

Procedural Rules for the Prosecution and Trial of Journalists for Publishing Personal Data: A Comparative Analytical Study between French, Emirati, and Jordanian Laws

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Abstract

This study examines the procedural framework governing the criminalisation of journalists' publication of personal data under French law. It compares it with the corresponding legislative approaches adopted in Jordan and the United Arab Emirates. It aims to analyse how criminal procedural rules seek to strike a balance between freedom of the press and the protection of individuals' private life, with particular emphasis on the procedural guarantees regulating investigation, prosecution, and judicial oversight in such offences.

Employing a comparative analytical methodology, the study explores how each legal system defines the scope of journalistic liability, identifies the competent authorities responsible for initiating criminal proceedings, and determines the procedural safeguards afforded to both journalists and victims. The findings indicate that French law establishes a more coherent and comprehensive procedural framework, grounded in constitutional protections of privacy and freedom of expression, while ensuring adequate judicial supervision and proportionate sanctions. By contrast, the procedural rules in Jordan and the United Arab Emirates appear less harmonised and exhibit a degree of legislative insufficiency in certain respects.

The study concludes by recommending targeted legislative refinement to enhance procedural clarity, reinforce judicial balance, and ensure adequate protection of fundamental rights in the context of media-related crimes.

Keywords: law, inviolability of private life, journalist, press and publication, criminal code, freedom of opinion, procedural guarantees, comparative criminal law

1. Introduction

The right to private life constitutes a fundamental human right closely linked to human dignity and individual autonomy. Although its philosophical and moral foundations have long been acknowledged, the recognition of privacy as an independent and distinct legal right emerged primarily at the end of the nineteenth century. It gained increased legal attention during the early twentieth century.

At the international level, this right has been expressly affirmed by key human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. At the constitutional level, the right to privacy has also received explicit recognition, notably by the French Constitutional Council, as well as under Article 7(2) of the Jordanian Constitution and Article 26 of the Constitution of the United Arab Emirates. (Gourari & Alkrisheh, 2024).

The right to private life is closely associated with the social development of modern societies, as the need to protect this right expands alongside societal progress. Following the Industrial Revolution, the protection of individual privacy became increasingly significant, particularly amid the expansion of mass media accompanying industrial and technological advances. Freedom of the press has played a crucial role in facilitating the rapid dissemination of news and ideas and in shaping public opinion.

At the same time, technological developments in media tools have enhanced the speed and scope of information

circulation. Such dissemination, however, is not confined solely to matters of public interest but may extend to commentary and opinion that encroach upon the private sphere of individuals. This may include the publication of personal data, private communications, or images, thereby posing a risk of unjustified interference with individuals' honour and reputation, and with their constitutionally and legally protected right to privacy. This situation consequently gives rise to a conflict between the right to privacy and freedom of the press. The press has long been regarded as a fundamental instrument for conveying truth and holding power to account. Nevertheless, this role does not exempt journalistic activity from legal and procedural limitations, particularly where the protection of individuals' private lives is concerned. (Salem, 2005).

The digital transformation of journalistic activity has further intensified these challenges, as unlawful publication is no longer confined to traditional print media but increasingly occurs through electronic platforms and online media outlets. The expansion of digital publishing has widened the scope of criminal liability by facilitating the dissemination of personal data through corporate websites and online journalistic channels. In this context, scholarly analysis has emphasised the growing importance of criminal protection mechanisms governing digital publication, highlighting the need to ensure legal accountability where published content infringes upon privacy and personal data protection (Alkrisheh, 2022).

Nevertheless, the press must not overstep its essential mission: to maintain credibility and integrity in the dissemination of information. The press performs multiple functions, including informing, interpreting, guiding, and entertaining; however, its primary function remains the dissemination of news related to public affairs and the service of the public interest. In this regard, the role of the press has often been compared to that of the legislative authority, given its influence on public opinion and democratic accountability (Egypt, 1996, Article 1 of the Press Regulation Law No. 96 of 1996; Egypt, 1980, Article 1 of the Egyptian Press Authority Law).

