

## **Kuwait's Sheikh Jaber blasted over naturalizations**

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Pressure was yesterday mounting on Interior Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Khaled Al-Sabah to quit over what MPs alleged wide-ranging violations in granting Kuwaiti citizenship to about 570 people last week. Liberal MP Ahmad Al-Mulaifi led the charge against the minister by calling on him to resign or face a grilling. He even threatened to take unspecified action against the whole government if it did not withdraw the citizenship list.

Several other MPs also criticized the minister and the government, citing illegal methods in granting citizenship to a large number of people on the list. MP Mulaifi declined to disclose what actions he plans to take "in the coming few days" if the minister did not resign and the government did not rectify the grave violations committed in the citizenship list. "We have discovered serious violations in the list of people who were granted citizenship and we will not remain silent. This is a sensitive issue that relates to the country and its sovereignty," he said.

Citing an example of a man on the list, Mulaifi said that the interior minister revealed state secrets when he said that the man had acted as a Kuwaiti spy in Iraq during the rule of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. If the minister was not saying the truth, then it is an even more serious offense when a Cabinet minister provides false information to the people, he said. "The interior minister should bear his political responsibilities and resign as of today because what he said hurts national security of the country," Mulaifi said.

The lawmaker also called on the government to withdraw the list because more than 200 people on it did not deserve Kuwaiti citizenship. "After scrutiny, we found that 300 people fulfilled the conditions and deserve nationality, while the remaining 273 did not. The government must review these names once again," he demanded. Mulaifi said the government has two options: either to withdraw the list to scrutinize the names and rectify the violations and the interior minister should resign, or it should be read y to "face the political consequences".

I make myself very clear. This issue cannot wait. If nothing happens, the next few days will reveal what type of action we are going to take," Mulaifi said without elaborating, in a hint that he may grill either the interior minister or the prime minister himself. The lawmaker said that 5,000 people, who fully qualify for citizenship, have been waiting for years because they have no influence and do not work at "sheikhs' homes".

Several other MPs have also called for a parliamentary probe of the citizenship list. The issue has clearly overshadowed the planned grilling of Education Minister Nouriya Al-Sabeeh, which is scheduled for debate on Tuesday. But spokesman of the new Islamic Bloc MP Jaber Al-Muhailbi said in a statement yesterday that his group will not violate the rules and regulations during the debate of the grilling.

He said the group will not show videos of mixed parties at private universities and schools, but insisted there will be many surprises during the debate. The Cabinet meanwhile is due to discuss the grilling in its weekly meeting today to see the minister's preparations for the debate.