

A decorative pattern of teal triangles of various sizes and orientations scattered across the dark blue background.

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Alliant Global Knowledge Center

1 November 2023

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## Oman's labor reforms enhance family leaves – a step towards work-life balance

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Published 1 November 2023

On 25 July 2023, the Sultanate of Oman, through [Royal Decree 53/2023](#), issued a new labor law, which among its wide-ranging and numerous provisions increased maternity leave entitlements, introduced unpaid childcare leave for female employees and paid paternity leave.

The provisions of the law came into force the day after publication in the Official Gazette i.e., 26 July 2023. Employers will be required to ensure compliance with the new requirements within six months.

The new labor law is part of the implementation of the country's long-term strategy – the [Oman Vision 2040](#), and its family-related provisions align with one of the four pillars of this strategic plan, namely, its "People and Society" pillar.

### Newly introduced paternity leave

The new labor law introduces seven days of government-paid paternity leave, making Oman one of the few countries in the Arab world with statutory paternity leave, succeeding the United Arab Emirates, where five days of paternity leave

were introduced by the Federal Decree Law No. 6 of 2020.

This new leave is employment-protected and can be drawn anytime within 98 days from the date of birth of a child. Employees are entitled to this new leave, irrespective of their nationality.

By granting fathers the opportunity to take paternity leave, Oman is acknowledging the shared responsibility of parenting between men and women. This initiative not only recognizes the evolving dynamics of modern families but also encourages a more equitable distribution of caregiving responsibilities.

### Maternity leave entitlement increased, and eligibility expanded

Employment-protected maternity leave has been increased from 50 to 98 days; a maximum of 14 days of which can be drawn prior to the date of birth, and the remainder is to be taken starting on the date of birth.

Furthermore, previously only Omani nationals were eligible for maternity leave. The law has now expanded the eligibility criteria for maternity leave to also include foreign national employees.

By providing women with increased maternity leave, Oman is both acknowledging and addressing the unique needs of working mothers. This progressive policy not only recognizes the fundamental role of women in both the labor force and the family, but also works towards mitigating the challenges they face in balancing professional and familial responsibilities.

## **New childcare leave and nursing breaks**

In addition to the increase in maternity leave, a new unpaid childcare leave of up to one year for new mothers has been introduced. The leave is to be drawn after childbirth.

Additionally, new mothers returning from maternity leave, are entitled to a one-hour nursing break per workday. The employee determines when they take their nursing break entitlement.

By introducing the childcare leave and the nursing break, Oman acknowledges women's multifaceted responsibilities. By granting new mothers the flexibility to take unpaid childcare leave, Oman is not only enhancing work-life balance for its female labor force but is also contributing to the overall development of a more inclusive and compassionate society.

## **Path towards work-life balance**

Oman is now among the first in the Arab world to join a series of countries that facilitate and encourage shared parenting as a step towards enhanced work-life balance.

With the recent changes, Oman paves way towards gender equity by supporting women, who typically bear the burden of childcare together with household tasks.

The introduction of paternity leave will not only enable fathers to bond with and care for their newborn child but will also provide new mothers with essential support during the challenging early weeks of parenthood, all while developing a sense of partnership between parents. These outcomes will contribute to a healthier balance between life and work responsibilities for both parents.

Additionally, the extended maternity leave allows women the necessary time to recover from childbirth, bond with their newborns, and establish a stable foundation for their families.

As women are granted the flexibility to navigate the demands of motherhood without compromising their careers, increased maternity leave further helps retain female talent in the labor force. This forward-thinking policy portrays Oman's dedication to fostering a workplace culture that prioritizes the well-being of employees and recognizes the invaluable contributions of women to the society.



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As an International Account Manager, Maya works with multinational clients, ranging from small emerging companies to large accounts, by being a main contact for global HR managers and local broker partners daily to ensure clients have consistent support and communication for all benefits-related issues and inquiries. Maya has produced country overview reports, managed renewals, and created benchmark reports on the EMEA, APAC and LATAM regions. As part of the services offered by Alliant's Global Knowledge Center, Maya tracks and researches international news and government policy developments related to global benefits, to produce compliance articles and thematic reports. Prior to joining Alliant, Maya was an International Benefits Research Analyst at Arthur J. Gallagher, a People Operations Planner at Apple Inc, and a Linguist at the Middle East Institute. She has also worked in Higher Education as a Language and Culture Lecturer and has lived in 8 countries that helped shape her passion for a global career path.

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