

Indonesian Hajj diplomacy to increase Hajj quota during 2015-2023

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to determine the forms of Hajj diplomacy carried out by the Indonesian government to overcome the long waiting period for Hajj pilgrims.

Research methodology: This study used a qualitative research method that utilizes secondary data as the data source. The secondary data mostly refer to various publications, such as books, journals, news, archives, social media, the official website of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, and other sources that are factual and relevant to the topic.

Results: The Indonesian government uses two tracks of diplomacy in Hajj affairs. The first track of diplomacy is bilateral relations with the Saudi Arabian government, either through meetings between the heads of the state or meetings with other relevant stakeholders. Meanwhile, the second track diplomacy is through the relationship between Indonesian non-governmental actors such as Indonesian Hajj and Umrah travel entrepreneurs with the Saudi Arabian authorities to obtain non-governmental Hajj quotas or commonly referred to as Hajj Furoda from the Saudi Arabian government.

Conclusion: These two forms of diplomacy reflect Indonesia's adaptive strategy in managing Hajj demand amid quota limitations, balancing state and non-state cooperation.

Limitations: This study focused only on the years 2015–2023. It also relies on secondary data that may not provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics and processes underlying Indonesia's Hajj diplomacy. Furthermore, this study only explores one non-state actor involved in Hajj diplomacy, namely, Hajj and Umrah travel entrepreneurs.

Contributions: This study provides valuable insights and recommendations to policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders regarding the dynamics of Indonesia's Hajj diplomacy and its impact on international relations.

Keywords: *Diplomacy, First Track Diplomacy, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Second Track Diplomacy*

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1. Introduction

Hajj is one of the five Pillars of Islam and one of the most important acts of worship. Muslims believe that performing the Hajj, the final pillar of Islam, completes their Islam. However, Hajj is not mandatory act of worship for all Muslims; it is only required for those who have met the necessary requirements of being intellectually, financially, and physically prepared (RI, 2016). Consequently, those who meet these requirements must expedite their Hajj pilgrimage. For Muslims, the wisdom of Hajj is to purify the soul of all kinds of sins so that pilgrims might become servants of Allah, who deserve praise both now and in the afterlife. Hajj is usually performed once a year in the month of Dhul Hijjah according to the Muslim calendar. In its implementation, Hajj includes activities in the form of *ziarah* or visiting

and carrying out several activities in several holy places in Saudi Arabia in accordance with the provisions of Hajj.

The history of the Hajj dates back thousands of years to the time of the Prophet Ibrahim AS (1861-1686 BC). The Hajj order came down from Allah SWT after Prophet Ibrahim and his son Prophet Ismail successfully completed the construction of Kaaba. History records show that the Hajj pilgrimage was first performed by Prophet Ibrahim AS and Prophet Ismail AS on the 8th of Dhul Hijjah. Starting from that day, the Hajj was performed once a year by Muslims. However, during its development, there was a deviation in the implementation of the Hajj pilgrimage in Kaaba. Kaaba, previously used as a place to worship Allah, was actually used as a place for idol worship. However, during the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, the Kaaba was recaptured and the Hajj was again implemented by Muslims in accordance with the teachings of Prophet Ibrahim and Prophet Ismail AS (Amrurozi, 2016).

Today, Hajj is no longer merely a matter of worship for Muslims all over the world; it has evolved into a unique issue in international relations. This is due to the fact that Hajj is a cross-border migration occurrence involving diplomacy as well as cooperation between pilgrims' home countries and Saudi Arabia as the host country (Niu & Metwally, 2016). Reporting from the Saudi Arabian statistics agency, Saudi Expatriates, every year the Saudi Arabian government receives 2-3 million pilgrims from various parts of the world. Therefore, it is not surprising that Hajj and Umrah are the largest trips in the world every year. The large number of pilgrims entering the territory of Saudi Arabia is certainly an advantage and a challenge for its government. In terms of benefits, as reported by CNN Indonesia, the Saudi Arabian government benefited by 450 trillion rupiah in organizing the Hajj in 2022. However, in terms of challenges, the large number of immigrants entering Saudi Arabia can also pose a threat to the country's national security. Therefore, to avoid possible threats and also as an effort to organize the Hajj pilgrimage efficiently, the Saudi Arabian government sets a limit on the number of Hajj pilgrims' quota from each country. The determination of the number of Hajj quotas for each country was agreed upon at the 1987 Organization of Islamic Cooperation Summit (OIC Summit) in Jordan. Through the summit, it was agreed that the quota for each country was 1:1000 of the total Muslim population.

The organization of the Hajj is also the responsibility of the government of each country considering that the implementation of the Hajj involves many parties, both domestic and foreign agencies. Furthermore, Hajj also includes important aspects such as health, accommodation, transportation, safety protection, and guidance. In addition, the arrival of Indonesian pilgrims to perform the Hajj in Saudi Arabia also involves Indonesia's good reputation in the international arena, especially in the eyes of the Saudi Arabian government. Domestically, the great interest of the community in performing the Hajj pilgrimage is also an important task for the Indonesian government, so that the implementation of this worship can run smoothly.

Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, is active in discussing Hajj affairs with the Saudi Arabian government. The Indonesian government is aggressively conducting various diplomacies and negotiations so that the quota of pilgrims from Indonesia can continue to increase and guarantee safety in Saudi Arabia. Indonesia has been listed as the country with the largest number of Hajj pilgrims. Based on the latest information, Indonesia receives a Hajj quota of 221,000 pilgrims annually (hikmah, 2023). However, the waiting period for the Indonesian Hajj is still relatively long, reaching 11–47 years. This causes the waiting lists for Indonesian Hajj departures to have a very long queue. In 2022, the quota for Regular Hajj is still sorted into three parts. The quota was allocated to 84,608 pilgrims who paid off their debt in 2020, 9,864 pilgrims who paid off their debt in 2022, and 108,847 pilgrims who have not paid off their debt (Anwar, 2023). Seeing this condition, the Indonesian government is still aggressively conducting various diplomacies and negotiations to increase Indonesia's Hajj quota.

When discussing Hajj diplomacy, there are previous articles that discuss how Hajj has become one of the strategic issues in the field study of bilateral diplomacy between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia as highlighted in an article entitled *The Practices of Public Diplomacy by The Gulf Cooperation Council Countries Towards Indonesia* and also a journal article entitled *Indonesian Diplomacy to the Saudi*

Arabian government in Adding the Hajj Quota for the 2017-2020 Period. These articles also mention how the bilateral relationship between the Indonesian and Saudi Arabian governments affects the policy of adding or reducing the quota of pilgrims each year. The same is also discussed in another article entitled *The Role of the Government of Indonesia and Saudi Arabia in Organizing the Hajj Pilgrimage 2015–2021*, which discusses the central role of the Indonesian and Saudi Arabian governments in organizing pilgrims from Indonesia. The journal article titled *The Dynamic of Bilateral Relationship Between the Republic of Indonesia-Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the Field of Politics* (Hamdani & Luthfi, 2019) discusses how the dynamics of international relations are carried out by the Indonesian government as an effort to get an additional quota of pilgrims from the Saudi Arabian government, and the journal article *The Reason Why Indonesia Refuses to Add Hajj Quota from Saudi Arabia* (Adjie & Warsito, 2022), which discusses the reasons for the Indonesian government to refuse the offer of an additional pilgrimage quota from Saudi Arabia. In addition, there are also several journal articles that discuss how Indonesia's Hajj diplomacy during the covid-19 and post-covid-19 pandemics, the articles are *The Role of Indonesian Politics Diplomacy Towards Saudi Arabia In Enhancement of Hajj Pilgrimage Quota After Covid-19 Pandemic* (Saputra, 2023) Islam which discusses the Indonesian government's diplomatic efforts to obtain an additional number of pilgrimage quotas after the pandemic period has passed, and a journal article entitled *Hajj and Umrah during Covid-19 Pandemic: The Case of Indonesia* which discusses the policies of the Indonesian Government and Indonesia's Hajj diplomacy during the Covid-19 pandemic. There is also a journal article entitled *Hajj Umrah Public Diplomacy for Indonesia's economy, politics, and culture* (Fadlillah, 2017) that discusses the contribution of organizing the Hajj pilgrimage to Indonesia's economic, political, and cultural aspects.

However, none of these articles have discussed the role or contribution of non-state actors in Indonesia's Hajj diplomacy efforts in detail, so there seems to be a neglect of the role of non-state actors. When looking at the dynamics of contemporary international relations, diplomacy should not only be carried out by state actors but also involve non-state actors. In the issue of Hajj itself, Hajj and Umrah travel entrepreneurs are one of the non-state actors officially regulated in Law No. 8 of 2019 concerning Hajj Management where they have an important role in the management of the Indonesian Hajj. Furthermore, the number of articles examining Indonesian Hajj diplomacy remains very small. Therefore, there is a need for further research on this topic. Therefore, this study will discuss the Hajj diplomacy efforts made by the Indonesian government in order to increase the number of Hajj quotas and examine the contribution and role of non-governmental actors, especially Hajj and Umrah travel entrepreneurs in Hajj diplomacy carried out by the Indonesian government. This research is expected to contribute to the development of the concept of Hajj diplomacy in International Relations Studies, both conducted by state actors and non-state actors as an effort to achieve state interests; contribute ideas to Indonesian *stakeholders* to create new strategies to increase Indonesia's Hajj quota; and provide information to the public regarding the regulation of determining Indonesia's Hajj quota.

2. Literature review

2.1 Good Governance and Village Government Administration

The concept of good governance serves as a foundational framework in managing a government that is transparent, accountable, responsive, and participatory (UNDP, 1997). In the local context, good village governance requires integration between legal norms, service ethics, and social oversight mechanisms (Putra et al., 2020). Training initiatives for village officials aim to enhance their understanding of these values and support the implementation of public policies that prioritize the community.

Effective village governance not only depends on the existence of formal regulations but also requires the capacity and commitment of local officials to act in the best interest of the community. Hence, training initiatives for village officials are vital to enhance their understanding of governance values and strengthen their ability to apply those principles in practice. These programs often include modules on transparency in budgeting, accountability in service provision, participatory decision-making processes, and the ethical responsibilities of public servants. By equipping village officials with such competencies, governance training supports the successful implementation of public policies that are equitable, responsive, and sustainable in meeting the needs of rural populations.

