

HuffPo Arabic Edition Goes Native

From the [Jihad Watch](#)):

The Huffington Post has caused outrage among those readers who considered it a liberal left website by launching an Arabic edition which has promptly criticised gays, atheists and the practice of taking selfies.

Days after going live, the site has already published a series of vitriolic outbursts including a piece by an Egyptian contributor on Saturday complaining that atheists were being allowed on Egyptian television and that the Government permitted “a press conference for gays in the heart of Cairo”.

In another article for the site, an Algerian columnist, authored what was intended as “an open letter to all the Islamic Ummah’s youth”, condemned the selfie as symptom of “the diseases and the viruses of the Western world”.

The blog, the author claimed, was designed as “call to stop adopting such sick behaviours that come to destroy our traditions and the basics of human cultural identity.”

In an interview last month, the website’s founder, Arianna Huffington, 65, had promised that *Huffington Post Arabi* would endorse the values of other editions of the news and blog site. The Cambridge-educated Huffington, who sold her site to Internet giant AOL for \$315m in 2011 and reportedly pocketed \$21m from the deal.

She suggested that the new Arabi service would be a platform for those speaking out in support of greater social and political freedom. “One of the reasons why we are going to be based in London and Istanbul is to make it

clear avoiding any kind of censorship and control is absolutely key to our coverage," she said. "We will support [contributors] in every way."

Unfortunately for Ms Huffington, the new edition's controversial output was translated by rival site BuzzFeed.

Huffington Post's executive international editor Nicholas Sabloff responded that the blog comments "do not reflect HuffPost's global editorial viewpoint". He claimed that Arabi would offer "diversity and balance".

The anti-gay blog was removed and replaced with the message. "This blog should not have been published as it contradicts the *Huffington Post's* editorial positions and guidelines which are based on encouraging positive dialogue and mutual respect. It has therefore been taken down."

One reader of the new site complained that "with this homophobic vitriolic post", the *Huffington Post* had "let its Arabic site disgrace its brand".

News of the reactionary comment attracted damaging coverage in gay site Pink News while the right-wing political blog Guido Fawkes mocked: "Judging by its initial output, it seems Arianna is struggling to control the Middle Eastern message."

The Greek-born media entrepreneur has an eclectic political past of her own. Once known as a conservative commentator, she switched to the left and has become a figurehead of liberal media in the United States. She founded *Huffington Post* in 2005 and Arabi is its 14th international edition.