

## PRESS RELEASE – 10/6/20

### The Global Hajj Community Unified in Purpose with Saudi Arabia

In every disaster there is bound to be some benefit, COVID 19 extrapolated compassion from across all communities and it was dispersed amongst friends, neighbours, strangers and even adversaries, abundantly. The human tragedy and loss of life reflects the harsh realities that this pandemic has imposed upon every nation.

“The champions of Humanity in today’s times are the medical workers in the frontline who are caring for their community, risking their lives everyday as they put on a gown of protection and wear the familiar face mask; witnessing the realities and the difficulties of sick victims of Coronavirus, remaining positive, focused and applying treatment, saving whom they can, however many as they can, where ever they can, without discrimination.

“No one knows the value of life better than the one trying to save life”

*Stated by, Dr. Nafiu Hussaini, Associate Professor of Biomathematics, Bayero University, PhD Mathematics --- Brunel University, Kano.*

“Performing Hajj for Muslims is as dear as life, it is one of the five pillars upon which we stand and show our solidarity, an opportunity for Muslims around the world for a second chance at life, desperate to achieve absolution on the blessed day of Arafah. Today more than 50,000 Hajj professionals from across the globe are anxious, with millions of pilgrims in hope, all waiting for any news from Saudi Arabia, seeking guidance and instructions”.

*Stated by, Syed Ahmed Abu Akif, former Director General Hajj of Pakistan, Islamabad*

The prospect of there not being a Hajj this year, becomes a source of anguish for businesses bearing heavy losses, Hajj Missions unable to fulfil their responsibility to their pilgrims, and intending pilgrims unable to perform the pilgrimage.



Another side of this shared anguish and pain belongs to the tens of thousands of Saudi people, raised in the culture of welcoming pilgrims; a people famed for having organised the pilgrimage for more than 1400 years, a generation for the first time in their history plagued and combating a foreign virus in the holiest cities, having to tell Muslims around the world, please have patience, we are doing our best, we cannot risk anyone's life and in need of your prayers as we pray for you also.

The COVID 19 pandemic has put a physical distance between us as human beings, two people together are a potential harm for each other, we no longer shake hands or embrace each other, rather we keep a two meter distance and wonder who did the other person meet today and where did he go. Saudi Arabia attempts to facilitate industry needs at the same speed, as they have done in the previous years, the best decisions are often made face-to-face, thousands of important meetings are usually had before the largest annual mass gathering convenes, being reduced to virtual meetings online and applying remote working practices.

“The Saudi society, a proud nation, home of the Kaabah and the holiest and most beloved cities of Makkah and Madinah, have always embraced the millions of pilgrims from around the world; welcoming not only as hosts but as believers in the virtues shared by our noble prophet Muhammad Ibn Abdallah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him”.

*Stated by, Barr. Abdullahi Mukhtar Mohammad. MON, Former Chairman of the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria, Abuja.*

The World Hajj and Umrah Care Foundation (WHUC Foundation) and Hajj People, join in understanding the challenges that Saudi Arabia faces in presenting the Hajj this year by contributing their expertise, developing a body of knowledge in conjunction with Hajj Missions, private sector, pandemic and health experts, pilgrims and other professionals.



As a result of this collaborative consultation “Hajj Under Pandemic Conditions” a White Paper was developed, exploring the feasibility of Hajj itself in the year 1441H, with the shared sentiment of, “where there is a will there is a way, Insha-Allah”.

“From the moment the announcement of cessation of Umrah was made, a specialised team of 23 professionals formed to join the fight against the effects of COVID 19 by researching and developing solutions required to address the additional complexity introduced in Hajj management with the advent of airborne pathogens infusing its effects within the Hajj and Umrah Ecosystem”.

*Stated by, Wassiem Al Zouabi, Chief Technology Officer at the WHUC Foundation, Dubai.*

Saudi Arabia’s progress on effectively combating the Coronavirus has become a daily ritualised observation on social media across the world. As numbers of recoveries increase, excitement arises, as reported cases rise, despair settles. It is to this extent, which the international community is connected with the condition afflicting the holy city of Makkah and Madinah.

