



# Nigeria Muslim Forum (UK)

SUITE 102, 95 WILTON ROAD, LONDON, SW1V 1BZ

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## Spring Conference 2009: Communiqué

The Nigeria Muslim Forum, United Kingdom, held its Spring Conference at the Muath Welfare Trust, the Bordesley Centre, Birmingham. The event, which took place on Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> Jumada Al Awwal 1430/May 2, 2009, drew participants and guests from both Nigeria and the UK. The theme of the conference was: *The Controversy of Moon Sighting in the Muslim World*.

Topics presented and discussed at the conference were: “The Controversy of Moon Sighting in Nigeria,” “Science and Moon Sighting” and “The Need for Unity in the Muslim Ummah.” The conference’s other highlights included a talk on “Making the Maximum Use of Online Discussion,” Recitations from the Holy Qur’an and a Quiz Challenge for Children.

At the end of the day-long NMF conference, the participants made the following observations and recommendations:

- That even though there may be no quick fix to the controversies that bedevil the sighting of the new moon of Ramadan and Shawwal for the observance of the Ramadan Fast and the Eid Festival in Nigeria, yet, the resolution of such avoidable controversies is possible, whereby the Ummah in the country draw lessons and inspirations from the noble traditions of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) who used to consult with his Companions on the resolution of issues of such important nature, especially at times of tribulations;
- The Ummah in Nigeria can also bridge any differences that may emerge among them on the moon sighting issue by emulating the ways and manners of the Prophet’s Companions who used to address such issues by embracing the unity of purpose even where they might have differed on principle and practice;
- Therefore, the Ummah in Nigeria, both as leaders and followers, should shun belittling of their sections. Instead, they should strive to resolve issues attempting to divide them with decorum and mutual respect that can even attract and lead others to their fold (the Ummah);
- The Ummah in Nigeria should note that the moon sighting issue, which is a universal phenomenon, can also be mitigated (moderated) in Nigeria if the problems of ego, tribalism, cultural practices and lack of respect for the rule of law in the acceptable conduct of Islamic practices ( delete blue) are tackled;

- The Ummah should also note that in the modern age moon sighting has become an issue that can be perceived and supplanted (delete) from the domains and perspectives of both Islamic Jurisprudence and science and technology;
- Accordingly, the Ummah in Nigeria may wish to contemplate and debate the desirability or otherwise of including scientific and technological methods into the practices of moon sighting, the adoption of a unified Heijra Calendar and the establishment of a standing Moon Sighting Project Committee;
- Faculties and Departments of Islamic Studies and other academic disciplines in Nigerian universities should also commission research projects on the science and the social practices of moon sighting in Nigeria and the research findings be made public for the benefit of the Ummah;
- In the meantime, as Muslims the world over intensify efforts on bridging the gaps on moon sighting, the Ummah should always strive to be in tandem with the *Ijmah*, (*Ijma*) which offers the Ummah a common platform;
- While noting that the Sultanate in Nigeria is already showing a commendable leadership by building bridges across communities and religious bodies in the country, the NMF conference, however urged for the sustenance and intensification of such efforts for the unity and cohesiveness of the Ummah with with refernce to Nigeria in particular.;
- Finally, the conference resolved that hence forth the Nigeria Muslim Forum, UK, should submit position papers that may emerge from proceedings at its periodic conferences to the Sultanate in Nigeria as part of the Forum's contribution to the Ummah in Nigeria.

*Communiqué Committee*