



# Iran N-brain hit; payback in due time

## Opinion

### Your Highness, we're at the end of the knees between a helpless government and a 'kidnapped' Parliament

By **Ahmed Al-Jarallah**  
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

YOUR Highness the Amir and Your Highness the Crown Prince, I turn to your lofty positions from my position as a journalist and a Kuwaiti citizen who is worried about the current economic situation. I think there is nothing wrong with that, especially since the picture drawn by world-class rating agencies, the latest of which is the Standard & Poor's report of the future of Kuwait, appears to be the same. It portends a great crisis, and everyone realizes that this is caused by economic mismanagement, procrastination by the government and its improvised decisions that are not based on a scientific vision.

Reports that sound alarm bells, both local and international, have been published for years, according to which the welfare State has ended in Kuwait and so it has to face the fact that it must wean itself from relying on oil as the sole nourishment of life and work towards diversifying the sources of income. However, this did not fall on deaf ears, especially since the government is concerned, first and foremost, with revitalizing the economy, and imposing laws that help increase the attractiveness of investors, instead of legislation to isolate and close the country, and to respond to racist desires, which made it repelling at all levels, and preventing investors from embracing it.

A few months ago, the Minister of Finance announced to us in an official parliamentary session that there would be no salaries at the end of November or December. This statement raised concerns at all levels, as it indicates the level of bankruptcy of the State. Have we really reached that point or did the exaggeration practiced by those in the government lead to talking irresponsibly?

In both cases, there is a calamity if the speech was correct and the executive authority did not take firm measures to avoid reaching this point. If the speech was without knowledge, the calamity is greater, and the responsibility is on the Prime Minister, for whom we have all the respect and love but we wonder about his natural role in this matter.

Experience in the recent months has proven that the current Cabinet does not have the ability to confront challenges. It yields to the wishes of the MPs more than once; even the recent interpellations were a bazaar of deals that further complicated the situation in the country. This leads us to ask - Doesn't the country need a prime minister and ministers with a great deal of courage for confronting and adhering to decisions taken without fear of parliamentary blackmail?

Today, we are on the verge of new elections and it seems their outcomes will not be better than the previous Parliament. Therefore, the country is continuing on its downward path, which does not bode well at all.

Years ago, neighboring countries - I mean the UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Qatar - began to lay down laws and legislations to reduce dependency on oil and to diversify sources of income; and they have achieved great benefits in this regard.

In Saudi Arabia, which has oil reserves estimated at \$35 trillion, dependence on non-oil income has reached around 33 percent. This is the preliminary result of the efforts that began four years ago, and

reports indicate that this is growing and is expected to reach 50 percent within a few years.

In the UAE, the non-oil sector constitutes 70 percent of the national economy. Today, there are 37 free trade zone areas there, thanks to the sophisticated legislations which were developed to the point of enabling non-citizens to have 100 percent ownership in companies.

The UAE is currently moving towards becoming a global financial and commercial hub, but this reality is still a slogan in Kuwait where all the legislation issued in this regard prevents the achievement of this goal.

Bahrain has taken a series of encouraging measures to attract investments, and so has Qatar, while the Sultanate of Oman has made great steps in this regard.

These countries have devised bold plans to transform the COVID-19 crisis into a great investment opportunity, and supported the local private sector by helping it to cushion the negative impacts of the crisis, and eventually overcome it.

His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince, there were no measures to encourage the industrial sector. Unfortunately, this sector has transformed to trade in lands or tanning sheepskins at best. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia has partnerships with international institutions, and they are today building aircraft and developing weapons, whereas the UAE has entered the era of satellites.

For 30 years we have heard talks about diversifying sources of income. Nothing has changed apart from going from bad to worse. Because favoritism and the quota game have reached all sectors, the salary clause has become the highest in the world.

The number of national manpower in the government sector has multiplied to the point that there is random employment in sectors with specific specialties like oil, for example, where a non-Kuwaiti works and a Kuwaiti gets paid.

This is due to the fact that underemployment, or rather the so-called disguised unemployment has swept over all the State's facilities. The legislation issued here and there make things more difficult for people, as if Kuwait is the only envied country in the entire world, while the truth is that states and peoples deal with us on the basis of bad classification, and no one will accept us.

