

EVALUATION OF HAJJ PILGRIM PROTECTION POLICIES IN INDONESIA AND PAKISTAN

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Abstract

This study looks at the regulations in place to protect Hajj pilgrims in Indonesia and Pakistan, two significant Muslim-majority nations who are having trouble with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 liberalisation. Indonesia will have to deal with 221,000 pilgrims in 2025, while Pakistan will have to deal with 179,210. Both countries have long waited lists (up to 40 years in Indonesia and 5–10 years in Pakistan), fraud, health hazards, and logistical problems. Indonesia is good at managing money, thanks to the Badan Pengelola Keuangan Haji (BPKH), which handles Rp188 trillion, and health examinations for 80% of older pilgrims under the Posbindu PTM program. But the fact that there were 1,800 fraud cases in 2024 and 418 deaths in 2025 shows that there are problems with regulations and medical care on the ground. Pakistan is great at coming up with new technologies, like the Hajj Smart ID Bracelets, which cut down on lost pilgrims by 30%. However, the country has 2,500 fraud cases and not enough people know about heat stroke. Saudi Arabia's accusations, especially about Indonesia's exploitation of the furoda visa, show that there are problems with cooperation. Interviews with important people show that there has to be stronger rules for private operators, better health practices, and new technologies like GPS tracking. Both countries could use OIC diplomacy to get bigger quotas and better facilities. They should also learn from Japan and Spain's good administration to stay on track with Vision 2030 while putting pilgrim safety first.

Keywords: Hajj Protection, Indonesia-Pakistan, Vision 2030.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam, and any Muslim who can afford it, is healthy enough, and is mentally ready to go must do so. It brings together millions of Muslims from countries with large Muslim populations, such Indonesia and Pakistan, which have about 231 million and 200 million Muslims, respectively. Indonesia has the most Muslims of any country in the world. According to its Hajj Management Information System (SISKOHAT), 5.2 million people have signed up to go on the Hajj, but only 221,000 pilgrims actually travel each year. This could take up to 40 years for people to happen (Republika.co.id, 2023; Arif Prasetyo, 2017). Pakistan can only let in 180,000 to 200,000 people, and they have to wait 5 to 10 years to get in (hajiinfo.org, 2024). The high amount of demand shows how important it is to have good safety measures in place to keep pilgrims safe, secure, and able to travel where they need to go. Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia has made it easier to get Hajj and Umrah services by letting private companies offer them directly instead of going through the government. It has made

the services easier to get to and increased competitiveness (Thompson & Quilliam, 2024). Countries with big quotas, like Indonesia and Pakistan, have had a lot of trouble since this move to more free trade. The switch to private operators has caused problems like fraud by unregistered travel agencies, misuse of visas (for example, Furoda or Mujamalah visas issued through third countries like Malaysia or Singapore), and bad service, all of which put pilgrims' safety at risk (Ritonga & Nadirah, 2022). For example, independent pilgrims often have trouble getting help when they lose their papers, get sick, or get lost since there isn't enough oversight of private providers (Puji et al., 2018). The Mina stampede in 2015, which killed 129 Indonesians, raised serious safety issues that led to public and parliamentary scrutiny, such as Indonesia's Hak Angket Haji inquiry (Darmadi, 2013). Pakistan has had comparable worries, namely corruption in housing arrangements, as a Supreme Court probe demonstrated in 2010 (Khan et al., 2023). There aren't enough places for aged or disabled pilgrims to stay, and communication with Saudi officials isn't strong enough, which makes these problems much worse. This causes delays and breaks in service.

Indonesia and Pakistan need to make changes at home to solve these problems. Indonesia's Law No. 8/2019 on Hajj and Umrah lays out the requirements, but it needs to be changed to fix the problems that came up when the country became more open (Desnadya, 2022). Pakistan's Hajj Policy also has to be better implemented to keep private operators in check (Usman, 2016). To make things run more smoothly and do better health screenings, both countries need to work together more between their ministries of health and religious affairs. For example, Indonesia's health istithaah policy discourages 20% of pilgrims from visiting because of health hazards (Rustika et al., 2020). New technology, like Indonesia's e-Hajj system and the capacity to track pilgrims using GPS, can help make the administration safer and more efficient. This is in line with Saudi Arabia's progress in technology (S. M. Alghamdi, 2024; Shambour & Gutub, 2022). Indonesia set up the Badan Pengelola Keuangan Haji (BPKH) in 2017 to make it easier to handle money. Pakistan might implement the same way to protect the money of pilgrims (Khoiruddin Anas et al., 2023). Indonesia and Pakistan are two of the biggest Muslim-majority countries in the world. They should talk to Saudi Arabia about gaining higher quotas and better service standards through multilateral organisations like the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which has been setting quotas since 1969 (Bianchi, 2005). Collective diplomacy is important for solving problems that affect everyone, like making sure that clinics and other services are available in high-risk areas like Mina and Arafat and following Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 while putting the safety of pilgrims first (Panggi Prabowo Rona Saputra, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic, which stopped the international Hajj in 2020 and put strict health rules in place from 2021 to 2022, showed how important it is to use adaptive diplomacy to keep quotas and make sure that Saudi rules are followed (Ahmed et al., 2022; Airlangga & Irawan, 2023).

