

**Royal Sultani Decree No. 49/1984 on Press and
Publications issued on May 29, 1984**

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Sultan Decree No. 49/84 regarding Publications and Prints Law dated May 29, 1984

We Qaboos Bin Saied, Sultan of Oman

After having reviewed the Royal Decree No. 26/75 promulgating the law regulating the administrative organ of the State and its amendments...

The Commercial Companies Law No. 4/74, and its amendments. .

And the Royal Decree No. 4/74 on promulgating Foreign Crafts and Foreign Capital Investment and its amendments. .

As required by the public interest. .

And in view of the public interests,

Hereby decree:

ARTICLE 1):

The provisions of the law herewith attached on press and publications in Sultanate of Oman, shall be validated and come into force.

ARTICLE 2):

The Minister of Information shall issue the regulations and the decisions necessary for the execution of the provisions of the attached law.

ARTICLE 3):

The Publications Law No. 3/75 and any other rules contrary to the provisions of the attached law or otherwise provided, are hereby stand cancelled.

ARTICLE 4):

This decree shall be published in the official gazette and shall come into force as from the date of its publication.

Issued on Shaba'an 25th, 1404 H
Corresponding to May 26th, 1984
Qaboos Bin Saied
Sultan of Oman

Press & Publication Law

Chapter one

Article 1:

The journalism, press and publication profession shall be organized under the terms and conditions provided in the present law.

Article 2:

The press prints issued by ministries, public institutions or public bodies in relation with their activities shall be subject to the supervision of the Ministry of Information

Article 3:

In application of the provisions of the present law the following words or terms shall have the meanings associated with each one, unless the context requires otherwise.

- 1- **Prints:** Shall mean any script, drawings, photography or any other copying or photocopying means when transcribed by any means and became negotiable, with exception of any personal print or any print related to the commercial activity, the contents of which do not for many breach to the provisions of the present or any other law.
- 2- **Circulation:** Shall mean prints' sale, sale offer, distribution, sticking on walls, exhibition in storefronts for the purpose of sale, advertising, marketing or decoration, as well as any other action that renders it by anyway within reach of some people.
- 3- **Journal:** Shall mean any periodic, regular or irregular scheduled newspaper, magazine or publication in one name.
- 4- **Journalist:** Any one choosing the press as profession or source of subsistence and that his work includes writing in the printed press and indifferent information media, supplying them with news, reportages, and any other journalistic materials, such as photos, drawings and otherwise. Shall be included under such title the reporters, correspondents and editors, regardless of their nationality and the nationality of the institutions where they work.
- 5- **Journalism:** Shall mean the profession of editing and releasing printed press.
- 6- **News agencies:** Shall mean the press institution that takes in charge the news distribution or photographed or non-photographed

reportages via telecommunication or through newscasts or any other means.

- 7- **Printer machine:** Shall mean any machine or group of machines or systems designed for printing words, drawings or photos in the purpose of publishing or circulating them. This definition shall not include the machines or systems designed for photocopying, the typewriters and systems used for photocopying copies of documents and papers.
- 8- **Typography:** Shall mean the owner of the printer machine. If such owner gives the printer machine in rent to any other person for its operation, the term typography shall be transferred unto him.
- 9- **Publisher:** Shall mean the physical or corporate person in charge of publishing any prints
- 10- **Bookshop:** Any institution dealing with sale and distribution of prints and books in any specified place
- 11- **Distribution House:** Any establishment dealing with the distribution or sale of prints through libraries or sellers.
- 12- **Publishing house:** Shall mean any establishment dealing with preparing and producing prints for the circulation purposes.

CHAPTER TWO

Provisions related to printing house and printings in general

Article 4:

Any one desiring to install a printing establishment must apply for a license from the Ministry of Information Enclosing the required data as required by the executing regulations of the present law. The obtainment of any other licenses by virtue of other laws will not exempt from the application for the license.

Article 5:

The concerned department in the Ministry of Information shall decide on granting such license within three months of the submission date. Failing to reply within such period shall be considered as rejection of the application.

Article 6:

The applicant whose application for installing a printing establishment was rejected may appeal to the Press and Publications Committee stipulated in the present law within fifteen days of the notification date of refusal or of the expiry date of the fixed period for reply mentioned in article 5. The Committee shall decide on such appeal within fifteen days from the submission date. Its decision in this concern shall be final after being ratified by the Minister of Information.

