



# MOON SIGHTING CONTROVERSY

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**Shawwal, 1435 Hijrah (August, 2014)**

The controversies that trailed the sightings of the last new moons of *Ramadhan* and *Shawwal* 1435 Hijrah (2014 CE) were the most unfortunate in the history of moon sighting in Nigeria since its national unification through the exalted office of His Eminence the Sultan of Sokoto in 1945.

In a few days, *insha* Allah, Muslims shall be looking out for the new moon of *Thul Hijjah* that will herald the rites of the all-important Hajj in the Holy Land and *Eid (Sallah)* in other Lands.

I therefore wish to, through this small Publication, tender my humble views and opinions and proffer some solutions to the moon sighting recurring controversy. I laid emphasis on the major bones of contention, i.e., eye-sighting versus the astronomical and the computer imagery projections.

May Allah (SWT) guide us aright, *ameen*.

**IT IS TIME WE STOPPED THE  
MOON SIGHTING CONTROVERSY  
FOR THE MUCH DESIRED MUSLIM  
UNITY TO PREVAIL !**

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**Shawwal 1435 Hijrah (August 2014)**



**Muslim Youths Trying To Sight The Moon With Their Eyes**



**The New Moon of Shawwal 1435 AH Was Forecasted Not To Be Sighted In Saudi Arabia On Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2014 (29<sup>th</sup> Of Ramadan In Saudi Arabia And *Sallah* Day In Nigeria) And In Effect It Was Not Sighted At The above High-Tech Al-Bayrouny Observatory In Mecca By Sheikh A. Ishola (In The Picture) And All The Saudi Experts Who Were At The Mecca Observatory That Day. But As Allah (SWT) Willed, And Despite The Negative Forecast And Despite Not Sighting It At The Observatory, The Same Moon Was Sighted, The Same Day, In Two Towns Near Riyadh And The Saudi Authorities Announced The Sighting And Celebrated *Eid* The Following Day (Monday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2014). Read details in this Publication.**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
وَالصَّلَاةِ وَالسَّلَامِ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ  
وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ

*Assalamu Alaikum,*

Worship in the religion of Islam hinges on precise timings revolving on lunar months. *Salaat, Zakaat, Fasting, Hajj, etc.*, are tied to precise dates and times and are performed in congregations and under the guidance of Muslim Leaders. This clearly denotes the paramount importance of both “**Time**” and “**Unity**” in Islam. Therefore the issue of moon sighting, that determines the Muslim calendar, is a collective Muslim affair based on the announcement of the sighting by the *Amirul Mumineen* in whatever title he may locally bear, like that of the “Sultan of Sokoto” in Nigeria.

The Glorious Qur’an and the Sunnah are explicit on the twelve Lunar Months recognized by Allah (SWT) that are to be monthly established through the sighting of their new moons with the human eyes. This method is universally and unanimously accepted by Muslims. Ancient Astronomers used calculations and some crude equipment to make forecasts as to when the new moons are expected to be sighted with the human eyes within their localities; while modern Astronomers use Science and Technology based computer software generated sun/moon images to make their projections as to when the new moons are expected to be sighted with the human eyes in the various World Zones.

Science and Technology are “knowledge based” and Islam is based on and encourages the seeking of knowledge. Therefore, Muslims accept that Science and Technology could be used to assist in new moon sighting. However, the use of Science and Technology should be complementary and not an alternative to the paramount physical eye sighting of the moon. For example, if computer software generated images suggest that a moon may not be sighted on a particular day but Muslims testify (in accordance with the Shari’ah provisions) to seeing the moon with their eyes on that day, their testimony should override the computer generated forecast and not the other way round!

Saudi Arabia and some Muslim Countries that have modern high-tech Observatories and use them to assist in moon sighting have never denounced Muslims who faithfully testify to sighting a moon with their eyes even if the moon has been projected not to be sighted on that day by their highly trained Astronomers.

