



# **Contribution of the Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC)**

**Submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council  
for the Fourth Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review  
Sultanate of Oman**

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## Information about Oman Human Rights Commission

The Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) was established in 2008 under Royal Decree No. 124/2008 to be an independent national body for promoting a culture of human rights and working to protect and uphold these rights within the territory of the Sultanate of Oman. Affirming the importance and status of the Commission, Royal Decree No. 57/2022 was issued to reorganize the Commission and implement a new operating framework that elevates it to a level of full independence in carrying out its duties, considering it a national mechanism responsible for the protection, promotion, and monitoring of human rights at both the national and international levels.

The establishment of OHRC reflects the Sultanate of Oman's awareness of the importance of protecting and upholding human rights and confirms its declared acceptance of the relevant international agreements. OHRC is responsible for:

1. Developing a national human rights strategy and monitoring its implementation in coordination with all relevant human rights entities.
2. Monitoring the protection of human rights and freedoms in the Sultanate of Oman in accordance with the Basic Statute of the State, international covenants and conventions joined by the Sultanate of Oman, and the applicable laws.
3. Monitoring remarks by foreign governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations regarding human rights in the Sultanate of Oman, coordinating with the relevant authorities to verify and respond to them.
4. Providing advice to relevant authorities in the state on issues related to human rights and freedoms and contributing to the preparation of reports on these topics.
5. Monitoring any violations or abuses related to human rights in the Sultanate of Oman and helping to resolve them.
6. Conducting field visits to prisons, detention centres, hospitals, and labour camps to monitor human rights conditions there.
7. Receiving and studying complaints in the field of human rights, making recommendations to the relevant authorities, and following up.
8. Cooperating with international human rights mechanisms, preparing reports, and participating in regional and international meetings related to human rights.
9. Organizing conferences, training courses, and seminars related to human rights in coordination with relevant entities.
10. Representing the Sultanate of Oman in regional and international human rights conferences, events, and meetings.



## Introduction

- 1) This report is an independent contribution by Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC), reflecting the human rights situation as observed through the monitoring and follow-up on the implementation of the third cycle UPR recommendations of the Sultanate of Oman. OHRC has adopted a broad consultative methodology during monitoring, data collection, and report drafting.

## First: International Obligations

- 2) Despite the positive developments in implementing the conventions under Royal Decrees Nos. 44, 45, and 46/2020, the Commission recommends the government to intensify awareness-raising and education about these agreements among all segments of society and law enforcement authorities, enhance cooperation with UN human rights mechanisms, and submit national reports within the deadlines set, as per Recommendation No. 48.
- 3) Furthermore, OHRC urges the government to expedite accession to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in accordance with recommendations Nos. (1–6, 7–25 & 27).
- 4) Regarding recommendations (Nos. 44–47) OHRC commends the draft Law on Persons with Disabilities, to which the OHRC officially contributed through its observations. The Commission recommends to swift issuance of the new law. OHRC also recommends expediting the issuance of an updated Anti Human Trafficking Law that aligns with international standards, as well as issuing the executive regulations of the new Media Law.

## Second: International Cooperation and Strengthening the National Human Rights Institution

- 5) Regarding Recommendations (Nos. 43, 51) and Voluntary Pledge No. 1, OHRC monitored the government's efforts to implement the treaties joined in 2020 including forming inter-ministerial national committees to oversee treaty implementation, hold national consultations, prepare and submit reports to the treaty bodies. OHRC recommends expediting the submission of the national report on the Convention Against Torture, and enhance engagement with treaty bodies for agreements previously ratified by Oman.
- 6) Regarding Recommendations (Nos. 49, 52, 53, 55), Royal Decree No. 57/2022<sup>1</sup> that reorganized Oman Human Rights Commission was issued. It granted OHRC full independence to carry out its functions related to the promotion and protection of human rights. It also regulated member representation, defined core competencies, and added new responsibilities reflecting increased trust and independence. Following this, OHRC submitted a reaccreditation request to the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI). In May 2024, SCA granted OHRC 18 months to implement legal and procedural amendments based on the SCA's recommendations and observation related to the legal aspects of OHRC and some practices.
- 7) OHRC has developed an action plan to advocate for legal amendments and implement the recommendations, which included participating in training workshops organized by the Asia

<sup>1</sup> The Decree on the Reorganization of the Oman Human Rights Commission, issued by Royal Decree No. (57/2022)



Pacific Forum on accreditation process, holding national consultations with decision-makers, with the support from the APF and OHCHR to align fully with the Paris Principles. Accordingly, OHRC recommends speedy adoption of the proposed legal amendments in order to implement Oman's international pledge to strengthen its national human rights institution in alignment with SDG 16.

