



**Oman**  
**Stakeholder Report for the United Nations Universal Periodic Review:**  
**The Death Penalty**

**Submitted by The Advocates for Human Rights,**  
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1996

and

**The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty**

**for the 51st Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review**  
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**The Advocates for Human Rights** (The Advocates) is a volunteer-based non-governmental organization committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law. Established in 1983, The Advocates conducts a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publications. The Advocates is the primary provider of legal services to low-income asylum seekers in the Upper Midwest region of the United States. In 1991, The Advocates adopted a formal commitment to oppose the death penalty worldwide and organized a death penalty project to provide pro bono assistance on post-conviction appeals, as well as education and advocacy to end capital punishment. The Advocates currently hold a seat on the Steering Committee of the World Coalition against the Death Penalty.

**The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty** is a membership-based global network committed to strengthening the international dimension of the fight against the death penalty. Established in 2002, its ultimate objective is to obtain the universal abolition of the death penalty. To achieve its goal, the World Coalition advocates for a definitive end to death sentences and executions in those countries where the death penalty is in force. In some countries, it is seeking to obtain a reduction in the use of capital punishment as a first step towards abolition.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report addresses Oman’s compliance with its international human rights obligations regarding the death penalty and related issues, including gender-based violence, discrimination against women, and administration of justice and the right to a fair trial.
2. Oman’s Penal Code does not limit the application of the death penalty to the “most serious crimes,”<sup>1</sup> authorizing the death penalty for a wide range of offenses, including unintentional killings.<sup>2</sup>
3. Women remain particularly vulnerable to the death penalty in Oman, where courts lack clear mechanisms in capital cases to consider gender-specific defenses and mitigation factors such as coercive control and prolonged abuse.

### I. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS

4. According to Amnesty International, Oman carried out 3 executions in 2024—its first executions since 2021—and an unknown number of people were on death row at the end of 2024.<sup>3</sup> 2021 is the last year for which Amnesty International has reported that Omani courts sentenced people to death.<sup>4</sup>

#### Acceptance of international norms

##### **Status of Implementation: Partially Accepted, Not Implemented**

5. In its third Universal Periodic Review, Oman accepted recommendations to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights but noted recommendations to ratify the ICCPR’s Second Optional Protocol, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty. Since 2021, Oman has neither signed nor ratified the ICCPR or the Second Optional Protocol.<sup>5</sup>

#### Death penalty

##### **Status of Implementation: Not Accepted, Not Implemented**

6. During its third-cycle UPR, Oman noted all recommendations relating to the death penalty.<sup>6</sup> During the interactive dialogue, Omani authorities asserted that the “death penalty is imposed under Oman’s Penal Code only for the ‘most serious crimes’” and “is accompanied by numerous safeguards, which ensure that the scope of its application remains as narrow as possible and that all judicial guarantees are made available prior to its confirmation, including a mandatory appeal procedure before the Supreme Court.”<sup>7</sup>
7. Oman’s 2018 Penal Code contains over 20 articles in which the death penalty is listed as a punishment, but due to the government’s secrecy, civil society has no reliable information on how Oman’s criminal legal system applies those provisions.<sup>8</sup> Capital offenses include murder, drug trafficking, arson, piracy, terrorism, kidnapping, recidivism of aggravated offenses punishable by life imprisonment, leading an armed group that engages in spreading disorder, espionage, treason, and perjury causing wrongful execution.<sup>9</sup> Articles

302(e) and 302(f) of Oman’s 2018 Penal Code authorize the death penalty for a murder committed against a public official or for “abhorrent reasons.”<sup>10</sup> The Penal Code also authorizes the death penalty for threats or actions taken to overthrow the Sultan.<sup>11</sup>

8. After abstaining from voting on the UN General Assembly resolution calling for a global moratorium on the death penalty in 2008 and 2010, Oman has consistently voted against the resolution, including most recently in 2024.<sup>12</sup>

