

Mecca Crush Survivors Share Accounts, Blame Saudi Authorities



Mecca, September 28 (RHC)-- Survivors of a deadly crush during the Hajj rituals have shared their accounts of the incident in which hundreds of people were killed near Saudi Arabia's holy city of Mecca.

Many of those who survived the crush on September 24 in Mina, located outside Mecca, blame Saudi authorities' mismanagement and the slow pace of rescue efforts for the deadly incident. The crush occurred as a large crowd of pilgrims were on their way to participate in the symbolic stoning of Satan in Jamarat.

An Iranian woman who witnessed the tragedy told reporters: "Saudi police and aid workers didn't even look at us. Many were alive for four or five hours, but help came too late and they died." Other survivors accused Saudi police of being selective in rescuing the pilgrims.

Some two million people were in Mecca for the annual pilgrimage at the time of the stampede. "The pressure of the crowd was immense. I couldn't breathe. I fell under people's feet twice but my friends pulled me out. I saw death with my eyes," a young Iranian said.

According to Saudi Arabia's Health Ministry, the death toll from the incident stands at nearly 770. However, the Head of Iran's Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization Saeed Ohadi says the disaster has killed around 2,000 pilgrims.

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