Article 7:

The licensee of opening a printing establishment or the responsible of its management shall inform the Ministry of Information in writing of any data change contained in the license application for opening a printing establishment within fifteen days of such change date.

Article 8:

The typography or the printing house manager shall keep special register indicating in order the titles of the published prints and those set for publication, the owners' names, the number of published copies and the publication date. The competent authorities may at any time review such registers when required.

Article 9:

The name and the address of the typography, the name and the address of the editor, if it is different from the typography and the printing date shall be mentioned on the first or the last page of each print.

Article 10:

The typography shall before publishing any print deposit five copies of the intended print to the Ministry of Information against a receipt of such submission.

Article 11:

Any typography before printing any journal shall submit an application for license for this purpose to the Ministry of Information. The Ministry

shall decide granting such license within two weeks of the application date.

Article 12:

The typography, shall before publishing any print, must obtain from the Ministry of Information a prior permission licensing the print.

Article 13:

The typography shall be prohibited from publishing printings of which the circulation is forbidden. He is further prohibited from publishing unauthorized periodical prints that the authorization of which was cancelled or modified or stopped from release.

Article 14:

The provisions of this chapter of the law shall be applicable to the publishing houses.

Article 15:

Any breach of the provisions of the articles mentioned above shall be punished by imprisonment not exceeding one year, or by a fine not exceeding five hundred Omani Riyals, or by both penalties with the possibility temporarily or permanently closing down the printing establishment.

CHAPTER THREE **The circulation of prints**

Article 16:

No one is allowed to exercise the profession of importing, selling, distributing, publication of prints, establishing a press house or a distribution house or a Bookshop before obtaining the relevant license from the competent authority at the Ministry of Information, comprising the required data that determined by the executive regulations of the present law.

Article 17:

The Ministry of Information shall be informed of any changes made to the data indicated in the application for the license within fifteen days of their occurrence.

Article 18:

Save the exceptions made to some prints pursuant to article (3) paragraph (1), the Ministry of Information shall be the sole licensing authority for distribution, circulation and publishing prints.

Article 19:

The peddlers are prohibited from promoting the sale of press prints by hawking false or non existing news in the newspaper, or in a manner that offending ethics or breaches the Public Order

Article 20:

Any distribution and circulation house shall provide the Ministry of Information, free of charge, with five copies of the prints they import, against relevant receipt of such submissions the made.

Article 21:

Prohibited shall be the import of any prints in breach with the Public Order or in contradiction with the general ethics. They shall further be prohibited from distribution and circulation in the Sultanate. Such prohibition shall be by virtue of a decision to be issued by the Minister of Information or by whom he authorizes.

Article 22:

The Minister of Information shall prohibit the circulation in the Sultanate of Oman the prints that are in contradiction with morals and general ethics or that infringe the Public Order or that breach the principles of true Islam or the traditions and the rules in force.

Article 23:

The competent authority at the Ministry of Information may administratively seize and confiscate the prints that their circulation or entry are decided to be forbidden by virtue of the provisions of the articles mentioned above.

Article 24:

Any breach to the provisions mentioned above shall be punished by imprisonment for maximum two years or by a fine of maximum two thousand Omani Riyals or by both penalties.

CHAPTER FOUR

Articles forbidden from publication

Article 25:

It is forbidden to publish anything that defames implicitly or explicitly the person of his Majesty the Sultan or of the members of his royal family, by insinuation or verbal or caricature statements. It is also forbidden to make any provocation or offense against the ruling system in the Sultanate or to cause harm to the Public Order or to embrace or promote any matters in contrary with the principles of the true Islamic religion.

Article 26:

It is forbidden to publish any matters that renders the State safety or its internal or external security in danger, any matters pertaining to military and security corps and their systems and internal regulations, or any documents, information, news and official confidential communications either through audio, visual or reading means of media, or through use of internet or any means of information technology, unless authorized by the competent authorities. It is furthermore forbidden to publish the texts of the agreements and treaties made by the government before their release in the official gazette.

Article 27:

It is forbidden to publish any item that could prejudice the national currency or that could lead to the confusion concerning the Financial Market in the Sultanate or the economic situation of the country.

