

**The Press and Publication Law of 1998
and its Amendments as of 2007
Kingdom of Jordan**

Article 1

This law shall be called “The Press and Publications Law of 1998”. It shall come into force as of the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

Article 2

Wherever they occur in this law, the following words and terms shall have the meanings stated hereunder, unless the context indicates otherwise:

Ministry: The Prime Ministry.

Minister: The Prime Minister.

Department: The Press and Publications Department.

Director: The Director General of the Department.

Association: The Jordan Press Association.

Person: The natural or legal person.

Publication: Any media in which meanings, words, or ideas are expressed in any way whatsoever.

Periodical publication: specialized and press publication of all types that are issued regularly; this include:

A. Press publication, including:

1. Daily publication: A publication issued daily and regularly under a certain name and serial number and is prepared for distribution to the public.

2. Non-daily publication: A publication issued regularly once a week or at longer intervals, and is prepared for distribution to the public.

B. Specialized publication: A publication specialized in a specific area and is prepared for distribution as stipulated in its issuance license.

C. News agency bulletin: A bulletin that is prepared to provide press institutions and others with news, information, articles, pictures, and drawings.

Journalism: The profession of preparing, editing, issuing, and broadcasting press publications.

Journalist: Every person registered as member of the Jordan Press Association and takes journalism as a profession according to its law provisions.

Correspondent of periodical publication and foreign media: Every journalist, of any nationality who practices journalism with non-Jordanian media and periodical publication.

Printing press: The place and equipment used to produce publications of various types, forms, and in all their stages. This definition does not include printing machines, typewriters, photocopiers and photographic equipment used for purposes other than publishing.

Publishing house: An institution undertaking the preparation, production, and the sale of publications.

Distribution house: An institution undertaking the distribution or sale of publications.

Publishing and distribution house: An institution undertaking the work of the publishing house, and the distributing house at the same time.

Bookstore: A commercial enterprise licensed to sell books, stationery, newspapers, magazines, and other publications.

Studies and research house: An institution that conducts or publishes studies and research and gives consultation in political, social, cultural, economic, humanitarian, and other areas.

Public opinion poll house: An institution in charge of conducting research with the aim of surveying public opinion trends on any specific subject through questionnaires and other methods.

Translation house: An institution undertaking translation from one language into another, including simultaneous translation.

Publicity and advertising agency: An office undertaking advertisement and publicity, producing their materials and publishing or transmitting them by any means.

The Court: The competent Court of First Instance.

Article 3

The press and printing are free and freedom of opinion is guaranteed to every Jordanian. Jordanians have the right to express their opinion freely through speech, writing, photography, drawing, and all other means of expression and information.

Article 4

The press shall freely exercise its task of presenting news, information, and commentaries and shall contribute to the dissemination of thought, culture, and science within the limits of the law and within the framework of preserving public liberties, rights and duties as well as respecting the private life of others.

Article 5

The publication shall search for the truth and adhere to accuracy, neutrality, and objectivity in publishing journalistic material, and refrain from publishing anything that conflicts with the principles of freedom, national responsibility, human rights, and values of the Arab and Islamic nation.

Article 6

Freedom of the press shall include:

- A. Informing citizen about events, ideas, and information in all fields.
- B. Enabling citizens, parties, associations, and cultural, social and economic organizations to express their thoughts, opinions, and accomplishments.
- C. The right of obtaining information, news, and statistics of concern to citizens, from the various sources, and analyzing, circulating, publishing, and commenting on them.
- D. The right of the periodical and the journalist to keep confidentiality of sources of information and news obtained.

Article 7

Journalism ethics are binding on the journalist; they include:

- A. Respecting public liberties of others, safeguarding their rights, and refraining from encroaching upon their private life.
- B. Considering the freedom of thought, opinion, expression, and access to information an equal right for the press and the citizen.
- C. Maintaining balance, objectivity, and honesty in presenting press material.
- D. Refraining from publishing anything that would, in any form, incite violence or call for dissension among citizens.
- E. Refraining from bringing or obtaining advertisements.
- F. Commitment to the provisions and principles of the Journalism Code of Ethics issued by the Association.

