

Sultanate Decree

No. 84/49

For the issuance of the Printing and Publication Law

We Qaboos bin Said, the Sultan of Oman

After having reviewed the Sultanate Decree No. 75/26 to issue a law to regulate the Administrative Apparatus of the State and its amendments.

And the Commercial Companies Law No. 74/4 and its amendments.

And the Sultanate Decree No. 74/4 to issue the Law of foreign crafts and investment of foreign capital and its amendments.

And as required by the public interest:

We Resolved the Following:

Article 1: The Provisions of the attached Printing and Publication Law in the Sultanate of Oman shall be applied.

Article 2: The Minister of Information shall issue the Regulations and Decisions required to implement the provisions of the attached Law.

Article 3: The Press Law No. 75/3 in addition to any other rules that contravene the attached Law or contradict its provisions shall be canceled.

Article 4: This Decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall come into effect as of the date of its publication.

**Qaboos bin Said
Sultan of Oman**

Issued on: Shaban 25th, 1404 H

Corresponding to: May 26th, 1984 G

Printing and Publication Law

Chapter One

Article 1: This Law, conditions and cases stated therein regulate the profession of journalism, printing and publishing.

Article 2: Press publications issued by ministries, public institutions or public bodies in connection with their activities shall be subject to the supervision of the Ministry of Information.

Article 3: In implementation of this Law, the following words and expressions shall have the meaning specified to each of them, unless the context requires otherwise:

1. Publications:

It means all writings, drawings, photographs or any other means of copying or transferring by any means, and became tradable, excluding all personal printings and printings related to business whose content does not violate the provisions of this Law or any other law.

2. Trading:

It means the selling, distributing, gluing them on walls or storefronts for the purpose of sale, advertising, distribution or decoration, in addition to any other work that makes them available to a number of persons.

3. The Newspaper:

It means every newspaper, magazine or publication issued periodically in a single name in regular or irregular times.

4. Journalist:

Every person who earns his living through working in press, and whose work includes writing in the press publications and various media or providing them with news, press investigations and other press items such as photos, drawings and otherwise. This name includes correspondents, delegates and editors of different nationalities of persons and institutions.

5. Journalism:

It means the profession of editing or issuing newspapers.

6. News Agency:

It means a press organization which distributes news or investigative reports, illustrated or not, by means of telecommunications, reports or by any other way.

7. Printing Press:

It Means a machine, a set of machines or a device designed for printing of words, drawings or images for publication or trading, but this definition does not include machines or devices designed for photography and typewriters or scanners.

8. Printmaker:

It means the owner of the printing press, but if the owner leases it to another person who operates it, the word “printmaker” will be transferred to him.

9. Publisher:

It means a natural or legal person who publishes any publication.

10. Bookstore:

It means every establishment that sells and distributes publications in a particular place.

11. Distribution House:

It means every establishment that distributes or sells publications through bookstores or vendors.

12. Publishing House:

It means every establishment that prepare publications for the purpose of trading.

Chapter Two

Provisions Related to Printing Press and Printings in General

Article 4: A person who desires to establish a printing press shall apply to the Ministry of Information to obtain the related license, the application shall contain the necessary data specified by the Executive Regulation of this Law. License obtained under any other laws shall not be regarded as an exemption.

Article 5: The competent authority in the Ministry of Information shall decide the said license application within “three months” from the date of submission. Non-replay at the said time shall be regarded as a rejection of the application.

Article 6: A person whose license application to establish a printing press is rejected, may file a complaint with the Press and Publication Committee stipulated in this Law within fifteen days from date of notifying him of the rejection of his application or the expiry of the date of response referred to in Article (5). The Committee shall decide this complaint within fifteen days from the date of its submission, and whose decision in that regard shall be final after the ratification by the Ministry of Information.

Article 7: A person who obtained a license to establish a printing press or the person responsible for its management, shall notify the Ministry of Information in writing about any change in the data included in the license application to establish the printing press, within “fifteen days” from the date of change.

