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Middle East/North Africa - Oman

Unwanted information

Two journalists investigated over article about gays in Oman

5 September 2013

Reporters Without Borders condemns the judicial proceedings started today against **Samir Al-Zakwani**, the editor of the local English-language weekly *The Week*, in connection with article entitled "The Outsiders" about gays in Oman, which has been widely criticized in the sultanate, especially on social networks.

The article, whose anonymous author is also being investigated, was published in the newspaper's print edition and on its website on 29 August, and was [removed](#) from the website three days later.

Prominent critics of the article have included Shura Council member Tawfiq Al Lawati. Referring to gay sex, [he said](#): "Promoting such an act and projecting Oman as a safe haven for homosexuality is unacceptable."

The Omani Journalists Association has also ["strongly condemned"](#) the article and urged the information ministry to punish the newspaper.

Responding to the online outcry, Shura Council chairman Shaikh Khalid Bin Hilal Bin Naseer Al Maa'wali said the council would look into the issue.

In a [statement](#) released today by the official *Oman News Agency*, the information ministry said it "does not allow harming the fundamentals, principles, and values of the society or undermining its moral and religious values."

After removing the article from his website on 1 September, the publisher **Saleh Al-Zakwani** posted the following apology: "*The Week* places on record that there was never any intention to knowingly or unknowingly cause harm, offend, or hurt the sentiments of the people with our article last week, and we deeply and sincerely regret the article. *The Week* issues a public apology to our readers whose opinion we respect."

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Saleh Zakwani
Publisher