### Third: Civil and Political Rights

#### 1. Judicial Independence and the Right to Access Justice

- 8) Regarding Recommendations Nos. 77 and 79, OHRC has monitored the judicial enhancement that aimed to develop a participatory legislative system and promote an independent, specialized, and efficient judiciary, as well as the strategic plans that integrate technology into judicial operations, promote women's roles in the judiciary, and support the SDGs.
- 9) To strengthen the judicial system and its reliance on a human rights-based approach when addressing cases of various types, OHRC recommends the following:
  - Enhance awareness, education and training programs for judges and judicial assistants on applying international human rights treaties.
  - Accelerate the issuance of litigation-related laws as stipulated in Royal Decree 35/2022 to uphold the Basic Statute's principles regarding judiciary independency and swift resolution of cases and other principles.
  - Incorporate a specific law on alternative penalties capable of achieving the purposes of punishment, both deterrence and rehabilitation, including: electronic bracelets and an open prison system under specific regulations and certain guarantees, in addition to establishing a legal authority that allows replacing fines with the remaining penalties restricting freedom.
  - Enhance aftercare programs that ensure the follow-up and support of released convicts to guarantee their reintegration into society.
  - Conduct studies related to the effectiveness of rehabilitation and recovery programs for imprisoned drug addicts, examining their statistics and the rate of recidivism, and finding appropriate solutions.

#### 2. Freedom of Association

- 10) Regarding recommendations numbers (91, 92, 93, 95, 102, 104, 105, 108, 110, 111), OHRC notes that despite the increase in the number of civil society organizations in the state, they still face difficulties that limit their development and hinder their contribution to the decision-making. The Commission has monitored that the Council of Oman (Parliament) is currently reviewing the new draft law on civil associations to align it with the best standards and practices.
- 11) OHRC recommends expediting the issuance of the new law on civil associations, reorganizing the establishment of associations and the exercise of their activities independently and in accordance with human rights standards.

#### 3. Freedom of Opinion and Expression

- 12) In relation to recommendations numbers (86, 87, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95), OHRC has observed the positive steps taken by the government to enhance the laws and legislation related to the



freedom of expression.

- 13) With regard to recommendations numbers (98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 107) and voluntary pledge No. (7), OHRC commends the issuance of the new Media Law which strengthened the right to freedom of opinion and expression. The Commission emphasizes the importance of expediting the issuance of the executive regulations for the law in a manner consistent with the freedoms and rights of journalists stipulated in the Media Law.

#### Fourth: Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

##### 1. Labour Rights

- 14) Based on voluntary pledge No. (2) and recommendation numbers (125, 128-131, 222-227, 230, 231, 234-236, 241-251), OHRC monitored the issuance of the new Labour Law in 2023. The law includes rights and responsibilities of both workers and employers to ensure the principles of justice, equality, and non-discrimination in the private sector.
- 15) Regarding domestic workers, OHRC monitored that the government is working on issuing new legislation regulating the work of domestic workers, and the Commission has provided its observations and suggestions on the draft to best align with national legislations, conventions, and international standards.
- 16) In addition, OHRC has prepared a guide to the rights of the workforce in the private sector aimed at raising legal awareness among both workers and employers. To promote accessibility, the guide was issued in six languages: Arabic, English, Urdu, Hindi, Bangladeshi, and Filipino. The guide also includes a set of official communication channels that enable workers and employers to communicate with relevant authorities. New communication mechanisms on the OHRC's website were implemented to enhance accessibility, allowing complaints to be registered in writing in six languages, in addition to voice complaints being registered via a toll-free number in any language.
- 17) Nevertheless, OHRC recommends the following to enhance the right to work and Labour rights in practice:
- Establish an effective mechanism for inspecting recruitment offices for expatriate labour, verifying the contractual documents between the worker and the recruitment office on one side, and between the worker and the employer on the other, and ensuring that the worker is informed of and understands the contract and its terms, in order to reduce violations by some recruitment offices of the laws and regulations in force in the state as well as the applicable international frameworks and standards.
  - Considering the proposal for an insurance system for recruited domestic workers in cases where they do not complete the duration of their employment contract, so that the insurance covers the payment of amounts due to the recruitment office and the employer.
  - Intensifying awareness and education campaigns for foreign workers about national protection mechanisms to ensure their knowledge of the procedures that enable them to claim their rights and protect them from abuse and discrimination.
  - Increasing awareness programs targeting the society about the rights and responsibilities stipulated in employment contracts.

