departments, and 10 Kuwaiti dinars for medicines dispensed through outpatient clinics. The policy also expanded restrictions on the dispensing of certain medicines to non-citizens, reserving access to some medications exclusively for Kuwaiti citizens.<sup>26</sup>

### Recommendations:

In light of this information, the GDP and MRRORS encourage the Committee to recommend that Kuwait:

- As recommended above, abolish all aspects of the *kafala* system in law and practice, ensuring that loss of employment does not immediately lead to loss of legal status.
- Adopt measures to guarantee access to health care regardless of migration status. In particular, Kuwait should review its differential fees and restrictions on medicines, to ensure that health care policies do not discriminate against non-citizens.

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<sup>25</sup> B. Alahmad B et al, “Disparities in Excess Deaths from the COVID-19 Pandemic Among Migrant Workers in Kuwait,” *BMC Public Health*, 2021, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8438289/>

<sup>26</sup> MRRORS, “The Cost of Good Healthcare for Kuwait’s Migrant Workers,” 12 February 2023, <https://www.mrrors.org/2023/02/the-cost-of-good-health-for-kuwaits-migrant-workers/>