2.2 Public Service Unit Performance Evaluation

Ministerial Regulation (PermenPAN-RB) No. 7 of 2010 serves as the national standard for assessing the quality of public service units. Research by Wibowo and Riyadi (2021) indicates that understanding the performance indicators of public services significantly affects the improvement of community-based service delivery. The ability of local officials to apply such evaluation criteria fosters a culture of accountability and performance measurement that is essential for continuous improvement. It allows for the identification of service bottlenecks, strategic resource allocation, and development of responsive service innovations. Moreover, the involvement of village officials in conducting internal evaluations strengthens their organizational learning and promotes an evidence-based approach to policymaking. It enables the transition from reactive service delivery to a more anticipatory and adaptive system that is better equipped to respond to dynamic local needs. As such, internal evaluation mechanisms, when consistently implemented, contribute to creating working systems that are both efficient and results-oriented, aligning with broader national goals of bureaucratic reform and quality public service provision.

2.3 The Role of Training and Bureaucratic Empowerment

Training based on simulations and real-life cases proves to be more effective than conventional lectures in developing bureaucratic capacity (Yuliana & Susanto, 2022). Unlike traditional lecture-based training that focuses on theoretical knowledge, simulation-based methods provide opportunities for participants to engage with real-world administrative scenarios, thereby improving their practical decision-making skills, problem-solving abilities, and teamwork. At the village level, this form of training is especially crucial, as officials are often required to make context-specific judgments with limited resources and within evolving regulatory frameworks. Human resource empowerment through governance training not only enhances technical capabilities but also cultivates leadership, initiative, and ethical awareness among village staff (Prasetyo et al., 2019). Empowered officials tend to be more confident, proactive, and accountable in delivering services, which ultimately benefits the broader goals of good governance.

Furthermore, experiential learning has emerged as an innovative approach in improving village officials' performance. By embedding participants in scenarios that mirror real challenges—such as budget planning, conflict resolution, or citizen engagement—experiential methods help internalize core values of governance, including transparency, inclusivity, and responsiveness. This hands-on approach also encourages reflective learning, where participants analyze their actions, receive feedback, and continuously improve. Such methods not only build individual capacity but also foster a culture of learning within the institution, leading to sustainable improvements in public service delivery.

2.4 Collaborative Governance Approach

The collaborative governance model, which involves community members in decision-making processes, fosters public trust and social legitimacy (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Harahap et al., 2023). This approach emphasizes joint deliberation and shared responsibility between public officials and citizens, resulting in more inclusive, transparent, and equitable governance outcomes. By engaging stakeholders across various sectors, collaborative governance can bridge the gap between state actors and the community, enhance mutual accountability, and reduce resistance to policy implementation. In the context of village governance, such collaboration becomes a vital mechanism to ensure that development priorities are aligned with the actual needs of the community.

This is particularly relevant in rural settings, where local knowledge and citizen engagement are often underutilized. Recent studies emphasize the importance of public hearings and participatory forums in strengthening citizens' sense of ownership over the services they receive, particularly in village-level public administration sectors (Nurhadi et al., 2022). These participatory spaces not only allow citizens to express their needs and concerns but also provide platforms for co-creating solutions, monitoring service quality, and enhancing policy responsiveness. Moreover, collaborative governance facilitates a sense of empowerment among community members by recognizing them as active agents rather than passive recipients of public services. When implemented effectively, it can lead to more sustainable and

context-sensitive governance practices that reinforce the legitimacy and performance of local institutions.

3. Research methodology

The researchers used a qualitative research design. The purpose of the research is to determine the kinds of Hajj diplomacy carried out by the Indonesian government, as well as the contribution of Hajj and Umrah travel entrepreneurs to Indonesia's Hajj diplomacy efforts, thus the research method used is a qualitative method because the researcher believes there is a match between the qualitative method and the data to be obtained in order to achieve the research objectives. Qualitative research methodologies are also suitable for finding research objects, such as different forms of diplomacy, diplomacy strategies, and the outcomes of the Indonesian government's efforts to obtain additional Hajj quotas for Indonesians.

This research entitled "Indonesian Hajj Diplomacy To Increase Hajj Quota during the Joko Widodo Presidency: 2015-2023" uses secondary data sources. Secondary data mostly refer to various publications, such as books, journals, news, archives, social media, the official website of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, and other sources that are factual and relevant to the topic. In this study, researchers used a thematic analysis approach to analyze the data. Thematic analysis is an accurate method of analysis for understanding experiences, thoughts, and behaviors across datasets precisely and effectively (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

4. Results and discussions

4.1 Quota Issues and Hajj Diplomacy

Diplomacy is the practice of conducting international relations, predominantly through negotiations and dialogue, to foster peaceful relations. According to Berridge (2010), diplomacy is defined as a political activity consisting of communication between officials designed to enable states to secure their national interests and foreign policies without the use of force or coercion and propaganda. This activity is carried out either by formal agreement or tacit adjustment. Diplomacy was conducted not only by professional diplomatic agents, but also by other officials and individuals in the direction of government officials. Well-resourced and skillful diplomacy is a key element of a state's power (Berridge, 2010). Diplomacy is an important tool used by states to implement foreign policies. These policies are still framed in many countries within foreign ministries. The ministry also has primary responsibilities for the country's diplomats serving abroad and managing formal dealings with foreign diplomats at home.