Article 8

- A. A journalist has the right to access to information; all official parties and public institutions shall facilitate his duty and allow him to get acquainted with their programs, projects and plans.

- B. It is prohibited to impose any restrictions that would impede the freedom of press of ensuring the flow of information to the citizen, or impose procedures that lead to disrupt his right to acquire it.

- C. Taking into consideration the provisions of legislations in force, a journalist should receive the answers to his inquiries concerning information and news in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs (A) and (B) of this article. The designated authority should provide the journalist with this information or news with the necessary speed in accordance with the nature of the news or the required information if it is regarded as urgent, and within a period not exceeding two weeks if it is not such.

- D. A journalist, and within the limits of performing his duty, has the right to attend general meetings, Senate and House of Deputies sessions, sessions of the general assemblies of parties, associations, unions, clubs, public meetings of the general assemblies of Public Shareholding Companies, charity societies, and other public institutions, open court sessions unless these sessions or meetings are closed or confidential pursuant to the laws, regulations, or instructions in force for these bodies.

- E. It is prohibited to interfere in any work practiced by the journalist in the limits of his profession, or influencing him or forcing him to disclose his sources of information, this includes depriving him from performing his work or writing or publishing, with no legitimate cause or justification, this is without prejudice to the recognized authority of the Editor-in-Chief to make the decision to whether or not to publish.

Article 9

- A. The correspondent of periodical publication and foreign media should be a Jordanian journalist; if he is not, the Council of the Association, with the consent of the Minister, permits him that work.
- B. The process of accrediting these correspondents shall be regulated in accordance with a regulation issued for this purpose.
- C. It is prohibited for the journalist to commit to a work relationship with any foreign party, unless according to the regulation stipulated in paragraph (B) of this article.

Article 10

It is not permissible for non- journalist to practice the profession of journalism in any of its forms including corresponding with periodical publications and foreign media, or presenting himself as a journalist; this does not include whose work is confined to writing articles.

Article 11

- A. Every Jordanian and every company owned by Jordanians shall have the right to issue a press publication.
- B. Every licensed Jordanian political party may issue its press publications.
- C. The Council of Ministers, based on the Minister's recommendation, may grant a license to issue newscasts to each of the following bodies:
 - 1. The Jordanian News Agency.
 - 2. Private Jordanian news agencies.
 - 3. A non-Jordanian news agency, on condition of reciprocity.
- D. The affairs of private Jordanian news agencies and non-Jordanian news agencies shall be regulated with regulations to be issued for this purpose.

Article 12

Taking into consideration the provisions of paragraphs (A) and (B) of article (11) of this law, an application to obtain a license to issue a press or specialized publication shall be submitted to the Minister, inclusive the following data:

- a) Name of license applicant, his place of residence and address.
- b) Name of the publication, the printing and issuance place.
- c) Times of issuance.
- d) Its specialization.
- e) Language(s) in which it is published.
- f) Name of the Editor-in-Chief of the press publication.
- g) Name of the Director of the specialized publication.

Article 13

- A. It is required to be granted a license to issue a specialized or a press publication, to register it as a company in accordance with the provisions of the Companies law in force.

- B. The company registered in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (A) of this article shall submit its budget to the Companies' Controller.

Article 14

Excepted from the provisions of article (13) of this law: the specialized publications issued by ministries, departments, public official institutions, universities, public interest NGOs, based on the Minister's recommendation; and the press publications issued by any political party.

Article 15

- A. An application to obtain a license to establish a printing press, publishing house, distributing house, studies and research house, public opinion polling house, translation house, or publicity and advertisement agency, shall be submitted to the Minister using the form prepared for this purpose.

- B. The data and procedures related to submitting an application to obtain the license stipulated in paragraph (A) of this article including changing or amending the content of the license as well as procedures of assigning it, shall be specified by a regulation to be issued under this law.

