



Dr El Ziq, WHO Representative to Saudi Arabia (right) addresses a meeting on the successful conclusion of this year's hajj 3 September 2017 –The World Health Organization would like to congratulate Saudi Arabia for successfully hosting the hajj this year without any public health events or disease outbreaks being reported among pilgrims performing hajj.

In addition, WHO expresses its deep appreciation to all the health care workers and volunteers for their great dedication and for the efforts that they have exerted this year in providing health care services to serve and protect the health of pilgrims.

As in previous years and upon the kind invitation of HE the Minister of Health, WHO deployed a technical team comprising epidemiologists and experts in disease surveillance and public health emergencies to work closely with the Ministry of Health to oversee, guide and advise on appropriate public health preparedness measures to prevent any potential disease outbreaks. During the course of its mission, the team visited health care centres and hospitals in Mena, Muzdalefa and Arafat to provide its support to implementation of measures.

WHO praises the effectiveness of the public health mitigation measures put in place by the Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia to ensure a safe pilgrimage. These measures included: effective surveillance to early detect and respond to any infectious disease outbreaks among pilgrims; infection control and prevention; proper sanitation; food safety; vaccination; risk communication and timely response; in accordance with the requirements of the International

Health Regulations (IHR 2005). These measures proved to be very effective in ensuring that this year's hajj passed with no reports of disease outbreaks or any other public health problems.

An increased number of pilgrims this year were reported to have suffered from the effects of heat exhaustion as a result of the high temperatures but health services were well prepared to deal with these cases and timely treatment was provided to those in need.

We need to remain vigilant and continuously monitor any public health threats that may be associated with returning pilgrims, and WHO will be working with all Member States to strengthen their disease surveillance systems and enhance risk communications. These measures will help to early detect and appropriately respond to any diseases of public health significance.

Once again, we would like to thank HE the Minister of Health for his kind invitation to WHO to work in collaboration with the Ministry to protect the health of pilgrims and provide support to the Ministry's effective implementation of public health preparedness measures.

Finally, we wish all pilgrims a safe return to their home after concluding their spiritual journey in this year's hajj.

Related link

[Effective preparedness for hajj 2017 \(1438 H\) pays off: no major public health events reported](#)

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