

Kuwait

Country name	Kuwait
State title	State of Kuwait ¹
Name of citizen	Kuwaiti
Official language	Arabic (ara) ²
Country name in official language	الكويت = Al Kuwayt
State title in official language	Dawlat al Kuwayt = دولة المكويت
Script	Arabic script
Romanization System	BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Arabic ³
ISO-3166 code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	KW/KWT
Capital (Conventional name) ⁴	Kuwait City
Capital in official language	مدينة المكويت = Madīnat al Kuwayt, often just المكويت = Al Kuwayt
Area / Population	17,818km² / 4.95million (UN data 2024)

Introduction

Kuwait is a country in south-west Asia with a coastline on the Persian Gulf⁵ and land boundaries with Iraq and Saudi Arabia. It gained full independence from the United Kingdom in 1961. Its area is 17,800km², making it much smaller than its immediate neighbours. In size, it is comparable to Eswatini⁶ and Fiji. Kuwait consists largely of low-lying desert and the economy is heavily dependent

⁶ Formerly known as Swaziland.

¹ Kuwait is a constitutional monarchy ruled by an Emir (Arabic: $am\bar{\imath}r$), so is an Emirate ($im\bar{\alpha}rah$), but the official title uses the Arabic word dawlah, which means 'state'.

² ISO 639-2 codes are given for languages mentioned in this Factfile.

³https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/8580 00/ROMANIZATION_OF_ARABIC.pdf

⁴ On cartographic products, PCGN would recommend showing the local Roman-script name in primary position with the English conventional name in brackets. In English-language texts the conventional name alone can be used, or the name can be shown the same way as on cartographic products, if desired. It is sometimes useful to reference both names at the first mention of a place.

⁵ Although sometimes referred to as the Arabian Gulf, the long-standing English conventional name for this body of water is the Persian Gulf and this latter is the name recommended for use on UK government products. The Gulf may be used *tout court* when it is clear from the context which feature is meant.



on petroleum. As with some other small oil-rich Gulf states, the majority of the population is non-citizen expatriate⁷.

The country is named after its capital and largest city. Kuwait is essentially a city state, with the vast majority of the population living in Kuwait City and its suburbs. The word kuwayt is Arabic, meaning 'little fort'; the diminutive form of $k\bar{u}t$ 'fort'⁸. The spelling Koweit was sometimes used in English prior to World War 2.

Historically there was no clearly defined boundary in this part of the Arabian Peninsula; at the start of the 20th century, the Ottoman Empire controlled what is now Iraq, and Britain controlled Kuwait as a protectorate. In December 1922 Britain and Ibn Saud signed the Uqair Protocol, which finalised Saudi Arabia's border with both Kuwait and Iraq. The Treaty also created a Saudi–Kuwaiti neutral zone in the south-east, where both parties were to share equal rights pending further agreement. When oil was later discovered in this zone it was agreed to partition it in 1965, this division being ratified in 1969-70, at which point the Kuwait-Saudi border was finalised at its current position⁹.

Geographical names policy

Geographical names in Kuwait are found written in Arabic, which is the country's official language. Where possible, Arabic-script names should be taken from official Kuwaiti sources and romanized according to the BGN/PCGN 1956 Romanization System for Arabic. It should be noted that Romanscript forms may be encountered which differ from those arising from the application of the BGN/PCGN System for Arabic. Some features have conventional English-language names which can be used in English-language text and should be shown in brackets after the romanized Arabic name on cartographic products. The national mapping agency in Kuwait is the Survey Department of Kuwait Municipality. An interactive map can be found at https://giss.baladia.gov.kw/kmeguide/, and information place on naming processes some names lists at: https://www.baladia.gov.kw/sites/ar/Pages/StreetsNaming.aspx?csrt=4038141279914768414. (both available in Arabic only, although the lists of street names include Roman-script names, but note that these Roman-script spellings do not conform to the BGN/PCGN Romanization System).