Article 16

Each of the institutions mentioned in article (15) of this law should have a responsible director who shall meet the following conditions:

- A. To be Jordanian and a permanent resident of the Kingdom.

- B. Have not been convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor violating honor and public morals.

- C. Have academic qualifications or practical experience commensurate with the requirements of the institution that he will run, as appropriate, and in accordance with instructions to be issued by the Minister for this purpose.

Article 17

- A. The Council of Ministers, based on the Minister's recommendation, shall issue its decision regarding the application for licensing press publication which shall be submitted meeting the conditions stipulated in paragraphs (A-F) of article (12) of this law; this shall be within thirty days of the date of submitting the application; otherwise, the application will be considered as accepted. In case it was rejected, the decision should be justified. The Association shall be notified with decisions related to press publications.

- B. The Minister issue his decision regarding licensing a specialized publication, or the application of licensing any of the institutions mentioned in article (15) of this law which shall be submitted meeting the required conditions; this shall be within thirty days of the date of submitting the application; otherwise, the application will be considered as accepted. In case it was rejected, the decision should be justified.

- C. The license applicant shall be notified with the Council of Ministers' decision or with the Minister's decision stipulated in paragraphs (A) and (B) of this article within a period not exceeding fifteen days of the issuance date of any of them.

Article 18

Taking into consideration the conditions stipulated in this law, a license to issue a press publication is granted to its owner, who may, under the approval of the Council of Ministers, assign it in part or whole to the others, provided that the following are taken into consideration:

- A. The assignor and the assignee shall notify the Minister thirty days before the date of assignment about their willingness to the assignment.

- B. The assignee shall meet the conditions stipulated in this law which allow him to take possession of the publication or any part of it.

- C. Both parties shall provide the department with a copy of the assignment agreement registered at the competent bodies.

- D. Selling people's shares in Public Shareholding Companies that issue press publications is excepted from the provisions of this article.

Article 19

A. The license of a periodical publication is deemed revoked in law, in any of the following situations:

1. If the press publication was not issued within six months of the date of granting the license.
2. If the daily publication stopped for a period of three consecutive months.
3. If the non-daily publication that is issued regularly once a week, has stopped publication for twelve consecutive issues.
4. If the non-daily publication that is issued regularly at interval longer than a week, has stopped for four consecutive issues.
5. If its owner assigned it in whole or in part contrary to provisions of article (18) of this law.

B. The Court may revoke a publication's license if it violated its licensing conditions, including the specialization content, without obtaining the Minister's prior approval, provided that he has notified it twice regarding its violation to conditions.

C. Press publications issued by registered political parties are excepted from the conditions stipulated in paragraph (A) of this article.

Article 20

- A. Press and specialized publications shall depend for their resources, on legitimate sources. It is prohibited from receiving any financial support from any State or non-Jordanian party.
- B. The owner of a press publication must provide the Minister with a copy of its annual budget within the first four months of the following year; the Minister or his designate shall have the right to be acquainted with sources of funding.

Article 21

The owner of specialized and press publication must meet the following conditions:

- A. Must be of Jordanian nationality, or a company owned by Jordanians, or a registered Jordanian political party.

- B. Have not been convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor violating honor and public morals.

Article 22

The owner of the periodical publication should publish clearly and in a prominent place of it, his name, and name of Editor-in-Chief of the press publication, and name of the Director of specialized publication, and the place and date of its issuance, subscription fees, and name of the printing press where it is printed. And he should submit a notification to the Director regarding any change or amendment occur to these issues within fifteen days of the date of occurrence of the change or the amendment.

Article 23

- A. Each press publication must have an Editor-in-Chief liable for what is published in it, and he must meet the following conditions:
 - 1. Must be a journalist and his membership of the Association has been for not less than four years.
 - 2. Must be Jordanian and actually reside in the Kingdom.
 - 3. Must be fully dedicated to his work duties and does not work in any other publication.
 - 4. Must be fluent in the language of the publication which he will work for as a responsible Editor-in-Chief, in reading and writing; if it is issued in more than one language, he must be fluent as provided, in the main language of the publication, and adequately conversant with the other languages.

