

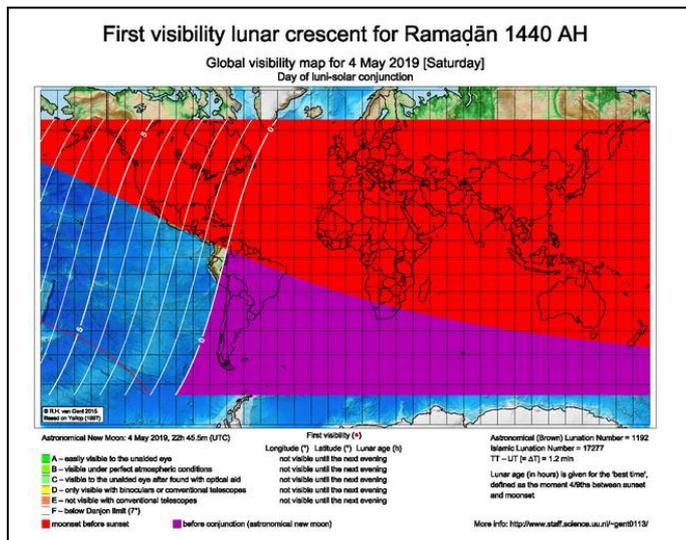
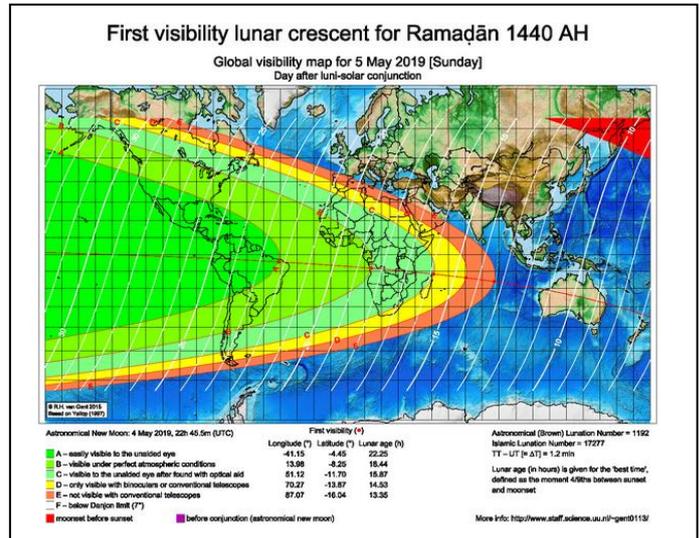
When is Ramadan 1440 AH?

Report by Qamar Uddin: On Friday 5 April 2019 (29th Rajab 1440 AH), many people from throughout the UK have tried to sight the crescent moon (Hilal) of Shaban 1440 after the Magrib (sunset) prayer to practice upon the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (S), but it was not sighted. We have also received negative sighting reports from the 278 points of the Moroccan territories that it was not sighted either. However, the next day (30 Rajab) the Hilal was sighted in the UK even though many places were cloudy and hence the month of Shaban was started from 7 April 2019.

Since 1 Shaban 1440 AH started from 7 April 2019 in the UK, along with many other countries in the same region (as well as the whole world), the 29 Shaban 1440 AH in the UK will be on Sunday, 5 May 2019, Insha-Allah. It is a *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (S) to look for the Hilal after the Magrib prayer on the 29th day of each lunar month and if the Hilal was not sighted (and no reliable sighting news was received from within the same region), then 30-days of the month has to be completed.

From a scientific point of view, the Ramadan moon will **not** be visible on the UK (or Makkah) horizon in the evening of 5 May 2019. This is because on that evening the moon will be too close to the sun and too close to the horizon in London (as well as Makkah). The age of the moon at London sunset will be 20:44 hours (and at Makkah sunset, it will be 17:02 hours). It is a known fact amongst the experts that when the moon is too close to the horizon, **atmospheric extinction** makes the moon invisible to the human eye. We have been advised by Moroccan government astronomers that they do not expect to see the Ramadan moon on 5 May 2019 either, for the above reasons, proven by many years of observation data.

However, on the next day (6 May 2019), the moon will be over 44 hours old at London sunset and should be easily visible in the UK as well as in most parts of the world. Therefore, 1 Ramadan 1440 AH in the UK is likely to be from 7 May 2019, Insha-Allah. It is a well-known fact that if the moon is sighted in the East, then it must be sighted in the West, but not the other way around. For example, if the moon is sighted in Saudi Arabia, then it must be sighted in all locations to the West, including Morocco (Dakhla, Western Sahara). Which means, if this is not the case, then the news from the East (i.e. Saudi Arabia, in this example) must be wrong and hence **rejected** (as mistake/false news).



Unfortunately, some people in the UK have chosen to follow the pre-calculated calendar of Saudi Arabia (called the Ummul Qura) to start the month of Shaban 1440 from 6 April 2019, which is not considered as a "Month of Ibadah" in Saudi Arabia (except Muharram, Ramadan, Shawwal and Dhul Hijjah). All other 8-months are based on the Ummul Qura calendar that may **not** match the visibility of the moon as stated on their website. As a result of starting Shaban 1-day early, they will be looking for the Ramadan moon on the wrong date (i.e. 4 May 2019), when the moon will not be born and will set before the sun in Saudi Arabia (and in most of the world). Hence, they are likely to wrongly declare the start of Ramadan from 6 May 2019 without sighting (using 30-days completion rule). Therefore, there will be a possible split in the start of Ramadan, as some people will start Ramadan on the last of Shaban (day of doubt!).

For the above reasons, many eminent Ulama, including Saudi Scholars have advised Muslims living **outside** Saudi Arabia (such as in the UK/USA), not to rely on Saudi Hilal sighting announcement and make their own alternative arrangements. This advice is consistent with the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (S) to leave what is doubtful for what is not. Regular moon sighting carried out throughout the year has proven that it is possible to sight the moon in the UK even in adverse weather conditions, since it was sighted in 10 months out of 12 last year (2018/1439). For reliable Hilal sighting reports from the UK/Morocco region, please visit the **ICOUK** website (www.moonsighting.org.uk).