

Declaration of Triangle Imams Council on Ramadan & Eid-ul-Fitr

April 25, 2019

All praise is due to Allah (swt) and may His blessings and peace be upon the Prophet Muhammad (saw).

Our dear respected brothers and sisters of the Triangle:

Assalamu alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh – may peace be with you, and the mercy of God and His blessings. We congratulate you on the anticipated arrival of a special guest – the blessed month of Ramadan. We pray this noble month is full of blessings, mercy, and accepted worship for you and your loved ones.

The undersigned members of the Triangle Imams Council met and deliberated the issue of the starting date of Ramadan and Eid. In particular, the recent adoption of the Wake County Board of Education of the *Eid-ul-Fitr* holiday in school calendars was carefully deliberated. Alhamdulillah, the Council had previously worked towards regional unity by reviewing prayer time calculations and by unifying the amounts of *Zakat-ul-Fitr* and *Fidya* regionally based on *Shari'ah* guidelines and market pricing research.

After a fruitful discussion, the undersigned imams and religious representatives voted on behalf of the listed institutions to adopt the opinion of determining the beginning date of Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr based on astronomical calculations, beginning with Ramadan 1440 AH / 2019 CE. Several important points are highlighted below from a broader, technical discussion:

- **Establishing Unity in the Muslim community.** Upholding the unity of Muslims takes precedence above and beyond any valid difference of Fiqh opinions. We therefore recognize and respect the legitimacy of differences on this issue and maintain our sense of brotherhood and unity, while seeking to unify the decision regionally as much as possible to facilitate a common calendar for family members and Muslims region-wide.
- **Facilitating Eid festivities for the Muslim family.** The Wake County Public School System has adopted Eid-ul-Fitr as a school holiday, a great accomplishment for the Muslim community of the area that other districts have been pursuing for decades. As with all school dates, it will be designated more than 1-2 years in advance and thus based on calculation. Adopting the present opinion will facilitate all Muslim families being on a single calendar, as well as immense benefits in *dawah* and sharing our beautiful religion with our neighbors of other faith traditions.
- **Upholding Scholarly References.** While the Council acknowledges and embraces the diversity of scholarly references utilized by different *masajid* in the area, a number of these have adopted criteria supportive of this decision. Both the Fiqh Council of North America (FCNA) and the European Council for Fatwa and Research adopt the astronomical calculation methodology outright. The Assembly of Muslim Jurists of America (AMJA) issued a recent fatwa asserting the importance of being united on the beginning and end of the fast, particularly in a single city, and conditionally supporting adopting calculations for community unity in certain contexts. Other imams also shared reasoning and evidence from classical Islamic scholarship and other references.

We must remind our community that the determination of Ramadan and Eid has traditionally been determined based on governance and administration within boundaries of the *Shari'ah*, rather than specific *fiqhi* differences. In fact, the very scholars who held these differences would universally obey the decree of the local ruler guided by his council of scholars. These scholars would not cause *fitna* and disunity by calling for people to adopt their individual opinion, even if they felt it was the stronger one.

It is our hope that each member in our community may follow in this legacy, starting with ourselves, in preferring the direction of the collective (*jama'ah*) to one's own opinion, and in coming together as one. If you have any questions, please reach out to your local imam for further discussion, and *Ramadan Mubarak!*

The first day of Ramadan 1440 will be on Monday, May 6, 2019. Taraweeh prayers will begin Sunday night insha'Allah.

The day of Eid-ul-Fitr will be Tuesday, June 4, 2019 insha'Allah.

Your brothers, [in alphabetical order]

Imam Mohamed AbuTaleb, Chair – Islamic Association of Raleigh
Imam Salahuddin Muhammad, Secretary – As-Salaam Islamic Center
Imam Abdullahi Ahmed – Jamaat Ibad ar-Rahman
Imam Mohamed Mesbah Badawy – Jamaat Ibad ar-Rahman
Br. Khalid Baloch – Muslim Youth and Community Center, RDU
Imam Muamar Dahnoun – Islamic Association of Raleigh
Imam Musa Jabi – Masjid King Khalid
Imam Oliver Muhammad – As-Salaam Islamic Center
Imam Juma Mussa – Masjid King Khalid
Dr. Mohamed A. Othman – North Durham Islamic Association
Imam Greg Rashad – Ar-Razzaq Islamic Center
Imam Khalid Shahu – Apex Masjid
Imam Abdenasser Zouhri – Islamic Center of Morrisville