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**Legislative Decree No. (47) of 2002 with respect to Regulating the Press, Printing and**

**Publications**

**We, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain.**

Having reviewed the Constitution,

Fundamentals of Penal Court Proceedings Law of 1966, as amended;

Penal Code promulgated by Legislative Decree No. (15) of 1976, as amended;

Legislative Decree No. (14) of 1979 regarding Printing and Publication;

Legislative Decree No. (10) of 1993 regarding Copyright Protection;

And the Commercial Companies Law promulgated by Legislative Decree No. (21) of 2001;

And upon the submission of the Minister of Information,

And after the approval of the Council of Ministers,

**Hereby Decree the following Law:**

**Part One**

**General Principles and Definitions**

**Article (1)**

Each and every human has the right to express his opinion and publish it through words or writing etc. according to the terms and conditions stipulated in this Law, all of which notwithstanding the fundamentals of Islamic creed and the people's unity and avoiding any divisions or sectarianis.

**Article (2)**

Taking into account the provisions of the preceding Article, the freedom of the press, printing, and publication is ensured in compliance with the terms and conditions stipulated in this Law.

**Article (3)**

In applying the provisions of this Law, the following words and expressions shall have the meanings assigned to them below, unless the context requires otherwise:

**Ministry:**Ministry of Information.

**Minister:**Minister of Information.

**Directorate:**Directorate of Printing and Publications in the Ministry of Information.

**Publications:**Writings, paintings, songs, images, audio, or audio-visual products etc. and other means of expression whether written, photographic, or recorded in any way including electronic, digital, affixed, magnetic, electronic, or any other new technology prepared and capable of circulation.

**Circulation:**Selling of publications or offering for sale or free distribution or posting onto walls or displaying on shop facades for the purpose of sale, advertising, or marketing or any other techniques that make them accessible to the public in any way.

**Printing Press:**Machine of set of machinery, hardware, and software used in printing, conveyance of words, paintings, images, films on tape etc. or other media with the aim of disseminating or circulating them and this definition does not include machinery or equipment used in printing, writing, copying, or imaging of substances not prepared for circulation.

**Printer:**Press proprietor or manager whether he owns the press or benefits from it or on behalf of its owner or any natural or legal person who benefits from it.

**Library:**Organization which professes the business of publications of various sorts.

**Press:**The vocation of editing journalistic publications and editions.

**Newspaper:**Any newspaper, magazine, or other publication issued under one name periodically at regular or irregular intervals of time including e-newspapers issued or broadcast electronically.

**Special Publication:**Any personal publication that doesn’t include in its content any offences punishable by law or considered a crime.

**Commercial Publication:**Any publication related to commercial business.

**Journalist:**Anyone who practices the vocation of journalism regularly on a daily or periodical newspaper or press agency or works as correspondent to an Arab or foreign news agency or for any other media whenever his job in it included writing, supplying news or reportage and various press topics or any photographic images or paintings whatsoever.

**Editor-in-Chief:**Anyone who is actually in charge of or supervises a newspaper and its content.

**Writer:**Anyone who writes in a newspaper regularly or irregularly.

**Publisher:**Natural or corporate person who assumes the publishing of any publication.

**Publishing House:**Institution which assumes preparation, production, or selling of any publication(s).

**Distribution House:**Institution which assumes distribution or selling of any publications(s).

**Translation House:**Institution which assumes translation business from one language to another and this includes simultaneous translation.

**Press Office:**Office which assumes garnering of information, news, and press reportage from various sources using various means and distributing them to the media.

**Public Opinion Polling House:**Institution which assumes conducting of researches aimed at finding out public opinion regarding a specific topic through questionnaires or other means, etc.

**News Agency:**The entity which provides press institutions or otherwise with news, photographic images, and paintings, issued daily, weekly, or monthly or otherwise.

**Advertising and Promotion Office:**Office which assumes advertising and promotion business and the production of its materials and publishing or disseminating them by any means.

**Part Two**

**Printing and Publishing**

**Chapter One**

**Organizing Printing Presses**

**Article (4)**

Anyone who wishes to establish a printing press, before carrying out any business in it, shall obtain licensure for this purpose from the Ministry.

