**Toward a crowd management training for police in the Haj season**

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**Abstract**

This paper aims to propose a framework for effective crowd management training for police. The importance of training police officers to deal with mass gathering events has been highlighted in some recent studies, which suggest that well-designed, adequate training is crucial to the success of crowd management (Alsubaie, 2014[[1]](#footnote-1); Hoggett and Stott, 2010[[2]](#footnote-2)).

This issue is of a particular significance in the Saudi context, where millions of Muslims gather annually in very limited spaces of land during the *Hajj* and *Omrah* (pilgrimage) seasons, thus creating what is considered to be the most challenging crowd management situations in the world. The fact that pilgrims have to converge simultaneously in one particular location in order to perform their compulsory religious rituals requires that security forces in the Holy places be well-equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for managing and ensuring the safety and security of such extraordinary masses of people.

The training of police officers to handle mass gathering events such as those experienced by Saudi security personnel in Makkah and Al-Madinah must follow scientifically established methods and be organized in such a way as to ensure the achievement of the desired outcomes with regard to effective and appropriate crowd management. Accordingly, the current paper is an attempt to highlight the essential components of effective crowd management training for the police, and link them with the lessons learned from the Saudi experience of crowd management in *Hajj* and *Omrah* seasons. In addition, the paper will propose multi-tiered training programmes, which cover the various aspects of crowd management and address the needs of different levels of personnel across the force. This will involve discussing the anticipated impediments to the implementation of such programmes and suggesting useful solutions. In doing so, the paper is hoped to constitute a useful reference for both academics and practitioners concerned with formulating crowd management training courses for the police.

1. Alsubaie, H. (2014) *Crowd Control and Management Enterprise Modelling (CCMEM) Utilizing the MECCA (Mega Event Coordination and Control Architecture) Framework*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Kingston University, UK. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Hoggett, J. and Stott, C. (2010) 'Crowd Psychology, Public Order Police Training and the Policing of Football Crowds', *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 33 (2). pp. 218-235. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)