##### 2. Combating Trafficking in Persons

- 18) Regarding recommendations (113 - 123), OHRC observed that the new Labour Law, issued under Royal Decree No. (53/2023), has positively contributed to efforts aimed at reducing the



victimization of workers by human trafficking. The law provides enhanced protection for workers and imposes deterrent penalties on offenders. Furthermore, the government is amending and reviewing the Anti-Human Trafficking Law to strengthen legal protections for victims, thereby achieving general deterrence and curbing trafficking-related crimes. The Commission also observed the issuance of the regulatory bylaws for temporary care shelters, pursuant to Ministerial Decision No. (392/2024) issued by the Ministry of Social Development. These bylaws govern the operation of the shelters and explicitly include victims of human trafficking among the beneficiary groups, detailing all procedures and services provided. Additionally, the Commission observed the establishment of a dedicated facility by the competent authorities for the reception and care of male victims of human trafficking.

- 19) Nevertheless, the Commission recommends that the government intensify awareness and education programs, including targeted publications and printed materials, regarding the acts and forms of exploitation that migrant workers may be subjected to, and acts that could constitute human trafficking offenses. The Commission further recommends raising awareness about the various national mechanisms and channels available for reporting violations, strengthening the national referral system, and training relevant personnel to ensure prompt response, referral, and protection.
- 20) OHRC also recommends that the government intensify training programs for law enforcement authorities on the established mechanisms for victim identification, protection, investigation, and prosecution. In addition, the Commission calls for enhancing public awareness among judges regarding human trafficking crimes, particularly in areas outside the capital city, and for strengthening oversight of labour recruitment offices.

### **3. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

- 21) Based on Voluntary pledge No. (3) and recommendations (69, 70, 71), OHRC has observed an improvement in the indicators related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those connected to human rights. The overall SDG index in the Sultanate of Oman has reached approximately 82%.
- 22) Nonetheless, The Oman Human Rights Commission recommends that the government continue its efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those where performance remains at a moderate level, such as issues related to gender equality and climate change.

## **Fifth: Rights of Vulnerable Groups**

### **1. Women's Rights:**

#### **Participation in Political Life**

- 23) Based on Voluntary Pledge No. (4) regarding the promotion of a culture of political participation, and in reference to Recommendations No. (153, 159, 165, 180, 181, 183, 187, 190, 191, 193) concerning women's participation in political life, OHRC observed that national legislations do not discriminate between men and women in the right to run for office and vote, or to hold political, public, and judicial positions. However, the recent elections for the Tenth Term of the Shura Council (consultative council) (2023–2027) resulted in no female representation. It is also worth noting that women's representation during the Ninth Term of the Shura Council



(2019–2023) was also weak, with only two women elected out of a total of 86 members. According to statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information, the number of female candidates for the Ninth Term elections was 40, compared to 597 male candidates. For the Tenth Term, the number of female candidates was 32, compared to 811 male candidates. These figures reveal a significant disparity between the number of male and female candidates, which has an impact on the final election outcomes. This disparity indicates a low rate of participation by Omani women in running for membership in the Shura Council, despite the legal guarantees of their right to candidacy. It also suggests the possible existence of other factors and considerations that warrant further research and study.