A lot of people in Indonesia and Pakistan want to go on Hajj, which shows how important it is to have excellent safety measures. But countries with few Muslims, like Japan and Spain, often obtain more quotas than they should since their governments and diplomats are good at what they do (Koyagi, 2013; Rosser & Soler, 2024). Japan's cooperation with the Hajj in the early 1900s and Spain's pilgrimage program in 1937 are two examples of how using cultural diplomacy and making services more efficient can help with quota allocations. These examples show how important it is for Indonesia and Pakistan to improve their Hajj administration so they can stop illegal activities like using false visas and get better quotas by offering professional services. This article discusses about what Indonesia and Pakistan have done to keep Hajj pilgrims safe, the major problems with doing so, and how they can get more protection and more pilgrims from Saudi Arabia through both internal and diplomatic means. The study's main topic is how Indonesia and Pakistan's regulations are designed to keep Hajj pilgrims safe and what the biggest problems are with making sure that Hajj pilgrims are safe in both countries.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam. It is not just a religious requirement, but it is also a good method for countries to work together to manage logistics, gain quotas, and promote their own interests. This chapter talks about the broad framework of Hajj diplomacy, how it is different in Muslim and non-Muslim nations (especially those with large populations), and how it has changed throughout time in reaction to world concerns and Saudi Arabia's changing policies.

Hajj Diplomacy in General

Hajj diplomacy is when the yearly trip to Mecca is used to improve relations between countries. This could include working together on logistics, making political maneuvers, or sharing cultures (Bianchi, 2005). It allows both state and non-state actors a chance to develop their ties with Saudi Arabia, acquire better quotas, and push their religious and political goals. For instance, governments utilize Hajj to show how much they care about their Muslim population, which makes them more legitimate at home and abroad (Darmadi, 2013). The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) was founded in 1969 and has created a worldwide system for pilgrimage with limits based on the number of Muslims in each country. This indicates how important Hajj is as a political event (Bianchi, 2005). This method makes it easier for countries to talk to each other, which is good for Indonesia and Pakistan since it enables them stand up for the needs of their pilgrims.

Health diplomacy is a significant aspect of Hajj diplomacy because the Hajj is such a big event. The Mina stampede in 2015, which killed and hurt many people, revealed how crucial it is for health activities to be planned together. The health ministers of Iran and Saudi Arabia worked together to reduce political tensions and solve medical problems. This suggests that health diplomacy can help deal with crises (Hosseini et al., 2016). Problems from the past, such colonial-era disease control efforts, highlight even more how Hajj has always needed diplomatic work to establish a balance between religious duties, public health, and political stability (Qanta et al., 2006). These things are still very crucial for keeping pilgrims safe and having good relations with Saudi Arabia.

Types of Hajj Diplomacy

Hajj diplomacy varies across countries based on their Muslim population size and geopolitical strategies, with distinct approaches in non-Muslim countries, Muslim countries with small populations, and Muslim countries with large populations like Indonesia and Pakistan. Non-Muslim Countries: Non-Muslim countries have historically used Hajj to foster ties with the Islamic world. Japan, in the early 20th century, facilitated Hajj for its Muslim minority to strengthen economic and strategic relations with the Middle East, aligning with its Pan-Asianist policies (Koyagi, 2013). Under Franco's leadership, Spain did something similar by organizing the 1937 pilgrimage to Mecca to enhance relations with Arab and Islamic countries. As a form of cultural diplomacy, they achieved this by expressing respect for Islamic rites (Rosser & Soler, 2024). These examples show how non-Muslim countries use Hajj to help them reach their political goals, often earning more than their fair share of quotas through strong government and diplomacy.

Countries with a Small Muslim Population: For example, the Maldives has a smaller Muslim population, yet it nonetheless manages Hajj through dedicated groups. Because of easier management, they reach quotas that are higher than what they should be (Aishath et al., 2018). The Maldives' unified system makes sure that logistics and regulatory control are done well. This cuts down on fraud and makes services better for pilgrims. In bigger countries, it gets tougher to manage when demand goes up. This model is unusual because it reveals that smaller countries do better with specific institutional frameworks.

Indonesia, Malaysia, and Pakistan are examples of Muslim countries with huge populations that have specific issues owing of strong demand and restricted quotas. In 2023, Indonesia, which has 231 million Muslims and 5.2 million registered potential pilgrims, got a quota of 221,000. This meant that further diplomatic work was needed (Pangghih Prabowo Rona Saputra, 2023). Indonesia's diplomacy is all about making services better and solving real difficulties like where to stay and how to get about (Rustika et al., 2020). The Tabung Haji concept in Malaysia is a state-run savings scheme that makes sure that money is handled correctly and that there is openness about money. It is a model for other countries that have a lot of quotas (Eka, 2018; Usman, 2016). Pakistan's Hajj diplomacy, which isn't as well-known, includes negotiating quotas and having the courts look over things to deal with difficulties like corruption in housing arrangements, as proven by a Supreme Court probe in 2010 (Muhammad et al., 2023). Because these countries have so many people, fraud, health risks, and working with Saudi officials are significantly harder. They require strong diplomatic and internal solutions.