Language

The official language of Kuwait is Arabic, which is a Semitic language written from right-to-left in Arabic script. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is used for official written purposes. The spoken language is the Kuwaiti dialect of Arabic, a variant of Gulf Arabic¹⁰ (afb) (also spoken in eastern Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states such as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates) but with pronunciation and/or vocabulary influences from Iraqi Arabic, Persian, Turkish, English, some Indian languages and others¹¹. English is widely used in both government and education and is commonly spoken as a second language.

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⁷ The CIA World Factbook gives the demographic composition as: Kuwaiti 30.4%, other Arab 27.4%, Asian 40.3%, African 1%, other 9% (2018 estimate) https://www.cia.gov/the-world-

<u>factbook/countries/kuwait/#people-and-society</u>

⁸ https://www.britannica.com/place/Kuwait

⁹ https://fall.fsulawrc.com/collection/LimitsinSeas/IBS103.pdf

¹⁰ Known in Arabic as Khalījī.

¹¹ https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Kuwaiti Arabic

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Kuwaiti Arabic is not so far removed from MSA as, for example, the Maghrebi Arabic dialects of North Africa. For information, below are listed some significant features of the dialect that may influence the pronunciation of Kuwaiti toponyms, and consequently the non-standard Roman-script spellings of these toponyms that might be encountered. These features are also found in some other Gulf Arabic dialects. PCGN recommends that all names be transliterated according to the BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Arabic.

- The Arabic letter \ddot{o} ($q\bar{a}f$), which is romanized in the BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Arabic as 'q' (in MSA it is pronounced as a voiceless uvular plosive (IPA: /q/)), is pronounced in some Kuwaiti contexts as the 'g' in 'get' and may sometimes be seen spelt with 'g' rather than 'q' in Roman script. For example, BGN/PCGN romanizations Al Maqwa' and Ar Riq'ī may be seen spelt Magwa and Rigai on Kuwaiti mapping or signs.
- The Arabic letter τ ($j\bar{i}m$), which is romanized in the BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Arabic as 'j', and pronounced in MSA as the 'j' in 'jug' (IPA: f(3)) is sometimes in Kuwait pronounced as the 'y' in 'may'. For example, the male personal name Mājid might be pronounced 'Mayid'. This pronunciation trait is less often transferred to Roman-script spellings than is the abovementioned q-to-g change.
- The Arabic letters \(\displai(\bar{z}\bar{a}')\) and \(\displai(\bar{q}\bar{a}d)\), romanized in the BGN/PCGN System as \(\bar{z}\) and \(\displai(\bar{q}\bar{a}d)\), respectively may both be seen represented in non-standard Roman script as 'd', 'dh' or 'z'. Compare BGN/PCGN romanization Az \(\bar{z}\) ahir with the Roman-script spelling Daher for the name of a district of Kuwait. Another example of this phenomenon in the Gulf region is the conventional name Abu Dhabi (BGN/PCGN: Abū \(\bar{z}\) aby).
- or assimilated if followed by one of the 'sun' letters, e.g. *Al Qamar*, *Ash Shams*. In Gulf Arabic pronunciation, the initial *alif*, 'a' sound is dropped. Nevertheless, the 'a' is usually retained in Kuwaiti Arabic- and Roman-script spellings. For example, the local pronunciation of the country name is *li-kweet*, however it is still usually seen romanized as Al Kuwayt or Al Kuwait.¹²

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 $^{^{12}}$ For further details on the romanization of the definite article see the BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Arabic.



Inventory of characters (and their Unicode encodings¹³):

The BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Arabic contains the following letter-diacritic combinations in addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman script¹⁴:

Romanization (upper case)	Unicode encoding	Romanization (lower case)	Unicode encoding
Á	00C1	á	00E1
Ā	0100	ā	0101
Þ	1E10	ģ	1E11
ŀ	1E28	Ъ	1E29
Ī	012A	Ī	012B
Ş	015E	ş	015F
Ţ	0162	ţ	0163
Ū	016A	ū	016B
Ţ	005A+0327*	Ţ	007A+0327*
•	2018 or 02BB	,	2019 or 02BC

^{*}Note, the z + cedilla is not available as a single encoding.

