

Ramadan 1447 AH | Moon Sighting and Commencement

Assalamu alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh,

May Allah SWT grant us the blessing of reaching Ramadan in good health, strong iman, and unity as a community.

As we approach the beginning of Ramadan 1447 AH, FIANZ wishes to provide clarity regarding the methodology adopted for determining the start of the month, so that our communities across Aotearoa New Zealand are not unsettled by differing announcements.

The matter of the Hilal is an integral part of a Muslim's life, through which we establish our days of worship such as Ramadan, Hajj, Eid, Muharram, etc.

Allah SWT says:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهْلِ لَيْلٍ هِيَ مَوْقِيتٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ

They ask you 'O Prophet' about the phases of the moon. Say, "They are a means for people to determine time and pilgrimage." S:2, V:189.

FIANZ Position on Moon Sighting

- FIANZ does not adopt pure astronomical calculation as the sole basis for commencing Ramadan, nor does it follow unrestricted global sighting.
- In line with the long-standing practice of the majority of Muslims in New Zealand, and in coordination with our shared regional day-night zone with parts of the South Pacific, FIANZ affirms that the beginning of Ramadan will be determined through local or regional moon sighting within our shared horizon.

Foundational Principle

- Our approach is rooted in the clear guidance of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ concerning the commencement and completion of Ramadan:
 - "Do not fast until you see the new moon, and do not end the fast until you see it; and if it is obscured from you, then complete thirty days." (Sahih al-Bukhari)
- This and other narrations establish that actual sighting, or completing thirty days when sighting is not possible, forms the decisive criterion. While astronomical data and optical instruments may assist in identifying the possibility of sighting, they do not replace ru'yah (physical sighting) as the basis of the ruling.
- This position has been affirmed by many recognised scholars as well as the majority of Muslim countries worldwide who maintain that calculation alone does not substitute the prophetic instruction of sighting.
- Accordingly, FIANZ will proceed on the basis of verified sighting within our shared regional zone (New Zealand and parts of the South Pacific).

Determining the Start of Ramadan 1447 AH

Local efforts to sight the crescent moon will take place on:

Wednesday Evening, 18 February 2026 (corresponding with the 29th Sha'ban 1447 AH).

- If the crescent is sighted within our regional zone, Ramadan will commence on **Thursday 19 February 2026**.
- If the crescent is not sighted, whether due to cloud cover or the absence of reliable reports, then Sha'ban will be completed as thirty days, and Ramadan will begin on **Friday 20 February 2026**, in accordance with the prophetic guidance cited above.

We encourage members of the community to observe this Sunnah by attempting to sight the moon where possible.

Consistency in the Establishment of the Hijri Calendar in Aotearoa New Zealand

It is important to note that the beginning and end of the Hijri Calendar months is a continual process and not one that occurs only at the time of Ramadan. To achieve consistency and coherency in this matter, the FIANZ Hilal Committee has the responsibility of establishing the start and end times for the months throughout the year. In this way the community can be assured that the minimum and maximum number of days for each month are correctly observed.

Respecting Legitimate Differences

FIANZ recognises that there are valid fiqh differences regarding the determination of lunar months. We respect scholars and organisations who adopt alternative methodologies within the bounds of Islamic jurisprudence.

We therefore urge our communities:

- Not to be unsettled by differing statements circulating online.
- To avoid argumentation or division over subsidiary matters.
- To uphold unity, mutual respect, and good character (adab).

Sincere Muslims may differ in secondary issues, and such differences should not lead to discord.

These issues of the Hilal and more, have been extensively discussed on multiple occasions within the FIANZ Hilal committee since its inception in 1984. To this day, the Hilal committee is constantly trying to improve its methodology, thereby striving to create ease for the community.

Our current process primarily follows Shariah guidelines, is simple, practical, pragmatic, and best suited to our circumstances in NZ. Our historical data has shown that this is the best practice. The vast majority of the time we start each month in line with multiple countries and hundreds of millions of Muslims around the world.

Additional information regarding the FIANZ Hilal Committee processes may be found on the FIANZ website under FAQs Moonsighting.

May Allah SWT unite our hearts upon the truth, accept our fasting and worship, and make this Ramadan a means of forgiveness, guidance, and strength for the Ummah.

Official confirmation of the start of Ramadan and Tarawih arrangements will be issued following Maghrib on the evening of the sighting on the FIANZ website and Facebook page.

Hilal Committee
Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ)