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## Pilgrimage to Death

*HOW THE 2024 HAJJ  
DEATHS HAPPENED*

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Analysis by Colonel Rabi Alenezi & others

**Exclusive  
Investigation**

To the memory of Abdullah Saeed Al-Ibrahim, Abu Fatima

My teacher and cousin who lost his life in Hajj 2015

& to thousands of pilgrims who perished in Hajj disasters over the past decades.



## **Preface:**

Over the past 40 years, the city of Makkah, a destination for over two billion Muslims worldwide for daily prayers and pilgrimage, has become the deadliest holy city in the world, killing thousands of pilgrims, mostly in en masse disasters.

Just last year, on June 16, over 1400 people from over 100 countries lost their lives – a calamity the Saudi government blamed on unregistered pilgrims. Embarrassed by the deaths, and in a typical Saudi fashion, the Saudi government maintained silence for five days before issuing its first statement. By then, videos of dozens of dead or dying pilgrims have surfaced on the internet showing the painful scenes of mass casualties abandoned on the side of the road. Several countries also issued statements reporting the deaths of their pilgrims. It was not until June 23, 2024, that the Saudi minister of health Fahad AlJalajel defiantly told the state broadcaster AlEkhbariyah TV that although [1301 people died, 83% of them were unauthorized pilgrims.](#)

On their end, the Western media blamed heat for these mass deaths without attempting to address the underlying causes. [American newspaper The New York Times waited eight days](#) to run a story on the world's largest mass death event, and only after the Saudi government reported it.

While America's [Associated Press took only three days to report the deaths](#), it also toed the Saudi government line and blamed the deaths on heat and unauthorized pilgrimage. An AP reporter who spoke to IGA on condition of anonymity said New York- and London-based editors limit the extent and tone of coverage in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. Western media, especially with reporters in Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries, have a history of staying close to the governments' line and refraining from running embarrassing news.

Notably, the Biden's State Department and US Embassy in Riyadh ignored the deaths and did not even issue a statement of condolences, despite the fact that 11 Americans were among the victims.

This investigation seeks to highlight the chronic failure of the Saudi government to manage Hajj safely and its obvious indifference to pilgrims' mass deaths. It also aims to spotlight the international media's serious failure or unwillingness to investigate these deaths in Saudi Arabia.

## **Hajj: The Journey of Faith**

Hajj is required of adult Muslims who are physically and financially capable of it. With [Muslims making up nearly 25% of the world population](#) or 2 billion people, only a small percentage of Muslims, less than 0.1%, actually makes Hajj. The annual capacity of Hajj, with a few exceptions, has been less than 2 million pilgrims. According to the Saudi government, [1,833,164 pilgrims](#) from every country in the world participated in the 2024 Hajj.

Hajj is an annual event, where the pilgrims' rituals and movements are known and predictable. Why, then, is Hajj so often marred by frequent mass deaths events? By the time this report is published, more may occur.

### **Eid of Death**

On Eid al-Adha day of June 16, 2024, more than 1400 pilgrims died of heat exhaustion inside Makkah metropolitan area, a stone's throw from dozens of hospitals in a city monitored by 8000 AI-enabled cameras livestreaming to Saudi Hajj Command and Control headquarters staffed by hundreds of trained security officers.

Hajj Command and Control is in charge of nearly 40,000 security officers from various security sectors equipped with a dozen helicopters, thousands of security vehicles and security centers spread across the city and holy sites.

Healthcare in Hajj is not in short supply. The command center manages over 30,000 healthcare providers, who staff 25 Saudi hospitals, 153 healthcare centers and over 1000 ambulances. Medical evacuation helicopters are on standby. In addition, dozens of countries send their own medical missions to accompany their pilgrims and provide them with free healthcare.

## **The Timeline**

June 16, 2024 marked Eid AlAdha, one of two most important Muslim holidays. It is the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month in Muslim Calendar. On that day, the final phase of Hajj begins. Millions of pilgrims, who had spent that night before in Muzdalifa, take the train to Mina, 6 kilometer (3 miles) at most, after dawn prayers around 4 AM. Some pilgrims choose to walk instead of taking the train.

At sunrise around 6:40 AM, pilgrims start the ritual of stoning Jamrat Aqbah, the largest of three pillars symbolizing Satan. This is not only to avoid the rush, but also to avoid the heat during summer time.