A classical case was that, the Shawwal 1435 AH new moon was projected not to be sighted in Saudi Arabia on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2014 (29<sup>th</sup> Ramadan in Saudi - *Eid* day in Nigeria). The internationally acclaimed and famous Website, [www.moonsighting.com](http://www.moonsighting.com), reported this forecast under its Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2014 column as follows:-

*“Moon is not expected to be seen in almost the whole World except with difficulty in South America, and with ease in Polynesian Islands, where there are not many Muslims reporting moon sighting. There is small possibility in South Africa but only experienced observers may see it”.*

Despite this negative forecast and the fact that the new Shawwal moon was not sighted at the Mecca Observatory, it was sighted in two Towns near Riyadh and the Saudi Arabian King announced the sighting and declared the following day (Monday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2014) as *Eid* day!

Here is how [www.moonsighting.com](http://www.moonsighting.com) Website posted the report by one of the Members of its Moon-sighting Committee Worldwide (MCW) who is based in Mecca:-

*“Sheik A.A. Ishola (MCW member) from Makkah reported:- Alihamudulilahi I was at the AlBayrouny Observatory in Mecca this evening accompanied with Ustaz Saheed Ganiyu Daramola and Engr. Nasiru Oluyemo. The Moon was not seen due to total cloud. And before we left the place we got the information that it has been seen in Sudair (near Riyadh) and Shaqra (near Riyadh)”.*

This classical Saudi Arabian case should be emulated by all Muslim Countries and Communities where Science and Technology have been introduced to assist in moon sighting. The Saudis wholeheartedly accepted the Shawwal 1435 AH new moon eye-sighting on the testimonies of people from only 2 Towns near Riyadh, despite the forecast against it and the failure to sight it at the modern high-tech Mecca Observatory.

Unfortunately however, some Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs Astronomers rejected the testimonies of the eye-sighting of the same Shawwal 1435 AH new moon on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2014 by people from 42 Towns in Nigeria, an action that generated a serious controversy!

**THIS PUBLICATION GIVES AN AMPLE INSIGHT INTO THIS 2014 MOON SIGHTING CONTROVERSY AND GIVES A PANACEA FOR ENDING IT.**

## THE ENDEMIC CONTROVERSIES

Previously, the endemic Ramadan and Shawwal Moon Sighting Controversies were just centred on the announcement of the moon sighting by His Eminence the Sultan of Sokoto and its opposition by a few “*Ulama*” and their followers who insisted on sighting the moons themselves.

But this year witnessed the most unfortunate incidence in the history of moon sighting in Nigeria, as the Secretary General of the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) and the Chairman of the NSCIA National Moon Sighting Committee (NMSC) publicly opposed the National Broadcast confirming the sighting of the Shawwal 1435 AH moon on Saturday the 26<sup>th</sup> of July 2014, by the NSCIA’s President General, the *Amirul Mumineen*, the Sultan of Sokoto.

The whole saga started on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2014 when the Sultanate Council Sokoto (as has been the tradition since 1945) issued a statement asking Nigerian Muslims to look out for the new moon of Shawwal (that would end the Fasting month of Ramadan) on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2014, as that was the 29<sup>th</sup> day of Ramadan, 1435 AH in Nigeria. Unfortunately, on that same Friday, the National Moon Sighting Committee (NMSC) set up by the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), issued a message, part of which stated that,

*“Conjunction of Shawwal Crescent is on 26<sup>th</sup> of July 2014, by 11.42 pm, therefore it is impossible to sight it, that means we have no choice but to complete 30 days because conjunction is after sunset on 29<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan”.*

Unfortunately again, on that same Friday, a news item on page 12 of the Daily Trust Newspaper quoted a Press Statement issued by the Secretary General of the NSCIA, Professor Is-haq Oloyede, as follows:-

