

Report of
Rabetah Al-Ulama Al-Islamiyyah
Batley UK
visit to
The Kingdom of Morocco
Ministry of Religious Endowment
and Islamic Affairs

May 2009
Jamadil Awwal 1430 H

Prepared by	Moulana Mohammed Amin Pandor Executive Member – IMWS General Secretary - Rabetah Al-Ulama Al- Islamiyyah Batley UK Executive Member Anjuman E Zinatul Islam
Date of report	May 2009
Checked by	Moulana Shakeel Hafez Executive Committee Member Rabetah Al-Ulama Al-Islamiyyah Batley UK
Date checked	May 2009
Reviewed by	Moulana Qari Hanif Imaam and Khateeb of Masjid Noor Executive Member of Batley Moon Sighting Committee
Date reviewed	May 2009
Reviewed by	Moulana Imran Loonat Executive Member of Batley Moon Sighting Committee
Date reviewed	May 2009
Reviewed by	Bashir Karolia Chairman – IMWS Batley UK
Date	May 2009
Approved by	Mufti Zakariyyah Akudi Chair - Batley Moon Sighting Committee Batley UK
Date Approved	May 2009
Approved by	Moulana Hashim Rawat Chairman - Rabetah Al-Ulama Al-Islamiyyah Batley UK
Date Approved	May 2009

Executive Summary

All praises are for Allah subhanahu tala, lord of the worlds, peace and blessing be upon the final prophet Mohammed (SAW), upon his companions and his family (may Allah be pleased with them all) .

[arabic verse here] Says almighty in the Quraan Al Kareem "... and the moon we set its positions so that you may know the passing of the years and the calculations (Sx Vx)" . The Prophet (SAW) has said [arabic hadith here] "fast upon seeing (the moon) and make iftar (end fasting) upon seeing the moon" (Bukhari).

Following the visit of the delegation of Ulama E Kiraam from Batley, UK to the Kingdom of Morocco in April 2009 to witness the new crescent for Jamadil Awwal 1430 H, it gives us great pleasure to report that Alhamdulillah after witnessing the procedure for sighting the moon of Jamadil Awwal 1430 H. We reviewed numerous documentation for previous years and had discussions with the Ministry of Religious Endowment and Islamic Affairs in Rabat. We are completely satisfied that the Kingdom of Morocco strictly follows the Kitabullah and Sunnat of our beloved Prophet Mohammed (SAW) in sighting the moon.

We would like to convey our sincerest gratitude to the Government of King Mohammed VI (may Allah subhanahu tala protect him) and all the officials of the Kingdom of Morocco for extending their full support, explaining in detail the complexities associated with moon sighting and answering all our queries.

This report contains the details on how we have come to this conclusion. We ask Allah subhanahu tala to accept our humble efforts for the betterment of Islam and Muslims (Ameen).

*Moulana Qari
Mohammed Hanif
Patel*

*Moulana
Shakeel Hafez*

*Moulana
Mohammed Imran
Lunnat*

*Moulana
Mohammed Amin
Pandor*

Xx May 2009.

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1.0 Acknowledgement

The Ulama of Batley UK, sincerely acknowledge the hospitality extended by The Kingdom of Morocco, Ministry of Religious Endowment and Islamic Affairs during the visit to witness the sighting of the new moon of Jumadil Awwal 1430 H corresponding to April 2009.

We are also grateful to Sheikh Abdul Majeed Al-Murdhi the Imaam of Jamia Kairaouine in Fez, Sheikh Abdul Hai Al-Amruwi, Sheikh Abdul Salaam Al-Gharmini, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Gaz Al-Hussaini and Sheikh Abdul Hai Amoor. the elder Ulama from Jamia Kairaouine and eminent Ulama from Majlis Al-Ilmi in Morocco for their welcome and generosity during the visit to the noble city of Fez.

The hospitality was such that even after being so far from our homes we were made to feel as though we were amongst family and friends. Nothing was spared by our host in looking after our health and well being.

Our sincerest appreciation to Fiona Rumley from the British Foreign Office in Rabat for providing support in the initial meeting at the Ministry of Religious Endowment and Islamic Affairs.

