



© martin-dms/E+ via Getty Images

Country matrix 2025

Oman

The country matrix adopts and adheres to the coding standards adopted in the "Gender Justice and the Law" initiative.

General framework of the State

Has the State ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)? Does it have any reservations on the implementation of the provisions of the Convention?

The Sultanate of Oman joined the Convention in 2006 but entered a general reservation to the clauses which are not consistent with Islamic Shariah. Oman also entered reservations to article 9 (2) (nationality), article 16 (1) (a)–(c) and (f) (family life), and article 29 (1) (arbitration).

Does the Constitution refer to gender equality and non-discrimination?

Article 21 of the Basic Law of Oman provides that all citizens are equal before the law and share the same public rights and duties. There shall be no discrimination between them including on the basis of sex.

If customary law is a valid source of law under the Constitution, is it valid if it violates constitutional provisions on gender equality or non-discrimination?

Customary law is not a source of law under the Omani Basic Law.

If personal law is a valid source of law under the Constitution, is it valid if it violates constitutional provisions on equality or non-discrimination?

Article 2 of the Omani Basic Law provides that Islamic Shariah law is the basis for legislation. Neither legislation nor case law addresses the validity of the Personal Status Law if it conflicts with constitutional provisions on equality.

Do national laws clearly define the mandate and jurisdiction of informal justice systems, where they exist, in terms of their enforcement of formal and informal laws, both of which must conform to international standards, including non-discrimination?

The law does not define the mandate and jurisdiction of informal justice systems.

Is there a law on discrimination that prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination against women?

There is no specific law on direct and indirect discrimination against women.

Is there a national action plan or policy to address violence against women and girls that is overseen by a national mechanism with the mandate to monitor and review implementation?

Oman has not developed a national action plan or policy regarding violence against women and girls.

Are there budgetary commitments provided for by government entities for

the implementation of legislation addressing violence against women and girls by allocating a specific budget, funding and/or incentives to support non-governmental organizations for activities to address violence against women and girls?

There are no budgetary commitments for the implementation of legislation addressing violence against women and girls.

Is there a national strategy or action plan currently in place containing measures to ensure full and equal access to the entire range of sexual and reproductive health information, services and supplies, with budgetary, human and administrative resources allocated for its implementation?

Oman's Health Vision 2050 covers some but not all aspects of sexual and reproductive health services, including maternal health care. There are no specific restrictions in terms of marital status or requirement for third-party permission to access some services.

Is legal aid mandated or guaranteed in criminal matters?

Article 28 of the Basic Law provides that the right to legal aid in criminal matters is established by the Omani Primary Law and the Law on the Legal Profession.

Is legal aid mandated or guaranteed in civil/family matters?

Article 28 of the Basic Law provides that the right to legal aid in criminal matters is

established by the Omani Primary Law and the Law on the Legal Profession.

Are there laws that explicitly require the production and/or

dissemination of gender statistics?

There is no law in Oman that requires the production or dissemination of gender statistics.

Legal capacity and public life

Do women and men have equal rights to apply for passports?

The Code of Civil Procedure adopts gender-neutral language to define the passport application requirements for Omani citizens such that women and men can apply equally for passports.

Do women and men have equal rights to obtain an identity card?

Pursuant to Royal Decree 59/2021, "Every Omani over 10 years old must obtain an identity card whereas those aged 10 or under may obtain an identity card with the consent of their legal guardian. Foreigners residing in the Sultanate of Oman must obtain a residence card. The implementing regulation shall define the form of the card, the information it must contain, the term of its validity, the application procedures and the documents required for an application".

Ministerial Decision 235/2021 clarified that an identity card must be issued for both sexes after the age of 10.

In civil law matters and procedures, are women required to obtain

permission from judicial or administrative authorities, spouses and other family members prior to initiating legal action?

Women are not required to obtain permission from judicial or administrative authorities, spouses and other family members prior to initiating legal action. The Omani Primary Law asserts that all citizens are equal before the law and that laws governing civil, commercial and criminal procedures do not include any gender restrictions.