A short ritual of shaving or trimming one's hair follows and offering sacrifice to the poor by confirming with an authorized agent of the large slaughterhouse outside Makkah that their wish has been fulfilled. Pilgrims pay for these donations in advance. Much of that meat is shipped to needy countries to feed the poor.

After that, pilgrims move towards the Grand Mosque 4 kilometers (2.3 miles) away by bus or on foot to carry out another important ritual. Circling the Kaaba, known as Efadah, takes few hours depending on the size of the crowd. It will take the entire day until midnight before all or most pilgrims are able to finish circling, depending on their place in line, so to speak. Those who start early finish early and those who start late must wait for those ahead of them.

After performing rituals in Grand Mosque, pilgrims return to Mina to spend the night there and to resume the second stoning the three pillars of Satan over the next two days. Mina is a city of modern tents with all modern services available. Amenities vary depending on price. Richer pilgrims receive five star accommodations while poorer pilgrims are housed in cramped quarters.

## **The Return to Mina**

In the late morning of June 16, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims left the Grand Mosque towards Mina to find the road completely blocked, according to a video taken by an unknown Egyptian pilgrim a few hundred feet east of Mina.

The 64 seconds video provides valuable clues as to what really happened on that fateful day. The video was carefully analyzed and correlated with other information obtained from dozens of interviews with former officials, local residents and pilgrims of various nationalities.

The Gulf Institute expert, Colonel Rabih Alenezi and a Saudi-American satellite image consultant who performed Hajj, have worked together to make this investigation possible.



**Colonel Rabih Alenezi inside the Grand Mosque during his Service in Hajj**

Alenezi served in Saudi Police for more than 20 years, lived in Makkah for two years and performed Hajj. Colonel Alenezi also served with Hajj security forces for 10 years.

Alenezi graduated from King Fahd Security College, the premier Saudi security-training center and later trained in Arizona at the Phoenix and Richmond Police Academy for two years. In the UK, he earned an MBA from Aberdeen University and attended Leeds University as well. He defected from the Saudi government in 2023 and currently lives in the United Kingdom.

## Location of Deaths

The video was taken outside Lahore Qalander Pakistani restaurant located off Al-Azizyah Main Road, also known as AlHaram Road because it leads to the Grand Mosque. Google images and YouTube videos of the restaurant and the road matched the same in the video. The restaurant has since closed and moved away from the city center. The building is a hotel called Ares Almashair.



Lahore Qalander Restaurant from A Pilgrim's video -- Lahore Qalander Restaurant (from Google maps)



## Time of Day

The video did not display the date and time of day it was taken, but the presence of pilgrims wearing their white Ihram among others who wore normal clothing confirmed the video was taken on June 16, the day of Eid. Pilgrims are allowed to remove their Ihram following the first stoning of Satan, performed earlier in the day in Mina, but many chose to keep it on to preform Efadah and change after returning to Mina at their residence.

Determining the time the video was taken was a complicated task initially - until the examiners noticed the lack of shadows. Al-Azizyah Main road runs east to west with a 45-degree angle. The westward direction is 45 degrees northward and its eastward towards Mina is tilted 45 southward. It appears the pilgrims took shelter from the sun using the tall building housing Lahore Qalandar restaurant. At the one-second mark, the sun can be seen to the right side (northwest) of the building. This indicates early afternoon, approximately around 2 PM. The camera is pointing south-west.

Another video provided by the London-Based organization, Monitor of Hajj and Umrah Violations (MHUV), shows dead pilgrims left on the hot asphalt road. The photo below is a screen capture of a dead pilgrim, indicating the approximate time when thousands of pilgrims started dying and left without help. The screenshot indicates the approximate time to be shortly after noon. [Noon in Makkah on June 16, 2024 was at 12:21 PM](#)

This video was taken on King Fahd road northward after pilgrims exited the tunnel. Yellow and black painted concrete barriers match satellite images of the ½-mile section of King Fahd road leading to Al-Azizyah main road.



**The Short Sun's Shadow of a Dead Pilgrim on the Road**



## **Saudi Road Blocks Trapped Pilgrims under the Sun**

On that fateful day, pilgrims finished their rituals in the Grand Mosque (Efadah) and were returning to Mina where they planned to stay for three more days to finish the Hajj.

Some take busses from Al Ghaza bus station located north East of the Grand Mosque. These busses travel to Mina through the northbound ½-mile long King Fahd Road tunnel, continuing for another ½ mile on same road before making a right turn heading east on Al-Azizyah Main Road to reach Mina one kilometer (.6 mile) away.