Dear leaders, I speak as a citizen who sees opportunities slipping from our hands while we are distracted by the Byzantine intrigues between a government and a Parliament, casting responsibility on each other.

If the government is impotent, a sound choice must be made for whoever takes over it. If the Parliament is the source of obstruction, let the solution be to suspend it, and in return take bold decisions that lead to the opening of the country, as all the Arabian Gulf states have done. Otherwise, we will only have to cry over the ruins of a country that was previously a pioneer in everything and is today at the end of the wheel. I have conveyed the message to you all.

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This photo released by the semi-official Fars News Agency shows the scene where Mohsen Fakhrazadeh (inset), was killed in Absard, a small city just east of the capital Tehran, Iran on Nov 27. Fakhrazadeh, an Iranian scientist that Israel alleged led the Islamic Republic's military nuclear program until its disbanding in the early 2000s was 'assassinated', state television said. (AP)



## Campaigns focus on jobs, threats from 'Deep State'

By **Saeed Mahmoud Saleh**  
Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 28: Third Constituency candidate and former MP Abdulkareem Al-Kandari has criticized the campaign to remove advertisements in various parts of the country; including cartoons aimed at raising the citizens' awareness and guide them to vote for candidates based on their capabilities, not due to family or tribal affiliations, in addition to highlighting the negative consequences of receiving bribe from any candidate.

He pointed out the concerned authorities have been silent over the vote-buying scandals, yet they are keen on removing public awareness advertisements and conducting investigations to identify those behind such advertisements. He added the government targets the whistleblower and turns a blind eye to the criminal.

Second Constituency candidate Mona Abdulhusain Abdulreda stressed the importance of making senior officials jobs exclusive for citizens. She argued it is true that any country cannot function without the contributions of both the citizens and expatriates, but it is not racist to maintain national security by assigning sensitive jobs to the citizens only. She also refuted the allegation that a Kuwaiti employee is not hardworking.

Former MP and First Constituency candidate Dr Adel Al-Damkhi said the 'Deep State' is a systemized entity of corruption which owns media and money, while controlling procedures for the appointment of senior officials. He said the 'Deep State' appeared in Kuwait in 2009 and it has been working till date as it enforces laws, which protect its interests like the laws on restricting freedom of speech and imprisoning whoever expresses opposing views. He repeated his statement at the National Assembly in the grilling of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Anas Al-Saleh, during which he pointed out that any MP who supports the no-confidence motion would face problems and would be a target in the 2020 parliamentary elections.

Former MP and Third Constituency candidate Osama Al-Menawer argued that the decision to prevent candidates from holding electoral meetings with citizens has nothing to do with coronavirus. He thinks the objective is to stop direct interaction between the candidates and voters. If it is true that the authorities took such a decision as part of health precautions, they should have allowed meetings provided the health regulations like wearing facemasks and gloves, as well as social distancing, are strictly implemented. This decision stabbed the heart of the entire election process. Without the television channels and other media platforms, no one would know about the elections, he asserted.

He warned about the public's reaction, which will be manifested in the results of the elections. He called to mind that in 1976, the authorities tried to disregard the people and cancelled the election. When the election was held in 1981, the authorities amended the number of constituencies from 10 to 25 in order to control the MPs. The citizens reacted in 1986 when the election resulted in the most powerful Parliament in the history of Kuwait, he added.

Former minister of Social Affairs and First Constituency candidate Dr Ghadeer Asseri criticized the government's way of dealing with the Bedouin issue. She pointed out it is no longer acceptable that the issue remains unsolved, considering the studies conducted in

### Day by Day

AN Arab proverb says: "Dirham is like a plaster on a broken bone." I think this proverb means money can heal 'fractures'.

Another proverb says: "Lubricate the belt for smooth running." Does this not mean bribe? Are we not living in the world of proverbs?

... Tomorrow is another day.

**Zahed Matar**

this regard. She wondered why the issue has been under study for almost six decades, while asserting that this is a humanitarian case. She urged the government to stop "mixing papers" by linking efforts to find a solution with the forgery of citizenship.