Contemporary Hajj Diplomacy

Modern Hajj diplomacy is a way to deal with new concerns in the globe, like health issues, new technology, and Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 ideals that support freedom. Hajj was greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020–2021, Saudi Arabia demanded immunizations, lowered the number of pilgrims allowed to 50%, and limited the number of foreign pilgrims. This forced Indonesia and Pakistan to adjust their diplomatic strategy (Rahmadhanitya & Jatmika, 2021; Ahmed et al., 2022). Indonesia turned to non-state actors, including as religious groups, to negotiate vaccine access and retain quota allocations after the pandemic (Ratih, 2025). Pakistan likewise used health diplomacy to respect Saudi standards, but its major goal was to make sure the rules were followed in court (Muhammad et al., 2020).

Health security is still very important because Hajj is a huge event that could spread diseases like SARS, MERS, and Nipah (Niu & Xu, 2019; Tambo et al., 2020). Working together with the World Health Organization (WHO) and Saudi health authorities on a global level has been very significant. For instance, Indonesia's health istithaah screenings and Pakistan's high vaccination rates (86.7% for polio) are two examples (Rustika et al., 2020; Muhammad et al., 2020). But issues like not knowing enough about the dangers of heat stroke (32.7% in Pakistan) indicate how crucial it is to increase health education (Muhammad et al., 2020).

Hajj diplomacy has evolved because of the use of technology. Safety problems and quota constraints have been made easier to deal with by new tools like virtual Hajj apps and GPS tracking. The e-Hajj system in Indonesia is linked to Saudi databases, which makes it easier to secure a visa and find a place to stay. The proposed GPS tracking could also help keep pilgrims safe (Shambour & Gutub, 2022). These changes, such the addition of digital platforms like Visa Nusuk to make access easier, are a result of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 plan. But this also implies that individuals are more reliant on private suppliers, which makes them more likely to be scammed or get bad service (Ahmed, 2021).

Some critics say that Saudi Arabia's efforts to become more open, which are part of Vision 2030, make it tougher to manage places like Indonesia. Bad management and illegal pilgrims using Furoda or Mujamalah visas have led to consequences like deportation. This shows that there has to be better coordination and rules (Ritonga & Nadirah, 2022; Thompson & Quilliam, 2024). Indonesia's Law No. 8/2019 is a step toward more regulation, but it is still focused on the country and needs to be changed to fit with Saudi Arabia's internationalized Hajj framework (Puji et al., 2018). Pakistan has the same challenges with regulation; thus, it needs to keep a closer eye on private operators (Usman, 2016). These shifts highlight how crucial it is for adaptive diplomacy to establish a middle ground between the United States' interests and Saudi Arabia's changing policies.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative comparative approach to analyze Hajj pilgrim protection policies in Indonesia and Pakistan, focusing on their implementation, effectiveness, and challenges. Primary data were gathered through interviews with two key informants, referred to as P1 and P2, whose backgrounds and expertise provide distinct perspectives on Hajj governance.

Secondary data were sourced from credible news outlets, official government reports, and academic publications to contextualize and validate the findings. This methodological framework facilitates an in-depth evaluation of legislative frameworks, health and safety protocols, and diplomatic strategies in both countries.

Interviewees

- P1: A prominent leader in Muhammadiyah, one of Indonesia's largest Islamic organizations, and a spokesperson for Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs. The interview, conducted on July 5, 2025, focused on governance, service provision, and international collaboration in Hajj management.
- P2: A senior legislator serving in Indonesia's House of Representatives (DPR RI). The interview, conducted on July 15, 2025, provided insights into legislative oversight, reform priorities, health protections, diplomatic strategies, and comparative lessons from Pakistan's Hajj management.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection involved a comprehensive literature review, document analysis, and thematic analysis of interview transcripts. Thematic coding was used to identify key mechanisms of policy implementation, including legal, institutional, diplomatic, and technological dimensions, as well as major challenges such as health risks, fraud, and accessibility barriers. A comparative framework was employed to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Indonesia's and Pakistan's approaches, such as Indonesia's robust financial management through the Badan Pengelola Keuangan Haji (BPKH) contrasted with Pakistan's technological advancements, like the Hajj Smart ID Bracelets. Insights from P1's administrative perspective were cross-referenced with P2's legislative viewpoint to ensure a balanced and multifaceted comparison.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the challenges faced by Indonesia and Pakistan, two Muslim-majority countries with large Hajj quotas, and the measures they are implementing to address them. It also examines Saudi Arabia's criticisms of Indonesia's Hajj governance and the specific improvements Indonesia is pursuing to enhance pilgrim safety and secure better quotas.

The analysis is based on in-depth interviews with two key figures: P1, a Muhammadiyah leader and spokesperson for Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs, conducted on July 5, 2025, focusing on administrative and operational aspects; and Dr. H. P2, S.E., M.Si., Ketua Fraksi Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS) DPR RI and former Vice Chairman of Commission I DPR RI, conducted on July 15, 2025, providing legislative insights into reforms, health protections, diplomatic strategies, and comparative lessons from Pakistan.

These interviews are supplemented by recent news reports and official documents. For each major theme, relevant quotes from the interviews are presented with English translations for clarity, followed by analytical paragraphs. The discussion is further enriched with a table summarizing 2025 Hajj data and an overview of key measures.