5. Have never been convicted by the penalty of the prohibition from practicing the profession of journalism.
- B. The provisions of paragraph (A) of this article shall apply to the Editor-in-Chief responsible for the publication issued by the political party, with the exception of what is stipulated in clause (1) of it.
 - C. An Editor-in-Chief is liable for what is published in the publication that he presides its editing; and he is considered liable together with the article writer for his article.
 - D. It is not permissible for the periodical publication to have more than one Editor-in-Chief.

Article 24

- A. An Editor-in-Chief of the press publication shall lose his capacity, in any of the following situations:
 1. Resignation.
 2. Loosing one of the conditions stipulated in paragraph (A) of article (23) of this law.
- B. 1. If the post of the Editor-in-Chief became vacant, or he is absent of his work place for any reason and for any duration, the owner of the press publication should appoint who could do his work of whom meet the required conditions and for a period not exceeding two months, and notify the Director about that.
2. If an Editor-in-Chief does not return to his work, the owner of the press publication should appoint another Editor-in-Chief, otherwise, the press publication shall be considered violating its licensing conditions.

C. In case of the absence of the principal Editor-in-Chief or who does his work, the owner of the press publication or who issues it, is deemed completely liable for what it is published in it until the new Editor-in-Chief commences his work.

Article 25

Each specialized publication must have a responsible Director meets the following conditions:

- A. To be Jordanian.
- B. Have academic qualification directly relevant to the subject of the publication specialization, or have a certified experience for not less than five years in that subject, accepted by the Minister based on the Director's recommendation.
- C. Have not been convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor violating honor and public morals.

Article 26

- A. It is prohibited for a specialized publication to write in other than the licensed subject, or to change its specialization subject without obtaining a prior approval of the Minister, based on the Director's recommendation.
- B. Each specialized publication must provide the Department with three copies on issuance of each issue.

Article 27

- A. If a press publication published an incorrect news item or article contains incorrect information, the person to whom the news-item or article is related has the right to respond to the news item or the article or claim its correction, and the Editor-in-Chief must publish the response or the correction free of charge in the issue following to the date of any of them, in the same letters and place in which the news item or the article was published in the press publication.

- B. If a press publication published incorrect news item or article contains incorrect information related to the Public Interest, the Editor-in-Chief must publish and free of charge the response or the written correction he receives from the party concerned or from the Director, in the issue following to the date of receiving the response or the correction and in the same letters and place in which the news item or article appeared in the press publication.
- C. The provisions of paragraphs (A) and (B) of this article are applicable to any non-Jordanian press publication being distributed inside the Kingdom.

Article 28

The Editor-in-Chief of a press publication may refuse to publish the response or the correction he receives according to article (27) of this law, in any of the following situations:

- A. If the press publication had adequately and sufficiently corrected the news item or the article before receiving the response or the correction.
- B. If the response or correction is signed by a pseudonym, or from a non-concerned party, or written in a language other than the language in which the news item or the article has been edited.
- C. If the content of the response or the correction is contrary to the Law, public order, or incompatible with the public ethics.
- D. If the response is received two months after the publication of the news item or the article.

Article 29

If the party responsible for any publication that is issued outside the Kingdom and distributed inside it refuses to publish the response or the correction in accordance with the provisions of article (27) of this law, the injured party may prosecute the publication in charge, or its correspondent, or who represents it in the Kingdom, as appropriate.

Article 30

- A. It is not permissible for the Editor-in-Chief to publish an article for any person under a pseudonym unless its writer had provided him with his real name.

- B. If any publication published press reports or news belonging to any party for a fee, the publication shall indicate clearly and explicitly to that it is an advertisement.

Article 31

- A. The Director shall take the necessary procedures to facilitate the entry and distribution in the Kingdom for publications that are issued outside.