Article 28

It is forbidden to publish any item that could prejudice the behaviors and general ethics and divine religions.

Article 29

It is forbidden to publish the facts of the investigations or debates related to the personal status or otherwise, that are forbidden to be published by the tribunal. It is further forbidden to misrepresent by bad intention the debates or of the deliberations of the hearings sessions.

Article 30:

It is forbidden to publish news, photos or comments related to the private or familial life confidences of persons, unless such publishing is in implementation of a judicial judgment or administrative decision required by the public interest. Such authorization of publishing should by virtue of a decision taken by the Minister of Information.

Article 31:

It is forbidden to publish any item provoking committing crimes or inciting hatred or spreading adultery or diffusing the discord spirit between the members of the society.

Article 32:

It is forbidden to publish any news, articles, photos or documents of which prohibition decision is made by the Minister of Information until the authorization is given by the same source.

Article 33:

The newspapers are not allowed to deal, in any way, with matters that are not within the scope of the decision on granting them license of issuing.

Article 34:

It is forbidden to publish press advertising or any other printed advertisements comprising forbidden items pursuant to the provisions of this chapter. It is further forbidden to publish advertisements that mislead the public or publishing advertisements related to medicines or pharmaceutical products without the special authorization of the Ministry of Health. Regarding the classified arts advertisements they shall be authorized by the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture.

Article 35:

Without prejudice to any more severe penalty stipulated by any other law, shall be punished by imprisonment for maximum three years or by a fine of maximum two thousand Omani Riyals or by both penalties any whoever breaches the provisions of Article (25) of the present law.

Article 36:

Any contravention to the provisions of Articles (26) to (34) shall be punished by imprisonment of maximum two years, or by a fine of maximum two thousand Omani Riyals or by both penalties.

CHAPTER FIVE

Provisions related to newspapers

Article 37:

The newspapers in Sultanate of Oman shall be issued through press establishments duly authorized by the competent authority at the Ministry of Information according to the procedures determined by executive

regulations of the present law. Each establishment shall have a board of directors tasked with the responsibilities of management of the newspapers the establishment issues.

Article 38:

The Press establishments that intend to issue a daily or weekly newspaper shall take the form of a joint stock companies and the Press establishments that intend to issue a half-monthly, monthly and seasonal newspaper shall take the form of a limited responsibilities, or a partnership, limited partnership companies or an individual person. The setting up of such establishments and their operation system shall be governed by the Commercial Companies Law No 4/74 and the amendments thereto without prejudice to the rules of this law.

It is provided that the capital of the press establishment shall never be less than five hundred thousand Omani Riyals if the journal is a daily paper and two hundred and fifty thousand Omani Riyals, if it is a weekly paper, and one hundred fifty thousand Omani Riyals monthly or fortnightly and one hundred thousand if it is a seasonal newspaper.

Article 39:

The capital of the press establishments shall be entirely owned by Omani citizens, and shall not be sold, or transferred, or dispose of in any way, except to Omani citizens.

Article 40:

Without prejudice to the provisions of the Companies Act, the Publications and Press Committee shall prepare a model contract for the incorporation of a Press establishment that takes the form a joint stock company and its statutes, provided that the objectives of the journal and the election procedures of the board of directors of the journal shall be provided in the incorporation contract, such articles of the incorporation shall determine the regulations of elections of the board of directors.

Article 41:

Each Press establishment shall have its legal personality and may exercise any legal procedures to realize its purposes. The chairman of the board of directors represents it before third parties. The establishment may within

the scope of its activity exercise import and export acts and carries out the activities of commercial companies.

Article 42:

Each journal shall have a responsible editor-in-chief effectively supervising its contents and assuming responsibility of any published item, before the Sultanate and before third parties.

Article 43:

The editor-in-chief must have the following qualifications:

- 1- To be citizen of Oman
- 2- To be not less than 25 years old
- 3- To be holder of appropriate study qualifications or has regularly exercised the profession for five years at least.
- 4- To be fully competent and with good reputation.
- 5- Not to be convicted by any penalty relating to honor, trust and honesty, unless his respect is restored to him or was granted pardon by the competent authority.