In personal/family law matters, are women required to obtain permission from judicial or administrative authorities, spouses and other family members prior to initiating legal action?

Women cannot themselves initiate legal proceedings for certain matters related to the personal status/family law. The father has priority in reporting and registering the birth of a newborn child under the Civil Code but women have equal rights in reporting deaths, marriage or divorce. Usually, women have to obtain permission from their legal guardian to get married.

Does a woman's testimony carry the same evidentiary weight in court as a man's?

In most cases, a woman's testimony in court carries the same evidentiary weight as a man's but there are still exceptions in some family matters. Article 28 of the Personal Status Law requires the presence of two adult male witnesses for the conclusion of a marriage contract.

Can a woman enter into a contract the same way as a man?

The Civil Transactions Law adopts gender-neutral language to define the legal eligibility to sign contracts or implement any civil transaction and only requires that the age of legal eligibility of 18 years has been reached.

There are no restrictions specifically for women.

Do women and men have equal rights to own, access, and control or use of property?

There is a legislative ownership system which asserts that men and women have equal rights to own, access, control and use property. Article 14 of the Omani

Basic Law asserts that the right to ownership is private, and the Civil Transactions Law uses gender-neutral language to assert this right. Article 1 of the Law on Land Ownership asserts the right of women and men equally to own, access, control and use land.

Does the law allow for women to register businesses the same way as men?

The Commercial Law adopts gender-neutral language in defining the eligibility and capacity to conduct commercial

activities, enter into commercial contracts and become a businessperson.

Do women and men enjoy equal rights and access to hold public and political office (legislature, executive, judiciary)?

Women and men enjoy equal rights to hold public office in the judiciary and senior executive offices such as ministers and members of parliament. However, article 5 of the Omani Primary Law explicitly excludes women from holding the office of Head of State.

Are there quotas for women (reserved seats) in the national parliament?

There are no legal provisions for gender-based quotas for seats or for the list of candidates for the Shura Council.

Is there a law that explicitly prohibits violence against women in politics and elections?

There is no law that prohibits any form of violence against women specifically in politics and elections.

Protection from violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres

Is there legislation on domestic violence that includes all forms of physical violence?

No law on protection from domestic violence exists that includes all forms of physical violence.

Is there legislation on domestic violence that includes all forms of sexual violence?

No law on protection from domestic violence exists that includes all forms of sexual violence.

Is there legislation on domestic violence that includes all forms of psychological/emotional violence?

No law on protection from domestic violence exists that includes all forms of psychological/emotional violence.

Is there legislation on domestic violence that includes all forms of financial/economic violence?

No law on protection from domestic violence exists that includes all forms of financial/economic violence.

Are there criminal and civil protection orders available for victims of violence for which a breach (constitutes a criminal offence) has legal consequences?

There are no legal provisions for protection orders for victims of violence.

Does the law allow mitigating circumstances for femicide?

There is no specific clause in the Penal Code allowing mitigating circumstances for perpetrators of "honour" crimes. The article which did allow reduced punishments was repealed by Royal Decree 72/2001.

Does the law criminalize female genital mutilation (FGM) or cutting if practised?

According to the Child Law, FGM by any method is considered harmful to a child's health and any offender shall be punished by a prison sentence.

Does the law criminalize adultery?

Article 259 of the Penal Code criminalizes adultery.

Do laws that criminalize rape act based on absence of consent without requiring proof of the use of physical force or penetration?

Pursuant to article 263 of the Penal Code, sexual intercourse shall be deemed complete upon penetration of the male organ, however slight, into the genital or anal opening whether or not accompanied by the ejaculation of semen.

Does the law criminalize marital rape?

There are no legal provisions criminalizing marital rape.

Does the law include exoneration if the offender marries his victim?

No law exists in Oman that exonerates the rapist if he marries his victim.