The applicant for licensure shall submit application to the directorate on the form prepared for this purpose including the data specified especially:

a- Name, nationality, domicile address, and number of CPR of applicant for licensure.

b- Name, nationality, domicile address, and number of CPR of manager in-charge.

c- Name, head office, and CR Number and type of machinery and supplies used in it.

Printer shall notify the directorate of any change which occurs on the data included in the application for licensure within thirty days from date of its occurrence.

Application shall be considered within sixty days from date of its submission. The elapse of the said duration without consideration of the application is deemed as a rejection thereof.

In case application for licensure has been denied or considered as rejected, applicant may submit objection to such decision before the High Civil Court within thirty days as from the date of being notified about the rejection decision or as from the date on which the application has been considered as rejected.

**Article (5)**

Every printing press shall be run by a manager in charge and held responsible in case of any violations, unless the owner of the printing press entitles management.

**Article (6)**

The two preceding Articles are applied on whoever wishes to establish a Library; a Publishing House; a Distribution House; a Public Opinion Polling House; a Translation House; an Advertising and promotion office; a Press office; or a News Agency.

**Article (7)**

The following conditions must be obtained by the manager in charge of the establishments mentioned in Articles (4) and (6):

a. Bahraini nationality and a permanent resident in the Kingdom.

b. Not to have been convicted of a felony or an offence involving moral turpitude or dishonesty, unless his consideration is restored.

c. To be dedicated to his profession.

d. Not to be a manger to more than one facility.

e. An academic qualification or practical experience equivalent to the requirements of the printing press management.

**Article (8)**

The printer shall hold a record of all sequenced publications with its titles, names of its owners, number of copies, and the date it's printed, available for authorities when necessary.

**Article (9)**

The printer's and publisher's name and address along with the date of printing must be mentioned on either the first or the last page of any publication.

**Article (10)**

The publisher shall deposit two copies of the publication at the directorate before issuance, and two copies to the public library. Publishers shall deposit two copies of each publication pertaining to religious issues at the Justice and Islamic Affairs Ministry.

If the publication was registered, the publisher will submit one copy to the Directorate and receives a receipt in return.

**Article (11)**

The provisions of Articles (9) and (10) of this Law shall not apply to special publications or noncommercial publications.

**Article (12)**

Any publisher -before carrying out any business in publications- shall obtain licensure for this purpose from the Directorate.

**Article (13)**

The publisher must obtain a licensure from the directorate when publishing any publication to a foreign authority or individual.

Application shall be considered within seven days from date of its submission. The elapse of the said duration without consideration of the application is deemed as a rejection thereof.

**Article (14)**

Publishers are not allowed to print or record any publication banned of circulation, or unlicensed, or within its cancellation, adjustment process.

No publication without written approval from its original owner or descendants is allowed to be publicized.

**Article (15)**

Establishing a printing press Licensee may waive the license to someone else after the approval of the directorate, that the assignee shall satisfy all the prescribed conditions for the license applicant.

In case of ownership transfer of the printing press by inheritance, the heirs must notify the directorate in writing within thirty days from the date of the deceased death.

**Article (16)**

Anyone who violates any of the penalties law or any other law shall be punished with a maximum of three months imprisonment or be fined a maximum of two thousand dinars or have both penalties combined:

a. Established any of the mentioned establishments of Articles (4) and (6) of this Law or began working on it before obtaining the licensure to it.

b. Printed any publication without written approval of its owner or descendants.

The Court may, besides the referred sentences above to order the confiscation of the seized publications that have been used in the crime, as well as the power to shut the printing press down.

**Chapter Two**

**Circulation of Publications**

**Article (17)**

No publication shall be circulated without a prior permission from the directorate, excluding publications with a special character and non-commercial ones.

No publication shall be circulated without a prior permission from the directorate, excluding publications with a special character and non-commercial ones.

**Article (18)**

The publisher, if not the printer, and anyone who takes charge of circulating the publications shall deposit two copies of the publication at the directorate before putting it to circulation, except for publications with a special character.

Importers of publications shall also do the same for any publication made abroad. These copies could not be reclaimed after approval of circulation of the publication.