Over time, actors in international relations have no longer been limited to states. Sociological liberalism emphasizes that international relations are not only about relations between states, but also about transnational relations involving relations between people, groups, and organizations from different countries (JACKSON & SORESENSEN, 2013). The emergence of non-state actors in international relations has impacted the implementation of diplomacy. According to Burton and W (1984), there are two concepts in diplomacy: first-track and second-track diplomacy. First-track diplomacy refers to traditional diplomacy, which is usually conducted state-to-state or government-to-government. Diplomacy in this track is used to create peacebuilding policies implemented through government channels.

This system marks the beginning of the development of the state-to-state diplomacy process, which serves as the main tool for formulating the country's foreign policy and strengthening bilateral relations. Thus, the actors in this first track of diplomacy were state leaders and high-ranking government officials. The first track is formal and represents the position of the state in a region, or the strongest position of a state in the region (Emilia, 2013). The advantages of first-track diplomacy are that the policies taken do not need to doubt their legitimacy because the government is a formal institution and the government plays a very important role in a country, so it can freely use resources, especially for the benefit of achieving national interests, and the peace process will be safer and policies will be more likely to be implemented because the process is formal and carried out by official representatives of a

country. On the other hand, second track diplomacy refers to diplomacy that is government-to-people and people-to-people. In this diplomacy, the actors involved are not only states, but also non-state actors such as international communities, non-governmental organizations, and other actors who are not tied to the government of any country (Berridge, 2010). Second-track diplomacy is usually aimed at achieving national interests by understanding, informing, and influencing foreign audiences. Second-track diplomacy is also aimed at establishing international relations with the people of other countries, maintaining a good reputation of a country, and reducing hostility with other countries. Diplomacy usually runs on an informal and open system.

One of the affairs between two or more countries that requires good diplomatic relations is the Hajj. The Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam. Hajj can be understood as the activity of visiting the Kaaba in Makkah, Saudi Arabia to perform a series of worship services that have been arranged based on the Islamic law. Hajj is usually performed at a certain time (Umar, 2020). Based on the Islamic calendar, the pilgrimage is performed during the months of *Shawwal*, *Dhul Qa'dah*, *9 Dhul Hijjah*, and on the eve of Eid al-Adha. Muslims believe that this worship is one of the most sacred forms of worship in Islam.

The reason why the Hajj itself is an international issue is that in this worship, Muslims from all over the world will flock to Saudi Arabia where the Hajj takes place. To control and manage the arrival of millions of Muslims worldwide, the Saudi Arabian government has set a quota of pilgrims from various countries whose people want to perform Hajj in the territory and jurisdiction of Saudi Arabia. This is certainly done to maintain security and peace in Saudi Arabia as a Hajj host country. The Hajj quota is a quota set by the Saudi Arabian government for each country based on the criteria set by the Organization of the Islamic Conference in 1987, which is 1:1000 of the total Muslim population of each country. The Saudi government was required to set the number of Hajj quotas for each country based on the agreement of the 1987 OIC Summit. Furthermore, each country has the authority to distribute quotas according to the proportion of each region.

The quota based on the agreement of the 1987 OIC Summit is often not sufficient to accommodate the needs of pilgrims from a very large number of countries, such as Indonesia. With a population of over 277.5 million by 2023, Indonesia should receive approximately 277 thousand Hajj quotas. However, in the same year, Indonesia received only approximately 221 thousand pilgrims (hikmah, 2023), which is insufficient to accommodate all pilgrims who wish to attend the Hajj. Given that Hajj is performed only once a year, a large number of people waiting to go is unavoidable. The waiting period is not even short, ranging from 11 to 47 years (Anwar 2023). Many of the prospective pilgrims end up not being able to fulfill it, particularly the elderly, and many of them sadly die before their scheduled departure time.

The quota set by the Saudi Arabian government has a major impact on Indonesian citizens. The Indonesian government considers the Hajj a national obligation. This is due to the vast number of Indonesian Muslims who wish to participate in the pilgrimage, the participation of numerous organizations and institutions both at home and abroad, and the government-imposed quota or number of pilgrims. Every year, the Indonesian government works to improve the quality of Hajj services, which is required for reform in the areas of clean and good governance (Fauzi et al., 2022). In order to solve Hajj-related problems—including the quota issue, Indonesia as the most populous Muslim-majority country in the world is active in diplomacy and negotiations with the Saudi Arabian government.

Diplomacy and negotiations between the Republic of Indonesia and the Saudi Arabian government to increase the number of Hajj quotas each year are largely carried out through two tracks: first track diplomacy (government-to-government relations) and second track diplomacy (people-to-government).

