

The announcement of the commencement of the blessed month of Ramadan 1433 A.H/ 2012 A.D

Bismillah Al Rahman Al Raheem

*All praise is to Allah the Lord of the worlds and may his peace and blessings be upon the
seal of the prophets and messengers Muhammad.*

This year the blessed month of Ramadan loom on the world while it is devastated by severe tribulations that have overwhelming effects on the world and humanity in general. An economic recession that threatens with bankruptcy the stability of nations, crises that portend a famine that may ravage complete societies and the twenty first century technology stands incapable of ending the strangling siege against indefensible nations.

The Arabic spring grinds to a halt and we are yet to see it cross the borders of some nations and bloom in it the flowers of liberty aspired by complete nations that scented for the first time the breeze of freedom.

Rivers of blood continue to gush yet the world responds to it with verbal condemnations that neither feed the poor nor protect the innocent.

The fate of occupied lands continues to be unknown as it has been for tens of years.

A Dark conspiracy weaved by cold blooded regimes, in the twenty first century, that aid tyrants in the suppression and subjugation of unarmed civilians and innocent women, elders and children continues to unfold.

At this point of time, Ramadan looms in the horizon on a world worn by the agony of our ummah, the fragmentation of our nations and the humiliation of our people.

Once more the news of another shameless movie that blasphemies the best of humans, the last messenger of Allah strikes our hearts at this point of time.

In such an environment the intelligent Muslim intellect must not cause a controversy that scars the face of religion at a point when its heart is deeply wounded by many attacks.

It is common knowledge that the sighting of the crescent of Ramadan is the subject of endless arguments every year.

By the same token, it is common knowledge that the difference of opinion in relation to it is old and has been discussed and differed about for a long period of time. A small student of knowledge knows that the scholars are one of two, those who insist on the eye sighting alone and accept no alternative and those who adopt the method of scientific calculation who believe that the sighting does not have to be a visual one and that the sighting is a mean and not an aim and that what is essential is to have certain knowledge of the commencement of the month whether it is achieved by the naked eye or the scientific factuality.

There are scholars who feel satisfied by the birth of the moon which takes at one point of time in the whole universe and others who add to it the condition of the moonset after the time of sunset.

There are those who believe that sighting in one region in the world is sufficient to the rest of the world and those who insist on a separate sighting for each region or country.

All opinions are open to study and academic discussions and the proponents of all opinions are respected and rewarded for their academic efforts.

This year we tried to combine all the respected scholars on a unified opinion. We succeeded, Al Hamdulillah, in unifying the majority of the scholars and Imams, whose names are listed below, after thorough discussions that took place over a number of days and they agreed on a mechanism that guaranteed their consent on one opinion.

On Thursday the 29th of Sha'baan 1433 H which corresponds to the 19th of July 2012, the respected Imams and scholars, whose names are listed below, met in the office of the Grand Mufti of Australia, his eminence Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohamed:

- His eminence Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohamed, the Grand Mufti of Australia.
- His eminence Sheikh Maalik Zaydan the representative of Dar Al Fatwa of Lebanon in Australia
- His eminence Sheikh Yahya Safi the Imam of Imam Ali Mosque in Lakemba.
- His eminence Sheikh Abdul Salam Zoud the general secretary of Rabitat Ahl Al Sunnah Wal Jama'ah.
- His eminence Dr Abdul Naasir Shamseen the president of the Jurists' council.
- His eminence Sheikh Nabil Sukariyyah the imam of the Islamic House Mosque in Liverpool
- His eminence Sheikh Tarik Al Buqa'ee the Imam of Rydalmere Mosque.
- His eminence sheikh Shady Sulayman Imam UMA association.
- His eminence sheikh Khalid Taalib Imam of Guildford Mosque.
- His eminence sheikh Aref shaakir the member of ANIC council.
- His eminence sheikh Mohamed Khamees the Imam of New Castle Mosque.
- His eminence sheikh Mu'tasim Jarraah the Imam of Jam'aat Al Da'wah Mosque.

In addition, the following respected Imams were consulted via phone conference:

- His eminence sheikh Ameen Abu Samaha the president of the Imam's council in Adelaide.
- His eminence sheikh Riyaad Al Rifaa'i the vice president of the Imam's council in Adelaide.

In addition his eminence Sheikh Abdul Rahman Muhammad the Imam of Umar Ibn Al Khattaab mosque in Wollongong authorised the council to decide on his behalf.

All the respected aforementioned scholars and Imams agreed on the following:

1. Thursday is the last day of Sha'baan and Friday is the first day of the blessed month of Ramadan based on the birth of the moon on Thursday at 2:44 pm and its setting for certainty after sunset in Australia.
2. His eminence the Grand Mufti of Australia Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohamed and the respected scholars and Imams reinforce the importance of uninvolving the general public, particularly the youth, in the controversial matters upon which the Imams and the scholars did not receive a unified stance. It is unacceptable customarily and rationally to let the differences in the views be the cause of animosity and hostility amongst the Muslims.

Finally, we emphasize the importance of respecting all the scholars and Imams regardless of their agreement or disagreement with us. We value them, respect their points of view and we appreciate it.

It is essential that dialogue and discussion amongst the scholars and Imam continues over the issues that concern the community and affect its future. We believe that dialogue is the first step towards understanding one another and bringing closer the different views and opinions until we can reach a complete consensus and unify the hearts. We hope that the state of the community continues to improve in the future.

Furthermore, the Grand Mufti of Australia Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohamed and the respected scholars and Imams admonish the Muslims to uphold and preserve their fasting from any acts that may diminish it. They request from them to designate their brothers in Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Yemen and the remaining Muslim countries in their daily supplications to Allah and to ask His majesty to end their tribulations and to triumph them against their enemies and to spread peace and security in Australia and the entire world.

We pray to Allah to make our present better than our past and to make our future better than our past and present. We implore His grace to change our state to a one that pleases him.

Ramadan Mubarak to all and we ask Allah to accept it from all the Muslims.

The Grand Mufti of Australia

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