Publishers and importers shall deposit two copies of each publication pertaining to religious issues at the Justice and Islamic Affairs Ministry.

**Article (19)**

As per a decision by the Minister, it is possible to prohibit circulation of publications instigating hatred of the political regime, encroaching on the State's official religion, breaching ethics, encroaching on religions and jeopardizing public peace, or raising issues whose publication is prohibited by the provisions of this Law.

Concerned parties can appeal the decision to prohibit circulation before the High Civil Court within fifteen days of its issuance or notification. The court shall settle the lawsuit on an urgent basis.

**Article (20)**

As per a decision by the Minister, it is possible to bar any publication issued abroad from entering and circulating in the kingdom so as to maintain public order, morals, religions, or due to any other reasons related to the public interest.

Concerned parties can appeal the decision of prohibition before the High Civil Court within fifteen days of its issuance or notification and the court shall settle the lawsuit on an urgent basis.

**Article (21)**

Copies of any publication which has been banned from being circulated or brought in as per the previous two Articles shall be seized and confiscated administratively.

**Article (22)**

Anyone who opens or runs a library, publishes, or circulates unlicensed publications shall face a maximum one-year imprisonment or be fined a maximum of one thousand dinars or have both penalties combined.

**Chapter Three**

**Controlling Cinematic Movies and Recorded Publications**

**Article (23)**

No movie, reference to a movie or commercial ad shall be displayed on a cinematic poster at cinemas unless a license is obtained from the cinematic movies and recorded publications control committee pointed to in the following article. Recorded publications shall not be circulated either before a written permission is obtained from the directorate beforehand. The directorate can place the recorded publication before the afore-mentioned committee before licensing its circulation.

**Article (24)**

A panel called "the Cinematic Movies and Recorded Publications Control Panel" shall be set up under the presidency of the Press and Publications Director and feature members from concerned ministries who will be nominated by the ministers.

The Minister shall issue a decision to form the committee and define its activities.

The committee will take charge of controlling movies as well as recorded publications referred to it from the directorate in terms of political, social, health, moral and religious aspects.

A cinema hall proprietor or user shall inform the directorate about the importation of any film and shall proceed with a special show of the movie before the committee before it is shown to the public or circulated.

The proprietor of any company selling recorded publications shall notify the directorate about any imported recorded publication before it is circulated.

**Article (25)**

The afore-mentioned committee shall delete inappropriate scenes from the movie and shall give a licence to broadcast the movie within fifteen days from being shown to it and after removing the inappropriate scenes. The committee has also the right to decline licensing the movie, when appropriate, after getting the Minister's approval.

Anyone who has his demand rejected can appeal the decision before the High Civil Court within thirty days since notification.

The Ministry shall issue instructions and directives to cinema halls proprietors and managers to uphold the standard of cinematic programmes religiously, nationally, morally and artistically and watch public morals in these halls.

**Article (26)**

Anyone who violates any of these chapter's provisions shall be fined no less than five hundred dinars and can have his cinema hall or library proclaimed shut for a period of no more than thirty days, while confiscating his unlicensed movies and publications.

**Part Three**

**Regulating Press**

**Chapter One**

**Press Freedom**

**Article (27)**

The press performs its message freely and independently and aims to provide a free climate for the society to grow while being equipped with the needed knowledge. It shall also contribute to working out the best solutions regarding the national and citizens' interest.

**Article (28)**

Newspapers shall never be confiscated, suspended, or cancelled unless a court verdict is obtained.

**Chapter Two**

**Journalists' Rights and Duties**

**Article (29)**

Journalists are independent and are under no authority but the law.

**Article (30)**

Any opinion or true information revealed by a journalist shall not pose a threat to his safety. A journalist shall never be compelled to reveal the source of his information. All of this shall be within the limits of the law.

**Article (31)**

The journalist has the right to obtain information, statistics, and news which can be legally disseminated from their sources. He has also the right to publish them.

**Article (32)**

Any restraints on flow of information or that might cause unequal access to information for newspapers or disrupt citizens' right to knowledge are prohibited if they do not violate public security and the nation's supreme interests.

**Article (33)**

The journalist has the right to attend conferences, sessions, and public meetings according to preset rules.