She stressed the need to refer whoever is involved in fraud to the court, while those who deserve the Kuwaiti nationality must be naturalized and those who do not deserve it must be given rights including the right to education and healthcare.

She then highlighted the fact that advanced countries like the United Kingdom register violations against parents if the latter do not send their children to school regardless of their citizenship - British or expatriates.

Second Constituency candidate Abdulrahman Al-Mutawa'a disclosed that he communicated with other candidates in order to form a bloc, which aims to ratify a bill on amending the electoral system within the first 100 days of the 2020 Parliament. He pointed out the bill, once ratified, will end compromise among MPs and consideration for the government's demands. He added that in such a case, the call for elections should be issued after the enforcement of the new law.

Third Constituency candidate Hamad Al-Ansari believes the 2020 election is a turning point in the parliamentary history of the country. He said the incoming Parliament will deal with economic problems like the public budget deficit.

He added the results of this election are important as they will determine if the Parliament will issue laws in favor of the citizens or it will solve economic problems by using the citizens' pockets. He said if the voters are wise, the next legislature will take pro-reform steps; such as rationalizing expenditures, combating corruption and imposing tax on wealthy business owners.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Khaled Al-Saleh said work is underway so that the parliamentary elections scheduled for next Dec 5 will be smooth and transparent, and that everyone stipulated in the election law be preserved.

This came in a statement to journalists during the inauguration of the Al-Muhallab Maritime Rescue Center affiliated to the Directorate-General of the Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFSD) in the Sabah Al-Ahmad Sea City, in the presence of the KFSD Director-General Lieutenant-General Khaled Al-Makrad, the Deputy Director General of the Control Sector, Major General Jamal Al-Blaihis, Fawaz Khalid Al-Marzouq, and the chief firefighters.

## Dr Al-Ujairi COVID critical... 319 new cases

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 28, (Agencies): Kuwaiti astronomer Dr Saleh Al-Ujairi who has tested positive for the COVID-19 virus is undergoing treatment at the Jaber Hospital, reports Al-Rai daily.

Medical sources said, "In light of the development of the health condition, the decision was taken to transfer Dr Al-Ujairi to Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital, and as the medical personnel continue their tireless efforts to provide the best means of healthcare, the sources revealed that "the health of the well-known astronomer remains critical."

Kuwait on Saturday logged 319 new coronavirus infections to raise the total to 142,195, while one fatality recorded over the past 24 hours upped its death toll from the outbreak to 875, the health ministry said.

The number of people hospitalized with the virus currently stands at 5,431, with 77 of them in intensive care units, according to ministry Spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad, who revealed that some 4,242 swab tests were conducted over the last day out of a total of 1,086,669 so far.

'Nimitz' near

TEHRAN, Iran, Nov 28, (AP): Iran's supreme leader on Saturday demanded the "definitive punishment" of those behind the killing of a scientist who led Tehran's disbanded military nuclear program, as the Islamic Republic blamed Israel for a slaying that has raised fears of reignited tensions across the Middle East.

After years of being in the shadows, the image of Mohsen Fakhrazadeh suddenly was to be seen everywhere in Iranian media, as his widow spoke on state television and officials publicly demanded revenge on Israel for the scientist's slaying.

Israel, long suspected of killing Iranian scientists a decade ago amid earlier tensions over Tehran's nuclear program, has yet to comment on Fakhrazadeh's killing Friday. However, the attack bore the hallmarks of a carefully planned, military-style ambush, the likes of which Israel has been accused of conducting before.

The attack has renewed fears of Iran striking back against the US, Israel's closest ally in the region, as it did earlier this year when a US drone strike killed a top Iranian general. The US military acknowledged moving an aircraft carrier back into the region, while an Iranian lawmaker suggested throwing out UN nuclear inspectors in response to the killing.

### Prominent

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called Fakhrazadeh "the country's prominent and distinguished nuclear and defensive scientist." Khamenei, who has the final say on all matters of state, said Iran's first priority after the killing was the "definitive punishment of the perpetrators and those who ordered it." He did not elaborate.

