

Kuwait new electoral law under fire

Kuwait Times - 16 December, 2007

The election law was changed recently and instead of 25, there will be only five electoral districts in the country. Most residents however, do not agree with this new system of elections, and see it as even worse than the previous one. Some deem that this system definitely needs political parties to be more successful, while the Kuwaiti political system does not encourage political parties. To rectify the situation, Lawyer Mubarak Al-Mutawa, filed a case in court demanding the issuance of a law to legalize political parties in Kuwait.

The case will be heard in today's session (Sunday). On this occasion Mubarak Al-Mutawa held a press conference at the Kuwait Bar Association yesterday. "There is political chaos in Kuwait right now. I felt the need of a new legislation to organize the present situation. People always complain that there is corruption, but they don't point out to specific persons. In this way, I'm trying to help as best as I can," he highlighted.

I have a personal benefit as a citizen in filing this particular case, but the main reason is for the general benefit of our county. This is the first case of its kind in Kuwait, and although I'm against political parties for various reasons, especially due to the small size of Kuwait and the bad examples set by, in other Arab countries, I'm obliged to do so," he added.

The financial situation in Kuwait being very good, several important matters and issues have come to the fore. "The Kuwaiti citizens are begging for their rights by staging demonstrations in front of the Parliament or in front of the Seif Palace. This case will change the so-many wrong things happening in the society," he said.

The court and the legislative powers are equally responsible for instituting the Constitution. "The legislation is the place where people are expected to demand their rights. I ask the decision-makers to respect that. The present situation is unconstitutional as there are several unorganized political and party activities held under fictional names," he noted. Through this case, Al-Mutawa said he plans to sue only certain legal authorities (such as the Cabinet, Parliament, Ministry of Interior and others) and would not target specific individuals, officials or even their representatives.

It has been proved that the law No. 42/2006 concerning the five electorates could not be applied without the political parties. "We need other laws to evoke this law to make it fair for all Kuwaitis, otherwise it could be appealed when applied. This law could also bring about negative results instead of being a reformative law," Al-Mutawa pointed out. He is however optimistic on winning this particular case. "I consider that I achieved partial success, and that I have won this case. The evidence lies in the announcement by three political parties of submitting their declarations. I made this issue active," he explained.

Many lawyers too joined in this case. Several citizens joined in as well, to exercise their rights and benefit from this case. "Also there are many international organizations following up on this case such as the Human Rights Watch Organization and others," Al-Mutawa concluded. Other lawyers meanwhile share the opinion that the five electorates are even worse than the previous 25. "I'm not for having political parties in Kuwait, but then, the new five electoral

law demands the existence of political parties. The best system is the one electoral system, but then again, according to the Constitution this isn't possible," rued Lawyer Nahis Al-Anezi.