

COUNTRY PROFILES

KUWAIT

Situated in the northern edge of Eastern Arabia, Kuwait shares borders with Iraq to the north and Saudi Arabia to the south and has a long Arab Gulf coastline to the east. Kuwait became independent with the end of the British protectorate in June 1961 and a constitutional monarchy with a semi-democratic political system under the rule of Abdullah Al-Salim Al-Sabah. Kuwait's Constitution was drafted that same year and under its terms. Kuwait held its first parliamentary elections in 1963. Sharia law governs only family law for Muslim residents in Kuwait while the rest of the cases are tried under the 'civil law system' modelled after the French legal system. Oil reserves were discovered in commercial quantities in 1938, financing a rapid process of modernization. Today Kuwait has a high-income economy backed by the world's sixth largest oil reserves. Kuwait has the highest percentage of GDP tied to oil among all OPEC nations. 92% of export revenue and 90% of the government income is reliant on oil. Kuwait is a member of the Arab League, the Organisation of

Islamic Cooperation, the Gulf
Cooperation Council and the
World Trade Organization.