Speaking earlier Saturday, President Hassan Rouhani blamed Israel for the killing.

"We will respond to the assassination of Martyr Fakhrazadeh in a proper time," Rouhani said. "The Iranian nation is smarter than falling into the trap of the Zionists. They are thinking to create chaos."

Both Rouhani and Khamenei said that Fakhrazadeh's death would not stop the nuclear program. Iran's civilian atomic program has continued its experiments and now enriches a growing uranium stockpile up to 4.5 percent purity in response to the collapse of Iran's nuclear deal after the US' 2018 withdrawal from the accord.

That's still far below weapons-grade levels of 90 percent, though experts warn Iran now has enough low-enriched uranium for at least two atomic bombs if it chose to pursue them.

Analysts have compared Fakhrazadeh to being on par with Robert Oppenheimer, the scientist who led America's Manhattan Project in World War II that created the atom bomb.

Fakhrazadeh headed Iran's so-called AMAD program that Israel and the West have alleged was a military operation looking at the feasibility of building a nuclear weapon. The International Atomic Energy Agency says that "structured program" ended in 2003. Iran long has maintained its nuclear program is peaceful.

Fakhrazadeh's widow appeared unnamed on state television in a black chador, saying his death would spark a thousand others to take up his work.

"He wanted to get martyred and his wish came true," she said.

Hard-line Iranian media has begun circulating memorial images showing Fakhrazadeh standing alongside a machine-gun-cradling likeness of Revolutionary Guard Gen Qassem Soleimani, whom the US killed in the January drone strike.

Soleimani's death led to Iran retaliating with a ballistic missile barrage that injured dozens of American troops, but Tehran also has the support of proxy forces across the Mideast that it can call upon. The Iranian Guard's naval forces routinely shadow and have tense encounters with US Navy forces in the Arabian Gulf as well.

Hours after the attack, the Pentagon announced it had brought the USS Nimitz aircraft carrier back into the Middle East, an unusual move as the carrier already spent months in the region.

## NewsWatch

**WASHINGTON:** President Donald Trump still won't bring himself to concede the election he decisively lost to President-elect Joe Biden. But he's now acknowledging he will leave the White House if Biden's win is affirmed by the Electoral College, which is firmly on track to do just that in a few weeks.

"Certainly I will," he said Thursday when asked if he will vacate the premises after electors make Biden's win formal. "But you know that."

Trump, who took questions from reporters for the first time since the election, unleashed another round of complaints about the vote and theatrical warnings that "a lot of things" would happen before the Electoral College meets Dec 14 that could possibly change results. But while he's stirring uncertainty about how he will behave in the weeks ahead, there is no real suspense about the outcome. (AP)

**PHILADELPHIA:** President Donald Trump's legal team suffered yet another defeat in court Friday as a federal appeals court in Philadelphia roundly rejected the campaign's latest effort to challenge the state's election results.

Trump's lawyers vowed to appeal to the Supreme Court despite the judges' assessment that the "campaign's claims have no merit."

"Free, fair elections are the lifeblood

of our democracy. Charges of unfairness are serious. But calling an election unfair does not make it so. Charges require specific allegations and then proof. We have neither here." 3rd Circuit Judge **Stephanos Bibas**, a Trump appointee, wrote for the three-judge panel, all appointed by Republican presidents.

The case had been argued last week in a lower court by Trump lawyer **Rudy Giuliani**, who insisted during five hours of oral arguments that the 2020 presidential election had been marred by widespread fraud in Pennsylvania. However, Giuliani failed to offer any tangible proof of that in court. (AP)

**WASHINGTON:** The oldest prisoner at the Guantanamo Bay detention center went to his latest review board hearing with a degree of hope, something that has been scarce during his 16 years locked up without charges at the US base in Cuba.

**Saifullah Paracha**, a 73-year-old Pakistani with diabetes and a heart condition, had two things going for him that he didn't have at previous hearings: a favorable legal development and the election of **Joe Biden**.

President **Donald Trump** had effectively ended the Obama administration's practice of reviewing the cases of men held at Guantanamo and releasing them if imprisonment was no longer deemed necessary. Now there's hope that will resume under Biden. (AP)