- 24) Accordingly, the Commission recommends the need to conduct studies and surveys to understand the reasons behind women's reluctance to run for elections compared to men, and to intensify awareness, training, and empowerment programs that encourage women to run for parliament and fully perform their political role. OHRC also recommends the adoption of temporary measures (such as allocating a quota of seats for women) to accelerate gender parity in representation within the Shura Council, in line with Articles (3) and (4) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), in order to ensure the promotion of women's right to political and public life on an equal basis with men.

### **The Right of Women to Confer Nationality to Their Children**

- 25) With regard to Recommendations No. (156, 162, 165, 185) concerning continued efforts to promote women's rights, OHRC monitored that the state has updated the Omani Nationality Law issued by Royal Decree No. (17/2025), which explicitly allows the Omani woman married to a non-Omani to confer Omani nationality to her husband, subject to specific conditions. The law also permits Omani women married to non-Omanis to confer their nationality to their children under certain conditions. In practice, many children of Omani women married to non-Omanis have indeed been granted Omani nationality in accordance with the legal requirements. Nevertheless, OHRC recommends establishing a mechanism to grant “permanent” residency to the non-Omani husband and to the children who have reached the age of 18, in order to ensure continued family stability in accordance with the Basic Statute of the State.

## **2. Child Rights:**

- 26) With regard to Recommendations No. (177, 178, 179, 203, 204, 205, 206), OHRC has observed the government's design and implementation of a comprehensive social protection fund programs that address the needs of children, including children with disabilities and vulnerable groups. The fund includes a childhood benefit that provides monthly financial support from birth until the age of 18.
- 27) OHRC has noted the government's efforts to update the National Child Protection Manual to support coordination processes and referral mechanisms aimed at effectively preventing and responding to cases of child abuse and neglect. In this regard, the Commission recommends the following:
- Regarding child marriage, Article (10) of the Personal Status Law issued under Royal Decree No. (32/1997) states that: (No one under the age of eighteen shall be married except with the permission of a judge and after verifying the best interests.) Accordingly,



OHRC recommends that the government reconsiders article (10) in the Personal Status Law to fully prohibit and criminalize child marriage, in line with human rights principles and the protection of girls' rights.

- OHRC recommends conducting a study on the reality of verbal, physical, and cyberbullying in the society, and proposes the development of national anti-bullying strategies. These should include public awareness programs about the risks of bullying, methodologies to combat and address it, and programs aimed at promoting positive parenting and creating safe environments for children. In addition, the Commission emphasizes the need to train teachers and social workers in schools on the dangers of bullying, how to identify and address cases, and to provide schools with psychological specialists to offer necessary treatment when needed.

28) Regarding Recommendations (151, 206, 145, 147, 148), the Commission notes good progress in basic educational services for children at all stages, as well as the inclusion of preschool education as a national priority. Accordingly, the Commission recommends continuing to support the expansion of early childhood education by conducting a feasibility study to establish integrated centers for early childhood development that provide comprehensive services in the fields of education, health, nutrition, and protection, aimed at developing children's cognitive skills.

### **3. Rights of Persons with Disabilities:**

29) Regarding Voluntary Pledge No. (7) and Recommendations No. (209, 210, 211, 213, 219, 220), OHRC recommends accelerating the issuance of the new Law on the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities to better align with the relevant international convention and related national laws.

30) Regarding Recommendations No. (216, 221), the government still faces challenges in ensuring quality education for persons with disabilities. OHRC recommends that the government conduct comprehensive surveys and evaluations on the adequacy and quality of educational services provided to persons with disabilities through inclusive programs and special education schools, as well as the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs offered at rehabilitation centres, especially concerning the preparation of children with disabilities for school enrolment and optimal social integration.

31) Concerning persons with autism, OHRC observed the Royal Orders issued in April 2025 approving an allocation of 7 million Omani riyals to establish the "Autism Spectrum Disorder Care and Rehabilitation Centre" in Muscat, as well as orders to study the needs of other governorates for such centres.

32) The Commission highlights the necessity of raising awareness about the importance of community support for persons with autism to ensure equal opportunities and full participation in society. OHRC recommends developing mechanisms to ensure the provision of integrated and effective services, and encourage innovation in designing new programs and services that enhance the effective exercise of the rights of persons with autism in the society.