Article 8: The printmaker or the printing press manager shall prepare a record showing the titles of the publications and those prepared for publishing, names of their owners, number of printed editions and the date of printing, the competent authorities shall have the right to access when appropriate.

Article 9: The first or the last page of the publication shall mention the name and address of the printmaker and the publisher if they are not the same person, as well as the printing date.

Article 10: The printmaker shall, before issuing any publication, deposit “five copies” of it with the Ministry of Information deposit and to be given a receipt against such deposit.

Article 11: A printmaker must, before printing a newspaper, apply to the Ministry of Information for a permission to do so, and the Ministry may issue its decision in this regard within two weeks from the date of submission to it.

Article 12: A printmaker must, before printing any “printed material” obtain a prior permission from the Ministry of Information to print such material.

Article 13: No printmaker may print any material that is not allowed to be traded, nor to periodically print any material that is not licensed or whose license is decided to be canceled, modified or discontinued.

Article 14: The provisions of this Chapter of Law shall apply to Publishing Houses.

Article 15: A person who violates the Provisions of the preceding Articles shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding one year, or a fine not exceeding Omani Riyal “five hundred”, or by both penalties, in addition to the possibility of closing the printing press temporarily or permanently.

Chapter Three

Trading in Publications

Article 16: No person may practice the profession of importing, selling, distributing, publishing publications or establishing a publishing or distribution house or a bookstore before

obtaining a license to do so from the competent authority of the Ministry of Information, which shall include the necessary data specified by the Executive Regulation of this Law.

Article 17: Ministry of Information must be notified of any changes that may arise to the data included in the license within fifteen days from occurrence.

Article 18: Except for the exempted publications in accordance with Article (3) Clause (1), the Ministry of Information is considered the sole licensing authority for distribution and trading of publications.

Article 19: Street vendors are prohibited from promoting and selling the publications by way of announcing false or non-printed news, defame morality, violate public morals or public order.

Article 20: Each distribution and trading house shall deposit “five copies” of the publications which it imports, and the depositor shall take a receipt for such deposit.

Article 21: Importation and circulation of any publication that are contrary to public order or public morals in the Sultanate are prohibited, such prohibition shall be made by a decision issued by the Minister of Information or his authorized deputy.

Article 22: The Minister of Information shall prohibit trading, in the Sultanate of Oman, publications which are inconsistent with public morals, oppose or contrary to the principles of true Islam or traditions and observed rules.

Article 23: The competent authority at the Ministry of Information may control and confiscate administratively the publications that have been decided to prevent their trading or entry under the provisions of the preceding Articles of this Law.

Article 24: A person who violates any of the provisions of the preceding Articles shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years or a fine not exceeding Omani Riyal 2,000 or by both penalties.

Chapter Four

Prohibited Publications

Article 25: It is not permissible to publish anything that may offend his Majesty the Sultan or members of the Royal family, by way of hinting, words or images. In addition, it is not allowed to incite or harm the Sultanate regime, the public order or to call for the embracement of anything contrary to the principles of Islam.

Article 26: It is prohibited to publish anything that would harm the integrity of the State or its internal or external security and all that relating to the military and security regulations, any confidential documents, information, news, or public communications whether published through visual, audio and printed media, or through the use of information network or any means of information technology except with the permission of the competent authority. In addition, it is prohibited to publish the texts of agreements or treaties concluded by the government before publication thereof in the official gazette.

Article 27: It is not allowed to publish anything that harms the national currency or may lead to confusion of ideas about the money market in the Sultanate or the economic situation of the State.

Article 28: It is not allowed to publish anything that violates morals, public morals and heavenly religions.

Article 29: It is prohibited to publish the proceedings of investigations or trials concerning personal status and otherwise, which the court prohibits their publication, nor to distort court proceedings in bad faith.

Article 30: It is prohibited to publish news, photos, or comments relating to the secrets of

private life, unless such publication is made in compliance with a judicial or an administrative decision required by for the public interest, and the publication permission is issued by a decision of the Minister of Information.

