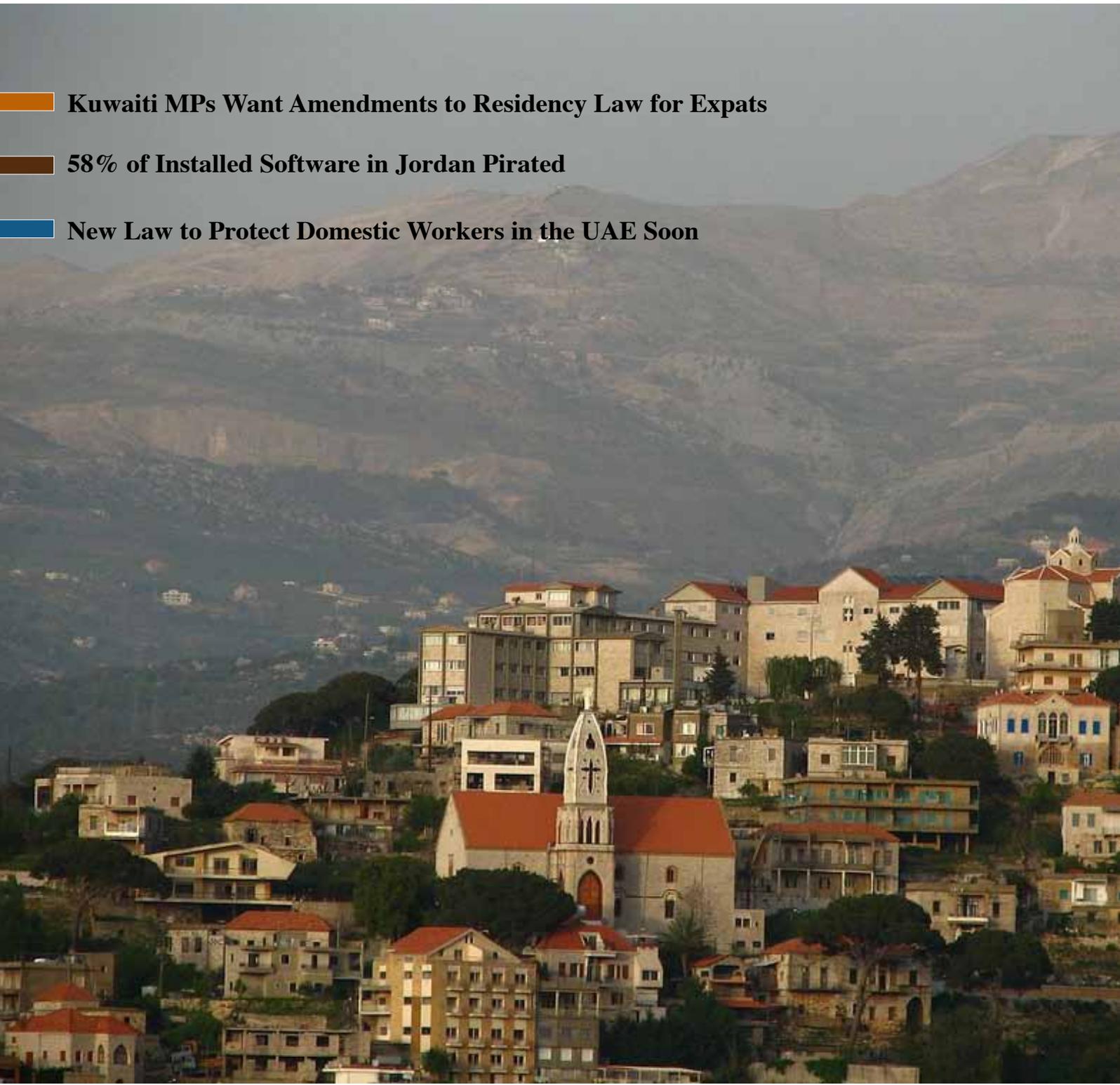


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Kuwaiti MPs Want Amendments to Residency Law for Expats

KUWAIT- Five MPs have proposed amendments to the Residency Law that would allow foreign residents to stay outside Kuwait as long as their residence permit is valid, and also would make it easier to grant certain categories of expats residency status. The five MPs – Nabeel Al-Fadhil, Abdulhameed Dashti, Hani Shams, Faisal Al-Kandari and Abdullah Al-Mayouf – have also proposed in their amendments to make it mandatory for the immigration department to grant residence permits and renew them in a number of cases, especially when the foreigners are relatives of Kuwaitis.

These cases would include foreigners married to Kuwaiti women and their permits would not be cancelled even if the relationship is severed if they have children. These also include foreign wives of Kuwaitis and their residence permits cannot be cancelled if she has children from the Kuwaiti husband. The amendments would also include foreign men or women whose children hold legal residence permits and foreign children whose parents or one of them is a holder of a legal residence permit.

