



## The Role of Indonesian Politics Diplomacy Towards Saudi Arabia In Enhancement of Hajj Pilgrimage Quota After Covid-19 Pandemic

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### **Kata Kunci**

**Kata kunci:** Arab Saudi, Diplomati, Haji, Indonesia

### **Abstrak**

Sebagai umat muslim tentu mengetahui salah satu rukun Islam yang kelima adalah haji. Haji bagi mereka yang mampu secara fisik dan finansial, umat Islam di seluruh dunia menunaikan ibadah haji setahun sekali. Selama Dzulhijah atau dikenal sebagai bulan haji, jemaah haji mengunjungi sejumlah lokasi di Arab Saudi. Dalam Metode Penelitian kali ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan kajian literatur. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui buku, jurnal, hasil-hasil, penelitian terdahulu dan sumber-sumber lainnya. Indonesia adalah bangsa yang secara konsisten berupaya memajukan kepentingan internasionalnya melalui jalur diplomasi dengan negara tujuan. Indonesia memiliki posisi strategis dengan populasi Muslim yang besar. Mengingat alokasi haji Mekkah ditentukan dengan aturan 1:1000, besarnya lobi politik yang diperlukan untuk memenuhi permintaan alokasi tambahan haji dari Pemerintah Republik Indonesia kepada Pemerintah Arab Saudi sangat besar. Berdasarkan kesimpulan yang telah ditemukan pada hasil diatas, bahwasannya Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia sebagai leading sector dalam penyelenggaraan Haji dan Umrah Indonesia hendaknya dapat lebih mengembangkan kapasitasnya dalam menyusun kebijakan pemerintah ke depan terkait penyelenggaraan haji dan umrah saat wabah COVID-19.

### **Keywords**

**Keywords:** Saudi Arabia, Diplomatic, Hajj, Indonesia

### **Abstract**

Mostly Muslim knew that one of the fifth pillars of Islam is Hajj. Hajj for those who are physically and financially able, Muslims around the world perform the pilgrimage once a year. During Dzulhijah otherwise known as the month of Hajj, pilgrims visit a number of locations in Saudi Arabia. The research method this time uses a qualitative method with a literature review. Data collection is done through books, journals, results, previous research and other sources. Indonesia is a nation that consistently seeks to advance its international interests through diplomacy with destination countries. Indonesia has a powerful impact with a large Muslim population. Considering that the allocation for the pilgrimage to Mecca is determined by the 1:1000 rule, the amount of political lobbying required to fulfill the request for additional allocations for the pilgrimage from the Government of the Republic of Indonesia to the Government of Saudi Arabia is very large. Hajj and Umrah Indonesia should be able to further develop its capacity in formulating government policies in the future regarding the implementation of Hajj and Umrah after the COVID-19 outbreak.

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## INTRODUCTION

The fifth pillar of Islam for Muslim is hajj pilgrimage. Hajj for those who are physically and financially able, Muslims around the world perform the pilgrimage once a year. During Dzulhijah, otherwise known as the month of Hajj, pilgrims visit a number of locations in Saudi Arabia (Alahmari et al., 2022).

Saudi Arabia itself is a country that is known by the international community, especially among the Muslim community around the world. The location is a stretch of desert, known for its geographical conditions (Gutub et al., 2023). Although Saudi Arabia is an Arab country, this does not mean that it has to lose its economic potential or natural resources (El-Kafrawy et al., 2022). Two cities in Saudi Arabia serve as prayer centers for Muslims around the world. Mecca and Medina are holy places that are always visited by Pilgrims for Hajj or Umrah (Alrufaidi et al., 2023).

When the Hajj season period, pilgrims from Indonesia are very numerous and crowded during the Hajj season. What then focuses on the Indonesian Hajj Supervisory Commission (KPHI or Komisi Pengawas Haji Indonesia) in organizing Hajj from year to year is on seven things amid the high interest of prospective pilgrims in Indonesia: 1) oversight of the organization, work procedures, and officers; 2) supervision of administrative and financial aspects; 3) supervising the implementation of religious guidance; 4) accommodation services; 5) transportation services; 6) consumption services; and 7) Health services (Hsu & Chang, 2023)..