The distance between the Grand Mosque and Mina is 3.3 Kilometers (2.05 Miles) by car or on foot. This is a short trip, considering it takes place on paved roads and inside a city without natural obstacles. It takes around [30-40 minutes to walk 2 miles with slow pace](#).

So what happened? The answer is found in the 64 seconds video. A thorough examination of that critical tri-intersection, locally known as Asheshah, separating Al-Azizyah main road from the gate of Mina, revealed the cause. One can see the traffic standing still on Al-Azizyah Main Road at the gate of Mina. It resembled a parking lot.

The long wait forced pilgrims to disembark from coach busses and vehicles, but human traffic was also blocked by armed Saudi security forces. Blocking roads in Hajj is a common Saudi practice. It is done to allow clear passage for Saudi and non-Saudi VIPs motorcades. Road closures are frequent, sudden and long. Almost everyone interviewed for the report agreed that is the case.

The photos obtained by the IGA clearly show the Saudi roadblocks and security forces ahead. Photos taken from the eighth floor of Ares Al Mashaer, which housed Lahore Qalndar restaurant, clearly depict Saudi forces and barricades erected before pilgrims ever got there. Red dots were added to point out visible Saudi security personnel and vehicles.



**A Photo Taken from Ares Al Mashaer Hotel, July 5, 2022**

Colonel Rabih Alenezi and many pilgrims interviewed for this report confirmed the many security roadblocks around Makkah during Hajj season. Alenezi said that police is the leading force that enforces road closure, which causes stampedes, overcrowding and the disruption of the pilgrims' traffic between the holy sites.

A man from Jeddah, interviewed June 1, 2025, said he waited six hours to get from the Grand Mosque to Mina because security forces closed the road. "We had to exit the bus and just wait with nowhere to go," he said.

Colonel Alenezi said he witnessed abrupt road closures every year he served on Hajj security forces. "You see a road full of pilgrims struggling to move next to a road that is completely empty because the king, a prince or even a guest of the Saudi state will be passing. He added that the Saudi priority is to provide security for officials and VIPs and for the pilgrims.

## **AlMuaisem Tragedy**

During the research for this report, the cause of the 1990 mass Hajj deaths in the AlMuaisam tunnel was confirmed. In that tragedy, over 2000 pilgrims suffocated inside AlMuaisam tunnel in a stampede the Saudi government blamed on unnamed entities to escape responsibility. The tunnel then was used by pilgrims to move from Mina to the Grand Mosque on Eid day.

According to an anonymous retired Saudi security officer who served in Hajj that year and to Sami Anqawi, the Makkah born former head of Hajj Institute, the tunnel's exit to King Khaled Road was closed by the motorcade of then Deputy Minister of Interior Ahmed AbdulAziz AlSaud who was on his way from Mina Palace to AlSafa Palace, which adjoins the Grand Mosque.

The tunnel exit was blocked, squeezing thousands of pilgrims inside to death. The pilgrims had nowhere to go, with thousands more pouring into the tunnel unaware of the closure. Colonel Alenezi repeated that he witnessed numerous road closures in Makkah by forces protecting members of the Saudi ruling family.

## **Militarizing the Hajj**

Hajj is a religious practice that requires the Muslim pilgrims to replace their normal clothes with a two simple white sheets and stay in humble accommodations for the duration. The Saudi state views this differently. It views Hajj as a “security operation”, Colonel Alenezi explained.

Alenezi referred to the annual Saudi security parade at the start of Hajj season that brings together various branches of Saudi security and military forces in the largest show of force in the country. On [May 31, 2025, thousands of Saudi soldiers](#) adorned with camouflaged face painting brandished shoulder-fired anti-armored missiles and varieties of machine guns, while columns of armored personnel carriers drove past the stage where Saudi officials watched the parade.

Saudi officials issue annual warnings to the pilgrims threatening anyone who crosses the line. “Hajj security is a redline,” said Saudi Police Chief General Mohammed Al-Bassami a few days ago. Saudi media repeats this and similar statements ad nauseam. Saudi minister of interior AbdulAziz Saud Naif chairs the Hajj Committee that includes the minister of Hajj and security commanders.

The June 8, 2024 press conference of the heads of various Saudi security and military forces in charge of Hajj provided clues of how the Hajj 2024 tragedy unfolded. The event was headlined by Lt. Lieutenant General Mohammed Al-Bassami, head of Saudi public security, alongside other security and military commanders. Al-Bassami said the plans for the security and crowd control and movement were approved by the minister of interior.