Is sexual harassment defined in any legislation?

Despite the fact that sexual harassment is not defined in Omani law, inappropriate acts or gestures against women and girls are criminalized under article 266 of the Penal Code.

Is there a provision in the law that criminalizes cyberviolence against women and girls?

There is no provision in the law that specifically targets cyberviolence against women and girls, but there are provisions that can be applied to both men and women. The

Cyber Crime Law punishes various acts which constitute a violation, defamation and infringement of privacy and which expose the safety of the individual, male or female, to danger over the Internet.

Are sex work and prostitution criminalized?

Prostitution is prohibited under articles 255 and 256 of the Penal Code.

Are there comprehensive provisions (punitive, protective and preventive) on human trafficking in any law?

In 2008, Oman passed a comprehensive law combating human trafficking which included punitive provisions.

Employment and economic benefits

Does the law mandate non-discrimination against women in employment?

Under the previous Labour Law, all provisions governing the employment of workers applied equally to women without any distinction in the same workplace. The current law, issued by Royal Decree No. 53/2023, does not explicitly refer to a prohibition of discrimination. However, it defines a “worker” as every natural person who works for remuneration under the authority and supervision of an employer. Article 12 provides that termination by the employer of the employment contract is deemed an arbitrary dismissal of the worker if the termination is

based on any of the following reasons: sex, origin, colour, language, religion, creed or social status, or disability, pregnancy, childbirth or nursing in the case of a female worker.

Does the law mandate equal pay for the same work as men?

The previous law required equal pay for women and men performing the same work. The law issued by Royal Decree No. 53/2023 does not address this issue directly. However, Article 23 clearly stipulates that the employer shall treat all workers equally in the event that the nature and conditions of work are the same.

Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value?

Article (1) in Chapter One of the Labour Law, issued by Royal Decree No. 53/2023, defines the basic wage as the monetary compensation agreed upon between the worker and the employer in the employment contract, in addition to the periodic allowance. The same article defines the gross wage as the basic wage plus all allowances and benefits granted to the worker in return for their work.

Article (23) of the Labour Law stipulates that the employer must treat all workers equally in the event that the nature and

conditions of work are the same. However, the law does not contain any provision on equal pay for work of equal value.

Does the law allow women to do the same jobs as men?

Pursuant to Article 75 of Royal Decree No. 53/2023 issuing the Labour Law, the employment of women in jobs that are dangerous, difficult or harmful to health, or in other jobs shall be determined by a decision issued by the minister.

Does the law allow women to work the same night hours as men?

Pursuant to Article 75 of Royal Decree No. 53/2023 issuing the Labour Law, the employment of women during the night working hours shall be in the cases, jobs and occasions determined by a decision issued by the minister.

Do national labour and civil service-related laws (labour codes, civil retirement acts, etc.) discriminate between men and women in terms of retirement age?

Article 75 of the Social Protection Law issued by Royal Decree No. 52/2023 permits the insured person to request early retirement that is not subject to reduction percentages in the following cases: when the insured man has reached old age; when the insured woman has reached an age that is less than old age by 5 (five) years; when the insured person working in dangerous and difficult work has reached an age that is less than the old age by 5 (five) years for men and by 10 (ten) years for women.

Do national labour and civil service-related laws grant men and women equal rights to pass on their pensions to their spouses?

Under Article 111 of the Social Protection Law issued by Royal Decree No. 52/2023, if the insured person or pensioner dies, the following beneficiaries are entitled to shares of the death pension: sons and daughters, including foster children, provided that the fostering period prior to death is not less than six (6) months, the widower and the widow. Article 114 states that sons and daughters shall simultaneously receive the two pensions due to their parents, and the widow or widower shall simultaneously receive the pension due to them and the pension due to their deceased spouse.

Does the law prohibit dismissal during pregnancy and maternity leave?

