



## Hilal Advisory Team Clarification Ramadhan 1429

Having received numerous requests from Moamineen, The Hilal Advisory Team of The Council of European Jamaats would like to elaborate on its reasoning in declaring Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2008 as 1<sup>st</sup> of Ramadhan 1429.

According to Fiqh - Jurisprudence, it is the responsibility of every individual to ascertain the beginning of the month. The CoEJ Hilal Advisory Team is only an advisory body that is setting out guidelines to assist mo'amineen in this process. It remains the duty of every mo'amineen to acquire 'Itminan' – Certainty and then act accordingly. The Hilal Advisory Team sets out below the basis it has used in deriving its declaration:

The following are deductions as per the rulings of His Eminence Ayatullah Ali Al Hussain Al Sistani (may Allah prolong his life) **ONLY**.

As for Muqalideen of Ayatullah Khuei (RA), please see end of statement for further explanation.

Based on the principle of "*multiple curve sightings*" and backed by astronomical data in regards to the possibilities of sighting the New Crescent at sunset on Monday, 1st September 2008 in UK and most of Europe, was improbable. However The Hilal Advisory Team does alert mo'amineen in various parts of Europe to sight the crescent and declaration would then be made using witnesses whereas the astronomical calculations are used to provide guidance and indication of the same.

### Sighting Possibilities – Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008

The Hilal Advisory Team based its facts from the following data collated for various leading cities in UK and Europe to determine possible sightings:

#### **LONDON (England):**

Astronomical New Moon on 30 Aug 2008 @	8:59 pm
Sunset on 1 Sep 2008 (29 Sha'ban) @	7:46 pm
Moon Age @ Sunset on 1 Sep 2008	46hr 47min
Moonset on 1 Sep 2008 @	7:58 pm
Time Duration	12 min
Elongation @ Sunset on 1 Sep 2008	24° 19'
Crescent altitude @ sunset on 1 Sep 2008	1° 17'
Naked eye sighting is <b>NOT POSSIBLE</b> on Monday 1 September 2008 evening.	

#### **BIRMINGHAM(England):**

Sunset on 1 Sep 2008 (29 Sha'ban) @	7:58 pm
Moon Age @ Sunset on 1 Sep 2008	47hr 0min
Moonset on 1 Sep 2008 @	8:07 pm
Time Duration	9 min
Elongation @ Sunset on 1 Sep 2008	24° 26'
Crescent altitude @ sunset on 1 Sep 2008	0° 29'
Naked eye sighting is <b>NOT POSSIBLE</b> on Monday 1 September 2008 evening.	



## PORTSMOUTH(England):

Sunset on 1 Sep 2008 (29 Sha'ban) @	7:49 pm
Moon Age @ Sunset on 1 Sep 2008	46hr 51min
Moonset on 1 Sep 2008 @	8:02 pm
Time Duration	13 min
Elongation @ Sunset on 1 Sep 2008	24° 20'
Crescent altitude @ sunset on 1 Sep 2008	1° 34'

Naked eye sighting is **NOT POSSIBLE** on Monday 1 September 2008 evening.

## PARIS(France):

Sunset on 1 Sep 2008 (29 Sha'ban) @	8:32 pm
Moon Age @ Sunset on 1 Sep 2008	46hr 34min
Moonset on 1 Sep 2008 @	8:50 pm
Time Duration	18 min
Elongation @ Sunset on 1 Sep 2008	24° 10'
Crescent altitude @ sunset on 1 Sep 2008	2° 17'

Naked eye sighting is **NOT POSSIBLE** on Monday 1 September 2008 evening.

## ZURICH(Switzerland):

Sunset on 1 Sep 2008 (29 Sha'ban) @	7:27 pm
Moon Age @ Sunset on 1 Sep 2008	46hr 29min
Moonset on 1 Sep 2008 @	7:34 pm
Time Duration	7 min
Elongation @ Sunset on 1 Sep 2008	24° 11'
Crescent altitude @ sunset on 1 Sep 2008	0° 39'

Naked eye sighting is **NOT POSSIBLE** on Monday 1 September 2008 evening.