**Saudi Military and Security Parade May 31, 2025 in Arafat outside Makkah**

The number of security and military forces in Hajj is unnecessarily large, Alenezi said. He added that Hajj should be a civilian operation, with security element. “Instead it is a security operation, with civilian support,” he said.

Alenezi said security road closures are causing deaths and tragedies in Hajj. “If a prince passes by, suddenly, the road is blocked to allow him to pass unencumbered. It is a tragedy,” he said. Massive numbers of Saudi soldiers and vehicles can be seen around Makkah and holy sites during Hajj, a fact that Alenezi said it is making Hajj more dangerous for the pilgrims.

### **Deadly Receptions**

While hundreds of pilgrims were dying at the gates of Mina, two miles away the Saudi rulers led by the country’s strongman, [Crown Prince Mohamed Bin Salman, were gleaming and receiving congratulations for Eid](#) from hundreds of Muslim officials and dignitaries who performed Hajj or were managing their pilgrims.

The annual reception takes place at the sparkling Mina Palace situated on the AlMurslat Mount overlooking Mina and other holy sites. The opulent palace is used by Saudi rulers several days a year to showcase the Saudi state and its rulers to the Muslim world. At the reception, MBS declared the 2024 Hajj season a success, and his Minister of Hajj Tawfiq AlRabeah, congratulated the king and MBS for their achievements.

The reception included several Saudi ministers and many members of the Saudi ruling family, Muslim officials. Among them was Najib Miqati, former Lebanese prime minister, former head of Saudi intelligence and ambassador Turki Faisal Al Saud, AlWaleed bin Talal, many dozens of senior Saudi officials, and many heads of Hajj missions.

A short time later, a [second reception](#) at the same hall began for hundreds of Saudi officials and security commanders who came to offer their loyalty and congratulations to MBS for Eid and the success of Hajj.

Google Earth's area measuring tool revealed that Mina Palace at 1.4 SQ kilometers rivals the size of Grand Mosque. The Palace features two separate sections, five helipads, over 50 buildings, well-manicured green space, protected by a high wall. Outside the wall, the area is surrounded by security buildings and headquarters.

Colonel Alenezi said the palace was protected by thousands of soldiers when he visited during his work on Hajj security forces.



**Mina Palace Overseeing Holy Sites of Mina, Muzdalifa and Arafat**

## **The Prince and the Paupers**

The two MBS receptions at the Mina Palace strained Saudi security forces and other government services who were attending to the protection and comfort of their leaders and their guests. It was not a coincidence that the deaths started while receptions were underway. Dozens, if not hundreds, of motorcades for Saudi officials, members of the ruling family and Muslims officials traveled to and from Mina Palace, causing the havoc of road closures and other restrictions that lead to the slow and painful deaths of Muslim pilgrims. Colonel Alenezi affirmed that the Saudi priority is to protect the king, the princes and the guests of the Saudi government and not the pilgrims. “I have seen the plans for Hajj operations myself”, he said.

This was [affirmed by none other than Lieutenant General Mohamed Maqbool Al-Amri](#), the commander the State Security Presidency’s Special Emergency Forces this June 8 during the annual news conference of heads of Hajj security. AlAmri said his Special Forces include (Diplomatic Protection Forces) that are tasked with accompanying foreign officials performing Hajj ritual at all times and transporting them under guard.

A video of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi’s motorcade in Mina on June 17, 2024, showed a large security detail holding up pilgrims.

Our analysis, reviews backed by witness statements, and the extensive expertise of Colonel Alenezi agree that the slow death of 1400 pilgrims at the gates of Mina last year was caused by the Saudi government. The excessive number of Saudi forces in Hajj, and the useless presence of top Saudi officials shifted security and health priorities to serve them at the expense of the pilgrims. Both Lt General AlAmri and Colonel Alenezi agree that Saudi security forces are everywhere in Makkah and are spread across Hajj locations. The excessive number of security personnel has resulted in creating the conditions for these repeated tragedies, Alenezi said. Many past pilgrims who spoke to IGA also agreed on the same conclusion.

This is highlighted by the deaths of thousands caused by easily preventable conditions 0.75 kilometer away from the large King Faisal Hospital, the nearest hospital to Mina with over 300 beds.

## **Al-Azizyah Road Video Transcript**

Below is the full script of the video made by an unknown Egyptian pilgrim and made available on the internet June 16, 2024.