In 2020, the outbreak of a disease brought by the SARS-CoV-2 virus was one of the things that caused a change in the implementation of the pilgrimage (Memish et al., 2020). When the SARS-CoV-2 virus first appeared at the end of December 2019, it triggered an unusual event that took the form of the disease and the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Health Organization first recognized the SARSCoV-2 virus on December 31, 2019 in Wuhan, China, after emerging from a pneumonia case of unexplained origin.

The COVID-19 pandemic has restricted all types of events involving large crowds, including pilgrimages. The World Health Organization (WHO) advises preventing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic by postponing important events, including sporting events, concerts and music festivals (Auerbach et al., 2023). Because of the large number of pilgrims, the pilgrimage, which is known as the annual ritual of Muslims, has attracted a lot of attention. According to estimates, an average of 10 million Muslims from 182 countries make the pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia every year (Alzahrani et

al., 2020). As a result, on 27 February 2020, the government of Saudi Arabia focused on the security and welfare of the pilgrims, taking swift action in the form of flight violence and violations of the arrival of pilgrims, both local and foreign who plan to travel to Saudi Arabia (Alamer et al., 2023)

## METHOD

The research method uses a qualitative method with a literature review. To understand social phenomena according to a book by Dr.H.Zuchri Abdussamad, S.I.K., (2021) from the participant's perspective, qualitative research investigates the participant's perspective using flexible and participatory research methods. In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the main object instrument and conducts research in natural conditions. Data collection is carried out through books, journals, results, previous research and other sources (Murdiyanto, 2020).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **The Indonesian Government Uses Track Government To Regulate The Number Of Pilgrims During The Covid-19 Outbreak**

Indonesia is a nation that consistently seeks to advance its international interests through diplomacy with destination countries. is a powerful force with a large Muslim population. The issue of the Mecca pilgrimage is one of several affecting the relationship between the two main countries (Ajija et al., 2021).

The allocation requested by the Saudi Arabian government in Indonesia is not in accordance with the number of Indonesian hajj applicants, so the interest in performing the pilgrimage is shown by the long and expensive queues of Indonesian pilgrims in Mecca. The Indonesian government has played the most significant role in advocating for an increase in Saudi Arabia's hajj pilgrimage allocation for Mecca. The government has a relatively easy method of approaching Saudi Arabia directly to request allocations (Alahmari et al., 2022).

As an example, an additional group of 10,000 pilgrims traveled to Indonesia in 2019 to help with housing and programs along the new Mecca city route. In fact, the Indonesian and Saudi governments have established good diplomatic relations for years to perform the pilgrimage. The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as the authority holder is responsible for the area around the Grand Mosque in the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia and has enormous power to control the annual pilgrimage. In addition, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has the power to determine and control the number of pilgrims to Mecca in each country, and all countries have the right to have the power to decide on this number, according to the

results of the 1987 OIC Summit in Amman, Jordan. Distribution is based on how much of each region is present.

Then, according to Alzahrani et al., (2020) Considering that the allocation for the pilgrimage to Mecca is determined by the 1:1000 rule, the amount of political lobbying needed to fulfill the request for additional allocations for the pilgrimage from the Government of the Republic of Indonesia to the Government of Saudi Arabia is enormous. tall. It's challenging. The increase in Muslim adherents and the increase in pilgrimage registrants is a proportional formula for increasing the allocation for the pilgrimage to Mecca to achieve an allocation of 1 mile or 1/1000 of the entire Muslim population in any country at that time.