We ask Allah subhanahu tala that may he keep His Eminency, Amir Al Muamineen King Mohammed IV safe and may Allah subhanahu tala protect The Kingdom of Morocco from all evils (Ameen).

2.0 Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the four Ulama's visit during Jumadil Awwal 1430 H corresponding to April 2009 to the Kingdom of Morocco in relation to the sighting of the new moon in the Kingdom.

3.0 The purpose of the visit to The Kingdom of Morocco

The purpose of the visit by the four Ulama to the Kingdom of Morocco was to;

- observe how the Kingdom of Morocco operates its moon sighting system,
- learn about the complexities and the associated challenges with moon sighting,
- understand how these complexities and challenges are resolved,
- enable sharing of good practice,
- and explore partnership working on an on-going basis and mutual cooperation.

4.0 Background

- 4.1 The importance of time and location based worship is essential in Islam. Daily importance is associated with the five times Salaat. Weekly importance is associated with the Friday Salaat, monthly importance is associated with the sighting of the new moon. Annually importance is associated with Ramadham Al Mubarak and once in a lifetime importance is associated with the Hajj.
- 4.2 The importance of the heavenly bodies is iterated in the Quraan Al Kareem which relates to Hazrat Ebrahim (peace be upon him) which led him to the assurance of Allah's unity.
- 4.3 The physical sighting of the first day moon is essential to be proper start of the Islamic month. Unfortunately, some Muslims have called for a move to astronomical calculations rather than direct sighting. Clearly, weather conditions in UK, particularly in the winter months make it extremely difficult for direct observations. However still direct observation is essential.

- 4.4 Ironically, the breaking of fasts and fixing of the obligatory Salaat are often based on calculation methods. Therefore, we must not completely discredit those who advocate calculation methods for the beginning of the lunar month.
- 4.5 The time for one complete orbit of the moon around the earth is approximately 29.5 days. The shortest period is 29.2 days and the longest is 29.8 days. This variation is mainly due to the orbit being elliptical and the velocity not being constant. The total number of days in a lunar year is approximately 354. This is approximately ten days shorter than the Gregorian calendar.
- 4.6 In modern times, the need for global consistent dating is essential for planning and execution purposes. Without this exactness, different communities would have different lunar calendars. For this reason, some Muslim communities and governments use astronomically calculated months to ensure consistency of dates within their borders. The result of this can cause up to two days difference with the sighted calendar on some occasions.
- 4.7 The challenge in the UK is that there is a diverse population of Muslims from all over the world. Some follow Saudi Arabia as those wishing to perform Hajj will have to use the Saudi Arabian Hajj dates. They then extend this to Ramadan also. Others follow their home countries (India, Pakistan or other Arab countries).
- 4.2 The sighting of the first day of the Islamic month is very important. It impinges on the worshipping aspects of religion. These aspects include but not limited to the following;
- first of Ramadhan Al Mubarak
 - eid Al Fitr
 - days of Haj
 - day of Arafaat
 - eid Al Adha
 - birth of Prophet Mohammed (SAW)
 - fifteenth of Shabaan
 - tenth of Muharram
 - key historical events.
- 4.2 Many of these aspects of worship are related directly to the Faraiz (Obligatory) acts. Others aspects are related to Mustahab (Preferred) acts.
- 4.3 The Kingdom of Morocco is in North Africa and has the same longitude as UK. It is the nearest Muslim County from UK (see [annex 1](#)). They are very particular about establishing the first day

of the Islamic month. As Sayyads and from the lineage of Hazrat Fatimah Azzohra (Radi Allahu Anha) they have special love for establishing the correct beginnings of the Islamic month. The Moroccan Kingdom is often at variance with other Muslim countries. This does not diminish their love for the holy places. See [annex 2](#) for details on the Sayyad Linage of King Mohammed VI

4.4 Muslims in Batley UK, in the past use to take moon sighting information from the Kingdom of Morocco. However, in those days the telephone and fax systems were not as reliable. There was possible delays sometimes in collating the information from all the observation points in The Kingdom of Morocco. Alhamdulillah ,there have been improvements in communications systems infrastructures at a rapid pace.