Article 44:

Any Press Establishment desiring publication of a journal shall submit an application for license to the Publication and Press Department at the Ministry of Information signed by the legal representative of the Press Establishment. A receipt shall be given accordingly. The application shall be filled up on a form prepared by the Publication and Press Department and designed for such purpose. The same procedures shall be followed if such Establishment desires publishing a new journal.

Article 45:

The executive regulations of this law shall determine the data that the application for license should contain and the procedures to be followed in case of any change effected to such data.

Article 46:

The authorization shall be notified to the legal representative of the Press Establishment owning the journal by official notice within three months of the application date.

Article 47:

In case any decision on rejection of an application for issuing a journal, the concerned parties may submit their appeal to the Publication and Press Committee. The resolution of the Committee shall be final after being approved by the Minister of Information.

Article 48:

Failing to issue the journal within six months of the license date, or if it ceased publication for six consecutive months without reasonable cause, the Publication and Press Committee may cancel the license and the prejudiced party may appeal such decision before the Minister of Information within 30 days of the cancellation date.

Article 49:

The approval of issuing the journal shall be considered private authorization of the Press Establishment, the property of which may not be transferred in any manner unless by approval of the Ministry of Information.

Article 50:

Once any issue or a supplement of a journal is circulated, five copies thereof shall be delivered to the competent authority at the Ministry of Information against receipt. If the Printing house issued several times of the same issue of the journal, same number of copies shall be submitted separately.

Article 51:

The journal may not be offered for circulation unless it contains the name of the chairman of the Board of Directors of the Press Establishment, the name of the editor-in-chief, the name of the printing press, where it is printed, the unit price of each copy and the subscription price in an explicit way in the first or last page of each copy.

Article 52:

Shall be considered as journal and shall be subjected to the provisions of the present Chapter, the press and news agencies that supply the Press Establishments with news, photos, drawings and any other press

materials. The same shall be applicable to the agencies that transport and distribute the clips of the press prints to the applicants.

Article 53:

The license granted to the advertising agencies for working in Sultanate of Oman requires that such agencies shall be in form of Oman joint stock companies and with capitals not less than the capital of the daily journal. The provisions of the present chapter apply thereon.

Article 54:

The Minister of Information may by resolution exempt the newspapers and publications issued by clubs and cooperative associations from all or part of the conditions stipulated in the present chapter, upon requests by the Government authorities in charge of such clubs and associations.

Article 55:

Any who breaches the provisions of the present chapter shall be punished by imprisonment of maximum two years or by a fine of maximum two thousand Omani Riyals or by both penalties.

CHAPTER SIX **REPLIES & RECTIFICATIONS**

Article 56:

The responsible editor-in-chief shall upon request of the concerned parties, must publish in the first issue after the receipt of rectification of the journal an in the same place of the published article or the portion to be rectified, the rectification of any mentioned facts and the previous published statements in the journal, free of charge, provided the rectification does not exceed the double size of the article or the news. Exceeding it, the journal shall be entitled to claim from the concerned party before such publishing of the extra size on the ground of the determined advertising tariff.

Article 57:

It is possible to abstain from publishing the rectification in the following cases:

- 1- If such rectification reaches the journal after the expiry of fourteen days in case the legal claimant resides inside the Sultanate and sixty days if he resides outside the Sultanate for the daily newspapers and the period becomes one month for the legal claimant residing inside the Sultanate and sixty days if he is residing abroad for the magazines and non-daily newspapers.
- 2- If the journal had already rectified the facts in the same meaning with the same instances or the statements as appeared in the article to be rectified.
- 3- If the rectification is written in a foreign language other than the language of the article or the news.

Article 58:

The journal must abstain from publishing the rectification if the contents thereof are in contradiction with the provisions of the present law or of any of its articles.

Article 59:

Any contravener of the provisions mentioned above shall be punished by imprisonment of maximum two years and by a fine of maximum one thousand Omani Riyals, or by any one of these two penalties. The journal shall be bound to publish the rectification in the form presented by the concerned party.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The journalist

Article 60:

Any editor or writer may not work in any journal unless he obtains the license to exercise the profession from the Publishing and Press Committee. The owners of newspapers and the chairmen of the boards of directors of the Press Establishments and news agencies shall abstain from appointing temporarily or permanently in their Press business editors or writers before they obtain such license.