Journalists bear a significant responsibility in addressing matters of public concern and contributing to the welfare of society as a whole. Nevertheless, journalistic activity may, in certain circumstances, give rise to practices that conflict with the public interest, particularly when private information is disclosed without sufficient legal or ethical justification. Such conduct may result in unjustified interference with individuals' private lives. Accordingly, the publication of personal data that infringes upon the sanctity of private life justifies the application of legal accountability mechanisms under criminal law. A journalist has a duty to respect individuals' private lives and is not permitted to violate them or use them as material for publication. Any violation of the sanctity of private life constitutes a criminal offence punishable by law. Such a violation may take the form of obtaining private conversations or photographs, or publishing personal or family data. This research has been undertaken to answer a central question regarding the procedural measures to be followed in criminalising a journalist's publication of personal data, particularly given that such conduct appears to infringe the right to privacy. This study is conducted under French law, in comparison with Emirati and Jordanian laws, to determine the extent to which the relevant legal provisions require amendment or supplementation in light of the comparative analysis.

The analytical method has been adopted the legal provisions governing the prosecution of a journalist for publishing personal data under the laws covered by this study. A comparative approach has also been findings, results and recommendations for this research. The study has been divided into three Topics: the first deals with the necessity of filing a complaint to initiate criminal proceedings; the second concerns the defendant in criminal proceedings relating to the offense of publishing personal data by a journalist; and the third addresses the court having jurisdiction to consider criminal proceedings related to this offense, followed by the conclusion, which presents the findings and recommendations.

2. The Extent to Which the Filing of a Complaint Is Required to Initiate Criminal

Proceedings Concerning the Offence of a Journalist's Publication of Personal Data

The French, Jordanian, and Emirati legislators share a common principle that restricts the Public Prosecution from initiating criminal proceedings in certain offences unless the victim submits a complaint. This reflects a legislative balance between protecting individual interests and maintaining public order. This principle appears in Article 10 of the UAE Criminal Procedure Law, Articles 284, 334, 347, 348 bis, and 364–365 of the Jordanian Penal Code, and Article 226-6 of the French Penal Code, which condition prosecution for offences such as defamation and violation of privacy upon a victim's complaint (United Arab Emirates, 1992; Jordan, 1960; France, 1992).

In certain offences, a complaint is the victim's declaration of their desire to initiate criminal proceedings and to bring charges against the perpetrator. The complaint is directed primarily at the specific offence (Al-Nuwait, 1998; Najm, 1991). It differs from a report submitted by a person to the competent public authorities to notify them of the occurrence of a crime or their observation of it, without the crime having been committed against them. (Alneyadi et al., 2022)

The complaint is submitted by the victim or their legal representative (guardian). If the victim is an adult, they may authorise another person to submit the complaint on their behalf. In cases involving multiple victims, it is sufficient for one of them to submit the complaint. It is not required that all victims agree on a single submission, as the complaint is not divisible. (Abdel Fattah, 2013) Suppose a journalist publishes photographs of a family without consent. In that case, any family member has the right to act as the complainant in an offence under the law protecting the sanctity of private life. In cases where there are multiple victims, it is sufficient for one of them to submit the complaint; each individual's right to complain is independent of the others, and the exercise of this right is not contingent upon others exercising theirs. Furthermore, the complainant must have legal capacity to litigate; if the victim is a minor, the complaint is submitted by the victim's legal guardian.

The French legislator considered the offence of violating the sanctity of private life to be a complaint-based crime. Article 226-6 of the Penal Code provides that the offence of violating private life cannot be prosecuted except upon a complaint from the victim. Furthermore, Article 48, paragraph 6, of the Press Law No. 29 of July 1881, as amended by Law No. 2007-297 of March 5, 2007, stipulates that offences affecting a person's reputation and honour through any of the means referred to in this law may not be subject to criminal prosecution except upon a complaint from the victim. The submission of a complaint by the victim or their legal representative is a necessary condition for initiating criminal proceedings for offences involving the violation of the sanctity of private life. If no complaint is submitted, the criminal prosecution is deemed to be affected by a defect of nullity related to public order.

The French legislator's requirement for a complaint in this offence stems from the view that the violation of the sanctity of private life constitutes an infringement of a personal right, unrelated to public order. Only the victim has an interest in pursuing the person committing the violation. Regarding the period during which the victim may file a complaint, the French legislator did not specify a time limit. In our view, the complaint may be filed at any time, provided that the criminal action has not become time-barred by the three-year statute of limitations, which runs from the date of the commission of the offence, since this offence is classified as a misdemeanour. As for the Jordanian legislator, it has been established that a criminal action in the offence of violation of private life may not be initiated except upon a complaint submitted by the injured party, requesting the taking of legal measures against the perpetrator. This is confirmed by the text of Article 348 of the Penal Code, which provides that:

"Anyone who violates the privacy of others by eavesdropping or by sight, by any means whatsoever, including sound recording, taking photographs, or using binoculars, shall be punished, upon the complaint of the injured party, with imprisonment for a period not exceeding three months. The penalty shall be doubled in case of repetition." (Najm, 1991; Joukhadar, 1992).

Suppose investigations are conducted before the submission of the complaint. In that case, they shall be deemed absolutely null and void, as this matter pertains to public order, and such nullity may be invoked at any stage of the criminal proceedings. (Mostafa, 1988; Ramadan, 2012)

This raises the question of what would happen if a journalist's act consisted of publishing information or rumours about individuals in newspapers? Would such an act require a complaint to initiate criminal proceedings? Upon examining the Jordanian Press and Publications Law, we find no provision requiring a complaint from the victim to initiate criminal proceedings, unlike the French legislation. Consequently, once the victim has submitted a complaint, they do not possess the right to withdraw it. Thus, offences such as defamation, insult, or libel against individuals, or the publication of information that infringes upon individuals' freedoms through the press, are not considered complaint-dependent crimes under the Jordanian Press and Publications Law. , under the Jordanian Penal Code, offences of defamation, insult, and libel are complaint-dependent, and the Public Prosecution may not take any action without a complaint from the victim. Therefore, it seems necessary to add a provision to the Press and Publications Law stating: "No public action may be instituted in crimes involving the publication of private data committed through newspapers or other means of publication except upon a complaint submitted by the victim to the Public Prosecution or to one of the judicial officers."

Regarding the period within which the victim may file a complaint, the Jordanian legislator has established a three-month time limit from the date the victim became aware of the crime. This contrasts with the French legislator, who did not stipulate a fixed time limit for filing a complaint and allowed it to be submitted at any time, provided that the criminal action has not become time-barred by prescription, which occurs after three years from the date of the offence, since this crime is classified as a misdemeanour. We support the approach adopted by the French law, which does not specify a period within which the right to file a complaint expires but instead defers to the general rules governing the statute of limitations for criminal actions. Thus, the complaint may be filed within three years from the date the crime was committed. Accordingly, we propose adopting the French approach and refraining from imposing a 3-month limitation period for filing the complaint.

As for the position of the UAE legislator, Article 17 of Federal Decree-Law No. 55 of 2023 on the Regulation of Media

provides that: “Without prejudice to any provision contained in any other law, any person engaged in media activity or profession must comply with media content standards as follows: (10) Respect for privacy rules and all matters related to individuals’ private lives.” Respecting privacy rules and matters their work. , upon examining the same law, no provision was found indicating the procedure for filing a criminal case or requiring a victim's complaint as a precondition for instituting criminal proceedings. Furthermore, Article 431 of Federal Decree-Law No. 31 of 2021 on the Crimes and Penalties Law stipulates that: “Whoever assaults the sanctity of the private or family life of individuals shall be punished by imprisonment and a fine if he commits any of the following acts in circumstances other than those authorised by law or without the consent of the victim:

1. Eavesdrops, records, or transmits by any device, of whatever type, conversations conducted in a private place or via telephone or any other device.
2. Captures or transmits, by any device, of whatever type, the image of a person in a private place.”