5.0 The delegation

The delegation consisted of four Ulama from Batley as follows;

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Moulana Qari Mohammed Hanif Patel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imaam Masjid Noor • Member Batley Moon Sighting Committee |
| Moulana Shakeel Hafez | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Members Rabetah Al Ulama |
| Moulana Imran Loonat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muallim Quran Al Kareem • Member Batley Moon Sighting Committee |
| Moulana Mohammed Amin Pandor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Member IMWS • General Secretary Rabetah Al Ulama • Executive Member of Anjuman E Zinatul Islam |

6.0 Itinerary of the visit

6.1 The Itinerary ([see annex 3](#)) was agreed with the Kingdom of Morocco, Ministry of Religious Endowment and Islamic Affairs as follows,

Date (AD)	Date (Hijri)	Activity
24 April 2009	27 Rabi UI Thani 1430	Arrived in Rabat

25 April 2009	28 Rabi UI Thani 1430	Meet with Ministry officials
26 April 2009	29 Rabi UI Thani 1430	Moon sighting day
27 April 2009	30 Rabi UI Thani 1430 or 01 Jamadil Awwal 1430	Visit Ulama in Fez
27 April 2009	01 Jamadil Awwal 1430 or 02 Jamadil Awwal 1430	Meet with Ministry officials and Depart to UK

* depends on the sighting of the moon

7.0 Methodology and Approach

7.1 The methodology and approach for witnessing the moon sighting system was as follows

- Discuss the available documentation at the Ministry of Religious Endowment and Islamic Affairs.
- Review the preparations on 28th day of Rabi UI Thani 1430
- Witness at firsts hand the sighting of the moon from prescribed locations on. 29th day of Rabi UI Thani 1430
 - Masjid Sunna - Moulana Shakeel
 - Masjid Aazam - Moulana Imran Loonat
- Witness the collocation of data from the various regional offices at the Wizarah on the 29th day of Rabi UI Thani 1430
 - Moulana Qari Hanif Patel &
 - Moulana Mohammed Amin Pandor
- Witness the procedures for declaring the result of moon sighting on the 29th day of Rabi UI Thani 1430
- Review documentation for previous months.

8.0 Meetings with Ministry officials

- 8.1 The delegation of Ulama had numerous meetings throughout the course of the stay with Ministry officials.
- 8.2 At the first introductory meeting, the Ministerial official gave a detailed presentation on how the Kingdom operates its moon sighting system. The Kingdom prepares its citizen prior to the moon sighting day. They have established 278 observation points through out the Kingdom (see annex 4).
- 8.3 Specialists Advisory Astronomer Brother Ali Al-Amruwi outlined the technical aspects of moon sighting.
- 8.4 The Ulama delegation made a presentation (see annex 5) outlining;
- the objectives of the visit,
 - who the delegation consisted of,
 - location of Batley in UK,
 - the relationship between Rabetah Ulama Batley, IMWS and Batley Moon Sighting Committee
 - and the achievements to date.

9.0 Personnel requirements for sighting the moon

The Kingdom has established the following requirements for personnel witnessing the moon. They must have;

- experience in sighting the moon which enables them to differentiate between false and true sightings,
- a good moral character,
- good sharp eyesight to enable viewing the crescent without the aid of magnification.

10.0 Moon sighting practice preparation on 28th of the month

- 10.1 The public are encouraged via television and radio announcements to view the moon and report it to the nearest Qazi.
- 10.2 The public are reminded that the sighting must be with the naked unaided eye.
- 10.3 The moon sighting is a national effort and the government has set up 278 sighting points throughout the Kingdom.

10.4 Moon sighting criteria and basic sighting data (see annex 6) is sent to all the 278 sighting points. The following data is shown on the communication;

غروب الشمس	Sunset
غروب القمر	Moon set
ارتفاع القمر	Attitude of moon
مكث الهلال	
قوس الرؤية	
قوس النور	

11.0 Actions of the 29th of the month

- 11.1 After Magrib Salaat the observers go to the top of the minarets and top of hills to view the moon.
- 11.2 Each team have up to five observers assigned by the Ministry.
- 11.3 In this national effort the military personnel also take an active part.
- 11.4 Each sighting point reports positive or negative sighting by telephone and / or fax to the regional headquarters.
- 11.5 The following information is collected from those reporting by telephone (see annex 7);
- Name of person taking the call
 - Name of person calling
 - Weather condition - Clear
- Cloudy
- Rainy
 - Result of the sighting - Positive sighting
- No sighting
 - Time of call
 - **Mulahizaat**
- 11.6 Before any further action is taken, the Ministry wait for all 278 sighting points through 14 regional offices (see diagram 1 – Moon

sighting reporting structure) to report the results of the sighting (see annex 8).