Pursuant to Article 12 of Royal Decree No. 53/2023 issuing the Labour Law, the termination by the employer of the employment contract is deemed an arbitrary dismissal of the worker if the termination is based on several reasons, including pregnancy, childbirth or nursing in the case of a female worker.

Does the law provide for maternity leave that meets the International Labour Organization (ILO) standard of 14 weeks?

Under paragraph 10 of Article 84 of Royal Decree No. 53/2023 issuing the Labour Law, a female worker is entitled to ninety-eight (98) days of maternity leave, covering both the prenatal and postnatal periods.

Does the law provide for paid paternity leave available to fathers?

Both the Labour Law (Article 84) and the Social Protection Law (Article 129) grant fathers seven (7) days of paid paternity leave.

Does the State provide or subsidize childcare facilities?

There is not publicly provided or subsidized childcare in either the public or private sectors.

Does legislation tackle sexual harassment in the workplace?

The Labour Law does not include a specific provision prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace. However, it is possible to rely on the provisions of article 266 of the Penal Code, which criminalizes inappropriate acts committed against women and can be applied in various contexts.

Reference may also be made to Article 40 of the Labour Law issued by Royal Decree No. 53/2023, which authorizes the employer to dismiss a worker without prior notice and without an end-of-service gratuity if the worker commits an act violating public morals. Article 41 provides that a worker may abandon employment without adhering to the notice period while retaining all legal rights if the employer or their representative commits an act violating public morals against the worker.

Are there provisions allowing for civil claims/remedies for sexual harassment in the workplace?

Article 41 of the Labour Law asserts a worker's right to leave their employment before the end of their contract without prejudice to any of their rights and after having notified their employer in several situations, including if their employer or someone representing them commits an immoral act against the worker or if the worker is assaulted by their employer or the employer's representative.

It is also possible to rely on the Penal Code in civil compensation claims which a woman may submit within her criminal case.

Does the Labour Law provide protection for domestic workers?

According to the Regulation on Domestic Workers issued by Ministerial Decision No. 574/2025, several fundamental rights are guaranteed, including

the prohibition of forced labour, violence and harassment; the prohibition of confiscating personal documents; and the right to adequate accommodation, healthcare, transportation, defined working hours, rest periods and leave. The regulation also requires timely payment and documentation of wages, grants end-of-service benefits, and obliges settlement of dues upon contract termination. It further grants the worker the right to terminate the contract in case of rights violations. Protection mechanisms are strengthened through authorizing inspectors to follow up on complaints, exempting domestic workers from judicial fees and imposing penalties on violators.

Is there a public entity that can receive complaints on gender discrimination in employment?

Ministerial Decision No. 617/2024, issued by the Ministry of Labour, establishes new regulations for complaints and grievances under the Labour Law. Article 2 provides that a worker—male or female—has the right to submit a complaint or grievance directly to the competent administrative department within the Ministry of Labour if internal remedies are not granted by the employer or direct supervisor. This right does not preclude the worker from seeking judicial recourse to claim compensation or civil redress where material or moral harm has occurred. However, there remains no public body dedicated to receiving complaints related to gender-based discrimination in employment.

Family matters (personal status)

Is 18 the minimum age at marriage, with no legal exceptions, for both women and men?

The minimum age for marriage is 18 for men and women. The judge can agree to the marriage of an individual under this age after investigating the benefit of the marriage.

Is marriage under the legal age void or voidable?

The Personal Status Law provides that the legal age for marriage is 18 but it does not include any provisions on

voiding the marriage contract if a party is underage.

Do women and men have equal rights to enter marriage (i.e. consent) and initiate divorce?

The Personal Status Law requires a husband to support his wife and in return the wife owes submission to her husband (nafaqaa). The husband has the right to divorce. The wife has the right to divorce for specific reasons. She can also apply to receive a khula divorce without reasons if she forfeits her financial rights from nafaqaa.

Does the law prohibit polygamy?

The Personal Status Law permits polygamy.

Do women and men have equal rights to be legal guardian of their children during and after marriage?