The amendment makes it compulsory and not optional as is the case now for the immigration department to grant these cases residence permits. Under the current law, immigration authorities can reject a request for residence permits without

explaining the reasons even if the applicants fulfill all the conditions.

The other amendment allows expatriate residents to stay outside Kuwait during the whole period of the residence permit which effectively scraps a rule in the immigration law stating that the residence permit becomes null and void if a foreigner stays outside Kuwait for more than six months unless he/she provides a legitimate or compelling reason. The amendments must first be reviewed by the legal and legislative committee, passed by the National Assembly and then accepted by the government which is expected to oppose it because it loosens its grip on immigration matters.

In another development, the legal and legislative committee approved a proposal stating that all public tenders which have a value of less than KD 70,000 can be processed by the concerned department or ministry without the need to go through the Central Tenders Department. Under the existing law, almost all contracts must first be approved by the CTC before it can be signed and processed, which some quarters blame for the delay of some projects in Kuwait. The committee also approved another proposal to allow the establishment of a second livestock import company to end the monopoly in the sector in Kuwait.

Source: Kuwait Times



Majid bin Mohammed Opens Dubai World Conference on Consumer Rights

DUBAI - The first-ever Dubai World Conference and Exhibition on Consumer Rights (DWCCR) and Power Brands Dubai exhibition, held under the patronage of HH Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai, was opened by HH Sheikh Majid bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairman of Dubai Culture and Arts Authority, at the Dubai World Trade Centre.

“Upholding consumer rights and fighting unhealthy practices, like counterfeiting, are vital elements of the ongoing efforts to add transparency and neutrality to business in Dubai and the UAE in general. Earlier this year, the Federal Cabinet headed by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, approved a new draft law on combating commercial fraud, reiterating the government’s commitment to protecting consumer rights and the integrity of trade,” said Sami Al Qamzi, Director General of DED who delivered the opening address at the conference.

Al Qamzi added that a major focus of the Department of Economic Development and its Commercial Compliance & Consumer Protection (CCCP) sector

is on evolving and implementing policies and regulations on consumer rights protection and best practices that would enhance Dubai’s reputation as a competitive retail destination. While he also mentioned the Dubai World Consumer Rights Conference and Power Brands Dubai exhibition will enable the private sector and governments to learn the best means to leverage such forecasts for sustained growth.

Speakers at DWCCR included 27 regional and international experts, who shared their observations on 12 critical issues including the role of governments in protecting consumer rights and IPRs, benefits of IPRs and patent laws, consumer-driven retailing, importance of integrity in sales promotions, corporate social responsibility, protecting brands against counterfeiting, and aligning marketing strategies to modern consumer laws.

Source: Emirates News Agency (WAM)



Saudi Women Can Sponsor Sons, Husbands

AL-AHSA - Finally, Saudi wives married to non-Saudi husbands can now sponsor their sons and husbands after the Cabinet recently approved a number of regulations allowing them to do so. It is understood that over 750,000 Saudi wives are married to non-Saudi husbands.

According to the new regulations, the sons of Saudi wives can now enjoy the right to education, work, and medical treatment, while businesses that hire them will get points for that in the count toward their Saudization targets.

Muhammad Al-Awas, director of Eastern Province Civil Affairs, said that in order for a Saudi wife to sponsor her sons, she should submit a proof to the authorities that her marriage contract has been issued legally and the marriage has been approved by concerned authorities while her sons should have IDs.

“A Saudi mother will be the sponsor of her sons and her name will be written in the residency permit. If a son lives outside the Kingdom, the mother can bring him over and be his sponsor. The new regulations

allow the sons of a Saudi mother to work in the private sector without having to transfer their sponsorship. The sons of a Saudi mother will be treated like Saudi citizens,” Al-Awas noted.

Saudi wives can also bring over their non-Saudi husbands to the Kingdom and be their sponsors. The profession of a non-Saudi husband will be written as «husband of Saudi citizen» in the residency permit. He will also be allowed to work in the private sector as long as he has an official passport.

The new regulations consist of 13 articles to regulate the issue of marriage contracts between Saudi and non-Saudi parties, taking into consideration the security, social, and legal dimensions, according to Al-Awas. A non-Saudi husband who is married to Saudi wife can apply for multiple-entry visas and his sons can enjoy the same right.

Al-Awas said violators of the new regulations will be fined SR100,000, noting that such fines will be passed to charitable organizations that help young Saudi men get married.

Source: The Saudi Gazette

58%
**of Installed Software
in Jordan Pirated**



AMMAN - Jordan ranked 50th globally out of 144 countries in software piracy, according to the World Economic Forum's (WEF) 2013 Global Information Technology Report.

Unlicensed software units as a percentage of total software units installed stood at 58 percent in Jordan, according to the recently released report. At the Arab level, Jordan came fourth, after the UAE, which came in first, followed by Qatar and Saudi Arabia. While the Kingdom came ahead of Kuwait, Egypt, Oman, Turkey, Morocco and Lebanon.