## **Gender-based violence; Discrimination Against Women**

### **Status of Implementation: Accepted, Not Implemented**

9. In its third-cycle UPR in 2021, Oman supported several recommendations to address discrimination against women, including recommendations to work toward elimination of gender-based violence, discrimination against women, and violence against women.<sup>13</sup>
10. Oman has made some progress toward implementing some of these recommendations, but there are significant implementation gaps. For example, although Oman supported a recommendation to criminalize all forms of violence against women,<sup>14</sup> Oman’s Penal Code still does not criminalize domestic violence.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Omani women are at ongoing risk of coming into conflict with the law and then facing the death penalty.
11. Around the world, women often come into conflict with the law and come to be at risk of the death penalty for crimes committed in the context of intimate partner violence and coercive control relationships.<sup>16</sup> In a groundbreaking 2018 study, the Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide found that, in the global context, women are more likely to be sentenced to death for criminal offenses committed within the context of gender-based violence<sup>17</sup> and manipulative or coercive-control relationships with male co-defendants.<sup>18</sup> Cornell’s data indicate that most women under sentences of death have been sentenced to death for the crime of murder.<sup>19</sup> These women have overwhelmingly experienced prolonged domestic violence at the hands of an intimate partner, spouse, or other family member.<sup>20</sup>
12. In November 2023, in response to a request for information from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women,<sup>21</sup> Oman stated that it had executed two women between 2018 and 2022.<sup>22</sup> Oman executed at least one woman in 2020 for premeditated murder and sentenced a woman to death in 2018 alongside her lover for allegedly plotting to kill the woman’s husband, even though the lover carried out the killing.<sup>23</sup>
13. Cornell’s 2021 follow-up study demonstrated that “fair trial principles dictate that courts should consider all relevant mitigating circumstances before imposing a sentence.”<sup>24</sup> In practice, however, many courts neglect gender-specific mitigation. In response to the CEDAW Committee’s request for information on whether Omani courts treat gender vulnerabilities, “such as trauma, gender-based violence against women, coercion and dependency,” as mitigating factors when women face a possible death sentence, Oman simply cited Article 78 of its Penal Code, which states that sentencing courts “must . . . take[] into account if the perpetrator suffered from loss of awareness, mental deficiency or severe provocation on the part of the victim,” but provided no information regarding gender-specific defenses or mitigation.<sup>25</sup> Oman also failed to show whether Article 78 in

practice requires sentencing courts to consider gender-based violence, prolonged domestic violence, coercive control relationships, or dependency as mitigating factors for women at risk of being sentenced to death.<sup>26</sup> Oman’s response also set out the grounds for self-defense in Article 46 of the Penal Code, which require the person acting in self-defense to face “the imminent threat of a crime against their person,”<sup>27</sup> a context that often does not apply to women who kill their abusers after a protracted history of gender-based violence.

14. The CEDAW Committee in 2024 recommended that Oman “[e]nsure a gender-sensitive interpretation and implementation of the law so that gender-based violence against women, prolonged domestic violence, coercion, a situation of self-defence, dependency, economic destitution and other vulnerabilities unique to women are taken into consideration as mitigating factors.”<sup>28</sup>

### **Administration of justice and fair trial**

15. Oman’s Penal Code permits courts to impose a sentence other than death if the victim’s heir grants a pardon or accepts *diya* (financial compensation). This procedure, however, is subject to judicial discretion and lacks transparency.<sup>29</sup>
16. According to some reports, activists in Oman have been denied timely access to legal counsel.<sup>30</sup> Credible reports from Gulf Centre for Human Rights, the Omani Centre for Human Rights, and the Omani Association of Human Rights document cases where Omani security forces denied political prisoners access to legal counsel, particularly in broadly defined “security cases,” despite Penal Code provisions allowing such access.<sup>31</sup>

## **II. RECOMMENDATIONS**

17. This stakeholder report suggests the following recommendations for the Government of Oman:
  - Abolish the death penalty and replace it with penalties that are fair, proportionate, and consistent with international human rights standards.
  - Ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Second Optional Protocol.
  - In the interim:
    - Institute a *de jure* moratorium on executions.
    - Amend the Penal Code to restrict the death penalty to cases of intentional killing by the offender
    - Commute the sentences of all persons sentenced to death for offenses that did not involve an intentional killing by the offender.
  - Annually publish data on all individuals sentenced to death or executed, disaggregated by crime(s) of conviction, age at time of offense, sex or gender, relationship to any victims or codefendants, nationality, occupation at the time of arrest, age of any dependent children, amount of *diya* requested by the victim’s

family and amount paid (if any), date of execution (if applicable), status of any appeals or petitions for mercy, and current location (if applicable).

