

Saudi Arabia considers limiting Hajj pilgrims



Mecca, June 9 (RHC)-- Saudi Arabia has announced it is considering to drastically limit the number of people allowed for the annual Hajj pilgrimage expected to start in late July, sources told Reuters news agency.

Some 2.5 million pilgrims visit the holiest sites of Islam in Mecca and Medina for the week-long Hajj, a once-in-a-lifetime duty for every able-bodied Muslim who can afford it. According to sources familiar with the matter, authorities were now considering allowing "only symbolic numbers" this year, with restrictions including a ban on older pilgrims and additional health checks.

While some officials are pushing for a cancellation of the haj, others are considering allowing up to 20 percent of each country's regular quota of pilgrims, another source familiar with the matter told Reuters.

Muslims pray during the Laylat al-Qadr, or Night of Power, the holiest night for Muslims, while practicing social distancing, following the outbreak of the coronavirus disease.



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