

Headline	One million M'sians still waiting to perform pilgrimage in Mecca		
MediaTitle	The Star (Kuching)		
Date	24 Nov 2013	Color	Black/white
Section	NEWS	Circulation	293,375
Page No	S2	Readership	1,026,812
Language	English	ArticleSize	110 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 609
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 1,828



One million M'sians still waiting to perform pilgrimage in Mecca

KUCHING: Some 1.2 million Malaysians are on the list to perform their *haj* as the waiting period for intending pilgrims now stands at around 50 years.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom admitted that it was a global problem that not only affected Malaysia but also the rest of the world as the requirements were set by the Saudi Arabian government.

"It all depends on the quota set by the Saudi government. At the moment, the quota for our country is an annual 0.1% of the population,

which means 28,000 pilgrims," he revealed at a press conference here yesterday.

Moreover Jamil reiterated that Lembaga Tabung Haji (TH) did not set any quota for pilgrims according to states.

Rather, he said, the board adopted the "first come, first served" basis, adding that those who registered first would make it on the list as long as they were given a clean bill of health.

In saying this, however, he pointed out that if there was a death or a pilgrim was found unfit to travel

among those in the first list, then that spot would be filled by the next individual.

Jamil said TH would also consider special requests such as those from elderly pilgrims.

Asked if he would encourage youths to register quickly, he replied that it was not his place to do so.

According to Jamil, since its establishment in 1963, TH has handled more than a million *haj* pilgrims.

Currently, the board has 119 branches with 6,000 service channels all over the country and also an operation office in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.