Detention of Fareah Al-Saqqaf and Suad Al-Munayes by State Security Raises Serious Concerns about Freedom of Expression and Legal Safeguards in Kuwait

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Kuwaiti authorities have detained activist and writer Fareah Al-Saqqaf and thinker and activist Suad Al-Munayes over social media posts in which they expressed political views. Available information indicates that the State Security apparatus was responsible for their detention, amid a lack of clear official information regarding their legal status or the legal basis for the measures taken against them.

Several days after their detention, information about the circumstances of their custody and their legal status remains limited. Available reports also indicate that, to date, they have not been allowed to meet with a lawyer or communicate with their families, raising serious concerns about respect for the fundamental safeguards to which detainees are entitled and their right to defence.

The detention reportedly followed social media posts attributed to both Fareah Al-Saqqaf and Suad Al-Munayes. According to circulated information, Fareah Al-Saqqaf reshared content via the “stories” feature on Instagram expressing a political position related to regional escalation. Meanwhile, Suad Al-Munayes posted on her account on the platform “X” on March 1, 2026, in which she criticized political rhetoric related to relations with Iran and the presence of foreign military forces in the region.

Fareah Al-Saqqaf (67) is a prominent Kuwaiti writer and activist in the fields of cultural work, youth engagement, and community development. Throughout her career, she has received numerous regional and international awards and recognitions in appreciation of her humanitarian and human rights activism. She is also known for her support of the Palestinian cause and her criticism of U.S. and Israeli policies in the region.
Suad Al-Munayes (73) is a Kuwaiti thinker and activist with a long history of civic and political engagement. She is known for her advocacy on women’s issues and human rights, as well as for her support of the Palestinian cause. She is also active in the committee “Kuwaitis for Jerusalem.”

The detention of the two activists in connection with their peaceful expression of political views raises serious concerns about the state of freedom of expression in Kuwait, particularly given reports that they remain in custody without access to legal counsel and without being clearly informed of the legal basis for their detention. This raises serious questions regarding respect for the fundamental guarantees of a fair trial.

The Kuwaiti Constitution guarantees a number of fundamental rights and freedoms, including freedom of opinion and expression and personal liberty. Article 36 (PDF) states:
“Freedom of opinion and scientific research is guaranteed. Every person has the right to express and disseminate his opinion by speech, writing, or otherwise, in accordance with the conditions and procedures specified by law.”

Article 31 (PDF) also provides that:
“No person shall be arrested, detained, searched, compelled to reside in a particular place, or have their freedom of residence or movement restricted except in accordance with the provisions of the law. No person shall be subjected to torture or degrading treatment.”

Furthermore, Article 32 (PDF) enshrines the principle of criminal legality, stating:
“There shall be no crime and no penalty except by virtue of a law, and no punishment shall be imposed except for acts committed after the law providing for them has come into force.”

The continued detention also raises concerns regarding Kuwait’s compliance with its international human rights commitments, particularly the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Article 9 of the Covenant guarantees the right to liberty and security of person and prohibits arbitrary deprivation of liberty, while Article 19 protects freedom of opinion and expression, including the right to hold opinions without interference and to express them freely.

HuMENA is monitoring the case of Fareah Al-Saqqaf and Suad Al-Munayes and considers that continued prosecution or detention in response to the peaceful expression of opinions raises serious concerns concerns about respect for freedom of expression and the legal safeguards guaranteed to detainees, as well as about the consistency of these measures with Kuwait’s constitutional and international obligations.

Accordingly, HuMENA calls on the Kuwaiti authorities to:

- Ensure the immediate release of Fareah Al-Saqqaf and Suad Al-Munayes unless they are charged with acts that constitute criminal offences clearly defined by law and consistent with Kuwait’s international obligations, rather than on the basis of the criminalisation of peaceful expression.
- Immediately grant them access to legal counsel, and ensure their full right to defense and to communicate with their families.
- Disclose without delay the legal basis for their detention and their place of custody, and ensure that all procedures taken against them comply with the Kuwaiti Constitution and Kuwait’s international human rights obligations, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- Immediately cease using security or legal measures to criminalize individuals for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of opinion and expression, including the expression of political views on social media.

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