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### PRESS RELEASE: DECISION ON HAJJ 2020 / 1441H FOR SOUTH AFRICAN PILGRIMS

The South African Hajj and Umrah Council (SAHUC) strives to serve the interest of our Muslim community guided by the policies of the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

SAHUC has been in discussions with the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, The Royal Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Pretoria as well as the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) with regards to Hajj 1441 / 2020 due to the current COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Ministry of Hajj and Umrah has not as yet made any official announcement with regards to Hajj 1441 / 2020. There is currently no indication as to when an announcement from the Ministry can be expected as the Ministry is currently monitoring the coronavirus effects and its recommendation is to put all arrangements for Hajj on hold. The continued increase in the number of active cases in Saudi Arabia has grown exponentially and there is concern about a second wave of the coronavirus internationally.

A meeting between SAHUC and DIRCO was held on the morning of the 11th of June to discuss the possibility of Hajj under the current COVID-19 Pandemic in South Africa as well as the rules of International travel due to the current National Disaster Act.

The Minister of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, Honorable Minister Naledi Pandor, indicated that the South African borders are currently closed and will not be open for International commercial travel, except for the repatriation of citizens, under the current lockdown.

Based on the closure of our borders, the curtailment of International travel and issues pertaining to COVID-19, it is with regret that we inform South African accredited Hujjaaj that South African pilgrims will NOT be able to embark on the 1441 / 2020 Hajj.

While a decision not to participate in the hajj will surely disappoint Muslims who yearn to perform the pilgrimage, many amongst us have been sharing online a relevant hadith – a tradition reporting the sayings and practice of the prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) – that provides guidance about traveling during a time of an epidemic: “If you hear of an outbreak of plague in a land, do not enter it; but if the plague breaks out in a place while you are in it, do not leave that place.”

Hujjaaj are reminded to contact the respective accredited Hajj Operators to arrange your release from any contract and for refunds of monies paid to the operator.

We would like to inform all Hujjaaj that the South African accredited Hajj operators will not be charging any administrative fees – however, where cash deposits were made the charges associated with same will be deducted. In addition, where any airline tickets have been acquired, the operator will refund according to the cancellation policy of the said airline company. Where deposits were paid into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by the operator, those parts of the refund will follow once funds are received from the Saudi counterparts.

SAHUC will refund the R1500 accreditation fee to all Hujjaaj. Once you have been released from your contract with the Hajj Operator, please send your banking details along with your accreditation reference number to [info@sahuc.org.za](mailto:info@sahuc.org.za).

All 1441H Hujjaaj affected by this unfortunate situation will be placed into the queue according to your date and time of application and queued for Hajj 1442H (2021). Accreditation for 1442H will be the same as in prior years on a date and time priority as per the rules set out on the SAHUC website.

The 1442H accreditation will take place once the SAHUC team returns from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia following the conclusion of agreements under the Protocol of Hajj.

Should you have any difficulty with the refund process between yourself and your selected accredited Hajj Operator, contact SAHUC on [info@sahuc.org.za](mailto:info@sahuc.org.za). Please provide us with all communications between yourself and the operator to assist in resolving any disputes.

We request all Hujjaaj to continuously make dua for ALLAH (S.W.T) to bring an end to this pandemic In Shaa ALLAH.

Yours Sincerely,  
Was Salaamu Alaikum

Moaz Casoo  
Secretary General