

Kuwait opposition groups call for safeguarding constitution

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Nine opposition groups and movements yesterday called for concerted efforts to safeguard the 1962 constitution by complying with all its provisions and prohibiting the suspension of all or part of it. The call came in a joint statement signed by the groups after noticing that "there has been a retreat in the application of constitutional principles and values and an increased role of the corrupt forces in their attempt to demolish democracy".

The statement stressed that the 1962 constitution remains "the security valve" for the country's stability and development. "The political powers (groups) condemn the symbols of corruption and its institutions which represent the core of forces that are against the constitution and the democratic rule in Kuwait," the statement said. These corrupt forces have remained relentless in their efforts to suspend the constitution and stop popular participation, the statement said.

It stressed that forces of corruption have "unified their ranks and increased their efforts by circulating the so-called unconstitutional dissolution of the Assembly through suspending the constitution with the ultimate goal of destroying the constitutional powers of the National Assembly".

The statement however expressed with high esteem the opposition groups' gratitude for the "principled and decisive position of His Highness the Amir who has categorically denied" rumors about the unconstitutional dissolution. The groups however demanded the necessity to hold firm to the constitution and for prohibiting suspending any or all of its articles. They called for the full implementation of the constitution by activating its articles, and urged the National Assembly and the government to abide by the provisions of the constitution and practicing their full powers.

The statement called on all authorities and civil society organizations to confront any attempt to suspend the constitution. The opposition groups also called for full coordination between groups and movements and civil society organizations to strengthen constitutional gains, achieve reforms and development and confront corruption forces. The statement was issued following a meeting last week for the opposition groups to study the latest developments in the country.

The nine groups which signed the statement include National Reconciliation, Popular Action Movement, Islamic Constitutional Movement, National Democratic Alliance, Islamic Salaf Alliance, National Islamic Alliance, Democratic Forum, Justice and Peace Alliance and Charter Alliance. But three groups which attended the meeting refused to sign the statement saying it fell short of their expectations and aspirations.

The groups, the Ummah Party, Salaf Movement and the Justice and Development Movement, said that they wanted the statement to include a reference to the need to have a popular government, in which the prime minister will be from common Kuwaitis and not from the ruling family.