Article 31: It is prohibited to publish anything that incites to commit crimes or hatred or spreads infidelity or the spirit of discord among individuals and society.

Article 32: It is prohibited to publish any news, articles, photos, or documents for which a publish prohibition order has been issued by the Minister of Information until a publish permission order is issued by the same source.

Article 33: Newspapers may not tackle subjects that fall within the decision of their license in any manner.

Article 34: It is not permissible to publish press or other printed advertisements containing materials prohibited in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter of the Law. Advertisements that mislead the public may not be published, and the advertisements relating to medicines or medical products may only be published with specific permission from the Ministry of Health. As for advertisements relating to artistic works, the advice of the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture must be taken.

Article 35: Without prejudice to any tougher penalty provided for in any other law, a person who violates the Provisions of Article (25) of this Law, shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding “three” years, or a fine not exceeding Omani Riyal “two thousand” or both penalties.

Article 36: A person who violates the Provisions of Articles (26 – 34) shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding “two years” or a fine not exceeding Omani Riyal “two thousand” or both penalties.

Chapter Five

Provisions Related to Newspapers

Article 37: Newspapers in the Sultanate of Oman are issued through press institutions licensed by the competent authority at the Ministry of Information in accordance with the procedures specified by the Executive Regulations of this Law. Each institution has a board of directors which will be responsible for the management of the newspapers it issues.

Article 38: A press institution that desires to issue a daily or weekly newspaper shall be in a form of a limited liability company, and the press institution that desires to issue bi-monthly, monthly or quarterly newspaper, shall form a company of limited liability, partnership, limited partnership or individual trader. The establishment of the said companies are subject to the provisions of the Commercial Companies Law No. 74/4 as amended without prejudice to the Provisions of this Law.

The capital of the press institution shall not be less than Omani Riyal five hundred thousand for daily newspapers, Omani Riyal two hundred fifty thousand for weekly newspapers, Omani Riyal one hundred fifty thousand for bi-monthly or monthly newspapers, and Omani Riyal one hundred thousand for quarterly newspapers.

Article 39: The capital of the press institution shall be fully owned by Omani citizens, and may not be sold, transferred or disposed of in any manner except to Omani citizens and after obtaining the approval of the Ministry of Information.

Article 40: Without prejudice to the provisions of the Companies Law, the Press and Publication Committee shall prepare a form of the Articles of Association of the press institution which takes a form of a company and its statutes, provided that the Articles of Association shall specify the purposes of the newspaper and the procedures for the election of

the board of directors of the institution in compliance with the regulation prescribed by the Articles of Association.

Article 41: Every press institution shall have its legal personality, it shall be entitled to practice all legal actions to achieve its purposes, to be represented before third parties by the chairman of the board of directors, and the institution may practice within the field of its activity exportation and importation as well as the activities of commercial companies.

Article 42: Every newspaper shall have an editor-in-chief who will be responsible towards the Sultanate and third parties for the actual supervision over its contents and what is published therein.

Article 43: The Editor-in-chief shall have following characteristics:

- a) To be Omani.
- b) Not less than “twenty-five” years old.
- c) To have an appropriate academic qualification, or has practiced the profession for a period of “five” years at least on regular basis.
- d) To be fully competent and reputable.
- e) No convictions of a felony or offense of dishonor are issued against him, unless he was rehabilitated.

Article 44: Every press institution that desires to issue a newspaper must submit an application duly signed by a legal representative to the Press and Publication Department at the Ministry of Information for a license, who will be given a receipt thereof. The application shall be made on the form prepared for that purpose by the Press and Publication Department. The same procedures shall be followed in case of the institution’s desire to issue a new newspaper.

Article 45: The Executive Regulation of the Law specifies the data that shall be included in the license application and the procedures to be followed in case of any change to that data.

