



Contribution by Oman Human Rights Commission on Youth Mental Health and Human Rights in Oman

Submitted to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 57/30

February 2026

❖ Information about Oman Human Rights Commission:

Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) was established in 2008 by Royal Decree No. (124/2008) to be an independent national body dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights in Oman. In recognition of the Commission's importance and status, Royal Decree No. (57/2022) was issued, reorganizing the Commission and establishing a new operational framework, elevating it to the level of full independence in carrying out its work. The Commission operates as a national mechanism responsible for protecting, promoting, and monitoring human rights both domestically and internationally.

The establishment of the OHRC by the Sultanate of Oman reflects its recognition of the importance of protecting and safeguarding these rights, as well as its commitment to upholding the international conventions related to human rights. OHRC is tasked with the following responsibilities:

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 treaties and conventions to which Oman is party, and applicable laws.
3. Observing and responding to comments raised by foreign governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations regarding human rights in Oman by coordinating with the concerned authorities to investigate and address these issues.



4. Providing advice to state entities on matters related to human rights and freedoms and contributing to the preparation of reports addressing these topics.
5. Monitoring any violations or abuses related to human rights in the Sultanate of Oman and assisting in their resolution.
6. Conducting field visits to prisons, detention centers, hospitals, and labor gatherings to assess the human rights situation in these locations.
7. Receiving complaints related to human rights, studying them, making recommendations to the competent authorities, and following up on their resolutions.
8. Collaborating with international mechanisms related to human rights, preparing reports, and participating in regional or international human rights meetings.
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 conferences, events, and meetings concerning human rights.

Introduction

This submission is provided in response to the call for inputs issued by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 57/30. It is submitted from the perspective of the Oman Human Rights Commission and is based on national monitoring activities, institutional engagement, and collaboration with relevant stakeholders. The submission examines the impact of mental health challenges on the enjoyment of human rights by young people in the Sultanate of Oman, with a focus on systemic factors, vulnerable groups, and the State's obligations under international human rights law.

Mental health is increasingly recognized as a core human rights issue. For young people, mental health challenges can have long-lasting consequences that affect education, employment, social participation, and overall well-being. This report adopts a rights-based approach, emphasizing the principles of availability, accessibility, acceptability, and



quality (AAAQ), as well as participation, non-discrimination, accountability, and transparency.

1. Main Mental Health Challenges and Impact on Human Rights

OHRC monitoring and engagement indicate that young people in Oman face a range of mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, academic stress, fear of failure, and difficulties related to identity formation and the transition to adulthood. Rapid social change, shifting family structures, and extensive exposure to digital media have contributed to increased feelings of isolation, social comparison, and reduced self-esteem among some young people.

These mental health challenges have a direct and measurable impact on the enjoyment of human rights. The right to education may be affected through absenteeism, reduced academic performance, or early dropout. The right to health is compromised when mental health needs are not identified or addressed in a timely manner. Young people experiencing psychological distress may also face barriers to participation in social and cultural life, undermining their right to participation and development.

OHRC notes that the impact is particularly severe for young people in vulnerable situations, including those with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities, those exposed to violence or neglect, young people in conflict with the law, and those without stable family or community support. In these contexts, mental health challenges intersect with trauma, stigma, and institutional barriers, increasing the risk of exclusion and rights violations.

2. Government Measures and NHRI Engagement

OHRC notes that the government of Oman has taken steps to address mental health challenges among young people through a gradual and multisectoral approach. These measures recognize that mental health challenges are influenced by family, educational,



social, and economic factors and therefore require responses that go beyond clinical treatment.

A notable development is the adoption of trauma-informed approaches within the justice system, including a national protocol for interviewing child victims and witnesses in criminal proceedings. This protocol is supported by specialized training and multidisciplinary teams and aims to protect dignity, prevent re-traumatization, and support rehabilitation.

In the health and education sectors, early developmental and behavioral screening has been integrated into primary health care services, pre-school assessments, and school health programmes. These measures support early identification and intervention, which are critical for preventing the escalation of mental health challenges.

OHRC has engaged in monitoring these efforts, providing technical input, and issuing recommendations aimed at strengthening rights-based approaches, particularly for marginalized young people.

3. Barriers to the Right to Mental Health – AAAQ Framework

Availability: While mental health services for young people have expanded, OHRC notes that specialized child and adolescent services and trained professionals remain insufficient in some regions, leading to delays in diagnosis and intervention.

Accessibility: Geographic distance, social stigma, lack of awareness, and unclear referral pathways continue to hinder timely access to services, particularly for vulnerable groups.

Acceptability: Cultural stigma associated with mental health and concerns about confidentiality reduce help-seeking behavior among young people and their families, even where services are available.



Quality: Professional regulation and clinical guidelines have contributed to improvements in service quality; however, uneven implementation and limited specialist capacity affect consistency.

These barriers collectively undermine the enjoyment of the rights to health, education, protection, dignity, and equal opportunities.

4. Legal, Policy, and Programmatic Framework

OHRC notes that the legal and policy framework relevant to youth mental health includes the Child Law, Public Health Law, Law on the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, juvenile justice provisions, and regulations governing psychological counseling and family guidance. Mental health is recognized as an integral component of public health, and a draft mental health law is in advanced stages of development.

National policies and programmes include the National Health Policy, guidelines for psychiatric services, school health programmes, early screening initiatives, awareness campaigns, and research programmes that support evidence-based planning.

OHRC notes that the consultation with young people in the development of these measures remains limited and non-institutionalized, representing an area for future improvement.

5. Public Expenditure and Financing

OHRC notes that disaggregated public data on expenditure specifically allocated to mental health services for young people are not currently available. Mental health funding is included within the general health budget without age-specific classification.

Institutional monitoring indicates a gradual increase in investment in mental health services in recent years, including service expansion, integration into primary care, early intervention programmes, and workforce development. The absence of disaggregated financial data remains a challenge for transparency, accountability, and impact assessment.



6. Questions 6 & 7: Strengthening Realization of the Right and Role of NHRIs

States can strengthen the realization of the right to mental health by integrating mental health across relevant policies, investing in prevention and early intervention, expanding community-based services, and adopting trauma-informed approaches across systems.

International cooperation can support capacity building, research, and the exchange of good practices. National human rights institutions (NHRIs) play a critical role through monitoring, advising, coordination, awareness-raising, and engagement with local communities and international human rights mechanisms.

OHRC has visited and observed mental health-facilities, contributed technical input to policy discussions, issued recommendations, and engaged with stakeholders (including the UNICEF, civil society institutions working on child rights, and public and private schools) to promote rights-based mental health responses for young people, which included the development of a strategic direction for the country.