*“It is an undisputable fact that the old (Ramadan) moon will set just before sunset in Nigeria on Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2014. The new astronomic moon would be born few minutes before midnight of that Saturday. Consequently, the search for Shawwal moon is on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2014. It can be sighted in Nigeria on Sunday with optical instruments or with some difficulty with naked eyes. Any claim of sighting a moon that is yet to be born is not only false, mistaken, or impossible but also ridiculous”.*

The Professor did not deny the press report; therefore it was taken as having come from him. Inadvertently, the Press Statement from which the Daily Trust Newspaper quoted the Professor was titled, “TOWARDS MOON-SIGHTING, NOT MOON-FIGHTING IN NIGERIA: 2014/1435AH”. Unfortunately, it elicited a lot of “**moon-fighting**” and ignited a serious MOON SIGHTING CONTROVERSY!

The controversy was most unnecessary as the NSCIA Secretary General and the NMSC Chairman are highly enlightened and know very well that some earthquake and volcanic eruption forecasts by seismologists were known to have failed. Some rains, drought and tsunami forecasts by meteorologists were known to have failed. Some Expected Dates of Delivery (EDD) forecasts by Medical Doctors for pregnant women were known to have failed. Some forecasts by astronomers of eclipses of the moon and/or the sun and similar forecasts on moon sightings were known to have failed. All these have been known to have failed despite their seeming meticulous and expert accuracy. Great World-class scientists and technologists who have access to the best tools and equipments always give room for human errors as they know that it is **only Allah (SWT) Who does not make mistakes and Who has the Divine Powers** over such natural occurrences.

Page 97 of the book, *Mabadi al-Kawniyyah*, by Sheikh Amin Muḥammed Ka'ura and Issue No 3 of the 1408 AH *Majallah al-Fiqh al-Islami*, by Sheikh Bakr Abu Zayd, gave instances of astronomers' forecasts that the moons of Ramadan and/or Shawwal will not be sighted on some specific days in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Jordan; and the moons were sighted on those specific days! The first and most famous Moon Sighting & Prayer Times Website on the Internet ([www.moonsighting.com](http://www.moonsighting.com)), posted its forecasts for the Shawwal 1435 AH moon sighting and had this under its Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2014 column:-

*“Moon is not expected to be seen in almost the whole World except with difficulty in South America, and with ease in Polynesian Islands, where there are not many Muslims reporting moon sighting. There is small possibility in South Africa but only experienced observers may see it”.*

This forecast clearly states that, even on **Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2014 (Eid Day in Nigeria)**, the Shawwal 1435 moon was not expected to be sighted anywhere in the World except in South America and South Africa and even there it will be sighted *“with difficulty”*. But as Allah (SWT) willed, the same Website reported that the Shawwal 1435 moon was sighted in all the Regions of the World on that Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2014 and that the *Eid* was observed the following day (Monday 28<sup>th</sup> July) in 81 Countries. A representative sample per World-Region of the Countries where the moon was sighted on Sunday, being **their 29<sup>th</sup> day of Ramadan** (just as it was sighted on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of Ramadan in Nigeria) included:- Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Yemen, United Arab Emirates (Arabia); Niger Republic, Chad, Cameroons (West Africa); South Africa, Kenya, Malawi, Madagascar (South Africa); Egypt, Algeria (North Africa) Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand (Asia); United Kingdom, Spain (Europe); Barbados, Chile, Argentina (South America).

**Allahu Akbar, despite the high-tech negative projection/forecast by the World's first and most famous Moon Sighting Website, the Shawwal 1435 new moon was sighted in the areas the Website forecasted that it would not be sighted!**

### **THE SHAWWAL MOON SIGHTED**

As Allah (SWT) willed, despite the Nigerian cloudy raining season weather and despite the National Moon Sighting Committee's computer generated imageries, estimations, calculations and forecasts; and the NSCIA Secretary General's negative statement, the new moon of Shawwal 1435 AH was sighted on **Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2014**, in 42 Towns and Cities spread over 17 Emirates, in 5 North East States, 5 North West States and 1 North Central State (eleven States) as follows:-