Article 46: The legal representative of the institution owning the newspaper will be informed of the issuance of press institution opening license by an official notice within three months from the date of submitting the application.

Article 47: In case a rejection decision of the issuance of the newspaper is issued, the concerned parties may appeal against such decision before the Press and Publication Committee, the decision shall be final after the approval of the Ministry of Information.

Article 48: If the newspaper is not issued within “six months” from the date of its license or if it ceases to issue for a period of “six months” consecutive without acceptable excuse, Press and Publication Committee may cancel the license, and the injured party may appeal the decision before the Ministry of Information within 30 days from the date notifying it of the decision of cancellation.

Article 49: Approval of the issuance of the newspaper is considered as a special license for the press institution that had been issued to it, and the title thereof shall not in whatever manner be transferred unless with the approval of the Ministry of Information.

Article 50: Once an edition of a newspaper or an annex thereof is traded, the competent body must be delivered “five” copies thereof against a receiving voucher, and if the newspaper issues several editions, the same number of copies of each edition must be deposited.

Article 51: The newspaper may not be offered for trading unless it shows the name of the press institution’s chairman of the board of directors, name of the editor-in-chief, name of the printing press, price of one copy and the value of subscription, provided that to be printed on each copy and on the front or last page.

Article 52: Press news agencies which provide the publishing houses with news, photos, drawings and all press materials, as well as the agencies that transmit press releases and distribute them of the requesters, shall be treated as a newspaper and shall be subject to the provisions of this Chapter of Law.

Article 53: It is conditioned for publishing houses and advertising agencies, in order to be licensed to operate in the Sultanate, to be in a form of a limited liability company, partnership, limited partnership or individual trader, and it may not be sold, transferred or disposed of in whatever manner except after the approval of the Ministry of Information. The establishment and activity of the said companies are subject to the provisions of the Commercial Companies Law No. 74/4 as amended without prejudice to the Provisions of this Law.

The capital of publishing houses and advertising agencies shall not be less than Omani Riyal one hundred thousand, and provisions of the two Chapters Second and Fifth of this Law shall apply on the matters not mentioned in this Article.

Article 54: Newspapers and publications issued by the clubs and cooperative associations may be exempted under a decision by the Minister of Information from all or some of the conditions stipulated for in this Chapter of the Law, based on a request by the governmental authorities responsible for these clubs and associations.

Article 55: A person who violates the Provisions of this Law shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding “two years” or a fine not exceeding Omani Riyal “two thousand” or both penalties.

Chapter Six

Reply and Correction

Article 56: The editor-in-chief shall publish, at the request of the concerned parties, the correction of facts and statements previously mentioned in the newspaper in the first issue of the newspaper after the correction in the same place in which the article or the part to be corrected was published, free of charge, provided not to exceed double the place, if exceeds, the newspaper shall have the right to require the concerned party to pay the excess amount before publication based on the tariff of the prescribed advertisements.

Article 57: The correction may not be published in the following cases:

- a) If the correction reaches the newspaper after fourteen days and person who has the right of reply resides in the Sultanate, and sixty days if he resides outside the Sultanate, this in case of the daily newspapers, and in case of the non-daily newspapers and magazines, the period shall be one month for residents of the Sultanate, and sixty days for those residing outside the Sultanate.
- b) If the newspaper has corrected in the same meaning the facts and statements contained in the article requiring the correction.
- c) If the correction is written in a language other than that in which the article or news was written.

Article 58: The correction shall not be published if it violates the provisions of this Law or any of its clauses.

Article 59: A person who violates the Provisions of the preceding Articles shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding “two years” and a fine not exceeding Omani Riyal “one thousand” or one of those penalties, and the newspaper shall publish the correction as provided by the concerned parties.

Chapter Seven

With Respect of Journalists

Article 60: No editor or author may work with any newspaper unless he is licensed by the Press and Publication Department to practice the profession, and the owners of the newspapers and the board chairmen of the press institutions shall not appoint on temporary or permanent basis any editors or authors before obtaining such license.

