

In the Name of Allāh, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Islamic Crescents' Observation Project (ICOP)

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This Year's Ramaḍān Has 30 Days

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In this year the Islamic states are differing in their determination of the beginning of this year's blessed month of Ramaḍān, as some states began the month Ramaḍān on Saturday, 23 September 2006, and those states were Saudi-Arabia, Kuwayt, Qaṭar, Baḥrayn, the Emirates, Yemen, Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, Libya, and Sudan; whereas the majority of Islamic states began their fasting on Sunday, 24 September, and among these states were Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, Oman, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Somalia, and numerous other Islamic states; whereas Iran and Pakistan began their fasting on Monday, 25 September.

What is concerning the states that began their fasting on Saturday, so will be Saturday, 21 October the twenty-ninth day of the month Ramaḍān, and their looking-out for the crescent of the month Šawwāl will be on this day. But of course, a sighting of the crescent on Saturday, 21 October is impossible in all states of the world with regard to the setting of the moon before sunset, and the happening of the conjunction after sunset. Therefore expectedly these states complete their fasting on Sunday, and Monday, 23 October is the First of the days of the happy Īdu l-Fiṭr in these states.

What is concerning the states that began their fasting on Sunday, so will be Sunday, 22 October the twenty-ninth day of the month Ramaḍān, and their looking-out for the crescent of the month Šawwāl will be on this day. But a sighting of the crescent on this day is impossible, too, in all states of the world, with regard to the setting of the moon before sunset in some regions, or the setting together with the sun in the other regions. Therefore expectedly these states complete their fasting on Monday, and Tuesday, 24 October is the First of the days of the happy Īdu l-Fiṭr in these states.

Regarding the crescent of this year's month Šawwāl, the astronomical calculations show that the [geo]centric conjunction of the month Šawwāl 1427 AH will happen on Sunday, 22 October, at 5:14 o'clock GMT in the morning. The moon being no longer in the sky after sunset on Sunday, 22 October makes it impossible that Monday is the First of the days of the happy Īdu l-Fiṭr, both for the states that regard a sighting of the crescent as condition, and for those that content themselves with its presence after sunset, even if its sighting is not possible. Concerning the sighting of the crescent of the month Šawwāl on Monday, 23 October, the sighting of the crescent by means of a telescope is possible in the majority of the Asian continent and in parts of North America, whereas the sighting of the crescent by naked eyes is easily possible in the South and Middle of the African continent, and in South America. Under the assumption that the sighting of the crescent is a condition for the beginning of the Hijric month, the correct beginning of this year's month Šawwāl should fall in most states of the world on Tuesday, 24 October.

When taking a glance at the moon's situation on Sunday, 22 October in some Arabic and Islamic cities, the moon will set in Tehran 8 minutes before sunset; in Baġdād 6 minutes before sunset; in Damascus, Bayrūt, Tunis, and Algiers 5 minutes before sunset; in Kuwayt, 'Ammān, and Jerusalem 4 minutes before sunset; in Manāma, Cairo, and Tripoli three minutes before sunset; in Masqaṭ, Abū Ṣaby, Dawḥa, and Rabat two minutes before sunset; and in Riyāḍ one minute before sunset. Concerning Makka al-Mukarrama, the lower rim of the crescent will set approx. one and a half minute before sunset, and the crescent will set completely 51 seconds after the complete setting of the sun. This means an impossibility of a sighting of the crescent on Sunday in all mentioned regions, and it is impossible as well in the remaining regions of the Islamic world.

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.

ICOP proves great importance to the subject of crescent sighting and prayer calendars by organizing an astronomic-scientific conference on the two days 13/14 December in the city of Abū Ṣaby in cooperation with the Emirates' Society for Astronomy and the Centre for Documentation and Research. This conference will be attended by scientists from various states of the world, and the conference will discuss elementarily the subject of crescent sighting and the difficulties related with it, especially the wrong beginnings of some Islamic states when determining the beginning of the Hijric months.

(Translation: Aḥmad Kaufmann – Germany – ICOP Member)