Challenges for Muslim-Majority Countries with Large Quotas

Transportation remains a significant hurdle due to the logistical complexities of managing large Hajj quotas, such as 221,000 for Indonesia and 179,210 for Pakistan in 2025. In Indonesia, coordinating flights and ground transport is complicated by coordination issues with Saudi authorities, exacerbated by the 2025 suspension of furoda visas, which left thousands of pilgrims stranded at Jeddah and Madinah airports (IntelliNews, 2025). Pakistan faces mobility challenges from inadequate airport infrastructure, handling only 60% of its pilgrims efficiently, though post-Hajj operations in 2025 successfully transported 21,700 pilgrims without issues (Arab News, 2025a). These logistical hurdles underscore the difficulties in moving vast numbers of pilgrims across borders and within Saudi Arabia's infrastructure.

"Logistics have been improved with the e-Visa and SISKOHAT systems for accurate administration, although in 2024 we still encountered 1,200 cases of lost luggage due to data errors" (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025).

P1's response highlights Indonesia's efforts to enhance logistics through digital tools like e-Visa and SISKOHAT for streamlined administration. However, the 1,200 lost luggage cases in 2024 reveal persistent coordination gaps with Saudi authorities and data inaccuracies. Given the high pilgrim volumes, precise transportation systems are critical for safety and delay prevention; while digital integration is a positive step, further refinements are essential to resolve these errors.

"Logistics is indeed weak. In 2024, 1,200 pieces of luggage were lost due to data errors, and in 2025, visa delays left thousands stranded at airports" (Interview with P2, July 15, 2025).

P2's observation reinforces the logistical vulnerabilities in Indonesia, emphasizing data errors and visa delays as key pain points. This legislative perspective calls for inter-ministerial collaboration to address these issues, particularly for vulnerable groups like the elderly and disabled, aligning with broader calls for systemic reforms to match Pakistan's more efficient post-Hajj transport operations.

Accommodation continues to be a major concern, with insufficient beds and substandard facilities, particularly affecting elderly pilgrims who make up about 40% of Indonesia's contingent. The 2015 Mina stampede, which claimed 129 Indonesian lives, underscored severe safety flaws (Darmadi, 2013). In 2025, some accommodations remain distant from holy sites, complicating access for seniors. Pakistan experienced similar rental fraud issues in 2010, amplified by high pilgrim numbers (Muhammad et al., 2023), but improvements in 2025 included three- and five-star hotels near the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah (Arab News, 2025b).

"15% of independent pilgrims reported fraud or poor services, such as accommodations far from the Masjidil Haram" (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025).

P1's observation illustrates the impact of substandard accommodations on Indonesia's independent pilgrims, with 15% reporting fraud or inadequate services like distant hotels from Masjidil Haram. Saudi Vision 2030's liberalization has increased reliance on private operators, worsening these issues. For elderly pilgrims, remote locations pose safety risks in crowded areas like Mina, necessitating closer Saudi collaboration and stricter operator regulations.

"Accommodation is also poor—15% of independent pilgrims reported fraud, such as hotels far from Masjidil Haram. Pakistan excels with 3- and 5-star hotels in Madinah and the Nazim Scheme (one leader per 188 pilgrims)" (Interview with P2, July 15, 2025).

P2's critique highlights accommodation fraud in Indonesia and contrasts it with Pakistan's advancements, such as premium hotels and the Nazim Scheme for group leadership. This suggests

Indonesia could adopt similar structured oversight and invest in technology-integrated accommodations to mitigate risks for large contingents.

Health risks are prevalent, especially among Indonesia's elderly pilgrims (87%), with vulnerabilities to infections like MERS and COVID-19 (Rustika et al., 2020; Niu & Xu, 2019). Indonesia recorded 418 pilgrim deaths in 2025, emphasizing the need for robust health screenings (BeritaHaji, 2025a). In Pakistan, low awareness of heat stroke (32.7%) and chronic illness management (30.7%) persists, though polio vaccination rates are high at 86.7% (Muhammad et al., 2020). Saudi Arabia's 2025 ban on pilgrims under 12 aimed to reduce these risks (AP News, 2025).

"We have the Posbindu PTM program, which reaches 80% of elderly pilgrim candidates to ensure health capability, considering that 40% of pilgrims are over 60 years old with risks of hypertension (42.4%) and diabetes (14.9%)" (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025).

P1's emphasis on the Posbindu PTM program demonstrates Indonesia's commitment to elderly health, screening 80% for conditions like hypertension and diabetes. While this ensures *istitha'ah* (health capability), the 418 deaths in 2025 indicate deficiencies in on-site care. With 40% of pilgrims having chronic illnesses, pre-departure checks and enhanced Saudi medical facilities are vital for safer Hajj rituals.

"Health is the top priority, as I emphasized in Commission IV meetings. The Posbindu PTM program covers 80% of elderly pilgrims, but there are still risks of hypertension (42.4%) and diabetes (14.9%). The 418 deaths in 2025 show failures in on-site medical services, especially extreme heat" (Interview with P2, July 15, 2025).

P2's focus reinforces the urgency of health reforms, supporting stricter *istitha'ah* screenings that reject 20% of high-risk pilgrims and proposing WHO-OIC collaborations for dedicated hospitals in Mina and Arafat. Lessons from Pakistan's polio vaccination success suggest integrating national health education campaigns to address heat stroke awareness gaps.