**Article (34)**

Anyone who offends a journalist or attacks him because of his job shall be punished as per Articles (219) to (222) of the Penal Code.

**Article (35)**

The relationship between the journalist and the newspaper is governed by a press work contract without contradicting the Labour Law for the Private Sector.

**Article (36)**

The journalist shall never be dismissed from his work before notifying the journalist association of the reasons for that. If the association fails to reconcile between the newspaper and the journalist and the provisions included in the Labour Law for the Private Sector are enforced in this regard.

**Article (37)**

A journalist shall be committed to the principles and values embedded in the Constitution and the provisions of the law and have to take into account the requirements of honour, sincerity, professional ethics and traditions so as to maintain community values, and in a manner that does not violate the citizens' rights and freedoms.

**Article (38)**

The journalist shall not advocate racist calls or instigate defamation or hatred of religions, cast doubt on others' beliefs, incite discrimination, or contempt of the views of any sect of the society.

**Article (39)**

The journalist, or any other person, is not allowed to tackle another person's private life or deal with the conduct of a public official only for public interests.

**Article (40)**

It is forbidden for any newspaper to tackle the investigation conducted by investigation or trial authorities in a way that may affect the on-going inquiry or trial or the positions of those subjected to investigation or trial. The newspaper must publish the decisions of the Public Prosecution and the rulings issued regarding the cases it covered during investigation or trial and a thorough description of the verdict.

**Article (41)**

Newspapers and journalists are not allowed to accept special donations or benefits from foreign sides, directly or indirectly. Any rise in the cost of advertisements published by foreign sides in the newspaper is considered as indirect donations.

The violator will have to pay a fine of no less than five hundred dinars and not exceeding one thousand dinars, and will be compelled by the Court to pay an amount equalling the donation or gift received. The amount will go to the Bahrain Journalists Society.

**Article (42)**

It is prohibited to publish any newspaper article announcement that is inconsistent with the values of society and established principles and etiquette, and public or the press with the message and its goals, and should be separated completely, and prominent among the editorial and advertising materials.

**Article (43)**

It is not permissible for a journalist to work to bring advertisements, get any money directly or indirectly, benefit from advertising in any capacity, or sign his name in advertising material.

**Chapter Three**

**Issuance of Newspapers**

**Article (44)**

A newspaper may be issued only after the issuance of the Minister’s license and approval of the Council of Ministers.

**Article (45)**

Any company owned by a minimum of five Bahrain partners has the right to issue a newspaper, under the provisions of Commercial Companies Law.

**Article (46)**

The license application shall be submitted to the Directorate on a previously prepared form, accompanied by the company’s establishment contract and statute and the following data:

a. The company’s paid-up capital, number of commercial registration and the name, surname, nationality, and residence of its legal representative.

b. Name, surname, nationality, and residence and qualification of the editor-in-chief or the editor-in-Charge, if any.

c. Name, language, publication dates, and address of the newspaper.

d. Show whether the newspaper will be political or non-political.

e. Name of the printing press (if there is any).

f. Financing sources.

The application must be signed by the legal representative and editor-in-chief of the company and a receipt must be given.

**Article (47)**

Taking into account the provisions of the Commercial Companies Law, the licensee must submit financial records including accounts, sources of income, expenditure, and supporting documents.

A decision shall be issued by the Minister regulating these records and their control.

**Article (48)**

Every newspaper must have an editor-in-chief who supervises all content directly. The paper may also have an editor-in-charge and editors who are responsible for its sections.

The legal representative of the licensee or one of the partners may be the editor-in-chief or editor-in-charge if he meets the requirements of this Law.

**Article (49)**

The editor-in-chief should be a Bahraini national, the editor-in-chief or the editor-in-charge must fulfil the following qualifications:

a. Hold a university degree and has the appropriate practical experience

b. Not be under the age of thirty.

c. Be of good character and reputation and has never been convicted of a felony or a misdemeanour involving moral turpitude or dishonesty, unless he has been rehabilitated.

d. Not hold any public office whether appointed or elected.

e. Be fluent of the language of the newspaper in reading and writing.

