

# **Vigorous Steps and Strict Measures Taken for Umrah Pilgrims' Safety**

12 November 2020

The Government of Saudi Arabia, under the generous directions of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and HRH the Crown Prince, continues to take precautionary measures and active steps to create a safe healthy environment for those coming from outside the Kingdom to do Umrah. These measures aim to preserve the health and safety of pilgrims and limit the spread of the novel Coronavirus.

Saudi health authorities, led by the Ministry of Health (MOH), are enforcing a package of precautionary measures before the arrival of pilgrims. These measures will also be enforced during the performance of Umrah rituals. All pilgrims coming from outside the Kingdom will be obliged to adhere to these preventive measures.

MOH stressed that pilgrims must be tested for COVID-19, especially the age group 18-50 years before they arrive to the Kingdom. All pilgrims that arrive at the airport must prove that they have undergone a recent PCR test (sampling must be done at most 72 hours ago). Moreover, a quick screening of all passengers is conducted, and all precautionary measures are applied during the trip to Makkah. This includes wearing masks and maintaining safe distances on board of buses. Sterilizers are also provided. This all takes place under the supervision and follow-up of trained, qualified health professionals.

Another quick screening is also done upon arrival at the hotel. A PCR test is performed 48 hours later on all pilgrims and the results of the tests are monitored. Additionally, they will be getting quarantined for 3 days at the hotel from the time of their arrival. Individuals whose PCR test results come out negative are allowed to perform Umrah. On the other hand, positive cases continue their quarantine for 10 more days. Individuals who came into direct contact with positive cases are allowed



up on a daily basis. Continuous health education is provided to all pilgrims during that time.

Coordination and communication with all relevant authorities take place continuously. Furthermore, the implementation of preventive measures during Umrah is followed up. Moreover, ongoing monitoring of any suspected cases is done, and necessary measures are taken accordingly.

Noteworthy, KSA was the first to take many proactive measures that played an effective role in curbing the effects of the pandemic. It also took early steps in the field of cooperation with international and regional communities.

Furthermore, it offered financial contributions to support international efforts to deal with COVID-19. This support was allocated to specific organizations and bodies to challenge the spread of the pandemic and handle global emergencies. It contributed to developing health systems and training, supporting early warning systems, and responding to epidemics and pandemics.

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