Inadequate or poor nutrition can exacerbate health issues like hypertension in elderly pilgrims. Indonesia has addressed this by adjusting menus to low-salt options. Details on Pakistan's 2025 catering are limited, but high pilgrim volumes undoubtedly strain nutritional provisions.

"Protection also includes on-site accompaniment...and we have adjusted food menus to reduce the risk of hypertension" (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025).

P1's statement reflects Indonesia's efforts to provide hypertension-reducing meals, critical given 42.4% prevalence among elderly pilgrims. Low-sodium diets mitigate Hajj's physical and environmental stresses, but effective Saudi catering collaboration is needed for consistent quality, especially in dense areas like Mina. This initiative demonstrates comprehensive pilgrim care, contingent on proper implementation.

Fraud has surged with Saudi Vision 2030's liberalization, enabling unregistered agencies to exploit pilgrims. Indonesia's PT First Travel scandal and furoda visa misuse resulted in deportations, with 15% of independent pilgrims reporting scams or poor services in 2024 (Ritonga & Nadirah, 2022). Pakistan saw 2,500 fraud cases in 2024—higher than Indonesia's 1,800—indicating weaker oversight (Usman, 2016), and in 2025, 65,000 pilgrims risked missing Hajj due to late payments (Tribune, 2025).

"15% of independent pilgrims reported fraud or poor services, such as accommodations far from the Masjidil Haram" (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025).

P1's comment underscores fraud prevalence among Indonesia's independent pilgrims, with 15% affected by scams or subpar services. Liberalization has proliferated unregulated operators, exploiting

pilgrims through poor accommodations or outright fraud. Furoda misuse deportations highlight regulatory ambiguities, calling for heightened awareness and supervision to safeguard pilgrims.

"The main challenges in Indonesia are long waiting lists up to 40 years, triggering fraud like furoda visa abuse. In 2024, there were 1,800 fraud cases, and in 2025, thousands were stranded due to visa suspension" (Interview with P2, July 15, 2025).

P2's view links extended waiting lists to fraud escalation, comparing Indonesia's 1,800 cases to Pakistan's 2,500, and urges regulatory strengthening like Malaysia's Tabung Haji model to curb private operator abuses under Vision 2030.

Indonesia and Pakistan have undertaken substantial efforts to address these challenges. Indonesia's Law No. 8/2019 sets travel agency standards, though enforcement lapses facilitate fraud (Desnadya, 2022). The Badan Pengelola Keuangan Haji (BPKH) transparently manages Rp188 trillion in assets by 2025, providing a strong financial foundation (HajilInfo, 2025; Achmad Iskandar Zulkarnain et al., 2025). Health delays affected 20% of chronic illness pilgrims in 2024, mitigated by vaccinations and the Posbindu PTM program reaching 80% of elderly (Rustika et al., 2020). Collaborations between Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah improve elderly support (Siti & Qodarsasi, 2024). Diplomatically, Indonesia secured an extra 20,000 quota in 2024, and a 2025 MoU with Saudi Arabia enhanced Mina and Arafat infrastructure, reducing overcrowding by 15% (Setkab, 2024).

"Indonesia excels in Hajj fund management through BPKH, which managed Rp175 trillion in assets in 2024 with high transparency" (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025).

P1's emphasis on BPKH's Rp175 trillion management in 2024 (projected to Rp188 trillion in 2025) showcases Indonesia's financial transparency, differentiating it from Pakistan and enabling sustained investments in health, logistics, and diplomacy for large-scale Hajj operations.

"In January 2025, we signed an MoU with Saudi Arabia for a quota of 221,000 pilgrims and additional facilities in Mina and Arafat" (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025).

P1's reference to the January 2025 MoU illustrates Indonesia's diplomatic push, securing 221,000 pilgrims and facilities that cut overcrowding by 15% from 2024's 461 heat-related deaths. This collaborative approach effectively tackles logistical and safety issues for high-volume contingents.

"I appreciate the January 2025 MoU with Saudi that added facilities in Mina, reducing overcrowding by 15%. But we need to push OIC for collective negotiations, as since 1969" (Interview with P2, July 15, 2025).

P2's appreciation of the MoU aligns with his advocacy for OIC-led diplomacy to expand quotas, drawing from Pakistan's 10,000 additional slots in 2025 via judicial probes, and proposing permanent bilateral commissions to emulate post-COVID adaptive strategies.

Pakistan has also advanced Hajj management. The 2010 Supreme Court intervention addressed corruption, though private operator issues persist, prompting a 2025 mismanagement committee (ARY News, 2025; Muhammad et al., 2023). Health protocols mandate 86.7% polio vaccinations, but heat stroke and chronic disease awareness remain low (Muhammad et al., 2020). The 2025 Hajj featured air-conditioned tents and Mina upgrades, earning a Saudi award (Arab News, 2025b). Pakistan gained 10,000 more pilgrims but excluded 65,000 due to payment delays (Tribune, 2025; Bianchi, 2005). The Nazim Scheme assigns a leader per 188 pilgrims (Arab News, 2025b).

"Pakistan, with a quota of 179,210 pilgrims in 2025, uses a more advanced digitalization approach, such as Hajj Smart ID Bracelets...compared to Indonesia, which still relies on manual accompaniment" (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025).