**Article (50)**

The company seeking license to issue a newspaper must have a minimum capital of one million Bahraini dinars for a daily newspaper, two hundred and fifty thousand Bahraini dinars for a non-daily newspaper. And for a specialized newspaper,the paid-up capital must not be less than fifty thousand Bahraini dinars.

**Article (51)**

An application for licensure shall be considered within sixty days from the date of its satisfactory submission and the elapse of this period without its consideration shall be deemed as an implicit rejection.

A decision in favour of rejection shall be justified by causation and the respective applicant may object to the rejection decision before the High Civil Court within thirty days from date of being notified about the rejection decision or as from the date on which application was deemed as rejected.

**Article (52)**

A licensee when issuing a newspaper shall deposit into the Ministry's treasury within three months as from the date of license approval cash or banker's warrantee not less than 10% of the paid up capital as guarantee for payment of any adjudicated fines or expenditures imposed on the licensee or editor-in-chief or editor in charge – if any – or journalist.

In case of failure to deposit the warrantee within the prescribed duration or in case of its shortage, it shall be deposited or completed within thirty days from the date of notification of giving to the licensee in this regard through a registered mail letter with acknowledgeable delivery, otherwise license shall be suspended.

The licensee, in the event of his final suspension or cancellation of his license, shall recover the warrantee stipulated in the preceding paragraph, or what remains thereof, after the lapse of one month from the date of suspension or cancellation of the license.

**Article (53)**

A newspaper licensee may assign the licensure to third party after approval from the Minister provided that the licensee should have fulfilled the prescribed conditions for licensure from the beginning and in such case, he may retrieve the warrantee amount he paid or balance thereof.

The new proprietor shall replace previous proprietor in all matters stipulated for in this Law once the aforesaid approval has been issued.

The Ministry shall be notified of any change in the person of the editor-in-chief or editor in charge – if any, at the time of newspaper issuance or changing of its capacity.

**Article (54)**

The name of a newspaper's licensee/proprietor – or editor-in-chief or editor in charge, if any, shall be shown conspicuously on the newspaper and the section he supervises and the name of printing press if the newspaper does not have its own printing press.

**Article (55)**

The editor-in-chief or editor in charge – if any – shall comply by showing the real name of writer or painter on the articles and images however signature may be using pseudonym provided that the newspaper editor-in-chief or editor in charge – if any – shall inform Directorate about the real name of pseudonym signatory whenever required to do so.

**Article (56)**

A newspaper supplement may be issued on the same day of issuance of the newspaper edition to which the supplement is annexed. It is a must in a newspaper supplement to carry the same name and data and to be subject to the same rules of the newspaper and to be sold together with the newspaper without any extra cost.

**Article (57)**

Three copies shall be handed over to Directorate from the newspaper or its supplement as soon as it has been circulated.

**Article (58)**

Upon permission from the Minister in agreement with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, recognized foreign diplomatic missions and consulates in the Kingdom of Bahrain may issue periodical publications and distribute them on the basis of reciprocation treatment and international organizations or their branches operating in the Kingdom may do the same.

Five copies from each and every publication shall be deposited with the Ministry and equal number of the publication shall be deposited with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before its distribution.

The Minister, upon agreement with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, may cancel the licensure whenever the foregoing paragraph has been violated or if the publication contains anything which could be considered as meddling into the Kingdom's internal affairs or criticism of the Kingdom's political, social, or economic policies or published anything prohibited under the provisions of this Law.

**Article (59)**

A newspaper licensure shall be cancelled in the following instances:

a. If the licensee requested its cancellation or if he has lost any of its terms and conditions.

b.  If the daily or non-daily newspaper has not been issued or halted its issuance without a cause which is acceptable to the Ministry for a period of six months, or otherwise for one year.

c. If the licensee's legal person has been liquidated or declared bankrupt or lost his legal capacity for any reason(s) whatsoever.

**Chapter Four**

**Response and Ratification**

**Article (60)**

The editor-in-chief or the editor in charge must publish based on the request from the rightful person in responding a correction from incidents or what have been published as statements in newspapers within three days from receiving the correction or on the first edition of the newspaper in all its publication any of which comes first. This must be in accordance with publishing schedule of the newspaper and should be in the same location using the same characters in which the article was published or the news item needing correction.