Administrative structure

Kuwait is divided into six governorates (Arabic: muḥāfaẓah/muḥāfaẓat) at first-order administrative level (ADM1). The Kuwaiti governorates do not have administrative centres (PPLAs). Approximately two thirds of the population live in the four governorates that form Kuwait City and its suburbs. The remaining two governorates cover over 90% of the country's area and contain approximately one third of the population. Governorates were first established in 1962 (when there were three) with the most recent division and arrangement dating from 1999. Five of the governorates fall under Baladīyat al Kuwayt (Kuwait Municipality)¹⁵, with the exception of Al Jahrā'.

The built-up areas of the governorates are divided into 119 areas (or districts) (Arabic: mintaqah; plural: $man\bar{a}tiq$), at second-order administrative level (ADM2). Many $man\bar{a}tiq$ are the size of suburbs. The Arabic word for suburb, $d\bar{a}tiq$, sometimes appears as part of the area name. The second-order administrative structure continues to be modified, with new districts being added as new urbanised areas are constructed.

A GeoNames Soft-Copy Keyboard can be downloaded from the NGA website and used to enter the required letter-diacritic combinations for a particular region: https://geonames.nga.mil/geonames/GNSHome/services.html.

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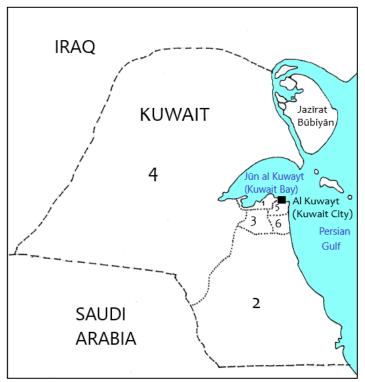
¹³ See www.unicode.org

¹⁴ Characters can be manually input into Microsoft Word documents by typing in these character codes and then holding down the ALT key and pressing /x/. The code will change to the required character. The letter can be copied and pasted into other programmes if required. Alternatively, the 'Insert – Symbol' command can be used; the code can be entered into the 'Character code' box which will show the corresponding letter.

¹⁵ https://www.baladia.gov.kw/sites/ar/Pages/main.aspx



Map of Kuwait



Map produced by PCGN for illustrative purposes only, and is not to be taken necessarily as representing the views of the UK government on boundaries or political status

The governorates (ADM1s) and areas (ADM2s) of Kuwait are listed below. With the exception of Al Jahrā, the ADM2s listed are taken from maps on the https://www.baladia.gov.kw website in 2020. More recent sources show some slight differences, so possible new areas listed elsewhere are also mentioned for reference.

1. Al 'Āşimah (29° 20' 00" N, 047° 55' 00" E)16

Name in Arabic script		العاصمة
Long form name	Muḩāfazat al 'Āşimah	
Long form name in Arabic script		محافظة العاصمة
ISO 3166-2 code	KW-KU	
Variant Name(s)	Al Kuwayt; Capital	
Centre	N/A	

Al 'Āşimah consists of 34 ADM2s¹⁷:

Jazīrat Umm an Namil, Shamāl Gharb aş Şulaybikhāt, Mīnā' ad Dawḩah, Ad Dawḩah (Doha), Aş Şulaybikhāt, Gharnāţah (Granada), Mīnā' ash Shuwaykh, Ash Shuwaykh aş Şinā'īyah (Shuwaykh Industrial) 1, 2 & 3, Ash Shuwaykh at Ta'līmīyah (Shuwaykh Educational), Ash Shuwaykh aş

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¹⁶ Al 'Āṣimah means 'the Capital'. The governorate includes the island of Faylakā.

¹⁷https://www.baladia.gov.kw/sites/ar/BranchesSector1/Pages/capital/contactUs.aspx?menuItem=item25&g1=demoMenu1 [accessed November 2020]



Şiḥhīyah (Shuwaykh Health), Mu'askarāt al Mubārakīyah, Ash Shuwaykh, As Surrah, Qurţubah (Cordoba), Al Yarmūk (Yarmouk), Ar Rawḍah, Al 'Adaylīyah, Al Khālidīyah, Ad Da'īyah, Al Qādisīyah, An Nuzhah, Al Fayḥā', Kayfān, Banayd al Qār (Bneid al-Gar), Ad Dasmah, Al Manşūrīyah, Dāḥiyat 'Abd Allāh as Sālim, Ash Shāmīyah, Dasmān, Ash Sharq, Qiblah (Jibla), Al Mirqāb.

