

## I Have Questions

My attention was drawn to an announcement from the municipality in which it warns citizens of the consequences of purchasing properties which violate the building codes. The announcement claims that they did not and would not issue description certificates for the infringing buildings. The late awakening of the municipality, if it has actually happened, is the doing of its new general manager, Bu Abdullah, a man for whom I hold the deepest respect. He has a great task before him, and *inshallah*—God willing—he is up to it. But I am still holding my opinion that the core of the problem is the construction law, whether it's the previous one or the new one. The law provides no solution for the problem neither does it grant the municipality the proper mechanism to apply the law and clear the backlog of irregularities. So, after reading this announcement, I have some questions:

First, is the Municipality absolutely sure that it hasn't been issuing certificates for these infringing buildings?

I suggest the municipality take a sample from the buildings that have recently transferred ownerships and let's see whether or not any of them have violations!

Second, the municipality is working on identifying all the houses which have violated the code by constructing additional floors and ordering their removal. That is good, but what will be done in the case of homes that have been converted into apartments without increasing the number of floors? For example, a house of 500 square meters is allowed to have a building rate of 210% distributed on three floors, not including the basement. The owner is permitted to divide the second floor into two separate apartments. But in many villas, after the electricity is connected, the owner will also divide the ground, first floor, as well as the basement into two separate apartments each. This brings the total to eight apartments in one villa. Some owners even go so far as to divide each floor into four units, which means the villa has 16 apartments! My question is: Does the municipality have a plan to remove such irregularities? And how will it deal with the hundreds of Kuwaiti families renting out these