

Kuwait Airways to lay off 1,500 foreign employees

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coronavirus pandemic.

The loss-making national carrier, which has a total of some 6,925 employees, has struggled amid the regional and worldwide downturn in [air travel](#).

"In dealing with the coronavirus crisis and its [negative impact](#) on commercial operations ... Kuwait Airways announces the termination of around 1,500 non-Kuwaiti employees," the airline said on Twitter.

It said the decision comes as part of a "comprehensive plan" to deal with the pandemic's economic impacts which meant the company is facing "significant difficulties".

Kuwait, like other oil-rich Gulf states, has been severely hit by a slump in oil revenues and the [economic impacts](#) of coronavirus.

Kuwait Airways, which has a fleet of 30 aircraft, has been mostly grounded like almost all airlines in the Middle East due to the massive lockdowns.

It however operated over 200 flights in late April and early May to repatriate some 30,000 Kuwaiti citizens from abroad.

The carrier's losses are paid by the government, which has not yet announced any special compensation.

The International Air Transport Association forecast last month that air traffic in the Middle East and North Africa is set to tumble by more than a half.

IATA said that MENA airlines' revenues in 2020 will be slashed by \$24.5 billion compared to last year, and warned the region's aviation

shutdown threatened some 1.2 million jobs.

Private companies in Kuwait have fired hundreds of employees but the airline is the first government agency to take such action.

The Kuwait Municipality has said it would soon sack at least half of its 900 expatriate employees.

Around 3.4 million foreigners live and work in Kuwait, making up some 70 percent of the Gulf state's population.

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