*“There is death, people as you can see the number of deaths as is pretty high, so high. They are on the street, there is no ambulances or anything. This case, this man is dead. We have this case as well, this lady is also dead and this lady is dead as well.*

*Three or four are dead in one square alone. This besides the strange behavior of people dealing with the event. People are eating and drinking normally. This woman is dying. It is over here. She is on her last breath. People are helpless as what to do. This other woman is also dying, just seconds. This woman too, here, her soul is exiting. Here, here. That’s it.*

*People, I don’t know how to help her. I am unable to do anything. There are no tools, no supplies. Ambulance service tells you, I have 900 people ahead of you, who informed police. Police say we have nothing to do with it.*

*The situation. I do not understand anything. I do not understand anything.”*



## The Players

- 1- Mohamed Bin Salman, Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister and de facto absolute ruler. He is in charge of government policies and is an unchallenged and absolute authority on Hajj affairs. MBS moves with his large entourage and protection forces to Makkah at the end of Hajj season, complicating its operations.



MBS at Mina Palace during Reception of Muslim Hajj Leaders June 16, 2024

- 2- AbdulAziz bin Saud bin Naif bin Abdulaziz, Minister of Interior and Chairman of the Supreme Hajj Committee. He has the day-to-day authority over Hajj operations. While real authority lies at the hand of MBS, Abdulaziz is the top authority during Hajj with a few exceptions. He oversees the annual military parade showcasing the massive Saudi forces in Hajj.



AbdulAziz bin Saud bin Naif during the annual Hajj Military Parade in Arafat, May 31, 2025

- 3- Lt. Gen. Mohammed Al-Bassami, head of Saudi public security and part of the ministry of the interior. He is the top commander of the security forces and reports to the minister of interior directly. While he has authority over his soldiers, he does not have any over army, National Guard, state security presidency officers and soldiers.



Al-Bassami on June 8, 2024 during Annual Pre-Hajj Press Briefing

- 4- AbdulAziz AlHwairini, the head of the notorious State Security Presidency, the most powerful security apparatus in the country and supersedes all others. SSP reports directly to MBS and has replaced the ministry of interior for domestic security. AlHwairini moves to Makkah during Hajj and remains behind the scenes to coordinate his commanders' actions. He is responsible for most of the human rights crimes in the country.



**AbdulAziz AlHwairini, the Head of Saudi State Security Presidency**

- 5- Ahmed AbdulAziz Al-Issa, the shadowy head of Saudi Mabathith, a deputy of AlHwairini. Al-Issa's record is not different of that of his superior. Al-Issas was involved in the torturing and killing of dozens of protesters and civilians in Qatif during his tenure as head of Mabathith in the Eastern region. Mabathith is the domestic spy agency in charge of surveillance and arrests of thousands including pilgrims. Hundreds of its agents and collaborates roam Hajj locations for surveillance and arrest.



**Ahmed AbdulAziz Al-Issa, the shadowy head of Mabathith.**

- 6- Lieutenant General Mohamed Maqbool Al-Amri, the commander the State Security Presidency's Special Emergency Forces, the well-equipped and highly trained rapid force used against domestic threats and involved in killing of hundreds of civilians. While the exact number of this force is not known, public sources estimate it at 100,000 soldiers properly an exaggeration pushed by the government itself. This is the top security forces during Hajj. Al-Amri was promoted by King Salman in October 2024.



**Al-Amri on June 8, 2024 during Annual Pre-Hajj Press Briefing**

- 7- Lt. General Mufleh bin Saleem Al-Otaibi, the Commander of Special Forces, a branch of the Saudi State Security Presidency. This force led the attack on Awamyia city in the summer of 2017 killing dozens of civilians and razing the ancient AlMosawara quarter. This was the first time ever-Saudi government shelled a city under its control. This force is heavily armed and trained by American military contractors and mercenaries. This force launched the largest domestic military operation since the foundation of the Saudi state in 1932. Al-Otaibi was promoted by King Salman in October 2024 in spite of the deaths.



**Al-Otaibi receiving his promotion to Lt. General from King Salman in October 2024**

- 8- General Suhail Saqer AlMutairi, the head of the Saudi Royal Guard in charge of protecting the king and the crown prince. These forces enter Makkah to secure the massive AlSafa and sprawling Mina palaces where the king and/or the crown prince reside for a few days during Hajj and end of Ramadan. They are blamed for most of the prolonged and abrupt road closers leading to many pilgrims' deaths and injuries.



