

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

مجمع فقهاء الشريعة بأمريكا



## The Assembly of Muslim Jurists Of America

AMJA Declaration: Methodology for Confirming the New Moon

Sha'ban 25, 1442/April 5, 2021

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

All praise belongs to Allah, and may prayers and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, his Companions, and those that followed.

On Wednesday, Sha'ban 25, 1442/April 5, 2021, the Assembly of Muslim Jurists of America's General Assembly gathered via Zoom to discuss this draft regarding AMJA's methodology for confirming the new moon .

The discussion lasted approximately two hours and resulted in the following decisions.

### **AMJA's methodology for confirming the new moon consists of the following:**

1. Sighting by the naked eye serves as the foundation of knowing the beginning of every lunar month, and this can be assisted with optical aids (e.g., telescopes). However, it is not relied upon if there is a strong case against it, such as if it contradicts the scientific facts of the astronomical calculations which are relied upon by experts whose faith is trusted. It is therefore recommended that a committee of three trustworthy astronomers be established for the purposes of consultation in this regard.
2. As a foundational principle, differences in sighting locations are not considered. When the moon is sighted and legally confirmed in any Muslim country not known to diverge from the mainstream, all other Muslims who share a portion of the night with the location where it was sighted are required to fast (i.e., to observe Ramadan).
3. If acting according to an inferior conclusion, such as considering local sightings, were to occasionally lead to uniting the local community in beginning or ending the month of Ramadan, we would act accordingly. Such differences in opinion from one legal school to another is something found within the fiqh of Ahl us-Sunnah (People of the Sunnah). Whether they subscribe to astronomical calculations or visual sightings, for the sake of unity and to avoid division and offensive differing, minority communities in North America should follow the position of the majority Muslim community in their area if there is a discrepancy in the practical methodologies employed to confirm the obligation of fasting (i.e., of observing Ramadan).

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4. Considering the unique nature of North America and its vastness, the continent is divided into time zones. Therefore, each region, if the news of a moon sighting has not reached them by the time of 'Ishā', can announce the completion of Sha'ban the following day. That community should then give no consideration to any local sighting that occurs in states or provinces to the west of them.
5. It is also necessary for Muslims in North America to create an official Islamic hijri calendar, based on principles that have been utilized in other Muslim countries, which determines fixed dates for official occasions. This will serve as a permanent calendar to be utilized throughout the year (with the rare discrepancy), making it possible for us to assign fixed dates for Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, and to submit this calendar to schools, universities, and other institutions in order to establish religious holidays for the Muslims.