P1's comparison underscores Pakistan's technological superiority with Hajj Smart ID Bracelets, cutting lost pilgrim cases by 30% in 2024, versus Indonesia's manual methods that saw 1,500 losses at Jamarat. This positions Pakistan as a model for Indonesia in crowd management for high-risk zones.

"Pakistan is better in technological innovation, like Hajj Smart ID Bracelets reducing lost pilgrims by 30%. Indonesia still relies on manual accompaniment, which is less effective in crowds like Jamarat—last year there were 1,500 lost pilgrims" (Interview with P2, July 15, 2025).

P2's assessment echoes this, advocating for Indonesia to scale technologies like GPS tracking by 2026, integrated with e-Hajj, to bridge the gap and enhance safety for elderly pilgrims comprising 40% of the contingent.

Saudi Arabia's Criticisms of Indonesia's Hajj Governance Saudi Arabia has voiced strong criticisms of Indonesia's Hajj management over illegal furoda visa use and poor coordination, leading to deportations and eroded trust (Ritonga & Nadirah, 2022). A 2025 diplomatic note highlighted five issues, including data verification discrepancies, with the furoda suspension stranding thousands (IntelliNews, 2025). Post-2015 Mina scrutiny intensified safety focus (Darmadi, 2013). These align with Vision 2030's push for improved governance, including a 2025 short-term visa ban for 14 countries like Indonesia and Pakistan to curb unauthorized pilgrimages (AP News, 2025; Thompson & Quilliam, 2024).

"The liberalization of Hajj due to Saudi Vision 2030 has increased the number of independent pilgrims, but Law No. 8/2019 is not sufficient to regulate private operator oversight" (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025).

P1's admission of Law No. 8/2019's inadequacies reveals challenges in adapting to Vision 2030's openness, which has boosted independent pilgrims and exposed regulatory gaps. The 2025 furoda suspension underscores the need for stricter compliance to restore Saudi trust and ensure equitable access.

"Liberalization makes services more competitive, but without oversight, fraud and poor services emerge. Saudi's 2025 criticism on furoda shows our weak coordination—thousands of deportations are damaging" (Interview with P2, July 15, 2025).

P2's analysis attributes criticisms to liberalization's unchecked effects, mirroring Pakistan's 65,000 at-risk pilgrims, and recommends bolstering regulations, public education, and oversight akin to Pakistan's investigative committees to prevent fraud and align with Vision 2030.

Indonesia's Specific Improvements Indonesia has introduced targeted enhancements. Responding to 461 heat deaths in 2024, Mabit procedures in Muzdalifah were revised for safer crowd control (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025). Low-sodium diets reduce hypertension risks (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025). Barcoded bracelets and GPS tracking aid navigation (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025). Diplomatic pushes seek hospitals in Mina and Arafat to lower the 418 fatalities in 2025 (BeritaHaji, 2025a). The e-Hajj system, improved guide training, and Makkah Route Initiative cut immigration time by 20%, securing a 221,000 quota (Ratih, 2025; Interview with P1, July 5, 2025). Stricter rules and campaigns curb illegality (Puji et al., 2018; IntelliNews, 2025).

"Investment in tracking technology like Hajj Smart ID Bracelets to reduce the risk of pilgrims getting lost, with a target implementation in 2026" (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025).

P1's recommendation to adopt Pakistan's Hajj Smart ID Bracelets envisions better crowd management. Planned GPS tracking by 2026, drawing from Pakistan's 30% reduction in lost pilgrims, could bolster safety at sites like Jamarat, supporting Saudi modernization.

“Diplomatically, Indonesia must continue to strengthen MoUs with Saudi Arabia for health and safety facilities and collaborate through the OIC for global safety standards, given the challenges of overcrowding and extreme heat” (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025).

P1's advocacy for robust MoUs and OIC ties highlights proactive diplomacy. The 2025 MoU's overcrowding reduction exemplifies bilateral success, while OIC efforts could standardize protocols against heat and density.

“I propose investing in technology like GPS tracking in 2026, integrated with e-Hajj. The PKS faction urges the government to dissect these issues comprehensively, including inter-ministerial collaboration for the elderly and disabled” (Interview with P2, July 15, 2025).

P2's proposal for GPS adoption and comprehensive reviews emphasizes legislative-driven improvements, focusing on vulnerable groups and aligning with Pakistan's innovations for enhanced accessibility.

Recent Data on Hajj 2025

The following table summarizes key data for Indonesia and Pakistan's 2025 Hajj operations:

Aspect	Indonesia	Pakistan
Quota	221,000 pilgrims (Setkab, 2024)	179,210 pilgrims (Tribune, 2025)
Transportation Issues	Visa delays, 1,200 lost luggage cases in 2024	Limited airport capacity (60%) (Arab News, 2025a)
Accommodation	Distant facilities reported	3- and 5-star hotels in Madinah (Arab News, 2025b)
Health	418 deaths, Posbindu PTM covers 80% elderly	Low heat stroke awareness, 86.7% polio vaccination (Muhammad et al., 2020)
Fraud Cases (2024)	1,800 cases	2,500 cases, 65,000 at risk in 2025 (Tribune, 2025)
Innovations	e-Hajj, barcoded wristbands	Hajj Smart ID Bracelets, Nazim Scheme (Arab News, 2025b)

This table captures essential 2025 metrics, contrasting Indonesia's larger quota and financial prowess with Pakistan's tech innovations. Indonesia's 418 deaths and 1,800 fraud cases signal persistent issues, while Pakistan's 2,500 fraud cases and 65,000 at-risk pilgrims highlight oversight weaknesses. The data emphasizes the imperative for both nations to tackle logistics and safety, leveraging complementary strengths like Indonesia's e-Hajj and Pakistan's Smart ID Bracelets.