Article 61: Omani journalists to be employed in any newspaper, shall meet the following:

1. To be not less than “twenty-one” years old.
2. To have an appropriate academic qualification, or has practiced the profession for a period of “two” years at least on regular basis.
3. No convictions of a felony or offense of dishonor have been issued against him, unless he was rehabilitated or amnestied by the competent authority.
4. To be of praiseworthy conduct and good reputation.
5. Not employed by any foreign country or a holder of a public job.

Article 62: In addition to the provisions of Article (61) a non-Omani journalist shall meet the following requirements in order to be licensed to work as a journalist in the Sultanate of Oman:

1. To be a holder of a newspaper card issued by his country or the country of the publication he represents.
2. To be a holder of a legal work permit issued by the competent authorities.
3. To have an appropriate academic qualification, and has practiced the profession of journalism for a period of “five” years at least.

Article 63: Journalists of foreign newspapers and news agencies may not practice their duties in the Sultanate unless they have obtained the required license from the Press and Publication Department, and the competent authorities should facilitate their obtainment of the information that enables them to perform their work while respecting the applied rules and laws, and those reporters may not enter or publish any false or malicious news about the Sultanate in the foreign newspapers or publications.

Article 64: An Omani journalist may not work with any non-Omani newspaper, agency or any other media inside or outside Oman, unless he has obtained a permit from the Press and Publication Department.

Chapter Eight

With Respect of the Press and Publication Committee

Article 65: Press and publication affairs in the Sultanate of Oman are the responsibility of a committee called the Press and Publication Committee, which consists of:

- Deputy Minister of Information	Chairman
- General Manager of Information at the Ministry of Information	Member
- Head of Media and Studies Affairs at the Ministry of Information	Member
- General Manager of Culture at the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture	Member
- General Manager of Islamic Affairs at the Ministry of Justice, Endowment and Islamic Affairs.	Member
- A delegate from the Sultanate Office	Member

The manager of the Press and Publication Department at the Ministry of Information shall be the secretariat of the Committee.

Article 66: The Committee shall carry out the following tasks in addition to the competences

provided for in this Law:

1. All matters relating to journalists, the protection of journalism, the rights of the journalists and the performance of their duties, accountability upon violating their duties under this Law or code of ethics of media, and the Committee shall have the power to decide and inflict the appropriate penalties in line with the provisions of this Law, after the violating person has been invited and heard, the decision of the Committee shall be valid only after the approval of the Ministry of Information.
2. To set up an approach for coordination among the various press institutions, and between them and the institutions specialized in media in order to achieve the integration between the State media institutions.
3. Taking all matters that lead to overcoming the obstacles facing the press institutions to raise their technical and professional level in order to achieve the purpose of their foundation.

Article 67: The Executive Regulations of this Law regulates all the procedures relating to the meetings of the Committee, the formation of its specialized committees and any other organizational matters to ensure the performance of its duties.

Chapter Nine

With Respect of Transitional and Final Provisions

Article 68: The owners or the managers of the current newspapers which are not published by press institutions dully established, may apply to the Press and Publication Department to correct their situations under the provisions of this Law.

Article 69: Printing presses, publishing houses, bookstores, news and advertising agencies that were founded and already existed before the date of this Law, are considered dully existed, and their owners may apply to the Press and Publication Department to correct their situations under the provisions of this Law. Supporting documents and data shall be attached to the application.

Article 70: Journalists who work in the newspapers, news agencies or the reporters in the Sultanate shall apply to the Press and Publication Department in order to be licensed to practice the profession within “ninety” days from the date of enforcing this Law, provided that the supporting documents and data shall be attached to the application. The decision of the Committee shall be final after the approval of the Minister of Information.

Article 71: The employees of the competent department at the Ministry of Information shall have, under a decision issued by the Minister of Information, the powers of judicial control in implementing the provisions of this Law, and to register any violations of it, its regulations and executive decisions.