

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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Kuwait urged to investigate police raid on MP's gathering

Amnesty International has called on the Kuwaiti government to launch an urgent independent investigation into the violence used by police on Wednesday evening when they broke up a meeting injuring several members of parliament (MPs) and others.

At least four MPs are reported to have required hospital treatment following the police decision to forcibly disperse people attending a *diwaniye*, a gathering at a private individual's house, outside of which members of the public had gathered.

Wednesday's *diwaniye* was being held at the house of MP Jama'an Al-Harbash. It appears to have been peaceful until police decided to disperse it by force after some of those present inside the MP's house openly voiced criticism of the government. Told to end the gathering, Jama'an Al-Harbash reportedly agreed and had asked for a few minutes to end the gathering when scores of police, many in riot gear and wielding batons, then broke up the meeting violently.

Walid Al-Tabatabai, an MP and long-standing member of the Kuwait parliament's human rights committee, was taken to hospital with a broken arm, and university law professor Obeid el-Wasmi can be seen being beaten by police in images posted on the website of the online Kuwaiti newspaper *Alaan*. Reports suggest that over 10 other people also sustained injuries, apparently as a result of police beatings.

Amnesty International calls on the Kuwaiti authorities to immediately launch a thorough, independent and impartial investigation into the actions taken by the police, to make public the results as soon as they are available and to hold to account any police officers who are found to have used excessive force.

Amnesty International is also calling on Kuwait's Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, to withdraw his call for such public gatherings to be halted. As a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Kuwait must uphold rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association, as provided for under Article 19 of the Covenant.

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