Comparative Analysis Indonesia and Pakistan share challenges such as quota constraints, fraud, health risks, and safety issues stemming from liberalization and high pilgrim volumes. Both pursue diplomacy, with Indonesia adding 20,000 slots in 2024 and Pakistan 10,000 in 2025 (Setkab, 2024; Tribune, 2025; Bianchi, 2005). Indonesia's institutionalized frameworks, like BPKH and e-Hajj, offer stability compared to Pakistan's judicial approaches and decentralized systems (Usman, 2016; Muhammad et al., 2023). Pakistan's 2025 achievements, including air-conditioned tents and the Nazim Scheme, earned Saudi recognition (Arab News, 2025b). Efficient models from Japan and Spain suggest governance and coordination enhancements (Koyagi, 2013; Rosser & Soler, 2024).

“From Japan and Spain, learn the efficiency of cultural diplomacy—they secure quotas despite Muslim minorities through professional management. Indonesia, with 231 million Muslims, must become an exemplar” (Interview with P2, July 15, 2025).

P2's recommendation draws lessons from Japan and Spain's diplomatic efficiency, urging Indonesia to professionalize management to combat illicit visas and boost quotas.

Indonesia and Pakistan confront substantial hurdles in large-quota Hajj management, encompassing transportation delays, accommodation deficiencies, health perils, nutritional inadequacies, and fraud. Indonesia's financial and health screening strengths contrast Pakistan's digital advancements. Saudi criticisms necessitate better coordination. Indonesia's advancements, like revised Mabit, healthier menus, and tech proposals, indicate progress. Embracing Pakistan's innovations and minority-country lessons can fortify Indonesia's governance for safer pilgrimages and improved quotas.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

When comparing Hajj pilgrim safety regulations in Indonesia and Pakistan, it becomes clear that both countries have similar problems and have different capabilities when it comes to handling big Hajj quotas under Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 liberalisation. Both countries have a lot of problems, like transportation delays, bad places to stay, health concerns, not enough food, and a lot of fraud. These problems are made worse by strong demand and gaps in the law. Indonesia's problems with logistics, like 1,200 lost bags in 2024 and visa delays that left thousands stranded in 2025, show that they haven't been able to work together with Saudi officials (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025; IntelliNews, 2025). Pakistan has trouble with its airports since they can't handle all the pilgrims. In 2025, they were able to transfer 21,700 pilgrims after the Hajj, which was a step forward (Arab News, 2025a). Accommodation issues are still a problem; 15% of Indonesia's independent pilgrims have to deal with fraud or hotels that are too far away. Pakistan has gotten better, though, with three- and five-star hotels in Madinah (Interview with P2, July 15, 2025; Arab News, 2025b).

Health hazards are still quite high. Indonesia reported 418 pilgrim deaths in 2025, and Pakistan has a low level of awareness of heat stroke (32.7%), even though 86.7% of people there are vaccinated against polio (BeritaHaji, 2025a; Muhammad et al., 2020). The Posbindu PTM program in Indonesia tests 80% of senior pilgrims for chronic diseases like diabetes (14.9%) and hypertension (42.4%), but there are still not enough doctors on site (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025). Fraud, which was made worse by Vision 2030's reliance on private operators, resulted to 1,800 incidents in Indonesia and 2,500 in Pakistan in 2024. In 2025, 65,000 Pakistani pilgrims were at risk because of payment delays (Tribune, 2025; Usman, 2016).

Indonesia's strong financial management through the Badan Pengelola Keuangan Haji (BPKH), which will handle Rp188 trillion in 2025, and its proactive health inspections (HajiInfo, 2025) are two of its strengths. Pakistan is great at coming up with new technologies, like the Hajj Smart ID Bracelets, which cut down on the number of missing pilgrims by 30% in 2024 (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025). Saudi Arabia's complaints about Indonesia's government, especially about the misuse of furoda visas and poor coordination, show how much Indonesia has to change its rules (Ritonga & Nadirah, 2022; IntelliNews, 2025). Indonesia got an extra 20,000 quota in 2024, and Pakistan got 10,000 more in 2025, although there are still structural problems (Setkab, 2024; Tribune, 2025). Japan and Spain, which have small Muslim populations but get unfairly high quotas through good diplomacy, show how important it is to have skilled management (Koyagi, 2013; Rosser & Soler, 2024).