Fathers are the sole guardians of their children.

Does the law grant women and men equal custody rights of their children?

After divorce or separation, the mother retains custody of her

sons until they reach the age of 7 and of her daughters until they reach the age of majority.

Do women and men have equal rights to choose where to live?

There are general legal provisions that assert equality before the law between women and men, including choosing where to live (place of residence). Article 18 of the Omani Primary Law confirms freedom of movement and freedom to specify their place of residence for every individual. However, according to article 57 of the Personal Status Law, a married woman must move to the place of the marital home with her husband unless there is a requirement to do otherwise or if the intent of this move is to oppress her. A married woman loses her right to (financial) maintenance if she refuses to move to the marital home without a justified reason.

Do women and men have equal rights to choose a profession?

Women and men have equal rights to choose a profession. There are no restrictions on the types of jobs women can do.

Do women and men have equal rights to own, access, and control or use marital property including upon divorce?

Islamic Shariah law is adopted as the principle for separating property between spouses. Each spouse can own, access, and control or use their own possessions independently from the other during and after marriage.

Where rights to inheritance are enshrined by law, do women and men have equal rights?

The Personal Status Law defines rules on inheritance which follow the principles of Islamic Shariah law. A woman has the right to inheritance but in many cases she receives less than the man, and girls are entitled to half the entitlement of boys.

Are there specialized civil courts or civil court processes for family law matters that provide for the equal rights of men and women?

Pursuant to the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law, the primary courts are responsible for hearing personal status/family disputes. However, there is no provision that guarantees equal rights for men and women.

Do women have equal rights as men to pass their nationality to children?

Women do not have the rights that men enjoy to pass on their nationality to children.

Do women have equal rights as men to pass their nationality to a foreign spouse?

Women do not have the rights that men enjoy to pass on their nationality to their foreign spouse.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

Do law(s) or regulation(s) exist that guarantee access to maternal health care for all women and girls, irrespective of marital status and without third-party authorization?

The Law on Children guarantees access to maternal health care. Women have the right to use all health services,

especially those available to mothers, without obtaining consent from the father or husband. A woman is not required to obtain consent for any surgical interventions or other interventions relating to her.

Do law(s) or regulation(s) exist that guarantee access to contraceptive services for all women and adolescent girls, irrespective of marital status and without third-party authorization?

Contraceptive methods are included within the national health programme. Women are entitled to use all health services

without obtaining consent from their legal guardian, whether he is their father or husband. A woman does not need to obtain consent for any surgical interventions or other interventions relating to her. The husband's consent is only required in relation to genital cutting. However, contraceptive services are available to married or unmarried women.

Do law(s) or regulation(s) exist that guarantee access to emergency contraception for all women and adolescent girls, irrespective of marital status and without third-party authorization?

Emergency contraceptive services are provided within the birth control programme within primary health-care services. They have been included for emergencies within the national health workers' manual. They are available without restrictions.

Is induced abortion legal at least when the life or health of the pregnant woman is at risk and in cases of rape, incest or severe fetal impairment, and is abortion decriminalized in any case for both the pregnant woman as well as health-care providers performing it (when consent is fully given)?

Abortion is illegal except if it is medically necessary as decided by a specialist medical committee. Permission must be obtained from the woman to carry out the abortion. Abortion is not permitted in the event of rape or incest.

Irrespective of the legal status of abortion, do law(s) or regulation(s) exist that ensure access to post-abortion care for all women and girls, independent of their marital status and

without third-party authorization?

Access to post-abortion care is not addressed in any law or regulation.

Do law(s), regulation(s) or national policies exist that make comprehensive sexual health education a mandatory component of the national school curriculum?

Comprehensive sexual health education is not mandated in the national school curriculum by any law(s) or regulation(s).

Do law(s) or regulation(s) exist that guarantee access to voluntary HIV testing and counselling services for all women and girls, irrespective of marital status and without third-party authorization?

HIV testing is available for men and women. There are services specifically for women.