According to the piracy figures, for which 107 countries presented data, the US came in first place with only 19 percent unlicensed software units used out of the total installed, followed by Luxemburg and Japan, 20 percent and 21 percent respectively. Zimbabwe came in 107th, with a 92 percent prevalence of unlicensed software.

In terms of the protection of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs), Jordan ranked 39th at the global level. On a scale of one to seven, with seven indicating very strong protection of IPRs, Jordan scored 4.5, according to the report. Accordingly, Jordan ranked sixth among Arab states in IPRs protection, preceded by Qatar, the UAE, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain respectively. It was followed by Kuwait, Morocco, Egypt, Libya and Lebanon, the survey showed.

Mohammad Abbadi, director general of the National Library Department (NLD), added that a series of workshops will be held in May and October in the northern and central regions to educate judges on IPR laws and the need for enforcement to end trading in pirated software, not to mention that the Jordanian Copyright Law stipulates that it is a crime to download software, music or movies that are protected under the legislation, and offenders face a prison sentence of three months to three years along with a fine ranging from JD1,000 to JD6,000.

Source: Jordan Times



Law on Online Trading and Licenses in Qatar

DOHA- A law is on the anvil to allow online trading in the country and provide license to new businesses, including those owned by foreigners, in just a day through a single-window clearance system.

If an applicant wanting to set up a business fails to fulfill the criteria, the Ministry of Business and Trade, the licensing authority and the facilitator of the single-window, would say a «no» on the spot. The Ministry has framed two draft laws - one to regulate commercial registration and licensing of businesses in general, while the other pertains specifically to the licensing of shops, industrial installations, garages, and vendors, among others. Shops include hotels, restaurants, cafeterias, clubs and clinics, among other outlets.

No vendor will be given a license to operate independently. Vending licenses will only be given to businesses that have shops and offices. The branches of a business will not be required to name a person separately who would be legally responsible for the operations of that branch, as it is the case now, but instead, an applicant for a business license will be required to name just one person legally responsible for its operations, whether at its main office or at branches.

Licenses will be issued for a year and will be renewable for another year or for a number of years. The current law, (Number 25 of 2005), provides licensing of a business or shop or industrial installation for a year and renewal for five years.

Under the new laws, the drafts of which were approved by the State Cabinet on April 10, businesses, including shops, offices and other outlets, could be given a license even for less than a year.

The aim of the new laws is to further simplify licensing procedures for businesses and attract increased inflow of foreign investment, Qatar News Agency (QNA) reported. Once the legislations are in force, Qatar would have a higher ranking in the world in terms of the «ease of doing business», the Minister said. “We will issue a business licence and registration in just one day.”

He said the existing businesses, including shops and other installations, will be asked to conform to the new laws within six months after they have been put into force.

Source: The Peninsula

New Law to Protect Domestic Workers in the UAE Soon

ABU DHABI- A new law was promised to protect domestic staff from exploitation by human traffickers, a local newspaper reported recently. “The legislation process takes time, but very soon,” said Dr Abdul Rahim Yousif Al Awadi, assistant Foreign Minister for legal affairs.

Dr. Al-Awadi was speaking at the launch of a report revealing that of 35 trafficking victims in Dubai, all but four thought they were coming for work and 19 had been promised to work as maids.

“Recruiters promise them there is a job opportunity, but when they come there is nothing, and most are pushed into prostitution,” Dr. Mona Al Bahar, director of care and rehabilitation at the Dubai Foundation for Women, said.

Out of the 35 women, most were poorly educated with more than half having either no education, or only to primary level, 27 discovered they had been trafficked within a week of arriving to the UAE - either by being told their job promise was false, or by being subjected to physical abuse. Nine out of ten trafficked women suffered sexual abuse. Dr. Al-Awadi said the UAE was making every effort to prevent trafficking. “This year we will increase awareness campaigns in airports, including Dubai airport,” he said.

Source: Emirates News Agency



Syria

Issues Fresh

General Amnesty for Crimes Committed before the 16th of April

DAMASCUS - A general amnesty for crimes committed in war-torn Syria prior to the 16th of April of 2013 has been issued recently. Under the decree, the death penalty will be replaced with a life sentence of hard labor.

The latest measure will not apply to people found guilty of smuggling weapons or drug-related crimes, but those convicted of joining the rebellion would get lighter sentences.

“Syrians who joined a terrorist organization will only have to serve a quarter of their sentences,” said the decree.

“The decision does not apply to those who avoided conscription,” the text added.

Rami Abdelrahman, head of the British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said he did not see it as sufficient because it did not address political prisoners. “Many will ask what good it does if political activists continue to be arrested daily,” Abdelrahman said.

The decree marks the holiday of Evacuation Day – the commemoration of the departure of the last French soldier in Syria, ending France’s occupation and allowing the proclamation of full independence on April 17, 1946.

Source: Al-Arabiya



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