If any of the acts referred to in the two preceding cases are committed during a meeting and within the hearing or sight of those present, the consent of those persons shall be presumed. The same penalty shall apply to anyone who publishes, by any means of publicity, news, photographs, or comments concerning the secrets of individuals’ private or family lives, even if such information is accurate. A public official who commits any of the acts mentioned in this Article by virtue of his official authority shall be punished by imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years and a fine. In all cases, the court shall order the confiscation of the devices and other instruments used in the commission of the crime, as well as the erasure or destruction of any recordings obtained therefrom.

It is noteworthy that the UAE legislator classifies defamation and insult committed through newspapers or other means of publication as offences requiring a complaint. Article 100 of the Press and Publications Law provides that no public criminal action may be initiated in such cases except upon a complaint filed by the victim with the Public Prosecution or one of the competent judicial officers.

This raises the question of whether offences involving the publication of news, photographs, or information relating to an individual’s private life also require a complaint from the victim to initiate criminal proceedings. An examination of the relevant legal provisions indicates that the UAE legislator has limited the requirement to file a complaint exclusively to offences of defamation and insult. Accordingly, the Public Prosecution may not initiate criminal proceedings in such cases without a complaint from the victim.

By contrast, other offences that infringe upon the sanctity of private life—such as the publication of personal data, private comments, or family secrets—do not, under the current legislative framework, require the submission of a complaint for criminal proceedings to be initiated by the Public Prosecution. In light of this legislative gap, the study proposes the introduction of an explicit provision in the Press and Publications Law stipulating that no public criminal action shall be initiated in offences involving infringement of private life or the publication of personal data through newspapers or any other means of publication except upon a complaint filed by the victim with the Public Prosecution or a competent judicial officer.

Furthermore, it is proposed that no specific time limit be imposed for filing such a complaint, in line with the French legislative approach, which does not prescribe a fixed period for submitting a complaint, provided that the criminal action has not become time-barred by prescription.

3. The Respondent in the Criminal Case Concerning the Crime of a Journalist

Publishing Personal Data

The criminal action in this offence shall be brought against the journalist. The journalist is defined as a person who takes journalism as a profession, writes for public or private newspapers, and whose primary source of livelihood is derived from this profession, devoting the greater part of his activity to practising journalism. (Oxford University Press, 1989). He has also been defined as a writer for a newspaper. (Gaillard, 1992) , a journalist is a person who engages in journalistic work within a press institution in return for remuneration, makes that work their regular profession, and maintains with that institution an employment relationship that links the worker to the employer. Journalistic work refers to the search for news and editorial material, the collection of information, and the preparation of such material for publication through its appearance in a newspaper. This work may take an editorial or technical form, requiring the journalist at times to be constantly on the move, or at other times to remain behind a desk or in the printing press, without this altering the nature of his journalistic activity. (Boutros, 1974)

As for the position of the legislation regulating the press regarding the definition of a journalist, some have omitted it, while others have addressed the definition:

A. The Position of French Legislation: Article 671/2 of the French *Labour Code* defines a journalist as: “Anyone who practices the profession of journalism as their principal and regular occupation in one or more daily or periodical newspapers or in a news agency, and derives their main source of income from this work.” This definition clarifies that a journalist is not characterised by the nature of their activity or academic qualifications, but rather by their engagement in media work. It also indicates that journalism must be their principal occupation, not a secondary or supplementary one. Thus, Article 671/2 of the *Labour Code* requires two conditions to be met for a person to acquire the status of a journalist:

- The individual must practice the profession as their principal and regular occupation, devoting themselves entirely to gathering, collecting, selecting, and organising news, so that journalism constitutes their main work and sole profession.
- The individual must rely on the remuneration received from practising this profession, such that this income constitutes the sole or primary source of their livelihood.

Accordingly, engagement in and dedication to journalistic work determine the nature of the journalistic identity. The designation of “journalist” is not limited to those who publish a newspaper or write its articles and news; it also includes anyone who contributes their skills and expertise to a section of the journalistic industry, helping produce publications. Thus, the title of journalist applies to the newspaper owner, the head of the institution, the editor-in-chief, the reporting journalist, the correspondent, the photographer, the illustrator, and anyone involved in the publication and distribution of the newspaper.