This correction must be free of charge and if more is requested by the person need the correction it should be priced according to the advertisement rate and the newspaper has the right to not publish the correction until the payment is made.

If the person who has the right for a correction is demised the right is transferred to his next of kin who can undertake this action in his place.

**Article (61)**

The applicant requesting the correction must send his request by registered mail in order to reach the editor-in-chief or the person in charge attached with the evidence and documents necessary.

**Article (62)**

The newspaper can decline from publishing the correction in the following cases:

a. If the request for a correction comes after three days after the date of publication.

b. If the newspaper had previously published a correction on its own.

c. If the response or correction was under an alias or from an unrelated body and that was written in a language other than the one used by the newspaper.

d. If the response content or correction was against the law or public order or unethical.

**Article (63)**

If the correction on the content according to Article (60) of this law and must informed via a registered letter related to the publication of the correction. Any side that declines to publish the correction maybe charged with a fine not less than one thousand dinars and not more than two thousand dinars.

The court has the right when passing down the verdict or through a fine can order the publication of the verdict or by paying compensation in one local daily newspaper or in the newspaper in which the article was published during a time frame that does not exceed fifteen days from the date of the verdict being issued. This must be done until the verdict is finalized.

**Article (64)**

The Criminal lawsuit related to the editor-in-chief or the person in charge if there is a crime in declining to publish can be dropped if the newspaper publishes the correction prior to the submission of the Criminal lawsuit against them.

**Chapter Five**

**Punishing the Journalist**

**Article (65)**

Without prejudice to the right of filing a criminal or civil lawsuit, for those concerned in submitting the complaint against the reported to the Journalists Association that has the authority to punish the journalist.

The Association will undertake reviewing the complaint to confirm the availability of enough proof on the validity of the lawsuit.

**Article (66)**

The Association will assign someone from its members to investigate the complaint against the journalist and which conclude within 15 days from the date for referring the complaint. If the member sees that the investigation required more time he must take permission from the Association .

If the complaint is found to be valid the accusation is made to the journalist is referred to the disciplinary committee chaired by a judge appointed through nomination by the Supreme Judicial Council and with the membership of three Association members nominated by the former. The function of this committee must be outlined by a decision passed by the Minister.

**Article (67)**

In the case of proving the accusation against journalist, the committee passes decision in with any of the following punishments:

a. Blaming.

b. Warning.

c. Prohibiting him from practising journalism for a period that does not exceed one month.

c. Prohibiting him from practising journalism for a period that does not exceed six months.

The committee must inform the Minister and the Journalists Association with its decision within a week from it being issued. The journalist has the right to appeal the decision within fifteen days from the date it issued at the High Civil Court.

**Chapter Six**

**Criminal Liability**

**Crimes that are Conducted by Publishing in the Newspapers**

**Article (68)**

Without prejudice to any harsher penalty stipulated in the Penal Code or any other law, punishing what is published that includes the following acts for time duration of not less than six months:

a. Violation against the country's official religion in its constituents and pillars with criticism.

b. Criticizing the king or holding him responsible for any of the government's actions.

c. Instigating the conducting of the crime of killing, mugging, arson or any crime against state security if no result is based on his instigation.

d. Instigation the overthrowing of regime or its change.

It there is a return during three months from the passing down of the verdict in the previous crime the punishment would be a jail sentence that does not exceed five years without violating the completion of the punishment of Article (75) from this Law.

**Article (69)**

Without prejudice to any harsher penalty stipulated in the Penal Code or any other law, punishing what is published that includes a fine that does not exceed two thousand dinars on publishing that:

a. Instigating some sect or sects of people or instigation that leads to disrupting public security or transmitting the spirit division in society and threatening national unity.

b. Violating public ethics or violating the respect of individuals or private lives.

c. Instigating against respecting the law or making seem correct that is considered a crime in within the framework of the law.