4.1.1 Organizing the Indonesian Hajj Pilgrimage

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, especially the Directorate General of Hajj and Umrah Organizers (Direktorat Jenderal Penyelenggara Haji dan Umrah), along with other associated ministries and agencies, oversees all aspects of Hajj and Umrah for the Indonesian people. This covers the authorities responsible for the distribution of Hajj quotas for each province. This is in

accordance with the UU No. 8 Tahun 2019. According to the second clause of the same article, Indonesia has two types of Hajj quota: regular and plus. Ministry of Religious Affairs in charge of quotas and overall supervision of regular Hajj. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Commission IV of the Indonesian House of Representatives has decided that the average cost of completing the Hajj in 1444 H / Year 2023 is 90 million rupiahs per individual. The waiting period spans 11 to 47 years, depending on the quota of each province in Indonesia. The Special Hajj Pilgrimage Organizer (Penyelenggara Ibadah Haji Khusus) is in charge of running Hajj Plus. PIHK is typically a private Hajj and Umrah travel business that has gained formal authority from the Ministry of Religious Affairs to manage Hajj Plus.

Hajj Plus differs from regular Hajj in terms of expenses, facilities, and departure times. The total cost of a special Hajj is approximately 117 million rupiahs per individual. This cost is specified by Minister of Religious Affairs Decree No. 226 Tahun 2023 on the Cost of Special Hajj Travel (Indonesia, 2023). The waiting period can be up to seven years.

4.2 Indonesian Hajj Diplomacy to Increase Hajj Quota

Despite having a relatively short waiting period, the high cost of Hajj plus causes most prospective Indonesian pilgrims to choose regular Hajj. Therefore, the Indonesian government held a myriad of policies, negotiations, and meetings to resolve this quota issue. This diplomatic conduct is mainly carried out through first-track diplomacy (government-to-government) and second-track diplomacy (people-to-government).

4.2.1 Indonesian Hajj Diplomacy Through Government-to-Government Tracks

The Indonesian government has conducted various political lobbies to relax the 1:1000 pilgrimage provision for each country, which has led to an increase in the quota of Indonesian pilgrims. These efforts undoubtedly encountered issues such as the Saudi Arabian government's inability to respond to the Indonesian government's request, as well as a quota cut in the number of pilgrims in 2013 due to delays in the expansion process of the Grand Mosque Masjid al-Haram. The delay in the revitalization of the Hajj center resulted in a cut in the quota of pilgrims sent by each country by 20% of the total quota set by the OIC Summit in 1987. Thus, Indonesia received only a quota of 168, 000 pilgrims from the original 211, 000 in 2013. At that time, the Indonesian government, represented by the Minister of Religious Affairs, tried to negotiate so that the Saudi Arabian government authorities could provide dispensation for Indonesia. Bilateral diplomacy did not bear fruit, and the Indonesian government had to be satisfied with the quota cut that was originally set (RI, 2013). Since then, the Indonesian government has been continuously negotiating with the Saudi Arabian government.

Table 1. Hajj quotas allocated by Saudi Arabia to Indonesia

	Initial Quota	Additional Quota	Total Quota	Note
2012	221,000	-	211,000	Before Masjid al-Haram revitalization
2013	221,000	-	211,000	20% cut, leaving a quota of 168,000
2014	168,000	-	168,000	-
2015	168,000	-	168,000	-
2016	168,000	-	168,000	-
2017	211,000	10,000	221,000	Quota normalization after the revitalization of Masjid al-Haram

2018	221,000	-	221,000	-
2019	221,000	-	221,000	-
2020	-	-	-	Covid-19 Outbreaks
2021	-	-	-	Covid-19 Outbreaks
2022	100,000	10,000	110,000	Additional quota rejected, leaving the initial quota
2023	221,000	8,000	229,000	Quota normalization after Covid-19 Outbreaks
2024	221,000	20,000	241,000	Not yet used

The figure above shows the ups and downs in the number of Hajj quotas allotted by the government of Saudi Arabia based on the 1987 OIC agreement to the Indonesian government from 2012 (before the revitalization of the Masjid al-Haram) until 2024. These data show a considerable rising trend in the quota, indicating that Indonesia's negotiations and diplomacy attempts to normalize and increase the Hajj quota were quite successful. There was a significant reduction because to the Covid-19 outbreaks and its aftermath.

To further explain the Hajj diplomacy efforts undertaken by the Indonesian government through this first-track diplomacy, the annual timeline is as follows:

On September 11, 2015, President Joko Widodo made a diplomatic visit to Saudi Arabia and met with King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud in Jeddah. President Widodo specifically tried to lobby the Saudi Arabian government to normalize the Hajj quota to the original amount. The request was not necessarily granted by the authorities of the Saudi Arabian government; in return, the Saudi Arabian government promised the approval of an additional quota of 10,000 for Indonesian pilgrims in 2016 (Kabinet, 2016). The lobbying attempt continued at the next meeting on March 7, 2016, during a bilateral meeting of the Extraordinary OIC Summit. President Joko Widodo spoke directly with Saudi Arabia's Minister of Foreign Affairs at that time, Adel bin Ahmed al-Jubeir, to continue the talks regarding the promise of additional quotas for pilgrims, as previously discussed (RI, 2016). Unfortunately, the promise of quota normalization was not maintained, and the Indonesian government had to settle with the previously established quota. The delay in increasing the Hajj quota itself is due to the massive renovation and expansion of Masjid al-Haram, which has not yet been completed (Sapiie, 2016).