B. The Position of Jordanian Law: The Jordanian legislator defined the journalist in Article 2 of the Jordanian Journalists’ Syndicate Law No. 15 of 1998 as “a member of the Syndicate registered in the journalists’ registry who has adopted journalism as his profession in accordance with the provisions of the law.” (Al-Ra’i, 2012) Similarly, the Jordanian Publications and Press Law No. 27 of 2007, in its Article 2, confirmed that a journalist is “a member of the Syndicate registered in its registry who has adopted journalism as his profession in accordance with the provisions of its law.” Article 5 of the Jordanian Journalists’ Syndicate Law specified the conditions required for registration in the journalists’ registry.

Article 9 of the Jordanian Journalists Syndicate Law permits the Council (Syndicate Council), with the Minister’s approval, to allow any journalist holding the nationality of an Arab or foreign country to practice the profession in the Kingdom at a location and for a duration determined by the Council, provided that a similar legal provision exists in the journalist’s home country.

Article 8 of the Jordanian Journalists Syndicate Law defines the following as journalistic work:

- a. Editor-in-Chief, Managing Editor, General Director of a Jordanian press institution, Responsible Editor, Editor, Photojournalist, Cartoonist, Reporter, or Correspondent within or outside the Kingdom.
- b. Editor, Correspondent, or Reporter for a legally accredited news agency in the Kingdom, or the authorised correspondent for a press publication.
- c. Editor-in-Chief, Editor, Correspondent, Reporter, Photojournalist, or Cartoonist in a ministry or any official media institution.
- d. University faculty member teaching Journalism or Media in a Jordanian university.
- e. Work of a registered journalist in any media-related position in a ministry or any official media department.

In conclusion, under Jordanian legislation, a journalist, like their French counterpart, is someone who has taken up journalism as a primary profession, a source of livelihood, and is registered with the Jordanian Journalists Syndicate. Not everyone who writes an article or delivers a speech qualifies as a journalist; it is the engagement and dedication to journalistic work that define a journalist’s identity. Furthermore, the Jordanian legal definition of a journalist is not limited to those who publish a newspaper or write its articles and news; it also encompasses anyone who contributes their skills and expertise to any section of the journalistic industry, including the production of publications. Accordingly, the title of journalist applies to the newspaper owner, the head of the institution, the editor-in-chief, the reporting journalist, the correspondent, the photographer, the cartoonist, and anyone involved in producing the newspaper and delivering it to readers.

Similarly, the Jordanian legislator, in Article 14 of the Jordanian Journalists Syndicate Law, distinguished between four categories of journalists: practising journalists, non-practising journalists, trainees, and those working for foreign media institutions who are registered with the Syndicate to practice their profession. The article stipulated that the Syndicate shall include the following registers:

- Practising journalists.
- Non-practising journalists.
- Trainee journalists.
- Non-Jordanian journalists who have been authorised to practice the profession under the provisions of this law.

C. The Position of the UAE Law: The UAE legislation does not provide an explicit and precise definition of a journalist as the Jordanian and French legislations do; instead, it only sets certain conditions for those wishing to practice the profession. Article 28 of the UAE Press and Publication Law (No. 15/1980) provides that a license for any editor or writer to work in any newspaper requires the following:

- a. To hold a higher educational qualification from a recognised college, institute, or university, or to have practised journalism regularly for no less than three years.
- b. To be registered with the authorities regulating journalistic work in their country, if applicable.
- c. To have full legal capacity.
- d. Not to have been previously convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude or dishonesty unless rehabilitation has been granted or a pardon issued by the competent authorities.
- e. Not to have been previously deported for being accused of a publishing-related crime.
- f. Not to be employed by a foreign state or entity at the same time as working in the newspaper.
- g. Not to hold a public office.

Citizens of the UAE are exempt from the requirements stipulated in points 1 and 2.