- B. If any publication that is issued outside the Kingdom contained what contravenes with the provisions of this law, the Director may stop its entry or distribution in the Kingdom, or restrict the number of copies allowed to be distributed, provided that he should urgently request the Court to issue an urgent decision to prevent its entry or distribution or restrict the number of copies distributed until a final decision is issued in this regard.

Article 32

Each publication shall record the name of its writer, publisher, and their addresses, and the printing press in which it is printed, and its printing date.

Article 33

The provisions of this law that are relevant to publications banned from importation, shall not apply to those imported by governmental institutions, universities, and scientific research centers, provided that a prior approval of the Director to admit it, is obtained. And it shall be put in special places for the use of scientific research.

Article 34

The owner or the director in charge of a printing press including newspapers printing presses, must observe the following:

- A. To maintain a record of names of periodical publications and number of copies of each printed publication.
- B. To maintain a record that lists in sequence, titles of printed books, names of their owners, and number of copies printed from each one.
- C. To present these records to the Director or his deputy if requested.
- D. To provide the Department with two copies of each non-periodical publication printed by him.

Article 35

- A. The author or publisher of any book that is printed or published in the Kingdom shall deposit a copy of it at the Department.
- B. If it appears to the Director that the book that is printed in the Kingdom contains what contravenes with the legislations in force, he may, upon the Court decision, confiscate it and prevent it from circulation.

Article 36

- A. If it appears to the printing press owner or its director that there is any publication has been banned, by a Court decision, from being printed, published, distributed, circulated, or sold, then he should refrain from printing, or re-printing it; subject to legal liability.
- B. Taking into consideration the provisions of legislations related to intellectual property rights; it is prohibited to print any book, painting, or any material without obtaining a written authorization from the owner of the right to.

Article 37

Excerpted or quoted press material shall be treated as authored or original material.

Article 38

It is prohibited to publish any of the following:

- A. What contains defamation, slander, insult or abuse to any of those religions which have their freedom guaranteed by the Constitution.
- B. What contains challenge or abuse to masters of religious laws of Prophets, by writing, drawing, picture, or symbol, or any other means.
- C. What consists insult to the religious feeling or belief, or incite racial or sectarian hatred.
- D. What offends individuals' dignity and personal freedoms, or contains untruthful rumors or information about them.

Article 39

- A. It is prohibited for the press publication to publish minutes of investigations related to any lawsuit before it is referred to the competent court, unless permitted by the Public Prosecution.
- B. A press publication has the right to publish the minutes of courts sessions and to cover them, unless the court decides otherwise in order to protect the rights of the individual, family, public order and public morals.
- C. The provisions of paragraph (A) of this article shall apply to the correspondents of foreign media. As well, the penalties stipulated in paragraph (C) of article (46) of this law shall apply to them.

Article 40

It is prohibited for the owner of any press publication, Editor-in-Chief, Editing Director, or any journalist working at it, or any writer used to write in it, to receive or accept by virtue of his ownership of that publication, or his association or relation with it, any financial grant or aid from any Jordanian or non-Jordanian party.

Article 41

It is prohibited for a specialized publication, a studies and research house, or a public opinion poll house or whoever used to work there, to receive or accept any financial grant, aid, support or funding from a Jordanian or non-Jordanian party. This shall not include the funding of joint projects, studies or research approved by the Minister.

Article 42

A. 1. Despite of what have been stipulated by any other law, the Court of First Instance shall be the competent court to adjudicate the crimes committed by publications contrary to the provisions of this law and any relative law. Lawsuits of publications shall be considered urgent.

2. One or more of the judges of the Court of First Instance shall be designated to adjudicate the lawsuits related to publications.

B. In case of appealing the Court of First Instance's decision before the Court of Appeal, it shall adjudicate the lawsuit within one month of the date of receiving it by the Court Registry.

C. The Prosecutor-General shall undertake the investigation in crimes committed by publications, and issue suitable decisions in its regard within a duration not exceeding fifteen days of the date he commenced the investigation. One of the Prosecutors shall be designated to this purpose.