**General Suhail Saqer AlMutairi, head of the Saudi Royal Guard**

- 9- General Saleh Ali AlJumaah, the commander of Saudi Arabian Diplomatic Protection Forces, Makkah region (SADPF). These forces are in charge of protecting non-Saudi officials and diplomats performing Hajj or visiting Makkah and Madinah. (SADPF) organizes the hundreds of motorcades and accompanies presidents, prime ministers and other high-ranking pilgrims and visitors. (SADPF) is properly is more responsible for road closers during Hajj than other forces.



**Gen. Saleh Ali AlJumaah, commander of Diplomatic Protection Forces, Makkah region**

## Recommendations:

1. Evacuate the Mina, AlSafa and Mina palaces and convert them to public facilities to use for Hajj and other public purposes due to their close proximity to the Grand mosque and holy sites. There is no practical purpose for these massive buildings at their current locations, where they crowd that tight space needed by millions.
2. End Saudi militarization of Hajj. The high presence of Saudi security and military during Hajj has not prevented disasters but made them more plausible. Managing Hajj requires a civilian authority. Security should not be in charge of Hajj, period. Saudi Arabia should end its military parade at the beginning of Hajj. Thousands of soldiers and officers in such parades should direct their energy at ensuring a comfortable environment for pilgrims. The Saudi government should stop issuing their annual threats and ultimatums to the millions of pilgrims.

The images of heavily armed Saudi soldiers brandishing bazookas and machine guns and riding military armored vehicles is extremely objectionable and contradict the spiritual journey and the experience of the pilgrims

Security forces have a role to play but it should be away from the millions of pilgrims. These forces can stay on the outskirts of Makkah to ensure that only authorized pilgrims can enter. Makkah should be a soldier-free zone.

3. End the Saudi practice of providing excessive security details to Saudi and non-Saudi officials performing Hajj. The practice of motorcades during Hajj have been linked to several stampedes including the 1990 and the 2015 stampedes. Hajj is meant as an equalizer of all Muslims, so the practice of VIP Hajj must end forever.
4. Create a civilian Hajj core to manage the Grand mosque and the Prophet's mosques, including its security. The sight of Saudi soldiers inside these holy places, especially during Hajj, is antithetical to the message of Hajj and the spirituality of these holy places. Prior to the Saudi takeover of Makkah, The Grand Mosque and the Prophet's Mosque were served by a civilian core called Aghwat established around 700 AD by the Abbasid ruler AbuJafar AlMansour.

There should be a new robust civilian cadre with a distinct uniform tasked with serving Makkah and Madinah and the tens of millions of pilgrims and visitors year around. This is not a job for a security officer or a religious cleric. Consult with Muslim governments and talent in best practices to make Hajj safer and smoother for pilgrims.

5. Stop the Saudi policy of overbuilding Makkah and Medina. Destroying the natural environment topography of Makkah especially has turned it into a city of concrete and asphalt. This has exacerbated the impact of the weather. It has made the city hotter than usual and made it suffer more flooding during the rare rainfalls. Open and green space is the best measure against extreme heat and heavy rainfalls. Add large water mist sprinklers along the pilgrims' path similar

to what has been used in the holy city of Karbala during Ashura where millions converge. Such mist sprinklers can be installed atop hundreds of hotels alongside pilgrims' routes.

6. Add substantial greenery to the holy cities to serve as shading for pilgrims during warm seasons. The paths of pilgrims between holy sites should be covered with trees instead of concrete. There are plentiful domestic species of trees that can thrive there. Instead of shelling billions on Saudi palaces in Makkah, with expensive greenery, millions of pilgrims are more deserving.
7. Stop price gouging affecting pilgrims' housing, food and transportation. Many pilgrims have complained that local businesses increase prices during Hajj and the end of Ramdan when Makkah is visited by millions.

## **Timeline: Hajj Catastrophes**

2015 - Thousands, of pilgrims were crushed to death at the hajj in Mecca.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/09/06/world/middleeast/2015-hajj-stampede.html>

2015 - Crane collapse at Makkah's Grand Mosque

<https://www.cnn.com/2015/09/11/middleeast/saudi-arabia-mecca-crane-collapse/index.html>

1990 - Stampede in AlMoaisem tunnel at Mecca causes deaths of 2000 pilgrims.

1994 - Stampede near Jamarat Bridge in Mina kills 270.

1997 - Fire kills 343 pilgrims at camp in Mina.

1998 - Stampede near Jamarat Bridge killed 119.