

Letter to all Imams and Management of Mosques in Ireland
Confusion regarding start of Ramadan 2014 & Eid

Assalamu Alaikum WWB.

26th July 2014

In the name of Almighty Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. Peace & Blessings upon the best of all creation the Beloved Prophet Muhammad

I am writing to you in regards to the serious issue of disunity among Irish Muslims that has come up in regards to the observation of Ramadan for 2014 /1435H and the upcoming challenge for Muslims in regards to Eid-ul-Fitr.

Decision of Irish Council of Imams regarding the start of Ramadan

The Irish Council of Imams was established in 2005. Currently the council has more than 15 members.

The ICI adopted a policy that ICI will accept the announcement of ANY Muslim Country and adopt it respectively. This policy was adopted democratically in a meeting in ICI a few years ago.

According to this policy ICI announced that since Yemen & Turkey have announced Saturday 27th June 2014 to be the first of Ramadan 1435 H, Irish Council of Imams will also do the same.

Disunity among Muslims in Ireland on this issue

Even though personally I was not in favor of the decision of the ICI due to the impossibility of visibility of the moon in Yemen, for the sake of unity among Muslims and acknowledging the authority of the ICI, I announced in Al-Mustafa Islamic Centre Ireland that Tarawih will be held Friday 27th June 2014. However after Tarawih I found out that some mosques have decided NOT to accept the announcement of the Irish Council of Imams.

These mosques are Limerick Mosque, Cork Mosque, Longford Mosque, Lucan Mosque, Dawah Centre, Madinah Mosque (Dublin City) and Sligo Mosque

This came as a shock to me as Cork Mosque, Luca Mosque and Limerick Mosque have representation in the Irish Council of Imams.

Why did these Imams choose to go against the decision of ICI. To differ in opinion is one thing but to decide to go against the decision of ICI is weakening the unity of Muslims in Ireland on this important issue.

The best approach would have been, in my opinion, to accept the decision of the authority and internally lobby to change the policy of ICI. This would not only avoid the disunity and confusion among Muslims, but at the same time address the concerns of these Imams including myself.

Unfortunately the approach taken by some Mosques has created for the first time in the history of Ireland a situation of disunity that is common and embarrassing in the UK.



In order to avoid again such a situation I would like to share my humble recommendations for the Irish Council of Imams as well as for Management of all Mosques in Ireland

Recommendations for the Irish Council of Imams

- The ICI must meet at the 29th of Shaban every year to ensure that the decision of the ICI is effectively communicated to all members and all members sign a document that they agree with the decision.
- ICI must organize a meeting to review its current policy as the announcements by Turkey and Yemen are absolutely wrong since there was no possibility of moon visibility Friday night. ICI must adopt a different policy and method. This could be following Saudi Arabia or adopting scientific calculation. This is to be discussed by the members. Once this is decided in light of the majority opinion it must be documented with signatures of all members.

I acknowledge that the current ICI opinion of following ANY Muslim countries sighting is a valid opinion in Fiqh, however as there are various opinions in most Fiqh matters, the opinion that will bring most Muslims together should be adopted always.

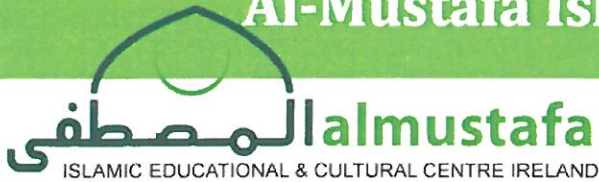
- ICI must organize an urgent meeting after Ramadan to address the current issue as some Muslims are observing 1st Ramadan today on Saturday 28th June and some will observe 1st Ramadan on Sunday 29th June 2014. If ICI does not meet before Hajj, it will mean that ICI loses its credibility among Muslims in Ireland.

Advice to Muslims in Ireland

The advice to Muslims in Ireland is to stick to the announcement of their Mosques at this stage as we are already in the last 10 days of Ramadan.

The decision not to fast on Saturday was only of 3 Imams. The other Mosques that have decided not to fast do not have an Imam representative in the Irish Council of Imams and have chosen to follow the UK. It was the best approach to follow the umbrella body Irish Council of Imams which since 2005 has been announcing the beginning and end of Ramadan. But the majority did not follow the Irish Council of Imams. Many Muslims also are not aware that such an umbrella body exists in Ireland.

At this stage our responsibility is to avoid disunity on Eid-ul-Fitr and in the future.



EID-UL-FITR 2014

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It has come to my knowledge that a Centre in Dublin has announced on its website that they will do EID as per the decision of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

We do not doubt the sincerity and the intention of the brothers behind the Centre. May Allah reward all those who are trying their best to guide Muslims in Ireland regarding moon sighting.

However a decision by any individual Mosque without consultation with the existing umbrella body of Muslims in Ireland, Irish Council of Imams, is NOT a wise decision. To follow KSA may be the best approach in the future in order to keep unity but not at this stage. There must be consensus through the Irish Council of Imams. Otherwise when every Mosque will make their own decision it will lead to disunity again which we have to avoid.

I appeal to the Muslims in Ireland to do Eid on Monday 28th July 2014 and not follow the KSA announcement for the moment. The moon birth takes place on Saturday 26th July 2014 and the moon is visible Sunday evening in some parts of the World (Please see www.moonsighting.com for details) Following KSA can lead to having 2 Eid in Ireland !!!

This is because KSA can announce to complete 30 days and do Eid on TUESDAY 29th July 2014. This will mean that those that followed Irish Council of Imams decision will have to fast 31 days which is not possible. So they will Eid on Monday since moon is NOT sighted tonight.

On the other hand if Eid is celebrated on Monday, it will mean that those that started on Sunday with KSA will have fasted 29 days and can also celebrate Eid on Monday. The best option for all Muslims in Ireland is to do Eid on Monday as this will keep them united insha Allah.

Request for Meeting of all Imams and Management of Mosques

I would like to also invite all the Muslim leaders for a meeting in which the agenda will be to develop consensus on one of the following options for following years insha Allah:

1. Follow local moon sighting
2. Follow Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
3. Follow Scientific Calculation

If you are an Imam or representative of a Masjid or Musalla in Ireland please contact info@islamiccentre.ie for more information on this meeting.

May Almighty Allah give us tawfiq to unite and avoid such situation in future, ameen.

Wassalaam,
Dr. Muhammad Umar Al-Qadri
Founder & Imam Al-Mustafa Islamic Cultural Centre Ireland