Other possible ADM2s: Madīnat Jābir al Ahmad, 'Alī Şabāh as Sālim, Ḥadā'iq as Sūr.

2. Al Ahmadī (28° 55' 00" N, 048° 00' 00" E)

Name in Arabic script	حمدي
Long form name	Muḩāfazat al Aḩmadī
Long form name in Arabic script	عافظة الأحمدي
ISO 3166-2 code	KW-AH
Variant Name(s)	Ahmadi
Centre	N/A

Al Ahmadī consists of 19 ADM2s¹⁸:

Al Finţās, Al 'Uqaylah, Jābir al 'Alī, Az Zahir (Daher), Al Maqwa' (Maqwa), Al Mahbūlah, Ar Riqqah, Hadīyah, Abū Ḥalīfah, Fahad al Aḥmad, Al Manqaf (Mangaf), Aş Şabāḥīyah, Al Faḥayḥīl, Janūb aş Şabāḥīyah, Madīnat al Aḥmadī, Shamāl ash Shu'aybah, Janūb ash Shu'aybah, Mīnā' 'Abd Allāh, Umm al Haymān.

Other possible ADM2s: Madīnat Şabāḥ al Aḥmad, Madīnat Şabāḥ al Aḥmad al Baḥrīyah, Al Khayrān, al Wafrah.

3. Al Farwānīyah (29° 15' 00" N, 047° 55' 00" E)

Name in Arabic script		المفروانية
Long form name	Muḩāfazat al Farwānīyah	
Long form name in Arabic script		محافظة المفروانية
ISO 3166-2 code	KW-FA	
Variant Name(s)	Al Farwaniyyah	
Centre	N/A	

Al Farwānīyah consists of 17 ADM2s19:

Al Andalus, Al Firdaws, Al 'Āriḍīyah, Şabāḥ an Nāşir, Ar Riq'ī (Rigai), Ar Ray, Abraq Khayţān, Khayţān al Janūbī, Al 'Umarīyah, Al Farwānīyah, Ar Rābīyah, Ar Riḥāb (Rehab), Ishbīlīyah (Seville), Al 'Āriḍīyah Takhzīn wa Ist'amālāt Ḩukūmīyah (Government Storage and Uses), Jalīb ash Shuyūkh, aḍ Ḍajīj, Al Maţār (Airport)

Other possible ADM2s: 'Abd Allāh al Mubārak, Gharb 'Abd Allāh al Mubārak, Ash Shadādīyah, Madīnat Şabāḥ as Sālim al Jāma'īyah (Şabāḥ as Sālim University City).

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¹⁸https://www.baladia.gov.kw/sites/ar/BranchesSector2/Pages/ahmadi/contactUs.aspx?menuItem=item25&g1= demoMenu1 [accessed November 2020]

¹⁹https://www.baladia.gov.kw/sites/ar/BranchesSector3/Pages/farwaniya/contactUs.aspx?menuItem=item25&g 1=demoMenu1 [accessed November 2020]



4. Al Jahrā' (29° 30' 00" N, 047° 30' 00" E)20

Name in Arabic script	جهراء
Long form name	Muḥāfazat al Jahrā'
Long form name in Arabic script	حافظة الجهراء
ISO 3166-2 code	KW-JA
Variant Name(s)	Al Jahrah; الجهرة
Centre	N/A
Website	http://jahra.gov.kw/

Al Jahrā consists of 24 ADM2s²¹: Of the 24 $man\bar{a}tiq$ in Muḩāfazat al Jahrā', 14 are within the built-up area of Al Jahrā' and 10 are outside the built-up area.

- The urban manāţiq of Al Jahrā' include: Al Wāḥah, Al 'Ayūn, Al Qaşr, Al Jahrā' al Qadīmah (Old al Jahra), An Nasīm, Taymā', An Na'īm, Madīnat Sa'd al 'Abd Allāh (formerly Janūb al Jahrā', Al Jahra South) and Al Jahrā' aş Şinā'īyah (Industrial al Jahra).
- The manāţiq outside the urban area of Al Jahrā' include: Kāzimah, Ar Rawḍatayn, Umm al 'Aysh, As Sālimī, Kabd (Kabed), Aş Şulaybīyah, Aş Şulaybīyah aş Şinā'īyah (Industrial Aş Şulaybīyah), Aş Şulaybīyah az Zirā'īyah (Agricultural Aş Şulaybīyah) and Amgharah; the cities of Aş Şubīyah and al Muţlā'; Maḥmīyah Şabāḥ al Aḥmad aţ Ṭabī'īyah (Şabāḥ al Aḥmad Nature Reserve); and Al 'Abdalī [agricultural area].

5. Hawallī (29° 18' 00" N, 048° 03' 00" E)

Name in Arabic script	,	حولي
Long form name	Muḩāfazat Ḩawallī	
Long form name in Arabic script	فظة الحولي	محاذ
ISO 3166-2 code	KW-HA	
Variant Name(s)	Hawali; Hawally	
Centre	N/A	

Hawallī consists of 14 ADM2s²²:

Ash Sha'b, Ḥawallī, Al Jābirīyah, As Sālimīyah, Ar Rumaythīyah, Salwá, Bayān, Mishrif (Mishref), Dāḥīyat Mubārak al 'Abd Allāh, As Salām, Aṣ Ṣadīq, Ḥiṭīn, Ash Shuhadā', Az Zahrā'

Other possible ADM2s: Al Mubārakīyah

²⁰ Includes the islands of Būbiyān and Warbah as part of Maḥmīyah Şabāḥ al Aḥmad aţ Ṭabī'īyah (Şabāḥ al Ahmad Nature Reserve).

²¹http://jahra.gov.kw/%D8%B9%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B8%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B8%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%88%D8%B1/[accessed 09/10/24]

²² http://ud.baladia.gov.kw/main-web/govs/hawally.htm [accessed November 2020]



6. Mubārak al Kabīr (29° 13' 30" N, 048° 03' 00" E)

Name in Arabic script	بارك المكبير
Long form name	Muḩāfazat Mubārak al Kabīr
Long form name in Arabic script	حافظة مبارك الكبير
ISO 3166-2 code	KW-MU
Variant Name(s)	Mubarak al-Kabeer
Centre	N/A

Mubārak al Kabīr consists of 11 ADM2s²³:

Şabāḥ as Sālim, Al Masīlah, Al 'Adān, Al Fanaytīs, Al Quşūr, Al Qurayn, Dāḥiyat Abū Fuṭayrah, Mubārak al Kabīr, Al Wusṭá, Janūb al Wusṭá, Şubḥān

Other possible ADM2s: Abū al Ḥaṣānīyah, Abū Faṭīrah, Gharb Abū Faṭīrah al Ḥarfīyah, Al Musāyil

Other Significant Locations

PCGN Recommended Name	Name in Arabic Script	Variant Names/Spellings	Location	Feature Type
Jazīrat Faylakā	جزيرة فيلكا	Faylakah; Jazirat Failaka; Faijlaka Island; Fulayka; al-Falakah	29° 26' 26" N, 048° 20' 05" E	Island
Jazīrat Būbiyān	جزيرة بوبيان	Bubyan; Būbīyān	29° 46' 11" N, 048° 15' 20" E	Island
Jazīrat Warbah	جزيرة ورية	Warba; Al Warbah; Ouarba	29° 59' 38" N, 048° 04' 00" E	Island
Jazīrat Qārūh	جزيرة قاروه	Jezirat Karu, Jazīrat Kārū, Qarawah, Qārawh, Qārū, Qaruh Island	28° 49' 03" N, 048° 46' 35" E	Island
Jazīrat Umm al Marādim	جزيرة ام المرادم	Umm Al-Maradem; Umm Al-Maradim	28° 40' 49" N, 048° 39' 06" E	Island
Jazīrat Kubbār	جزيرة كبار	Al Kubbar; Al Kuber; Al Kubr; Kuber; Kubar	29° 04' 20" N, 048° 29' 36" E	Island
Jūn al Kuwayt (Kuwait Bay)	جون الكويت	Khalīj al Kuwayt	29° 25' 55" N, 047° 55' 32" E	Bay
Jazīrat Miskān	جزيرة مسكان	Machiane;Jazīrat Mashjan; Mashjang; Mashjān Island; Mashyān; Maskān; Mischan	29° 29' 05" N, 048° 15' 05" E	Island

