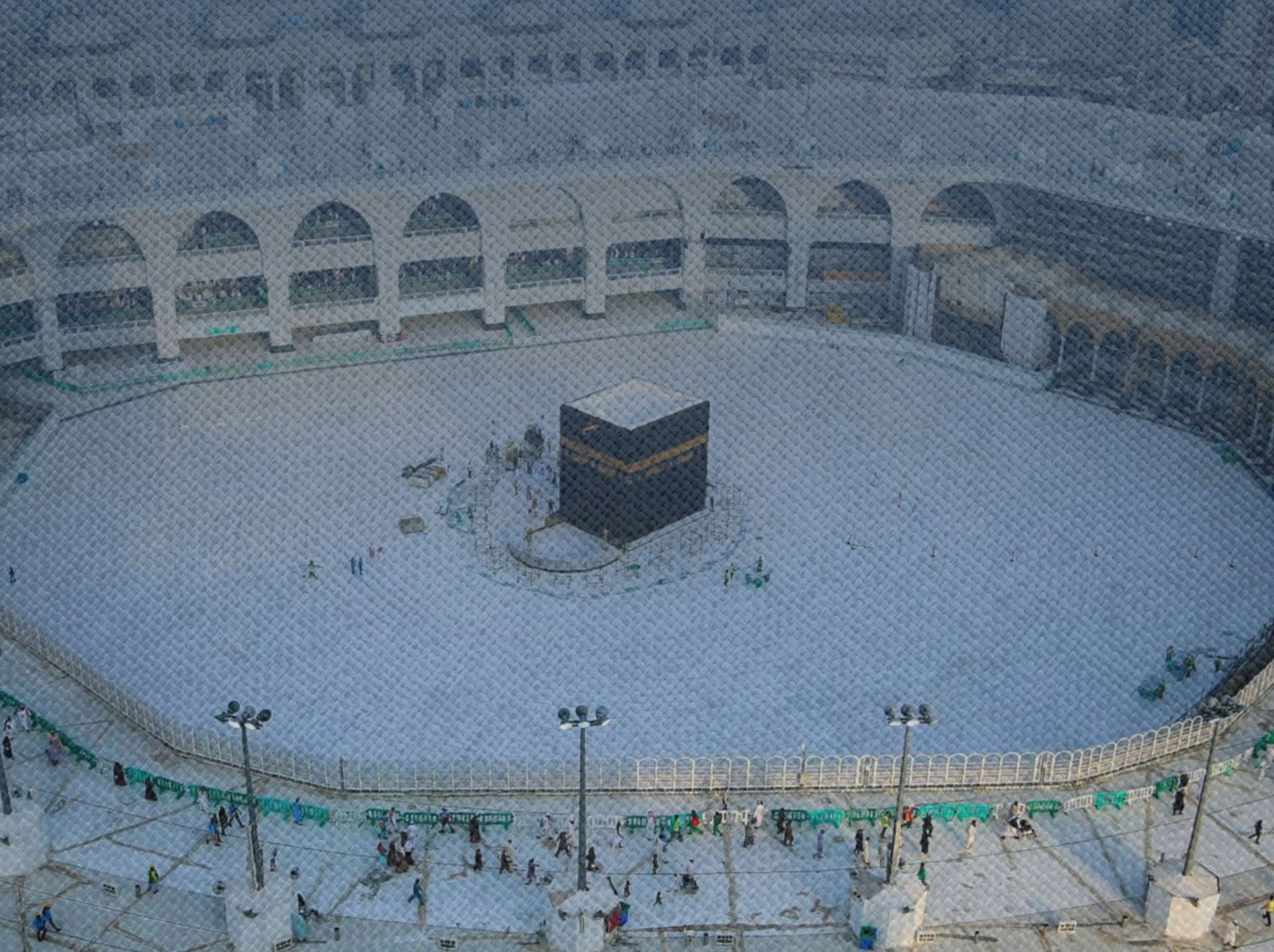




Makkan imam

kidnapped by authorities





One of the imams of the Grand Mosque in Makkah has been kidnapped and arrested by Saudi state authorities.

Sheikh Dr Saleh Al Talib, behind whom hundreds of thousands of worshipers pray and whose recitations and sermons are heard by millions of Muslims around the world was stopped whilst reentering the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with his family. He was detained and driven away to an undisclosed location in the country.

The imam of the noble sanctuary of Makkah was apprehended in a humiliating manner due to his deemed 'improper' social media activity. Dr Talib is accused of denouncing the excess in entertainment projects in the Kingdom – labelling it as wasting public money. He is on record for saying the investment would be better served in industry and production to strengthen the economy.

What has been described as a public show of force, Dr Saleh Al-Talib was detained under protest whilst in the view of his children and has not been seen for several months. The state authorities have also removed all communication privileges, with his family and relatives confirming they have not heard from him since the arrest.

SANAD, a human rights organisation monitoring and reporting on arbitrary detentions said, "It appears no one is spared from the brutality of the Saudi authorities. No one with a voice, influence, or a dissenting opinion is spared, regardless of their orientation and thought.



“The hand of oppression and the lashes of violations in Saudi Arabia has extended to every free voice calling for reform. Rather, it has been exceeded by those who once had the imprint of reform or spoke in a hidden voice to demand reform. This matter went further to attain and extend to the people of the Qur’an (who are God’s people and his own) and extended to those who prayed as an imam in the Noble Sanctuary of Mecca, the purest and most honourable place on earth, the shelter of the hearts of the believers and the focus of attention of Muslims in all parts of the world.”

Unfortunately, the latest arrest is not an isolated incident in the Kingdom. Among the religious personalities that the Saudi authorities have cracked down on is the reciter Sheikh Dr Abdullah Basfar, a professor at King Abdulaziz University and an imam and preacher at Al-Shuaibi Mosque in Jeddah.

Sheikh Abdullah Basfar is an academic and a proficient reader of the Qur'an. He devoted his life to serving, memorising and teaching the Holy Qur'an across the Islamic world. He is the Secretary-General of the World Organisation for the Book and the Sunnah and a well-known figure in the Islamic world, having overseen the construction of several Qur'anic institutes and schools (from which hundreds of memorisers and reciters have graduated).

Dr Basfar was arrested after a historical video of him resurfaced showing him leading worshipers in a mosque in Turkey in 2016, and because of the deterioration of the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Turkey after the assassination of Khashoggi.





He was subjected to the same violations, including arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, solitary confinement, and prevention of communicating with his family - the Saudi authorities as of yet have not charged him or initiated a trial.

SANAD says, "Attacking such Qur'anic figures and prolific personalities who are respected by all Muslims in the world, whose worth and status is well known, is a blatant attack on every Muslim and a provocation for every believer. Rather, it is a deliberate attack on the Qur'an and its people. These people did not commit a mistake and did not commit a crime to be arrested and hidden and to have the most horrific types of violations practised against them. All this despite them being Islamic symbols, not only in Saudi Arabia but throughout the Muslim world.



S A N A D
SANA ORGANIZATION



www.sanad.uk