## STOCKHOLM(Sweden):

Sunset on 1 Sep 2008 (29 Sha'ban) @	7:49 pm
Moon Age @ Sunset on 1 Sep 2008	45hr 51min
Moonset on 1 Sep 2008 @	7:36 pm
Time Duration	-13 min
Elongation @ Sunset on 1 Sep 2008	23° 57'
Crescent altitude @ sunset on 1 Sep 2008	-1° 47'

Naked eye sighting is **NOT POSSIBLE** on Monday 1 September 2008 evening.

**As expected, there was no reported sighting in any of these locations. In all cases the crescent altitude is well below even the most liberal criteria for possible sighting. According to most astronomers crescent cannot be sighted when the crescent altitude is less than 5° at sunset. Our community data collection over the years also suggests that there has not been a single occasion when crescent has been sighted with the crescent altitude at sunset has been under 5°.**



## Sighting using optical aid

According to the rulings of His Eminence, the use of optical aid is only acceptable for locating the crescent. However establishing it will need the crescent to be visible with naked eye.

The following is an excerpt from the questions sent to Najaf for further clarification of the said ruling.

### **Question**

Some scholars espouse that there is not a single *riwāyah* that specifies the requirement of sighting the crescent by naked eye. What is your Eminence's expert opinion regarding the use of optical aid like:

- a) Low level binoculars
- b) Powerful binoculars
- c) Telescopes.

### **Answer**

'Crescents were made for people to tell time' – as the Holy Quran stipulates. A crescent that can only be seen by aids cannot help the general public in telling time. Based on this, there is no consideration for a crescent sighted using optical aids like telescopes, etc. ***(Response to questions seeking further clarifications from His Eminence office in Najaf, Original stamped copy available.)***

In addition to the above, there is a strong suggestion to the above view in his book 'A Code Of Practice For Muslims In The West'

### **Question**

During certain months, it is declared that the sighting has been proven according to some religious scholars in some Eastern countries. This is based on the testimony of those who have sighted the new moon. Such declarations are usually coupled with the following facts:

- a. The witnesses who sighted the moon and who number around thirty, for example, are scattered in various cities such as 2 in Isfahan, 3 in Qum, 2 in Yazd, 4 in Kuwait, 5 in Bahrain, 2 in Ahsā', and 6 in Syria, etc.
- b. The sky was clear in a number of cities in the West, and the believers went out in the attempt to sight the moon; and there was nothing preventing the sighting.
- c. **The observatories in England announced that it was impossible to sight the new moon that evening in England except by using a telescope; and that its**



**sighting with the naked eye would be possible only in the following night.** So, what is the ruling in such a case? Please guide us, may Allāh reward you.

## Answer

The criterion is the satisfaction of the individual himself [1] about the actual sighting [of the new moon] or [2] the proof of sighting without any counter claim. **In the case mentioned above, satisfaction is not normally achieved concerning the appearance of the new moon on the horizon in such a way that it could have been sighted by the naked eye. On the contrary, one is satisfied that it was not sighted** and that the testimony [of sightings in the Eastern cities] is based on illusion and error in sight. And Allāh knows the best. **(A Code Of Practice for Muslims in the West)** (<http://www.najaf.org/english/book/5/>)

Considering the data above, even if sighting was possible with optical aid it would not be sufficient in establishing the crescent, because crescent was not visible **with a naked eye** on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008 in any of the locations stated above.

## Sighting in Southern Europe

The following is the data for Madrid, Spain where there was clear visibility subject to perfect conditions.

### MADRID(Spain):

RAMADHAAN 1429AH  
Astronomical New Moon on 30 Aug 2008 @ 7:59 pm GMT  
Sunset on 1 Sep 2008 (29 Sha'ban) @ 8:46 pm  
Moon Age @ Sunset on 1 Sep 2008 46hr 49min  
Moonset on 1 Sep 2008 @ 9:21 pm  
Time Duration 34 min  
Elongation @ Sunset on 1 Sep 2008 24° 9'  
Crescent altitude @ sunset on 1 Sep 2008 5° 38'  
Naked eye sighting is **POSSIBLE** on Monday 1 September 2008 evening.