In the same year, the G-20 Summit, which took place in Hangzhou, became a means for the Indonesian government to lobby the Saudi Arabian government for quota issues. On September 4, 2016, President Joko Widodo and Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi met Prince Mohammed bin Salman—Deputy Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia—they directly discussed bilateral economic cooperation, as well as the Hajj quota issue. President Joko Widodo specifically requested permission from Saudi Arabian government authorities to transfer the remaining Hajj quota from other countries so that it could be used by Indonesian pilgrims. President Joko Widodo reassured that the process of transferring the remaining Hajj quota would be carried out by complying with the procedures and regulations applicable in each country so that it would not cause other problems. The Saudi Arabian government responded by giving approval and instructing Foreign Minister Adel to meet directly with Foreign Minister Retno to discuss the issue further (Kabinet, 2016).

The request for the transfer of the remaining Hajj quota was again discussed at the meeting of heads of state that took place at Istana Merdeka, Indonesia. On September 09, 2016, President Joko Widodo directly requested that the remaining Hajj quota from the Philippines be transferred to Indonesia following the arrest of 177 Indonesians in Manila for attempting to depart for Hajj using unused seats from the Philippines' Hajj quota by falsifying their immigration documents. Philippine President

Rodrigo Duterte agreed to President Joko Widodo's request regarding the transfer of the Hajj quota. In addition to the Philippines, the governments of Singapore and Japan agreed to transfer the remaining quota of pilgrims to Indonesia to cover the shortage (Halim & Parlina, 2016). Unfortunately, this effort failed because the Saudi Arabian government rejected this proposal.

Further efforts have been made by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. On January 4, 2017, Indonesia's Minister of Religious Affairs, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, visited Saudi Arabia to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) related to the Hajj quota. Minister Lukman also discussed the issue of transferring the remaining Hajj quota from other countries in order to reduce the occurrence of cases such as the use of Hajj using illegal Filipino visas that would harm prospective pilgrims. The results of the memorandum of understanding were finally answered during the visit of the King of Saudi Arabia, King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, to Indonesia on March 11, 2017. The visit provided a breath of fresh air for the success of various political lobbies carried out by the Indonesian government over the years for the normalization and addition of the Hajj quota, where the Saudi Arabian government finally restored the Hajj quota, which was reduced by 20% in 2013. Starting in 2017, the Hajj quota for Indonesia normalized from 168,000 to 211,000 pilgrims. The Saudi Arabian government also agreed to provide an additional quota for Indonesia of 10,000 pilgrims so that the total number of Indonesian pilgrims in 2017 was 221,000 who were strictly intended for prospective pilgrims who had never performed the Hajj pilgrimage (Setkab, 2017). This foreign policy, implemented by the Saudi Arabian government, provides an opportunity for Indonesia to obtain an additional Hajj quota in the following years.

The twists and turns of Indonesia's diplomatic journey to increase the Hajj quota each year in order to shorten the waiting period then experienced a global-scale issue. The Coronavirus outbreak in 2019 limited the world to operate as usual, including the organization of the Hajj pilgrimage. The issue of the Hajj quota for each country has also become inevitable. There was a massive reduction in the Hajj quota by the Saudi Arabian government as a total implementation of the massive *social distancing* policy in an effort to break the chain of the spread of the Covid-19 virus. From initially being able to distribute a quota of 2 million pilgrims each year, the Saudi Arabian government will only provide a total Hajj quota of 1,000 in 2020. The reduction policy is followed by other regulations, such as quotas intended only for Saudi citizens, mandatory vaccinations, and pilgrims of a certain age (Karadsheh & Qiblawi, 2020). The Indonesian government, through the Minister of Religious Affairs Fachrul Razi, announced a policy to cancel participation in the Hajj pilgrimage in June 2020. This decision was made after the government considered the health, safety, and security aspects of pilgrims as top priorities because the global emergency status for COVID-19 has not ended.

This policy is part of the Indonesian government's response to the Saudi Arabian government, which has never provided clarity regarding the implementation of the Hajj pilgrimage during the pandemic, especially since the Saudi Arabian government at that time still closed entry access for any country as a result of the pandemic. The policy is still being implemented even though the Indonesian government has issued guidelines for the implementation of the Hajj pilgrimage during the pandemic, including provisions related to quarantine and strict health protocols during the departure and implementation of the Hajj. The same policy was also applied in 2021, when the Indonesian government again did not send its Hajj pilgrims to Saudi Arabia for safety and health reasons. Simultaneously, the Saudi Arabian government imposed restrictions on the implementation of the Hajj pilgrimage. Strict regulations regarding vaccinations and age limits on pilgrims not exceeding the age of 65 are still in effect, with minor changes in the form of an increase in the quota of pilgrims to 60,000. Again, this number is only for Saudi citizens (AlJazeera, 2021). The policy of canceling the implementation of the Hajj pilgrimage certainly provides a big loss for Indonesia, especially regarding the waiting period for pilgrims that are becoming longer. This then becomes homework for the Indonesian government to strengthen its diplomatic lobbying to the Saudi Arabian government in order to increase the Hajj quota every year.

