



## Hilal Sighting For Eid Ul Fitr 2009/1430AH In Makkah al Mukkarama

Although my report below had been sent to ICOP and ICOUK Members and recently published in the Daily Jang Newspaper in Urdu, I have been requested by many senior Ulema to put it on the Wifaq ul Ulama UK website. The main reason is to inform those people who are adamant that Hilal was sighted in Saudi Arabia and the decisions are based on Sighting and not on Calculations! I hope the detailed report below will be beneficial for those who want to understand Haq.

On Saturday 29th Ramadhan we set off after Asar Salah to the official Makkah Hilal Observatory location in Shimaysi. It is based on a Hill which is around 600M above Sea level. When we got there I was very impressed with the setup which is all purpose built to observe the Hilal. There were 2 small Telescopes and 1 very large Meade LX200 EMC Telescope which is housed in the purpose built dome.

We were very welcomed by the host Dr Abdullrahman H Maghrabi who is a Research Professor in the Astronomy Dept at King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology.

We briefly tried to locate the Hilal just before Maghrib but we were not able to do so. So we did our Iftar which was very well prepared and prayed our Maghrib Salah there.

Sadly 20 minutes after Sunset had occurred there was smog along the entire skyline where we would have expected to observe the Hilal so we were not able to do so even with all the equipment at hand. Dr Maghrabi duly reported negative sighting by telephone to the authorities whilst I was there. Our names were taken for official purposes by the organisers.

There were 12 observers present plus the 3 of us from UK. I have the names of 7 of us from the 15 who were there, listed below.

Dr Abdullrahman H Maghrabi - King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology  
Captain Abdullah Alzahrani - Saudi Navy  
Dr Hasan Basuraukh - KAU (King Abdulaziz University)  
Sheikh Mohammed Saeed (Makkah al Mukkarama)  
Abdul Aziz Raje (UK)  
Hussain Tutla (UK)  
Arif Moghual (UK)

Whilst on the hill we were told that some local individual had sighted the Hilal in Riyadh, upon which the decision of Eid was taken by the authorities. We only heard about the official announcement around 45 minutes after Maghrib when we were on the way back to Haram. So I called UK and I was told that this had already been announced on Islam Channel about 15 minutes ago. What was suprising was that people in the UK seemed to know before the people of Makkah al Mukkarama.

When I returned to the Holy Masjid, we were expecting Esha Salah to be one and half hours after Maghrib as is usually the case, however it was done as is usually done in Ramadhan after 2 hours. I spoke to many people in Masjid e Haram and informed them of my visit to sight the Hilal and also the fact that official announcement was already made, yet for what ever reason the Esha Salah was delayed. This news took few of the people by surprise, one very knowledgeable scholar in a private discussion with myself commented: "this (hilal decision) is an Amaanah (trust) and for years Khiyayanah (dishonesty) is being done by the authorities. If the Moon was there how is it you never saw it?"

Unfortunately this is the sad state of affairs of the Hilal decisions in Saudi Arabia, there are committees in place, knowledgeable people in charge of these committees, but the main decision makers are not taking the cautious approach. The very fact that these knowledgeable people seemed to agree with what we have been saying justifies the method / criteria based on caution, which the Wifaq Ul Ulama have taken. May Allah Almighty grant us all Hidaayah.



On my return I learnt that few people in the UK were spreading rumours that they sighted the Hilal in Makkah, please read the report carefully, "**with the aid of very expensive, up-to-date equipment, and with experts making the effort from a very high position, it was not visible**" so how on earth could anyone in Makkah sight the Hilal?

Some of my friends in Madina Al Munawwarah who were performing I'tiqaf informed me that they were told well before Maghrib on the Saturday the 29th of Ramadhan, to 'pack their stuff' as the holy Masjid was going to be closed at 10.00pm, for cleaning purposes in preparation for Eid on SUNDAY. YES SUNDAY, which means that this years Eid ul Fitr WAS INDEED predetermined.

The effort of sighting seems to be only a formality unfortunately. May Allah (SWT) guide us all on Haq!

Abdul Aziz