- Collaborate with civil society to fully implement the CEDAW Committee’s 2024 recommendations on women and the death penalty.
- Codify gender-specific defenses and mitigation in capital cases, encompassing women’s experiences of trauma, poverty, and gender-based violence, including defenses applicable to victims of prolonged gender-based violence, regardless of imminence of harm at the time she acts in self-defense.
- Ensure that all judicial officers responsible for sentencing in capital cases receive comprehensive training on gender-based discrimination, gender-based violence, and tactics of coercive control that may lead to women committing death-eligible offenses.
- Take steps to provide heightened fair trial and due process safeguards in capital cases involving women defendants, including by providing them with access to effective legal representation with experience in capital cases and with training on gender-sensitive defense strategies.
- In collaboration with civil society organizations specializing in gender-based violence, provide training to all defense counsel who take on capital cases regarding gender-specific mitigation and how to raise discrimination against clients on the basis of their gender, when appropriate.
- Adopt gender-sensitive detention policies aligned with the Bangkok and Nelson Mandela Rules to ensure women’s safety and wellbeing in custody.
- Provide public funding to ensure that no person is sentenced to death or executed because their socioeconomic background precludes them from paying the *diya* requested by the victim’s family.
- Ensure that all persons at risk of being charged with a capital crime have timely access to qualified legal counsel from the time of arrest through and including any appellate or other post-conviction proceedings.

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<sup>1</sup> *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, Dec. 16, 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 171, art. 6(2) (entered into force 23 March 1976) [ICCPR].; United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *UN Experts Call for Universal Abolition of the Death Penalty* (October 9, 2023), available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/10/un-experts-call-universal-abolition-death-penalty#:~:text=The%20international%20standard%20is%20clear,penalty%20from%20its%20criminal%20law>.

<sup>2</sup> *UN Experts Call for Universal Abolition of the Death Penalty* (October 9, 2023), available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/10/un-experts-call-universal-abolition-death-penalty#:~:text=The%20international%20standard%20is%20clear,penalty%20from%20its%20criminal%20law>.

<sup>3</sup> Amnesty International, *Death Sentences and Executions 2024* (2025), at 5, 10, 29, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/8976/2025/en/>.

<sup>4</sup> See Amnesty International, *Death Sentences and Executions 2021* (2022), at 61, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/5418/2022/en/>.

<sup>5</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – Oman*, (June 3, 2021), 2. Available online at <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/47/11/Add.1>.

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- <sup>6</sup> Harm Reduction International, *The Death Penalty for Drug Offences: Global Overview 2021*, (2021), 38. Available online at [https://www.hri.global/files/2022/03/09/HRI\\_Global\\_Overview\\_2021\\_Final.pdf](https://www.hri.global/files/2022/03/09/HRI_Global_Overview_2021_Final.pdf).
- <sup>7</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – Oman*, (June 3, 2021), 3. Available online at <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/47/11/Add.1>.
- <sup>8</sup> Omani Penal Code 2018, arts. 94-99, 101, 106, 107, 109-111, 113, 117, 125-130, 133, 142, 156, 164, 167, 224, 260 & 302. Available at [https://oman.om/docs/default-source/default-document-library/omani-penal-law.pdf?sfvrsn=64250c36\\_2](https://oman.om/docs/default-source/default-document-library/omani-penal-law.pdf?sfvrsn=64250c36_2).
- <sup>9</sup> Omani Penal Code 2018, arts. 94-99, 101, 106, 107, 109-111, 113, 117, 125-130, 133, 142, 156, 164, 167, 224, 260 & 302. Available at [https://oman.om/docs/default-source/default-document-library/omani-penal-law.pdf?sfvrsn=64250c36\\_2](https://oman.om/docs/default-source/default-document-library/omani-penal-law.pdf?sfvrsn=64250c36_2).
- <sup>10</sup> Omani Penal Code 2018, art. 302. Available at [https://oman.om/docs/default-source/default-document-library/omani-penal-law.pdf?sfvrsn=64250c36\\_2](https://oman.om/docs/default-source/default-document-library/omani-penal-law.pdf?sfvrsn=64250c36_2).
- <sup>11</sup> Omani Penal Code 2018, arts. 94-96, 98-99, 101, 106-07, 109-11, 113, 117, 125-30, 133. Available at [https://oman.om/docs/default-source/default-document-library/omani-penal-law.pdf?sfvrsn=64250c36\\_2](https://oman.om/docs/default-source/default-document-library/omani-penal-law.pdf?sfvrsn=64250c36_2).
- <sup>12</sup> G.A. Res. 77/222, *Moratorium on the Use of the Death Penalty*, U.N. Doc. A/RES/77/222, 77th Sess. (Dec. 15, 2022), <https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/77/222>; International Commission Against the Death Penalty, UNGA Moratorium Resolution Table, <https://icomdp.org/map-unga/> (last visited 10 July 2025).
- <sup>13</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – Oman*, (June 3, 2021). Available online at <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/47/11/Add.1>.
- <sup>14</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – Oman*, (June 3, 2021), 6. Available online at <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/47/11/Add.1>.
- <sup>15</sup> Amnesty International, *Oman 2023*, (2023). Available online at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/oman/report-oman/>.
- <sup>16</sup> Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, *Judged for More Than Her Crime: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty* (Sept. 4, 2018). Available online at <https://www.deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Judged-More-Than-Her-Crime.pdf>.
- <sup>17</sup> Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, *Judged for More Than Her Crime: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty* (Sept. 4, 2018). Available online at <https://www.deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Judged-More-Than-Her-Crime.pdf>.
- <sup>18</sup> Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, “No One Believed Me”: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty for Drug Offenses (Sept. 6, 2021), 6. Available online at <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/No-One-Believed-Me-A-Global-Overview-of-Women-Facing-the-Death-Penalty-for-Drug-Offenses.pdf>.
- <sup>19</sup> Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, “No One Believed Me”: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty for Drug Offenses (Sept. 6, 2021), 11. Available online at <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/No-One-Believed-Me-A-Global-Overview-of-Women-Facing-the-Death-Penalty-for-Drug-Offenses.pdf>.
- <sup>20</sup> Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, *Judged for More Than Her Crime: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty* (Sept. 4, 2018), 4. Available online at <https://www.deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Judged-More-Than-Her-Crime.pdf>.
- <sup>21</sup> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. List of Issues and questions in relation to the fourth periodic report of Oman, (6 Mar. 2023), U.N. Doc. CEDAW/C/OMN/W/Q/4.
- <sup>22</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Replies of Oman to the list of issues and questions in relation to its fourth periodic report, (5 Jun. 2023), U.N. Doc. CEDAW/C/OMN/RQ/4, ¶ 23.
- <sup>23</sup> The Advocates for Human Rights, the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, and the Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, *Oman’s Compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women: Suggested List of Issues Relating to the Death Penalty* (Jan. 30, 2023), ¶¶ 7, 9.
- <sup>24</sup> Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, “No One Believed Me”: *A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty for Drug Offenses* (Sept. 6, 2021). Available online at <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/publication/no-one-believed-me-a-global-overview-of-women-facing-the-death-penalty-for-drug-offenses/>.
- <sup>25</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Replies of Oman to the list of issues and questions in relation to its fourth periodic report, (5 Jun. 2023), U.N. Doc. CEDAW/C/OMN/RQ/4, ¶ 24.
- <sup>26</sup> Oman’s Compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, (30 Jan. 2023), U.N. Doc. CEDAW/ICO/OMN/51485, ¶ 16.
- <sup>27</sup> *Id.* ¶ 25.

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<sup>28</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, *Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Oman*, (26 Feb. 2024), U.N. Doc. CEDAW/C/OMN/CO/4, ¶ 18(b).

<sup>29</sup> Omani Penal Code 2018, art. 302. Available at [https://oman.om/docs/default-source/default-document-library/omani-penal-law.pdf?sfvrsn=64250c36\\_2](https://oman.om/docs/default-source/default-document-library/omani-penal-law.pdf?sfvrsn=64250c36_2).

<sup>30</sup> United States. Dep't of State, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - Oman, (2023), § 1.e Denial of Fair Public Trial, available online at <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/oman/>.

<sup>31</sup> United States. Dep't of State, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - Oman, (2023), § 1.e Denial of Fair Public Trial, available online at <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/oman/>.