However this region could not be taken into consideration due to the range allowed by his Eminence in his following clarification

## 115.Question

If the **new moon** is sighted in the East, does it apply to us also in the West? And if it is sighted in America, does it apply to Europe also?



## Answer

If the new moon is sighted in the East, it also applies to the West **as long as the latitude of the two locations are not greatly further away from one another**. If the new moon is sighted in the West, it does not apply to the East unless it is proven—even by the moon staying on the first [Western] horizon for the length of time that is longer than the difference between the sunset of the two locations. [For example, if the sunset in the Eastern city was half an hour before the Western city where the moon was sighted, and the moon stays on the horizon longer than half an hour—the Eastern city can follow the moon sighted in the Western city.]

*Minhāju 's-Sāliheen*, it says: “The new moon is proven through the knowledge acquired by sighting or recurring reports etc., and through credible reports of its sighting, etc.” In ruling No. 1044, it says: “If the new moon is sighted in a city, it is sufficient for other cities, provided they share the same horizon, in the sense that the actual sighting in the first city would necessarily be followed with the sighting in the second city if there were no barriers like clouds, fog, mountains, etc.”

In the light of what has been quoted, the following questions arise:

### 116.Question

Would the sighting of the new moon in cities in the East like Iran, Ahsā', Qatif [both in Arabia], other countries in the Gulf, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon necessarily be followed by its sighting in Western countries like England, France and Germany if there were no barriers like clouds and fog?

### Answer

Yes, the sighting of the new moon in an area would necessarily be followed—provided there were no barriers—in places which are located to its west **as long as they are not far apart on the latitude lines**. (*A Code Of Practice for Muslims in the West*) (<http://www.najaf.org/english/book/5/>)

Further clarification stated the range of 880 kilometres to be the maximum distance in considering the establishment of the crescent.

**سؤال:** إذا ثبت الهلال في الشرق، فهل يثبت عندنا في الغرب؟ وإذا ثبت في أمريكا فهل يثبت في أوروبا كذلك؟

**جواب:** إذا ثبت الهلال في الشرق فهو ثابتٌ للغرب أيضاً، مع عدم ابتعاد المكانين في خطوط العرض كثيراً. وأما إذا ثبت في الغرب فلا يقتضي ثبوته في الشرق، إلا مع تقارب الأفقين في خطوط العرض ولم يكن بحسب الطول الجغرافي بعيداً عنه بأزيد من (880 كم). ([www.najaf.org/arabic/book/6/](http://www.najaf.org/arabic/book/6/)).

Madrid is too far south with a distance of over 1200 kilometres, and could not be considered in the same horizon based on the above.



Therefore with no possibility of sighting with a naked eye in our horizon astronomically together with no credible reports of sighting, The Hilal Advisory Team concluded 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2008 to be the 30<sup>th</sup> Sha'baan 1429. With the early announcement from the website of Imam Ali (AS) Foundation in London, ([www.najaf.org](http://www.najaf.org)), The Hilal Advisory Team despite confidence in their deductions sought further clarifications from Najaf via Qum and advised mo'amineen to consider the following day as "Yaumu Shak" pending response from Agha's office.

Following response and guidance received from Agha's office in Najaf via Qum, a subsequent statement was issued by The Hilal Advisory Team of COEJ confirming that Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2008 as 1<sup>st</sup> Ramadhan 1429 for the Muqallideen of Seyyid Al Sistani.

### **Followers of Syed Khoei (RA)**

For those who can still follow the late Grand Ayatollah Sayyid al-Khoei (may Allah bless his soul), based on the principle of "*sharing of the night*" to which he subscribed to, The Hilal Advisory Team received confirmed reports of sighting from South America on Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008 which was also strongly possible as the New Crescent were high at sunset on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008 in the South American region. Therefore, Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008 was 1<sup>st</sup> Ramadhan 1429 for followers of Syed Khoei.

**The Hilal Advisory Team  
The Council of European Jamaat  
Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ramadhan 1429 , 5<sup>th</sup> September 2008**