**Article (70)**

Without prejudice to any harsher penalty stipulated in the Penal Code or any other law, punishing what is stipulated in the proceeding Article that includes:

a. Imperfection against a King or Head of an Arab or Islamic state, or any other country that exchanges with the Kingdom of Bahrain diplomatic representation.

b. Disrespecting or humiliating for any legislative council or courts or any regulatory bodies.

c. Publishing false news or falsified or forged papers aimed towards disrupting public security and effecting public interests.

d. Publishing news about secret official communications, or statements of the defence force, the publication of which would cause harm to the public interest, or if the government had prohibited its publication. The penalty shall be doubled if the crime was committed in time of war or during a general or partial mobilization of the Bahrain Defense Force. Criminal procedures may not be taken in the cases stipulated in Clause (b) of this Article except at the request of the Chairman of the Authority or the relevant body.

**Article (71)**

Without prejudice to any harsher penalty stipulated in the Penal Code or any other law, punishing what is published that includes a fine that does not exceed one thousand dinars on publishing that:

a. What happened in the lawsuits that the court decided to hear in a closed session, or publishing what happened in the public sessions distorted and in bad faith.

b. What happened in the secret sessions of the legislative councils or their committees, or publishing what happened in the public sessions of them distorted and in bad faith.

c. Verdicts passed in rape crimes or crimes of incidents with the intention of instigating vice.

d. News of any crime the authority had decided to prohibit publishing.

e. News that affects the currency of the country or threatening the economic status of the country or the bankruptcy of businesspeople or commercial establishments without the permission of the competent court.

f. That which reveals imperfection of a foreign country's representative in the Kingdom of Bahrain due to work related to his position.

g. Any notification or announcement issued from a country or foreign body prior to the Ministry's approval.

**Article (72)**

Slandering in the work of a civil servant or an individual having a parliamentarian characteristic or assigned for a public duty, punishment of the editor-in-chief or the writer of the article in the Penal Code or if it is proven with supportive incidents.

**Article (73)**

Is not relieved of the criminal liability related to what it was stated in previous Article only because what was written or drawn or photographed or any other means of expression either it be transferred or translated via publication issued in the Kingdom of Bahrain or abroad, or it be rumours or stories conveyed by others.

**Article (74)**

Without prejudice to the criminal liability of the article writer, author, graphic artist, or other means of expression, the Editor-in-Chief shall be punished for what is published in the newspaper, even if its sections are many and each of them has an editor responsible for the section in which the publication took place.

Newspapers shall be jointly liable with their editors for compensation awarded to third parties as a result of publication therein.

**Article (75)**

If the editor-in-chief was sentenced or the editor in charge in the crime of publishing conducted through the newspaper the Court shall have the right to suspend the newspaper's work not more six months.

If the editor-in-chief or editor is sentenced a second time in a crime that had been mentioned in the second consecutive year of the issuance of the previous sentence the newspaper shall be suspended for a period of three months and does not exceed one year with the authority of invalidating the licensure. The suspension or cancellation of the licensure may not be enforced unless the judgement becomes final.

In all cases, it shall be decided to confiscate the published issue and to seize and destroy the originals.

**Chapter Seven**

**Penal Procedures and Trials Relating to Publishing Crimes**

**Article (76)**

Publishing crimes via newspapers and other publications are subjected to the law on penal trials, taking into account the provisions stipulated in the following Articles.

**Article (77)**

The High Civil Court has the authority to deal with the above-mentioned crimes and its verdicts are appealable before the Supreme Civil Court of Appeal.

**Article (78)**

The High Civil Court has the right – upon request from the Public Prosecution or the claimants- to order the temporary suspension of a publication in case it publishes what amounts to a crime. It has also the authority to order – on its own initiative- the suspension of the publication if it deems that its issuance endangers national security.

**Article (79)**

Criminal lawsuit involving publishing crimes stipulated in this Law cannot be lodged in cases of elapse of three months as per the day of publishing.

Compensation claims will be dropped if the claimant does not file a lawsuit within three months as per the date of publishing / or the day of issuance of final court verdict for the criminal lawsuit.

**Article (80)**

The Public Prosecution is the sole party legally vested to investigate, of its own accord, crimes which violate this Law – or upon request of the Ministry, the claimant, or any party stipulated in this Law, taking into account Paragraph (d) of Article (70) of this Law.

