

Saudi authorities arrest Yemeni man who dedicated his umrah pilgrimage to Queen Elizabeth II

[Saudi security forces have arrested](#) a man who claimed he had travelled to the holy city of Mecca to dedicate his umrah pilgrimage to Queen Elizabeth II.

The man, a Yemeni citizen, posted on Monday a video of himself on social media where he held up a banner at the Grand Mosque of Mecca, the holiest site in Islam.

The banner stated that he was completing “umrah for the soul of Queen Elizabeth II, we ask God to accept her in heaven and among the righteous”.



The man appears to have fallen foul of two strict Saudi rules on the conduct of pilgrims in Mecca – the first being a ban on unfurling banners or chanting slogans at the scene. Secondly, pilgrims are not allowed to dedicate their pilgrimages to deceased non-Muslims, such as the late Queen who was also the supreme governor of the Church of England.

Saudi state media reported that security forces at the Grand Mosque had “arrested a resident of Yemeni nationality . . . legal measures were taken against him and he was referred to the public prosecution”.

To us that's a lovely example of ecumenicalism and charity, mindful of the Biblical teaching on prayer that “The Holy Spirit makes sense of that which we can only groan”. I hope the Saudi authorities only reprimand him for carrying a banner where he should not have and leave his intention to the wisdom of The Almighty.

Unlike the hajj pilgrimage, which takes place once a year and attracts millions of believers, the umrah pilgrimage can be undertaken throughout the year.