1. BORNO STATE – Maiduguri (Borno Emirate)
2. ZAMFARA STATE – Anka, Tabkin Kwaci, Rimawa (Anka Emirate )
3. ZAMFARA STATE – Kaurar Mota, Rawiyya (Bungudu Emirate)
4. ADAMAWA STATE - Mubi (Mubi Emirate)
5. TARABA STATE – Jalingo (Muri Emirate)
6. KATSINA STATE – Katsina, Rimi, Ingawa, Dankama (Katsina Emirate)
7. KATSINA STATE – Daura (Daura Emirate)
8. BAUCHI STATE – Jama'are (Katagum Emirate)
9. GOMBE STATE – Pindiga (Gombe Emirate)
10. KADUNA STATE – Saminaka, Kubau, Kauru, Damau (Zazzau Emirate)
11. ZAMFARA STATE – Tabkin Kazai (Tsafe Emirate)
12. ZAMFARA STATE – Gusau, Mada (Gusau Emirate)
13. NIGER STATE – Maikunkele, Gwada (Minna Emirate)
14. NIGER STATE – Kontagora, Rijau (Kontagora Emirate)
15. JIGAWA STATE – Hadejia (Hadejia Emirate)
16. ZAMFARA STATE – Birnin Magaji (Birnin Magaji Emirate)
17. SOKOTO STATE – Kofar Yamma Tambuwal, Kofar Gwandu Tambuwal, Nasarawa Tambuwal, Basansan, Gwadabawa, Kyadawa, Kadassaka, Kalmalo, Munwadata, Kajiji, Lugu, Kofar Bariki, Tureta, Sokoto North (Sokoto Sultanate)

**KINDLY NOTE:-** The new moon of Shawwal 1435 AH was sighted in all the three Northern Nigeria's Geo-political Zones (North-West, North-East and North-Central). But it was not reported to have been sighted in the three Southern Nigeria's geo-political zones, particularly the South-West where Muslims are in majority. That was because the Northern Zones disregarded the postulations of the NMSC Astronomers and went ahead to look out for the new moon while those in

the Southern Zones believed the astronomers' forecasts and DID NOT look out for the new moon. If they did, perhaps it would have been sighted there also. This assertion was confirmed by an Islamic Cleric and the Chief Imam of Ibara Housing Estate, in Abeokuta, the Ogun State Capital, Sheikh Fatai Opebiyi, on Sunday during his sermon after the *Eid-el-Fitr* prayer held at Ibara GRA, Abeokuta. The online Premium Times Newspaper of 28<sup>th</sup> July 2014 reported that as follows:-

*“The Islamic Cleric said that, “there was no need for any controversy over the sighting of the moon to commence or end the Ramadan fasting. The Muslim faithful should have faith in the ability of constituted authorities in the Nigerian Muslim Ummah to giving accurate information about moon sighting”. He added that, “Northern Muslims have established institutions for sighting the new moon unlike their counterparts from the South”... He also faulted the position of the Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Is-haq Oloyede, who, in an interview, directed Muslims to continue fasting on Sunday. The Imam concluded that, “During Ramadhan, Hausa people are in the desert looking for the moon while many of us preoccupied ourselves with other things in the South”.*

**ALSO NOTE:-** The Countries neighbouring Nigeria – Niger Republic, Camerouns, Chad and Benin Republic – are all Francophone Countries that started Ramadan Fasting one day after Nigeria. So, Nigeria's 29<sup>th</sup> day of Ramadan was their 28<sup>th</sup> day of Ramadan, therefore Muslims in those Countries would not be expected to look out for the new moon of Shawwal on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2014 as Nigerian Muslims did. Interestingly also, the famous **moonsighting.com** Website posted on its site that the Hijri Committee of India directed that *Eid* should be celebrated on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2014 (the same day with Nigeria)! So, in fairness, the argument that it was only Nigeria that reported the sighting of the Shawwal moon on Saturday the 26<sup>th</sup> of July 2014 and therefore the sighting was void; does not hold any water. By the way, did the Shari'ah stipulate that the moon sighting of one Country is void if other Countries do not sight the same moon?