- 11.7 Once a report (positive or negative) is made it is followed up by an official judicial document called “Rasm Aadil” (see annex 9).
- 11.8 Positive or negative results is forwarded to the Minister who in turn informs the King’s office and other officials.
- 11.9 A formal communication is then read out on the television and the radio. The website is then updated.
- 11.10 Finally faxes are sent to organisations abroad. (see annex 10)

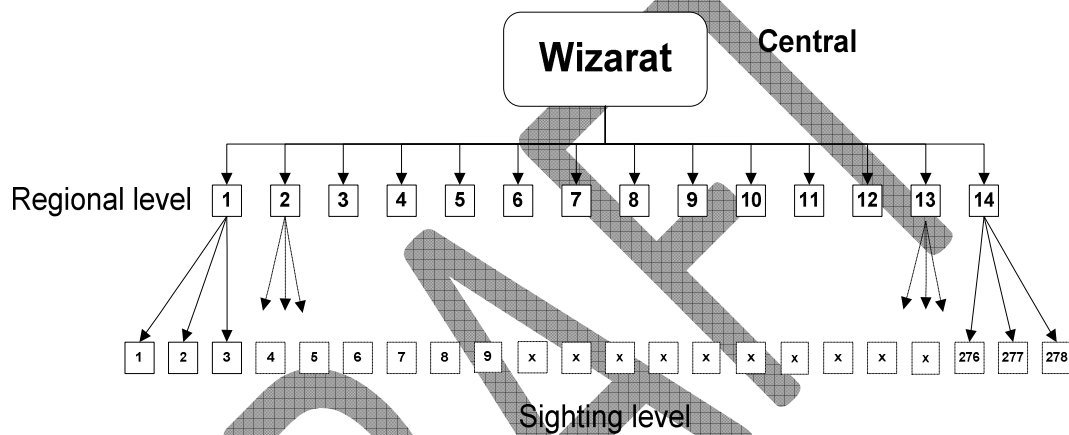


Diagram 1
Moon sighting reporting structure

13.0 Conclusions

- 13.1 As a result of the visit to the Kingdom of Morocco, meeting the various Ulama, Ministry officials, other people (see annex 11), witnessing the moon sighting practice for **Jamadil Awwal** 1430 and reviewing past records it has been concluded that The Kingdom operate a first class moon sighting system.

14.0 Recommendations

- 14.1 It is recommended that Rabetah Al-Ulama Al-Islamiyyah, IMWS and the Batley Moon Sighting Committee should make a request to the Kingdom of Morocco, Ministry of Religious Endowment and Islamic Affairs to supply positive or negative sighting of the moon at the end of each Islamic calendar month.

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Annex 3 Itinerary

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Annex 4 Presentation

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Annex 5 Moon sighting criteria

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Annex 6 Moon sighting report (positive or negative)

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Annex 7 Rasm Aadil – Judicial document

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Annex 8 Letter of announcement

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Annex 9 Ministry telephone log

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Annex 10 Personnel met during the visit

Personal met during the visit

	Name		Contact details
1	Sidi Idris Bil Mutair	Witness at Masjid Aazam Rabat	
2	Abdul Hakim Sabaatam	Witness at Masjid Aazam Rabat	

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Annex 11 Moon sighting points

1	xx	1	xx
		2	xx
2	xx		xx
			xx
3	xx		xx
			xx
4	xx		xx
			xx
5	xx		xx
			xx
6	xx		xx
			xx
7	xx		xx
			xx
8	xx		xx
			xx
9	xx		xx
			xx
10	xx		xx
			xx
11	xx		xx
			xx
12	xx		xx
			xx
13	xx		xx
			xx
14	xx	277	xx
		278	xx
	Armed forces		