Article 61:

To obtain a license any Omani journalist shall comply with the following conditions:

- 1- He must have attained the age of 21 years old.
- 2- Must be a holder of appropriate study qualifications, or he must have regularly exercised the profession for five years at least.
- 3- Must not to be convicted by any penalty related to honor, trust and honesty unless he respect has been restored to him, or was granted a pardon from the competent authorities.
- 4- Must have record of good behavior and conduct
- 5- Must not to be employed with any foreign country or occupying a public post.

Article 62:

In addition to the provisions of article (61), the non-Omani journalists, for obtaining the license of exercising the journalism profession in the Sultanate of Oman should satisfy the following conditions:

- 1- To be holder of any journalist card issued by the country of his origin or by the country of the journal with which he represents.
- 2- To be holder of a legal work permit from the competent authorities.
- 3- To be holder of appropriate study qualification and possesses at least five years' experience in journalism

Article 63:

The journal correspondents and foreign New Agencies may not exercise their work in the Sultanate unless they obtain the relevant license from the Publication and Press Department. The competent authorities shall facilitate their access to the relevant information enabling them to carry out their works within the while respecting the national sovereignty, the professional ethics, the laws and the regulations in force. Such correspondents are not allowed to enter or publish any false or prejudiced news in foreign newspapers and prints about the Sultanate.

Article 64:

The Omani journalists shall not work in any non-Omani newspapers, agencies or media inside or outside the Sultanate, only after obtainment of license in this concern from the Publication and Press Department.

CHAPTER EIGHT

PUBLICATION AND PRESS COMMITTEE

Article 65:

A committee named the Publications and Press Committee shall be in charge of the press and publication affairs in Sultanate of Oman. It shall be composed of the followings:

- 1- The Under- Secretary of the Ministry of Information/ as a Chairman.
- 2- The General Director of Information in the Ministry of Information/as a Member
- 3- Head, Information and Studies Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs/as a Member
- 4- General Director of Culture at the Ministries of National Patrimony and Culture/as a Member
- 5- General Director of the Islamic Affairs at the Ministry of Justice, Waqf and Islamic Affairs/as a Member
- 6- A delegate from the Royal Sultani Bureau.

Chairman,
Member
Member
Member
Member
Member

The Head of Publications and Press Department at the Ministry of Information shall be in charge of the Committee's Secretariat.

Article 66:

In addition to the specializations stated in the present law, the committee shall be in charge of the following missions:

- 1- Any matter related to the journalists and to the protection of the journalism business, the guarantee of the journalist rights, securing that they comply with their obligations, calling them to account for any breach of their duties stipulated in the present law, after summoning the contravener and hearing his statements. The resolutions taken by the committee shall only be in force upon being validated by the Ministry of Information.

- 2- Drawing up the method of coordination with the different Press establishments, as well as with the competent Institutions of the media field for the integration purpose between the government information institutions.
- 3- Taking all the procedures that may lead to overcome any obstacles facing the Press institutions, so as enhance their technical and vocational level in order to realize their raison d'être or the purpose of their incorporation.

Article 67:

The executive regulations of the present law shall organize any procedures related to the organization of the Committee's meetings, the formation of its specialized committees and any other organizational matter with aim to attain good performance of its missions.

CHAPTER NINE **TRANSITIONAL AND PROVISIONAL RULES**

Article 68:

The present newspapers that are not published through Press Institutions are considered validly existing. The owners or those who are responsible for the management of such newspapers may present applications to the Publications and Press Department for confirming their situation in accordance with the present law.

Article 69:

The effectively existing Printing houses, Press Houses, Libraries, News agencies and Advertising agencies before the date of the present law are considered validly existing. The owners may present applications, justified by documents and statements in proof, to the Prints and Press Department for confirming their situation in accordance with the present law.

Article 70:

The journalists working in the Sultanate in newspapers, news agencies and the correspondents must present applications to the Publications and Press Department requesting for licensee to exercise their profession

within 90 days as from the effective date of the present law. Their applications must be substantiated with documents and statements that support his request. The decisions of the Department shall be considered final after being validated by the Ministry of Information.

Article 71:

The competent department staff at the Ministry of Information shall be duly authorized by virtue of a resolution taken by the Minister of Information, to have the capacity of the legal control officers to implement the provisions of the present law and the proving any breaches of this law, its regulations and its executive decisions.

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