**THE NATIONAL BROADCAST:-** With the massive testimonies of the sighting of the Shawwal moon and as has been the tradition since the advent of Radio Re-Diffusion Service in Nigeria in 1945, His Eminence the Sultan of Sokoto made a National Broadcast on the sighting of the new moon.

The Broadcast was delayed to almost midnight as a result of the serious scrutiny all the reports (from Sokoto and all the other Emirates) of the moon sighting were subjected to by the Sultanate Council Committee on Moon Sighting (currently being chaired by Professor Sambo Wali Junaidu) and by the Sultan-in-Council, made up of His Eminence the Sultan, Muslim Scholars, Elders and Experts from many professional fields.

## THE SHAWWAL MOON SIGHTING REJECTED

Most unfortunately, the duo of the NSCIA Secretary General and the NMSC Chairman rushed to the news media immediately after the Broadcast to insist that the moon could not have been sighted by those who testified to the sighting, as it was impossible to sight the moon that day based on astronomical estimations, calculations and projections! The late night edition of the online Newspaper, Premium Times, of 26<sup>th</sup> July 2014 reported the statement by the NMSC Chairman, Dr Hafiz Wali, as follows:-

*“By the estimation and calculation of our Committee, the moon could not have been sighted and we did not sight it”... “We gave a report that the moon was not sighted but the Sultan received a lot of messages from people who said they sighted the moon. The Sultan could not tell them they lied. He made his announcement which is the right thing to do.”*

The same online Premium Times Newspaper also reported the Secretary General of the NSCIA, Professor Is-haq Oloyede, as having said,

*“I spoke to the Sultan about four times tonight and he did not tell me that the moon has been sighted. In any case, any such claim is ridiculous and unscientific. It cannot be right”.*

This first of its kind **Moon Sighting Controversy** that came at a time when Nigerian Muslims are facing multi-faceted challenges therefore desperately needing **“unity”** shocked millions of Muslims and Muslim Organisations. It was most shocking as there was never a time an organised Muslim body like the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs experienced such an abomination. A Secretary General and a Committee Chairman of a high profile Organisation to so openly oppose a National Broadcast by the same Organisation’s President General was unheard of! Caution and restraint should be exercised!

The issue of moon sighting in Islam affects the *Ummah* collectively, therefore matters concerning the beginning or ending of Ramadan Fasting and the performance of *Eid* prayers and celebrations are collective matters that could only be handled by the Leader of the Muslims, the *Amirul Mumineen*; and not by anyone else. Is it possible for a person to establish *Eid* with all its rituals such as the congregational prayer, *takbir*, *khutba*, exchanging greetings, etc, alone? Could an individual rely only on his moon sighting and have his private monthly “calendar”? Considering that unity is most paramount in Islam, can there be two or three different days of *Eid* in one City or Country without disuniting the *Ummah*?

The answers to these questions are certainly “no”! Therefore, the Muslim individual is left with no choice but to go with the flow of the majority on such matters and to act according to the meaning of the several *Hadith* and the instructions of Allah (SWT) as contained in very many verses of the Glorious Qur’an dealing with **Muslim Unity**. Here, the authority of and obedience to the *Amirul Mumineen* are of paramount importance. Expert knowledge on any matter cannot override unity in Islam and such knowledge is only relevant if it is taught to others with a view to making them understand the import of the knowledge and its practical and positive uses.