The most common question we are frequently being asked, as people search for answers in desperation and in frustration “Is Hajj going to happen?” When are we going to be informed of what we must do next?

*Stated by, Ms. A Saad, Government Liaison Officer at the WHUC Foundation, Jeddah.*

Learning from the genuine concerns shared with us, it became incumbent upon us to further our understanding of how pathogens impact mass gatherings and seek out facts to determine the possibility, probability and feasibility of Hajj under pandemic conditions.



“Collectively inspired, our team of experts set upon developing the “Masked Hajj Doctrine” a comprehensive set of solutions for industry stakeholders, identifying the means to mitigate health risks that COVID 19 poses to pilgrims and organisers, modules to educate pilgrims and professionals on precautionary and preventative methods, models for forecasting and selecting eligible pilgrims able, willing and ready to perform Hajj under such conditions”.

*Stated by, Mohsin Tutla, Chairman of the WHUC Foundation, London.*

We were able to achieve our goals in producing viable solutions as our modest contribution in addressing critical challenges faced by Hajj Missions and private Hajj organisers, affecting their planning and preparation for a Hajj under pandemic conditions.

As organisers of the World Hajj and Umrah Convention, we have been convening professionals in the Hajj & Umrah industry from around the world, discussing best practice methods and solutions in Hajj management for the past 8 years, annually. Cherry picking the best talent to bring forward the best possible solutions for the benefit of the pilgrims and our colleagues in Saudi Arabia responsible for hosting the holy pilgrimages.

Our research findings have been shared with the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah as well as the offices of the Royal Commission for Makkah City and Holy Sites, for their considerations and other countries that participated in the survey and study. Unified in purpose to serve the ideals of the Muslim community, we hope our contributions add to the tremendous body of knowledge already developed by the Saudi authorities and institutions.



“This unique White Paper titled, “Hajj Under Pandemic Conditions” introduces a new model “Qualification by Filtration” a method that observes the political sensitivities of quota distribution, health and social distancing protocols, and protection for pilgrims through venting vulnerabilities that could potentially leave Muslims exposed to harm”.

*Stated by, CEO of the Government of India Hajj Committee – Dr. Maqsood Ahmed Khan after he reviewed the white-paper report, Mumbai.*

“It is impressive that the survey developed for “Principles of Organising Hajj Under Pandemic Conditions” report, documents the views of more than 25 government Hajj Missions, who are responsible for the welfare of approximately 890,000 international pilgrims. The survey and study findings shared with us provide rationale, very useful information, analysis and policy recommendation.

The published survey findings provides readers, researchers and policy makers the opportunity to review the measures Hajj Missions are willing to adopt or not adopt, their status in readiness to perform Hajj under pandemic conditions, feasibility and the contingencies in consideration”.

The WHUC Foundation and Hajj People study findings on the subject of “Hajj Under Pandemic Conditions” are made freely available and can be found on the organisation’s website; [www.whucfoundation.com](http://www.whucfoundation.com). We are inviting all able personnel to aid in the efforts of intellectually contributing towards fighting the effects of COVID 19, further invoking the quality of forbearance to overcome these testing times and shared challenges as a community.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as our praiseworthy host, various Hajj Missions, private Hajj organisers, other stakeholders and pilgrims as guests of Allah, all working to bring back the Hajj and Umrah ecosystem to normalcy, collectively and as quickly as possible.

*Written by Mohsin Tutla in consensus with  
WHUC Foundation & Hajj People Research Committee*



## PRESS OFFICE

Thank you for taking the time to read our press release issued on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June 2020 titled “ The Global Hajj Community Unified in Purpose with Saudi Arabia”

As part of our on-going engagement with researchers and media outlets, we will coordinate the necessary communications with the relevant contributors to the project to assist you with your enquiries.

*“Principles in Organising Hajj Pandemic Conditions – Government Hajj Missions Survey Results” will be provided via email through formal requests.*

You are kindly requested to submit your request for information or interviews to the email address provided below addressed to Ms. A Saad.

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