### **Diplomacy of Indonesia and Saudi Arabia Regarding the 2020 Indonesian Hajj Quota**

The Muslim-majority country Indonesia annually sends hajj pilgrims to fulfill the fifth pillar of Islam, making it the largest hajj-sending country in the world. Friendship and cooperation between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia have been established for a long time. The choice to stop it completely, even if only for a moment. The big step that has never been taken is umrah. during the first 1,400 years of Islamic history, the Saudi monarchy. This was what the Saudis failed to do during the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) pandemic in 2014. However, this choice has a big impact because umrah attracts millions of people every year. Moreover, it happened ahead of Ramadan, the preferred time for pilgrims to perform Umrah. To reduce the danger of transmission of COVID-19, Saudi Arabia has finally announced the 2020 Hajj with various restrictions. Before, during and after performing the pilgrimage, the Saudis want to ensure that the congregation is always safe and healthy. It has been agreed that a small number of pilgrims from various countries who are already domiciled (residing) in Saudi Arabia will attend the pilgrimage in 2020 (Alzahrani et al., 2020).

Saudi Arabia has relied on oil and gas as its main source of income and Hajj and Umrah as a secondary source of income for many years. However, Saudi Arabia shifted the direction of its economy by relying on the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages starting in 2016, due to falling oil prices. Up to 18.3 million Umrah pilgrims and more than two million other pilgrims visit the country every year. According to projections, there will be 2.7 million pilgrims in 2020. This is further strengthened by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030, which aims to welcome 30 million pilgrims in that year (Farhanah, 2016).

Later, Corona's lockdown procedures, prevention of virus infection, and other solutions bore delicious fruit as the number of cases began to decline. Salman bin Abdulaziz, King of Saudi Arabia, issued a royal proclamation to reopen the Tawaf page of the Grand Mosque. The trial of tawaf will resume on March 7, 2020, according to the royal proclamation (al-Amru as-Sami) issued by King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. However, in his directives it was stated that the sunnah tawaf that is not related to the umrah worship is the one whose place of tawaf is opened rather than the umrah congregation.

Furthermore, Saudi Arabia after carrying out the lockdown has now relaxed restrictions that will take effect from 21 June 2020, in places other than Mecca. The gradual easing is carried out while maintaining physical segregation and prohibiting gatherings of more than 50 people (Mustofa, 2021). Due to difficulties enforcing social segregation laws, Saudi Arabia has not yet restored entertainment and leisure venues. Sports and fitness clubs, entertainment venues, as well as hair and beauty parlors are among the places that have yet to reopen.

### **Post-Covid-19 Pandemic Hajj Quota Increase**

According to the interview responses of the Minister of Religion Yaqut (Source: Liputan 6.com), it was implied that the discussion on increasing the quota for pilgrims when the two met to discuss preparations for Hajj. "Directly monitoring the progress of service preparations and requesting an increase in the quota of Indonesian pilgrims and officials are the two missions of my visit to Saudi Arabia. In Jeddah, we spoke with Minister Tawfiq regarding these two matters," he said. Yaqut stated that officials could only improve services for the elderly congregation by increasing the quota. The reason is, more than 64,000 haj candidates are included in the old group from the 203,320 regular hajj quota.

Yaqut, the Minister of Religion, said that many service arrangements were made with the aim of providing as much attention as possible to pilgrims, especially their parents. "There will be a special recruitment to fill the additional quota of officers, and this is focused on strengthening elderly services," he said. Minister of Religion Yaqut hopes that Minister Tawfiq can provide the extra Hajj quota more quickly. This is because the process of filling in congregation quotas requires preparation time, starting from making documents, passports, visas, and services (Fielnanda, 2018).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the conclusions that have been found in the results above, that the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia as the leading sector in the implementation of Indonesian Hajj and Umrah should be able to further develop its capacity in formulating future government policies regarding the implementation of Hajj and Umrah during the COVID-19 outbreak. Indonesia as a country with the largest Muslim population in the world receives special attention in carrying out the pilgrimage for Indonesian pilgrims using health protocols, the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia with the assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, must mediate or establish diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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