Effective moon sighting and the effective dissemination of information on it by the *Amirul Mumineen* are fundamental in Islam and these are duties that purely rest with him and with no one else! His Eminence the Sultan of Sokoto and President General of the NSCIA and his Deputy, His Highness the Shehu of Borno, are titular rulers of the largest and second largest pre-colonial Caliphates in Africa – Sokoto and Borno Caliphates respectively. They are doing their best, despite the serious difficulties and challenges, to bring Nigerian Muslims under one umbrella. They therefore deserve every respect, understanding and cooperation by all Muslims as they are the hope for Muslim unity in Nigeria and beyond. Nothing should be done that will portray disobedience or challenge to their authority.

An Islamic Organisation, the Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC), based in Nigeria’s South West Zone had this to say on the unity efforts of His Eminence, the Sultan of Sokoto, as reported by the online Premium Times of 28<sup>th</sup> July 2014:-

*“Nigerian Muslims have no reason to doubt the sincerity of His Eminence the Sultan. This is a man who has demonstrated great leadership qualities. He has always been consulting Muslim Leaders all over the country ... He is definitely not an armchair President-General of the NSCIA because he has been all over Nigeria, travelling almost every week to attend Islamic occasions as far away as Enugu, Port Harcourt, Ibadan, Ijebu, Ile-Ife, Auchi, Benin, Kogi, Minna, Maiduguri, etc.”* He has demonstrated good intention at all times. He has also been demonized by detractors and enemies of Nigeria because they saw dynamism in him. For these reasons alone we believe that Sultan Sa’ad Abubakar III deserves to be heard and obeyed.”

Almost one month after and as Muslims were heaving some sighs of reliefs, believing that the moon sighting controversy was over, another spanner was thrown into the works! One Malam Usman, the NSCIA Research Officer on Moon Sighting and *Qibla* Determination, posted a notice on the Website of NMN Forum ([www.nmnonline.net/forum](http://www.nmnonline.net/forum)) on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2014 stating that,

*“Secondly, on the issue of Shawwal sighting controversy, insha Allah the Sultan is making efforts to ensure that such a situation is avoided in the future. I am sure the issue will feature among the major points to be discussed during the forthcoming meeting. In the interim however let me mention that ever since the announcement on 29th Ramadan, I have sought for and been waiting for contact information of the actual people who sighted the Shawwal moon but till now nothing is forthcoming. This is despite the assurances given at that time that the crescent was sighted in several places in the country ... Till now the Committee is still awaiting; and appealing on this Forum and beyond for any information that could lead to the moonsighters. Another information I wish to share also is that The Sultan has directed the Emirates that called him and reported the Shawwal sighting (and based on which he announced Eid) to search for the moon on the Eid day i.e. Sunday 27th July 2014 and report back to him. All Emirates reported negative sighting or rainy/cloudy evening. Even in Sokoto a group of more than 10 persons from the Sultanate went to the outskirts on the Eid day and looked for the crescent. Sky was clear and both naked eye and telescope were used to look for the crescent but sighting was negative. By the way this is just to serve as an update and not meant to open another round of debate on the subject”.*

1. The statement must have been a gross embarrassment to His Eminence the Sultan, in its disclosing what was purported to have transpired (if at all it transpired!) between him and his colleagues, Their Royal Highnesses the Emirs. The Sultan and all the affected Emirs are certainly owed unreserved apologies for such an internet widely circulated embarrassment.
2. This unfortunate statement clearly implies that even one month after the *Eid*, those who started the moon sighting controversy still doubted that the Shawwal 1435 AH moon was sighted on Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2014! They are therefore looking for those who reported the moon sighting for interrogation. Perhaps they do not know the moon sighting tradition in the Emirates that formed the Sokoto and Borno Caliphates, as anybody who has an inkling on this tradition would never have issued such a very disturbing statement.