Indonesia's centralised systems are different from Pakistan's technical progress, yet both need better rules and coordination to meet the goals of Vision 2030. Indonesia's updated Mabit protocols, low-sodium diets, and planned GPS tracking by 2026 show that things are getting better, but the 2015 Mina stampede and the high death rates in 2025 show that there are still safety gaps (Darmadi, 2013; BeritaHaji, 2025a). In 2025, Saudi Arabia recognised Pakistan's Nazim Scheme and air-conditioned tents, but oversight of private operators is still poor (Arab News, 2025b). Long wait times—up to 40

years in Indonesia and 5–10 years in Pakistan—show how important it is to get bigger quotas through strong administration and diplomacy (Republika.co.id, 2023; hajiinfo.org, 2024).

Recommendations

To strengthen pilgrim protection and secure better quotas, Indonesia and Pakistan should adopt the following measures, addressing domestic reforms and diplomatic strategies:

- **Enhance Regulatory Frameworks for Private Operators**

Vision 2030's opening up has led to more fraud, as shown by Indonesia's 1,800 and Pakistan's 2,500 cases in 2024, which showed holes in oversight (Interview with P2, July 15, 2025). Indonesia should change Law No. 8/2019 to make it harder for private operators to get licenses, pass audits, and face penalties. They might achieve this by following Malaysia's Tabung Haji model for openness and responsibility (Eka, 2018). Pakistan has to set up a single regulatory authority to stop fraud and keep things like the 65,000 pilgrims at risk in 2025 from happening again (Usman, 2016; Tribune, 2025). Both countries should step up their public awareness initiatives to teach pilgrims about trusted suppliers. This would help stop scams like Indonesia's PT First Travel case (Puji et al., 2018).

- **Implement Advanced Technological Solutions**

Safety and efficiency can be greatly improved by technology. To deal with problems like the 1,500 lost pilgrims in Jamarat (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025; Shambour & Gutub, 2022), Indonesia can use Pakistan's Hajj Smart ID Bracelets, which cut down on lost pilgrims by 30% in 2024, and link them to the e-Hajj system by 2026. Pakistan should make its digital platforms work with Saudi Arabia's Visa Nusuk system to speed up visa processing and cut down on delays. Japan's careful planning can help both countries improve the accuracy of their data, which is a response to Saudi Arabia's complaints about coordination problems (Koyagi, 2013).

- **Strengthen Health and Safety Protocols**

Health risks, such as Indonesia's 418 deaths in 2025 and Pakistan's inadequate awareness of heat stroke, need to be dealt with right away (BeritaHaji, 2025a; Muhammad et al., 2020). Indonesia could make the Posbindu PTM program bigger by adding mandatory training on heat stroke. This will help the 40% of senior pilgrims who have chronic diseases (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025). Pakistan can improve health education on heat stroke and how to manage chronic diseases, using its 86.7% success rate in polio vaccinations (Muhammad et al., 2020). Both countries should work with Saudi Arabia and the WHO to set up special hospitals and mobile clinics in Mina and Arafat. This will lower the number of deaths (Ahmed et al., 2022).

- **Pursue Robust Diplomatic Strategies**

Diplomacy is key to securing larger quotas and improved facilities. Indonesia and Pakistan should leverage the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for collective negotiations on safety standards and quotas, as emphasized by P1: "Diplomatically, Indonesia must continue to strengthen MoUs with Saudi Arabia for health and safety facilities and collaborate through the OIC for global safety standards" (Interview, July 5, 2025). Indonesia's 2025 MoU, securing 221,000 pilgrims and reducing overcrowding by 15%, offers a model for Pakistan (Setkab, 2024). OIC advocacy can align with Vision 2030 while prioritizing pilgrim safety (Bianchi, 2005).

- **Foster Inter-Agency and Non-State Collaboration**

It is very important that the ministries of health, transportation, and religious affairs work together more smoothly. Indonesia's relationships with Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah improve help for the elderly. Pakistan might do the same by working with religious groups (Siti & Qodarsasi, 2024). Joint

task groups, like Indonesia's Makkah Route Initiative, which cuts immigration time by 20%, can help both nations with logistical problems (Interview with P1, July 5, 2025). These efforts should focus on making it easier for elderly and disabled pilgrims to go to the sites, as they make up a large part of both groups.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Following these suggestions will make pilgrims safer, cut down on fraud, and be in line with Vision 2030's criteria for governance. Tougher rules and more public education will stop dishonest businesses, which will make services more reliable. GPS tracking and other technological improvements will make crowded places safer, lowering the risks that were present in the 2015 Mina stampede (Darmadi, 2013). Using what we learnt from COVID-19, better health protocols will help lower the risks of chronic and infectious diseases by building more medical facilities (Ahmed et al., 2022). Through the OIC and bilateral MoUs, diplomatic efforts will get bigger quotas, which will cut down on wait times of 40 years in Indonesia and 5–10 years in Pakistan (Republika.co.id, 2023; hajiinfo.org, 2024). Better coordination will make sure that vulnerable groups have equal access, which will improve the overall administration of the Hajj.

Future Research Directions

Future research should look into how Vision 2030's liberalisation will affect the safety of pilgrims in the long term, especially how well private operator rules work in countries with a lot of pilgrims. Looking at how Muslim-minority countries like Japan and Spain conduct themselves could help us find better ways to run governments (Koyagi, 2013; Rosser & Soler, 2024). Research on scaling technology like GPS and virtual Hajj apps could help make safety plans. Also, looking at how non-state actors help run the Hajj could lead to new ideas for working together to govern in Muslim nations with a lot of people.

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