Along with the loosening of regulations for Covid-19, the Saudi Arabian administration ultimately reorganized Hajj pilgrims that included pilgrims from countries other than Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Arabian government provides a total pilgrimage quota of one million pilgrims with the requirements of

vaccination and age groups (Shiraz et al., 2022). For the first time, after two consecutive years of not sending pilgrims to Saudi Arabia, Indonesia finally returned to participate in this worship. The quota given to Indonesia by 2022 is 100,000 pilgrims with an additional quota of 10,000 (Rachmawati, 2023). This additional quota is certainly an opportunity for many pilgrims waiting for departure and a solution to shorten the waiting period for Hajj departure, especially after the cancellation of the Hajj for two consecutive years. Unfortunately, the Indonesian government could not fulfill the additional quota due to the short time between the announcement of the additional quota and the deadline for visa processing and the last flight. The Indonesian government officially received an additional quota on June 21, 2022, while the last scheduled departure date for the 2022 Hajj was July 03, 2022 (Adjie & Warsito, 2022). As a result, the Indonesian government was forced to settle 100,000 pilgrims by 2022.

In 2023, Hajj restrictions such as vaccination regulations and age restrictions were completely abolished for the first time. Indonesia was given a quota of 221,000 pilgrims by the Saudi Arabian government as a form of post-pandemic normalization. This number is far from sufficient, so the Indonesian government still hopes that the Saudi Arabian government will provide an additional quota for Indonesian pilgrims, even though it had refused to increase the quota in the previous year. Fortunately, the request was granted by the Saudi Arabian government with an additional 8000 pilgrims (RI, 2023). Diplomacy regarding the addition of the Hajj quota continues to be carried out intensively. President Joko Widodo also inserted an agenda for the addition of the Hajj quota to the sidelines of his visit to Saudi Arabia within the framework of the ASEAN-GCC Summit in Riyadh. To the Prime Minister and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al-Saud, President Joko Widodo frankly conveyed the problem of Indonesia's very long Hajj queue so that there are pilgrims who have to wait up to 47 years. Under these conditions, increasing the Hajj quota is the only way to shorten the queue length. Fortunately, the President's proposal received a positive response. Not more than 12 hours after the meeting, the Indonesian government officially received an additional quota of 20,000 pilgrims for the Hajj period of 1445H/2024 AD. Thus, if added to the initial quota of 221,000 pilgrims, the total quota obtained by Indonesia for the 2024 Hajj will be 241,000 pilgrims (Pramudyani, 2023).

In addition to the President, government-to-government relations carried out by the Indonesian government also involve delegations of members of the House of Representatives and other ministries through international forums, such as the OIC forum, or through diplomatic visits. For example, the Speaker of the House of Representatives Setya Novanto visited Saudi Arabia in 2015, where the House of Representatives lobbied for the normalization of the Hajj quota. Political lobbying through government-to-government will continue so that in the end, the Indonesian government succeeds in cutting the queue or waiting period for the Indonesian Hajj pilgrimage. The implementation of bilateral negotiations and diplomacy does not always result in positive outcomes or agreements between Indonesian and Saudi governments. However, numerous genuine efforts have been made, which have opened significant opportunities for the long-term sustainability of the policy of raising the quota of Indonesian pilgrims in the coming years.

4.2.2 Indonesia Hajj Diplomacy Through People-to-Government Tracks

Hajj and Umrah travel entrepreneurs are one of the non-state actors who have a special role in organizing the pilgrimage of pilgrims from Indonesia. In UU No. Eight Tahun 2019, Hajj and Umrah travel entrepreneurs are referred to as Special Hajj Organizers (PIHK). Based on this law, it is explained that PIHK has a role in facilitating the departure of Indonesian pilgrims who use the Hajj plus route, which is the Indonesian government's Hajj quota that departs faster and costs more than regular Hajj. It is noted that the cost of Hajj Plus in Indonesia ranges from 200-300 million rupiahs. Meanwhile, the waiting time was only around 2-3 years. In organizing this Hajj Plus, a fixed quota is obtained through an agreement between the Indonesian government and the Saudi Arabian government. Thus, travel entrepreneurs are not involved in the efforts to determine the number of Indonesian Hajj plus quotas.

Although Hajj travel entrepreneurs are not involved in determining the regular and special Hajj quotas, they play a crucial role in obtaining a non-governmental Hajj quota called the Hajj *Furoda* quota. Hajj *Furoda* itself is a Hajj quota directly issued by the Saudi Arabian government and is under the

management of the Saudi Ministry of Hajj. Through Hajj *Furoda*, a person can immediately leave to perform a pilgrimage without waiting in line (Puspadini, 2023). The management of the Hajj *Furoda* visa is then given to private parties in Saudi Arabia, who will later spread the Hajj *Furoda* quota throughout the world.