Furthermore, the UAE legislator provides, under Article 95 of the Press and Publications Law, that where a writer, illustrator, or any other person engaged in a form of expression commits an offence prescribed by this law, the editor-in-chief of the newspaper—or, in the absence of an editor-in-chief, the editor responsible for the relevant section—shall be deemed a principal perpetrator of the offence and shall be punished alongside the actual offender with the prescribed penalty.

Nevertheless, the editor-in-chief or the responsible section editor may be exempted from criminal liability if they establish that the publication occurred without their knowledge and that, from the outset of the investigation, they provided all available information and documents necessary to assist in identifying the person responsible for the publication. (Alkrisheh & Gourari, 2025)

Given the importance of the role played by journalists in serving society and the public interest, transmitting information accurately, insightfully, and promptly, and in a manner that serves the truth, and to ensure that the journalist performs this mission in the best possible way, it is recommended that the UAE legislator, in the law regulating journalistic work—as is stipulated in the French and Jordanian legislation—should require journalists to take an oath similar to that taken by doctors or lawyers before practicing their profession. This oath should include the journalist's commitment to report the truth with complete accuracy, avoid infringing on private and public freedoms protected by law, refrain from harming the reputation of the profession or disclosing its secrets, uphold the understanding that journalism is a sacred mission necessitating objectivity in news reporting and verification of facts, take responsibility for all writings, recognize that defamation, slander, and unfounded accusations are among the gravest professional errors, and always act with the awareness that their work serves the entire society.

4. The Competent Court to Hear the Criminal Case Related to a Journalist's

Publication of Personal Data

The general rule is that no distinction may be made between defendants as to the courts before which they are tried, without discrimination based on personal considerations. Anyone who commits a misdemeanour is tried before the Misdemeanour Court, and anyone who commits a felony is tried before the Felony Court, in application of the principle of equality before the law. (Al-Nweibet, 1998, p. 369).

As an exception to this, certain courts are designated for specific categories of defendants, such as juvenile, police, and military courts. The designation of courts for a particular category, such as juveniles or police officers, does not violate the principle of equality before the law, provided the designation is based on general, abstract criteria, such as the status of being a minor or a police officer. The competent court is not established to try a particular individual for purposes of favouritism or revenge. Regarding the crime of a journalist publishing private data, under French law and the Law of 1881, jurisdiction was granted to the Court of Assizes, the competent court to adjudicate crimes committed through the press. This court is composed of judges and a jury panel (Defferrard, 2009). The French legislator used to view the

protection of press freedom through a jury panel elected by the people, which decides on conviction or acquittal. , the French legislator, by virtue of Decision No. 11 of February 1999, amended the jurisdiction and indicated that if a crime is committed through the press, or if any component of the crime occurs within the territory of France, the criminal case shall be brought before a specialized chamber in the Court of First Instance, called the “Press Chamber.” (France, 1881; Tribunal judiciaire de Paris, 2020; Actu-Juridique, 2023).

Under the Jordanian Press and Publications Law, the legislator stipulated that the competent court shall be the Court of First Instance, a regular court. The regular courts in Jordan are divided into first-degree courts, such as the Magistrate’s Court and the Court of First Instance, and second-degree courts, such as the Court of Appeal, with the Court of Cassation at the top of this judicial hierarchy.

With the recent amendment to the Press and Publications Law, a specialised judicial chamber has been established within the Criminal Chamber of each Court of First Instance, called the “Press and Publications Cases Chamber.” This chamber is competent to adjudicate the following matters:

1. Crimes committed in violation of the provisions of this law.
2. Crimes committed through publications or licensed audiovisual media in violation of any other law.
 - a. The Press and Publications Chamber at the Amman Court of First Instance shall have exclusive jurisdiction over the following crimes:
 - Crimes referred to in paragraph (A) of this Article that occur in the Capital Governorate.
 - Crimes affecting internal and external state security, as stipulated in the applicable Penal Code, if committed through a publication or any licensed audiovisual media.
 - b. Press cases shall be treated as urgent.