 $^{{}^{23}\}underline{https://www.baladia.gov.kw/sites/ar/BranchesSector1/Pages/mubarak/contactUs.aspx?menuItem=item5}\\ \underline{6\&g1=demoMenu2}$

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PCGN Recommended Name	Name in Arabic Script	Variant Names/Spellings	Location	Feature Type
Jazīrat 'Awhah	جزيرة عوهة	Auha; Auhah	29° 22' 40" N, 048° 26' 21" E	Island
Mīnā' ash Shuwaykh (Shuwaikh Port)	ميناء الشويخ		29° 21' 09" N, 047° 55' 45" E	Port
Mīnā' ash Shu'aybah (Shuaiba Port)	ميناء الشعيبة	Mīnā' ash Shu'aibah	29° 02' 41" N, 048° 09' 33" E	Port
Mīnā' ad Dawḩah (Doha Port)	ميناء الدوحة		29° 22' 52" N, 047° 47' 56" E	Port
Mīnā' az Zawr	ميناء الزور	Mina Al-Zour, Zour, Az- Zour	28° 44' 00" N, 048° 23' 12" E	Oil pipeline terminal
Mīnā' al Aḩmadī	ميناء الاحمدي		29° 03' 50" N, 048° 08' 31" E	Oil pipeline terminal
Khawr 'Abd Allāh ²⁴	خور عبدالله	Khor Abdullah, Khawr Abd Allah	29° 52' 39" N, 048° 23' 00" E	Marine channel
Khawr Būbiyān	خور بوبيان	Khor Bubyan	29° 59' 43" N, 048° 09' 45" E	Marine channel
Khawr aş Şubīyah	خور الصبية	Khor Subiyah, Khawr aş Şabīyah, Khawr Sabiya, Khor Al-Subiyah	29° 38' 30" N, 048° 09' 02" E	Marine channel
Al Wafrah	الوفرة	Wafra, al-Wafrah	28° 38' 21" N, 047° 55' 50" E	Populated place
An Nuwayşīb	النويصيب	Al-Nuwaisib, Nuwaiseeb	28° 32' 49" N, 048° 23' 57" E	Locality & border post
Al Khīrān	الخيران	El Kheeran	28° 39' 04" N, 048° 23' 25" E	Populated place

Useful references

- BBC Country Profile: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14644252
- BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Arabic:
 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachmen
 t data/file/858000/ROMANIZATION OF ARABIC.pdf
- CIA World Factbook: https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/kuwait/
- Ethnologue: <u>www.ethnologue.com</u> (for information on languages)
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO): www.iso.org
- ISO Online Browsing Platform (OBP): https://www.iso.org/obp/ui#home
- Kuwait Electronic Guide: https://giss.baladia.gov.kw/kmeguide/ (interactive map in Arabic)

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²⁴ This channel forms the boundary between Iraq and Kuwait.



- Kuwait Municipality: https://www.baladia.gov.kw/sites/ar/Pages/main.aspx
- Kuwait News Agency (KUNA): https://www.kuna.net.kw/Default.aspx
- Kuwaiti Government Online: www.e.gov.kw
- Omniglot: www.omniglot.com (for information on languages and scripts)
- PCGN Country Names list: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/country-names
- Unicode Consortium: www.unicode.org
- US Board on Geographic Names Geographic Names Server: https://geonames.nga.mil/geonames/GNSHome/index.html
- US Library of Congress Persian Gulf states: country studies: https://www.loc.gov/item/93046476/

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