Investigation into such crimes is the responsibility of the Public Prosecution.

**Article (81)**

No journalist, a writer, an editor-in-chief, or a responsible editor – if existent - shall be interrogated unless the Minister and the Journalists Association are notified and in presence of a representative of a newspaper or the Association to be chosen by the concerned journalist himself.

No journalist shall be held in custody of involvement in press crimes unless the case concern a crime stipulated in Article (214) of the Penal Code.

**Article (82)**

In case of a final indictment of the case of press crime, the Court shall order the publication of the full text of the ruling or its summary in the following issue of the newspaper after the announcement of the verdict and in the same place in which the controversial article had been published and with the same font.

**Article (83)**

In case the publication involving the controversial article was issued abroad importers and distributors of the publication shall be held accountable and sanctioned as stipulated in this Law.  In case the writer or publisher is unknown, the publisher shall be punished as the initial perpetrator of the crime included in the publication.

**Article (84)**

The Ministry has the authority to warn the newspaper in case it publishes material that violates the provisions of this Law or the provisions of the Penal Code. The editor-in-chief or responsible editor shall publish the warning in the issue which follows the issuance of the warning.  Penalties stipulated in this Law shall still be imposed because of the material for which the warning was issued.

**Article (85)**

Without prejudice to the penalties stipulated in this Law or any other law, the newspaper can still be suspended for a period which does not exceed one year or have its license revoked if proven that it serves the interests of a foreign state or authority, or if proven that its policies contravene the national interest of the Kingdom of Bahrain, or if proven that it received, without authorization from the Ministry, from any foreign state or party, any aid, assistance, or benefit, of any form, for whatever reason, or under any pretext or name.

**Article (86)**

In case a newspaper – despite its suspension or the cancellation of its license – continue to be published, whether in its name or under another name, the licensed party, the editor-in-chief, the responsible editor, and the publisher – if existent - shall be punished by imprisonment for a maximum of six months, a fine of five thousand dinars, or both penalties.

**Article (87)**

All official notifications addressed to the newspaper within a reasonable period before its issuance shall be published in full text and the first issue.

**Article (88)**

Correspondents of foreign newspapers, magazines, news agencies, and radios shall not exercise their work in the Kingdom of Bahrain unless licensed by the Ministry for a renewable one-year period. Violators shall be fined a maximum one thousand dinars.

**Article (89)**

The Directorate has the authority to warn the correspondent of the foreign newspaper, magazine, or news agency in case the news he published involve exaggeration, fabrication, deception, or distortion. In case of a repeat, he will have his license revoked by order of the Minister.

**Part Four**

**General Provisions**

**Article (90)**

The provisions of this Law shall not apply on the state-owned press, newspapers, or any other publications issued by different ministries, directorates, institutions, and authorities affiliated with it.

The provisions of this Law shall not apply on school or academic press publications, nor shall they apply on books, bulletins, or newsletters which are issued or imported by the Government for schools, institutes, or colleges.

**Article (91)**

The fees levied on issuance or renewal of licensure mentioned in this shall be fixed by decision of the Minister and upon approval of the Council of Ministers, in addition to other fees stipulated in the Commercial Register Law.

**Article (92)**

The Minister shall issue a decision naming the Directorate employees allowed to access the locations specified in this Law, to ensure this Law is enforced and report any violations of its provisions. They have also the authority to check records and papers write reports and refer them to the Public Prosecution.

**Article (93)**

All individuals and parties subjected to this Law shall regulate their situation in conformity to its provisions-within a maximum ninety days from the day following it coming into force.

**Article (94)**

Legislative Decree No. (14) of 1979 regarding Printing and Publication and any text contravening the provisions of this Law shall be repealed.

**Article (95)**

The Minister shall issue the necessary decisions to implement the provisions of this Law.

**Article (96)**

The Ministers– each within his jurisdiction- shall implement this Law, and it shall come into force from the day following the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

**King of the Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa**

**Prime Minister**

**Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa**

**Minister of Information**

**Nabeel bin Yaqoub Al-Hamar**

**Issued at Riffa Palace:**

**On 17 Shaaban 1423 A.H.**

**Corresponding to 23 October 2002**