

## A Heartfelt Appeal to the Imams, Masjid Managements and Muslim Brothers and Sisters of the USA to Solve the Moonsighting Issues and Unite the Ummah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ

Alhamdulillah, we have completed another month of Ramadan and Eid by the immense bounty of Allah. May Allah ta'ala accept all of our 'ibadaat and efforts for His Deen.

This is an ideal time to calmly reflect on the matter of the timing of our Islamic lunar months. We, from the Central Hilal Committee, would like to share a way to resolve some of the tensions around the matter of moon sighting and unite the Muslims of the USA upon the Sunnah of sighting the moon every month.

We are an organization of Ulama and Imams from 20+ states across the USA. We serve our respective masjid and communities all across America. Each of our members has served the Muslim community in the USA for many years, some even for the last 40+ years. Alhamdulillah, we are imams from diverse backgrounds, reflecting the diversity of the Muslim community in the US, with an extensive amount of experience serving the Muslims in this nation.

We have seen a lot of confusion, disunity and misunderstandings related to such a simple commandment of our Deen and the time-tested system of this Ummah related to it.

Every year, we see many masjid in disarray about when and how to announce the beginning of Ramadan and the two Eids. Almost all masjid have an internal committee that decides upon Islamic dates which effectively follows someone else (who, many times, follows someone else, who follows someone else).

This causes confusion and tension, many times at a personal level, among the community members. There is no one central authority, who decides according to the parameters of the Shariah, on this matter. Yet the commandment of our Deen is one (and clear), the moon is one, the timing is one, and the nation we all live in is one.

To solve this exact problem, our member Ulama organized this effort in 2009 and decided to synchronize the efforts of moon sighting from coast to coast, every month. Without conducting this effort consistently every month from Muharram to Sha'ban, it is difficult to come to a valid decision about Ramadan or Eid.



CHC organizes the monthly effort across America and takes reports of the sighting efforts into consideration before making one unified decision by our national Shura of knowledgeable and experienced Ulama and Imams.

Alhamdulillah, this effort of CHC has been extremely successful. In the last 14 years, CHC has expanded its network to include hundreds of masjid and communities across the country. We have tens of thousands of followers on social media and nearly a million Muslims who visit our different online platforms to get their moon sighting information regularly. We foresee that this problem will be resolved in the next decade or so, inshaAllah. More and more masjid and communities are embracing this organized effort and centralized system of collaboration, putting an end to much confusion and a lot of the disunity by following an established Sunnah and heritage of this Ummah in an organized manner.

We invite you to join this effort of CHC on a community level by informing and educating the masjid managements to follow the announcement of CHC. On an individual level, you can join the effort by studying our educational material (webinar recordings, articles, etc. available on our website) and spreading awareness, and by keeping in touch with CHC alerts across all its platforms.

We find that some brothers are trying to advocate a complete replacement of moon sighting with astronomical calculations to avoid all the confusion, tension, and late-night announcements. We would like to clarify some issues along those lines as well.

Aside from the technical Fiqhi discussion of the matter (for those interested, please see CHC's publication, "A Miscalculation: A Refutation of Using Astronomical Calculations to Determine the Islamic Months" available on Amazon, or visit [www.hilalcommittee.org](http://www.hilalcommittee.org) and @CentralHilalCmt on Twitter, also), we find in the most sahih narrations of Rasulullah ﷺ, (found in Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, al-Sunan al-Arb'ah, and almost every other major collection of Hadith available to us today) that he explicitly forbade us from calculating the month beginnings (Sahih al-Bukhari, 1913; Sahih Muslim, 2380). Mind the fact that calculations of the lunar calendar existed, were quite developed (to nearly the same extent as it is today) and were in use by other nations in his time. He ﷺ explicitly prohibited beginning the month without a verified sighting (Sahih al-Bukhari, 1807; Sahih Muslim, 1080).

The tension around the late-night announcements alluded to by some reflects the breadth of the geographic span of the Muslim population in the USA coupled with the vastness of the nation we live in.



This tension becomes a form of excitement as we patiently wait for the news. We have three time zones and a large number of Muslims in each time zone. Since we all reside in one land and are a small minority of the population, and the fact that the chances of sighting the moon are higher toward the west coast, we must patiently wait for a few hours (2-3 nights in the whole year) for the sunset where our other brothers are looking for the moon in the USA, if we do not receive a positive report in our own time zone by then. This wait can be as short as 1 hour after the sunset and at most 3 hours. With Ramadan coming in shorter days throughout the USA for the next 20 years, this natural waiting period will get easier and less burdensome.

Historically, this waiting time has never been an issue, and is still not an issue for many. It is as simple as educating the public to continue their Ramadan A'mal (or whichever month is in question) until any positive report is received, verified thoroughly, and decided upon. By default, the month continues until proven otherwise. Rasulallah ﷺ and the Sahabah, may Allah be pleased with them, had the same exact procedure in their time. We find in Hadith that people came late night or even at Fajr with sighting information and Nabi ﷺ decided then. The Ummah at large has done the same for the last 1400+ years. Of course, all of this was before the internet and telecommunication, which makes timely dissemination of such crucial information seamless. The best of means should be utilized to help ease the tension of this matter. It also is as simple as publishing and announcing the clear policy of the masjid and how to stay connected for the information. Our experience as imams is that our communities do not lack means, alhamdulillah, and if we work together, we can become more disciplined and united, as is happening in many places..

Some argue that taking holidays on such short notice is not possible. This is a dilemma in conforming to the scheduling requirements of modern bureaucratic societies. The solution for this is as simple as planning ahead with the employer or school. In the cosmopolitan setting we live in, it is easy to explain that we need either two days off for Eid, twice a year, or one day off and one excused absence (regardless of paid or unpaid) contingent to moon sighting. Given the religious freedom and protection we enjoy as citizens of this nation, we find these solutions very feasible.

Finally, we believe it is our duty, as bearers of the knowledge of Rasulallah ﷺ to inform you about the effort of moon sighting in a clear way and provide a clear solution to call you towards it. Astronomical calculations are not a new development in science. Our Muslim scholars have mastered Astronomy for over a millennium and have contributed immensely to science. They have also unanimously stated (with



the exception of a few recent individuals) that replacing moon sighting with these calculations is impermissible, invalid, and akin to the opposition of Rasulullah ﷺ.

**In conclusion:**

We invite all imams and masjid management individuals to join with CHC and become a part of the effort, in action and in official public policy, by following the monthly moon sighting announcements by CHC. We invite our fellow Muslims to adhere to the Sunnah, follow what is clearly proven by the Sunnah, and be a part of solving this problem for the coming generations of Muslims in the USA.

May Allah Ta'ala enable us all to do what pleases Him and accept it from us.

JazakumAllah Khairan,

Mufti Nawalur Rahman (Chicago, IL)

Mawlana Ubaidur Rahman (Stockton, CA)

Mufti Jamaluddin Shaikh (Elmhurst, NY)

Mufti Ruhul Amin (Walden, NY)

On behalf of the Ulama and Imams of  
The Central Hilal Committee of North America