Even outside Saudi Arabia, the management of the *Furoda* pilgrimage is not given to the state because, in essence, the *Furoda* Hajj can be accessed privately or through Hajj and Umrah travel enterprises that have relationships with parties in Saudi Arabia who have the authority to manage the *Furoda* Hajj. Those who join this program will receive a *mujamalah* visa issued by each embassy. The implementation was in the same year as receiving a visa from the Saudi Arabian government. Regarding the departure process itself, based on UU No. Eight Tahun 2019 Pasal 18 Ayat (2) stated that it is mandatory to go through a Special Hajj Pilgrimage Organizer (PIHK) or a travel company registered with the Indonesian Ministry of Religion. From the data presented during a working meeting between the House of Representatives Commission VIII and the Indonesian Hajj Travel Association, it was noted that the number of *Furoda* Hajj quotas reached 70,000 pilgrims worldwide, while in Indonesia, it has reached 8,000 quotas. The waiting period for the *Furoda* pilgrimage itself is fairly quick, and the facilities provided are good. However, owing to the advantages of Hajj *Furoda*, the price of departure through Hajj *Furoda* is much more expensive. With the advantage of not queuing and departing immediately, it is costly to perform Hajj *Furoda*. It currently costs US\$15,500 or Rp 231 million (Puspadini, 2023).

The role of Hajj and Umrah travel entrepreneurs through second-track diplomacy is needed to obtain the *Furoda* Hajj quota. Because the government is not involved in managing this quota and based on the results of the minutes of Commission VIII of the House of Representatives together with the association of Hajj and Umrah bureaus throughout Indonesia, it is noted that the *Furoda* Hajj quota can usually only be obtained by Hajj travel entrepreneurs who have strong relationships with private parties involved in managing *Furoda* Hajj in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the role of travel entrepreneurs does not only extends to diplomacy to obtain the *Furoda* Hajj quota. However, Hajj and Umrah travel entrepreneurs have a duty to facilitate the departure of Indonesian pilgrims efficiently and are free from fraud. Fraudsters will usually offer the advantages of *Furoda* Hajj travel to the public and provide them with tourist and worker visas to the Indonesian people. Hajj departures using the *Furoda* Hajj route are only allowed to use a *mujamalah* visa.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Conclusion

The Saudi Arabian government imposed a rule limiting the number of prospective pilgrims sent by a country each year for the Hajj pilgrimage, which resulted in a waiting period of 11-47 years for Indonesian pilgrims. The Indonesian government has conducted diplomatic efforts, both the first track (political lobbies to the Saudi Arabian government) and the second track (involving Hajj and Umrah travel entrepreneurs) to address this issue. The Indonesian government has negotiated with Saudi Arabia to secure a larger quota and quota normalization due to increasing demand. Efforts undertaken through first-track diplomacy have not always been successful, but the Saudi government has offered additional quotas numerous times, including normalization. Additional allotments ranges from 8000 to 10,000 pilgrims. Additionally, there are concerns regarding corruption among travel agents, health and safety issues, gender segregation, and long departure schedules. In 2023, Indonesia received a quota of 221,000 for the 2024 Hajj pilgrims, the largest quota granted to any country globally. In the future, in addition to improving bilateral diplomacy to help with attempts to increase the Hajj quota, the Indonesian government must further develop the potential of Hajj *Furoda* to overcome the quota issue that contributes to the long waiting queue.

5.2. Implications

This study provides valuable insights and recommendations for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders in the field of Hajj diplomacy and international relations. By expanding the scope of the study, conducting primary data collection, and investigating the role of non-state actors, this research

contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of Indonesian Hajj diplomacy and its impact on international relations.

5. Limitations

This study focuses on the period of the Joko Widodo government (2015-2023), which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other periods or governments. The study also primarily relies on secondary data, which may not provide a comprehensive understanding of the underlying dynamics and processes of Indonesian Hajj diplomacy. In addition, this study does not explore the role of non-state actors in Indonesian Hajj diplomacy, which could provide a more nuanced understanding of diplomatic efforts.

5.4. Suggestion

To provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of Indonesian Hajj diplomacy, it would be beneficial to expand the scope of the study to include a broader timeframe and different governments. This would allow for a more in-depth analysis of the historical context and evolving nature of Indonesian Hajj diplomacy. Furthermore, conducting interviews or obtaining primary data from key informants, such as government officials, Hajj and Umrah travel entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders, would provide more detailed insights into the procedures and strategies used in Indonesian Hajj diplomacy. This would help us understand the viewpoints and experiences of individuals directly involved in diplomatic initiatives as well as the problems they encounter. In addition, investigating the role of non-state actors in Indonesian Hajj diplomacy, such as religious organizations, community groups, and Hajj travel entrepreneurs, would help to better understand the diplomatic efforts and their impact on the Hajj pilgrimage. This would provide a more holistic view of the dynamics of Indonesian Hajj diplomacy as it involves various stakeholders with different interests and objectives.

By incorporating these approaches, this study provides a more nuanced understanding of Indonesian Hajj diplomacy and its complexities, which would be valuable for policymakers, researchers, and the broader public interested in the topic.

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