

# Exhibition celebrates 200 years of Kuwait, France friendship

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📷 KUWAIT: French Ambassador to Kuwait Claire Le Flecher inaugurates the exhibition. - Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** The French Research Center of the Arabian Peninsula (CEFREPA) organized on Sunday an exhibition titled “France and Kuwait: a Friendship of More Than Two Centuries” in cooperation with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL) at the National Library of Kuwait.

In a press statement, French Ambassador to Kuwait Claire Le Flecher praised the excellent and historical relations that unite the two countries in various fields, saying the close relations between Kuwait and France have been manifested among others by the growth in efforts to bring about collaboration in sectors and solid ties.



*The late Yousuf Al-Alyan, founder and former Editor-in-Chief editor of Kuwait Times, appears in a documentary film shown at the exhibition.*

Le Flecher noted the depth of the joint relations and cooperation between the two countries in military, political and cultural fields, along with strong economic relations since the Kuwaitis' trade in pearls before the discovery of oil. She stressed the exhibition came as part of the 60th anniversary of distinguished diplomatic relations between France and Kuwait, indicating the exhibition showcases the beginning of non-diplomatic relations between the two sides, which was written by several French travelers who roamed the region in the past, in addition to France's early interest in the Arabian Gulf region and Kuwaitis' desire to establish ties with the French.

Director of CEFREPA Makram Abbes said the exhibition sheds light on the history of Kuwaiti-French relations since the 17th century by French cartographer Nicolas Sanson, where the exhibition aimed to explore available documents and unpublished archives that showcase the depth of relations between the two countries.



*From the exhibition.*

“Archived documents, maps, photographs and videos show a memory of moments and historical ties in the past – a lasting friendship that unfolds throughout several contexts and fields, encompassing not only politico-military contacts but also cultural influences, scientific collaborations as well as economic relations,” he added.

Sheikh Duaij Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah expressed joy to attend the exhibition, praising the efforts exerted in holding it to present the hidden history of Kuwait. “We hope such exhibitions continue. I wish other countries organize similar exhibitions to showcase the history of the relationship of Kuwait with other countries,” he said, stressing that this initiative is a great step in the direction of developing bilateral relations with France.



*From the exhibition.*

The exhibition showcases joint relations after the discovery of oil in Kuwait and technological and scientific cooperation, which supported the economic relations between the two countries, in addition to the start of diplomatic relations after Kuwait's independence. It highlights the French-Kuwaiti archaeological mission that carried out excavations on Failaka Island.

The exhibition also highlights certain unpublished documents thematically. It shows the longest first French text written on Kuwait and the Arab Gulf in 1902 by French traveler Gaston Bordat and features French-speaking sources, which like the Cairo magazine Images, address different scenes of life in the country like pearl diving and discovery of oil. Other materials are from the collection of the French National Audiovisual Institute (INA) and photographs and diplomatic documents from French National Archives.