D. The lawsuit of the Public Right in crimes committed by periodical publications shall be brought against the press publication and its Editor-in-Chief, or the director of the specialized publication, and the writer of the press material as principals. The owner of the publication shall be jointly and severally liable for personal rights resulted from those crimes, and for the litigation expenses. He shall not be criminally liable unless his complicity or actual intervention in the crime is proven.

E. The lawsuit of the Public Right in crimes committed by non-periodical publications shall be brought against the author of the publication as a principal, and against its publisher as his accomplice; if its author or publisher is unknown, the lawsuit shall be brought against the printing press' owner and director-in-charge.

F. It is not permissible to arrest as a result for expressing opinion verbally, in writing, or other means of expression.

Article 43

Owners of printing presses, bookstores, publishing and distribution houses, studies and research houses, public opinion poll houses; are deemed jointly liable for personal rights and litigation expenses sentenced against their employees in publication lawsuits that are subject to the law provisions.

Article 44

The Court which issues the verdict may order the convicted party to publish, free of charge, the final verdict in its wordings or publish a summary of it in the first issue of the periodical publication that will be issued following to the notification of the verdict; at the same letters and place of the publication where the article object of the complaint was published. The Court may, if finds necessary, decide to publish the verdict or a summary of it in two other newspapers at the convicted party's expense.

Article 45

- A. If a publication violates the provisions of article (5) of this law, the publication together as well as the violation perpetrator shall be penalized by a fine not less than five hundred dinars and not more than two thousand dinars.

- B. If the Editor-in-Chief of a press publication violates the provisions of any of paragraphs (A) and (B) of article (27) of this law, the injured party may bring a lawsuit against him.

- C. If a publication that is issued outside the Kingdom violates the provisions of paragraph (C) of article (27) of this law, the injured party may bring a lawsuit against it.

Article 46

- A. If the publication violates the provisions of paragraph (A) of article (20); or any of those who are mentioned in articles (40) and (41) of this law violates their provisions, they shall be penalized by a fine of not less than double the amount that was received.

- B. If the owner of a periodical publication fails to implement the provisions of paragraph (B) of article (20), he shall be penalized by a fine of not more than three thousand dinars; if failure persists, the Court may suspend the issuance of the publication for the duration it finds appropriate.

- C. If a periodical publication publishes what contravenes with any of the provisions of paragraph (39) of this law, it shall be penalized by a fine of not less than three thousand dinars and not more than five thousand dinars. This shall not prevent the penal prosecution of the responsible party, in accordance with the provisions of laws in force.

- D. Whoever violates the provisions of paragraphs (A), (B), and (C) of article (38) of this law, shall be penalized by a fine of not less than ten thousand dinars and not more than twenty thousand dinars.

- E. Whoever violates the provisions of paragraph (D) of article (38) of this law, shall be penalized by a fine of not less than five hundred dinars and not more than one thousand dinars.

Article 47

- A. Whoever illegally distribute, in the Kingdom, a publication that is banned by a judicial decision, or contributes in its distribution, shall be penalized by a fine of not less than five hundred dinars and not more than two thousand dinars, and the publication copies shall be confiscated.
- C. Every other contravene to the provisions of this law, where no penalty has been stipulated for, its perpetrator shall be penalized by a fine of not more than five hundred dinars.

Article 48

Whoever issues a periodical publication or practices one of the work of institutions stipulated in paragraph (A) of article (15) of this law, without license, shall be penalized by a fine of not less than five thousand dinars and not more than ten thousand dinars.

Article 49

The Council of Ministers may issue regulations necessary for the implementation of this law, inclusive of the determination of the amount of fees and levies collected by the Department within the extent of the implementation of this law.

Article 50

The Press and Publication Law No. 10 of year 1993 shall be abrogated.

Article 51

The Prime Minister and the Ministers are commissioned to implement the provisions of this law.