

SAUDI ARABIA HAS 100,000 AIR CONDITIONED TENTS THAT CAN HOUSE 3 MILLION PEOPLE SITTING EMPTY YET HAS TAKEN ZERO REFUGEES

While Europe takes the Burden of the Migrant Crisis.

The likelihood of the Saudis inviting Syrian refugees to stay in Mina is virtually zero, but the thousands of empty tents serve as a physical representation of the hypocrisy shared by wealthy Gulf Arab states when it comes to helping with the crisis

While European countries are being lectured about their failure to take in enough refugees, Saudi Arabia – which has taken in precisely zero migrants – has 100,000 air conditioned tents that can house over 3 million people sitting empty.

The sprawling network of high quality tents are located in the city of Mina, spreading across a 20 square km valley, and are only used for 5 days of the year by Hajj pilgrims. As the website Amusing Planet reports, “For the rest of the year, Mina remains pretty much deserted.”

The tents, which measure 8 meters by 8 meters, were permanently constructed by the Saudi government in the 1990’s and were upgraded in 1997 to be fire proof. They are divided into camps which include kitchen and bathroom facilities.

The tents could provide shelter for almost all of the 4 million Syrian refugees that have been displaced by the country’s civil war, which was partly exacerbated by Saudi Arabia’s role in funding and arming jihadist groups.

However, as the Washington Post reports, wealthy Gulf Arab nations like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and others have taken in precisely zero Syrian refugees. Although Saudi Arabia claims it has taken in 500,000 Syrians since 2011, rights groups point out that these people are not allowed to register as migrants. Many of them are also legal immigrants who moved there for work. In comparison, Lebanon has accepted 1.3 million refugees – more than a quarter of its population.

While it refuses to take in any more refugees, Saudi Arabia has offered to build 200 mosques for the 500,000 migrants a year expected to pour into Germany.

Saudis argue that the tents in Mina are needed to host the annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, but given that the Arabic concept of Ummah is supposed to offer protection to all Muslims under one brotherhood, surely an alternative location could be found so that Mina can be repurposed to house desperate families fleeing war and ISIS persecution?

While Europe is being burdened by potentially millions of people who don’t share the same culture or religion as the host population, Gulf Arab states refuse to pull their weight, resolving only to throw money at the problem.

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Photos credit: Akram Abahre.





