

Kuwaiti MP seeks grilling of sole woman minister

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A Kuwaiti MP sought on Monday to grill the emirate's only woman minister, blaming her for falling education standards and a failure to apply strict segregation of the sexes.

In a statement to the media, Islamist tribal lawmaker Saad al-Azemi also accused Education Minister Nuriya al-Sabeeh also accused her breaching the law in connection with several high profile appointments and dismissals.

He said she was responsible for "serious deterioration" in education standards and blamed her over an incident in which four Asian workers stand accused of molesting three Kuwaiti boys at a primary school.

A decade ago Kuwait's elected parliament passed a law enforcing total segregation of male and female students at all universities.

MPs in the conservative Arab Gulf state have been trying to extend the law to private foreign schools.

Sabeeh had stirred the anger of Islamist MPs when she took the oath in parliament in April without wearing a head cover or hijab in line with strict Muslim laws.

Since then she has been under scrutiny by Islamist MPs and could be dismissed if the grilling leads to a parliamentary no-confidence motion against her.

Liberal MPs have dismissed the attacks against her as politically-motivated.

Kuwait, a leading oil producer, has faced political crises in the past two years, including the forced resignation of three cabinet ministers.

Emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah dissolved parliament in May last year, when three MPs filed a request to grill the prime minister over electoral reforms and fresh polls were held the following month.

Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Mohammad al-Ahmad al-Sabah, a nephew of the emir, carried out a cabinet reshuffle in October after MPs demanded to grill two ministers.

Under pressure from MPs, the premier was forced to axe former oil minister Bader al-Humaidhi, who has not yet been replaced.