Under the UAE Press and Publications Law, the legislator has not established a specialised court to adjudicate crimes committed by journalists or arising from journalistic publications, leaving such matters subject to the general rules of criminal jurisdiction based on the legal characterisation of the acts. Where the conduct constitutes a misdemeanour or an infraction, jurisdiction lies with the Part-time Criminal Court, which is composed of a single judge. In contrast, felony offences fall within the jurisdiction of the Full Criminal Court composed of three judges.

In the absence of an explicit legislative provision determining the competent court for offences involving violations of an individual’s private life through journalistic publication, it may be inferred that jurisdiction rests with the Partial Criminal Court. Nevertheless, the study proposes that the UAE legislator consider establishing a specialised judicial chamber for press-related cases, endowed with an expedited procedural status, similar to the approaches adopted in French and Jordanian legislation.

5. Conclusion

Through this study, we have reviewed the procedural rules for criminalising the publication of individuals’ private data by journalists under French legislation, compared them with those in Jordanian and UAE legislation, and examined the procedural rules governing the criminalisation of a journalist’s publication of private data. We have observed, through this study, a clear divergence between French law and both Jordanian and UAE law, which has positively impacted the results and recommendations. We have reached a set of findings and recommendations from this study, which can be summarised as follows:

6. Findings

1. The French legislator considered the crime of publishing private data to be a complaint-based offence, as an infringement on the privacy of private life constitutes an infringement of a personal right, which is not related to public order, and only the victim has an interest in pursuing the perpetrator.
2. The French legislator did not set a specific period within which the complaint must be filed; the complaint may be submitted at any time, provided that the criminal action has not lapsed due to the statute of limitations after three years from the date of the offence, considering this crime as a misdemeanour.
3. The French and Jordanian legislators defined a journalist as anyone who practices the profession of journalism in a primary and regular capacity in one or more daily or periodic newspapers or in a news agency, deriving their primary income from this work. In contrast, the UAE legislator did not define a journalist in the Press and Publication Law, but merely set specific conditions for those wishing to practice the profession. Furthermore, the UAE law did not require taking a professional oath.
4. The UAE legislator did not establish a specialised court to adjudicate crimes committed in violation of the Press and Publication Law. Meanwhile, the French legislator provides that if a crime is committed through the press, or if any part

of the crime occurs within French territory, the criminal case is brought before a specialised chamber within the Court of First Instance, called the "Press Chamber." Similarly, under the Jordanian Press and Publication Law, there is now a specialised judicial chamber within the criminal division of each Court of First Instance, called the "Press and Publication Cases Chamber," which has jurisdiction over offences committed in contravention of the Press and Publication Law.

Recommendations:

1. We recommend that the Jordanian and UAE legislators adopt the French approach by adding a provision to the Press and Publication Law stating: "No public prosecution shall be initiated for crimes of publishing private data through newspapers or other means of publication except upon a complaint filed by the victim to the Public Prosecution or one of the judicial officers."
2. We recommend that the Jordanian and UAE legislators adopt the French principle, which does not specify a time limit within which a complaint must be filed, leaving it to the general rules governing the statute of limitations for criminal actions, thereby allowing the complaint to be filed within three years from the date of the offence.
3. We propose that the UAE legislator establish a specific definition of a journalist in the Press and Publication Law, as provided in the French and Jordanian legislation. Furthermore, considering the role of the journalist in serving society and the public interest, and to ensure the journalist performs this duty properly, we recommend that the UAE legislator, as in the French and Jordanian laws, require the journalist to take an oath before practising the profession. This oath should include a commitment to report the truth accurately without bias, to avoid infringing upon the private and public freedoms guaranteed by law, to refrain from harming the reputation of the profession or disclosing its secrets, to recognize journalism as a sacred mission requiring objectivity in reporting and verification of information, to assume responsibility for all writings, and to consider defamation, slander, and unfounded accusations as among the gravest professional errors, always recognizing that their work serves society as a whole.
4. We propose that the UAE legislator establish a specialised chamber to adjudicate press-related cases, similar to the French and Jordanian legislations, and that this chamber be granted expedited procedural status.

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