

In the Name of Allāh, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Islamic Crescents' Observation Project (ICOP)
December 19, 2006

Sunday is the First of the Days of the Blessed ʿĪd of Sacrifice

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The astronomical calculations indicate that the [geo]centric conjunction of the month *Ḍū l-ḥijja* 1427 AH will happen on Wednesday, 20 December 2006 CE at 2:01 p.m. GMT. On this day a sighting of the crescent is impossible from all states of the Islamic world and most of the United States, because of moonset before sunset. On Thursday, 21 December a sighting of the crescent is possible by means of a telescope in the central and southern parts of Asia, in Northern Africa and in Southern Europe, whereas a sighting by naked eyes can be expected in Central and Southern Africa, and in large parts of the American double continent. By taking the sighting of the crescent as criterion for the beginning of the Hijric month, the beginning of the month *Ḍū l-ḥijja* of this year must fall upon Friday, 22 December, and consequently Sunday, 31 December is the First of the Days of the blessed ʿĪd of Sacrifice. But it should be mentioned that in spite of the impossibility of a crescent sighting on Wednesday, 20 December in all states of the Islamic world because of moonset before sunset, we find that the responsible authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia called upon the general public to look out for the crescent on Tuesday, 19 December – that means two days before the correct date to search for the crescent. We hope that this will not lead to an error in the determination of the date for ʿĪd and Ḥajj of this year, and that the month *Ḍū l-ḥijja* will not start at least one day before its correct date.

Throwing a glance at the moon's situation on Wednesday, 20 December in some Arabic and Islamic cities, we find that the moon will set 21 minutes before sunset in Kuwayt City; 20 minutes before sunset in ʿAmmān and Jerusalem; 19 minutes before sunset in Manāma; 18 minutes before sunset in Abū Ḍaby, Dawḥa, and Cairo; 16 minutes before sunset in Rabat; and 13 minutes before sunset in Makka al-Mukarrama. This means the impossibility of a crescent sighting on Wednesday from all regions of the Islamic world.

On Thursday, 21 December the topocentric calculations of the crescent during sunset yield the following data: in the city Abū Ḍaby the moon will set 43 minutes after sunset, its age will be 22 hours and four minutes; in the city Makka al-Mukarrama the moon will set 47 minutes after sunset, its age will be 23 hours and three minutes; in the city ʿAmmān the moon will set 41 minutes after sunset, its age will be 23 hours and seven minutes; in the city Cairo the moon will set 43 minutes after sunset, its age will be 23 hours and 23 minutes; in the city Rabat the moon will set 47 minutes after sunset, its age will be 26 hours and 26 minutes. Sighting of the crescent will be possible on Thursday in Abū Ḍaby, Makka al-Mukarrama, ʿAmmān, Cairo, and Rabat by means of a telescope, and the crescent may even be sighted by naked eyes in the case of totally clear atmosphere and observation through an experienced [observer]. For a [better] understanding of the meaning of these figures, it should be pointed out that the shortest lag time of the crescent which permitted its sighting by naked eyes was 29 minutes – this observation was performed on 20 September 1990 from Palestine, whereas the shortest moon age which permitted its sighting by naked eyes was 15 hours and 33 minutes – this observation was performed on 25 February 1990 from the USA. But it is not sufficient to permit its sighting that the moon age and lag time [simply] surpass

these figures, as the crescent's sighting depends on other factors, for example its angular separation from the sun and its distance from the horizon in the moment of its observation.

To know about the results of the crescent's observation it is possible to visit the ICOP website on the Internet at the address <http://www.icoproject.org>. The Project was founded in 1998 and it comprises actually more than 300 members, scientists and people interested in crescent sighting and calendars. The Project encourages interested people in different states of the world to observe the crescent and to send the results of their observations to the Project via its site on the Internet.

(Translation: Aḥmad Kaufmann – Germany – ICOP Member)