At this juncture, it is most appropriate to explain the moon sighting traditions in the Emirates. Let the Katsina tradition be used as an example since all Emirates use the same standards. On Saturday, the 26<sup>th</sup> of July, 2014, His Royal Highness the Emir of Katsina, who chairs the Moon Sighting Committee in the Emirate, summoned a meeting of the Committee as was done for over 200 years. In attendance were the Waziri of Katsina who is the Secretary of the Committee, the Emirate Council Assistant Secretary who is the Coordinator of the Committee, three Senior Emirate Councillors, the Katsina Chief Imam, seven Imams of

Darika and Izala *Jumu'at* Mosques and members of their entourage, nine Senior Muslim Scholars and members of their entourage and some Emirate Council supporting staff. Those who professed to have sighted the new moon in Katsina were brought in. In one case, for example, eight persons were brought to the Committee who said that they sighted the new moon at the *Jumu'at* Mosque area located near both the Katsina State Hajj Commission Headquarters and the Katsina International Airport. The eight people said they were representing over thirty people who saw the new moon at that location. They were all questioned on their names, ages, professions, places of residences and when and how they sighted the moon. A staff of the Emirate Council who knows them testified to their good characters. Their composites and appearances were also observed and they denoted positive character traits. The Katsina Chief Imam specifically reminded them of the rules and regulations of moon sighting in Islam and told them that their testimonies shall affect millions of Muslims and if they were lying they will meet the wrath of Allah (SWT) in this World and in the Hereafter. They all answered that they knew and understood the weight of their testimonies and were giving the testimonies with all sense of responsibility and truthfulness. Other Scholars and some Members of the Committee also chipped in with questions and admonitions. The Committee, after being satisfied with their testimonies, accepted same and forwarded the information to His Eminence the Sultan of Sokoto.

The Katsina Emirate example represents how the moon sighting exercise is conducted at Emirate, District and Village Levels by the various Emirs, District and Village Heads. It is also the same procedure in all the Emirates of Sokoto and Borno Caliphates for the past 200 and 300 years respectively. With this fool-proof and Shari'ah compliant procedure, how can anybody request that, seventeen Emirs should, on the evening of *Sallah* Day, summon all those who testified to seeing the moon the previous day in their domains and tell them, "*my subjects, you lied, if you did not lie, go and show us the moon today*". This has never happened in over 300 years of moon sighting history and it should not be expected to happen now!

The notice referred to above that was posted on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2014 on the Website of NMN Forum ([www.nmnonline.net/forum](http://www.nmnonline.net/forum)) by NSCIA's Malam Usman had this sentence at its tail end:-

*"Finally as Shawwal 1435 approaches its last days, I wish to request members (of the Forum) to try looking for the Dhul Qada crescent next week. I attach herewith, for those in Nigeria, **images of expected positions of the sun and moon** next week for Abuja on three consecutive days i.e. Monday (25/8), Tuesday (26/8) and Wednesday (27/8) In Sha Allah. The images are generated using an astronomical software called 'Stellarium'".*

**Allahu Akbar**, if all the arguments by those who doubted the Shawwal 1435 AH moon sighting on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2014 are centred on images of expected positions of the sun and moon ... generated using an astronomical software called Stellarium, as clearly stated above by the NSCIA's "expert", then they have no arguments at all!!! Why all the arguments and all the insistence on a mere EXPECTATION? If anything is expected, it clearly means that it may or may not occur or happen, so, for Allah's sake, why all the controversy???

### EDUCATE THE UMMAH

If the NSCIA Astronomers feel so strongly on their "knowledge", they should intensify educating the *Ummah*. How long did it take them to acquire their knowledge and expertise? A minimum of 6-3-3-4 years to University graduation and 10 years of practical experience? Why should they not, therefore, spend only half of the 26 years it took them to become Astronomers in educating the *Ummah*? They should remember that as they flout their expertise, there are those who have superior Islamic knowledge on the subject than them! Recently, three of the NSCIA "astronomy experts" were at Argungu where they were introduced to an Astronomer-*Malam* by His Royal Highness the Emir of Argungu. After the *Malam* made some in-depth astronomy presentations to them, they were so astonished that one of them embraced the *Malam* and asked for his blessings! So, why not engage such Islamic experts in dialogue with a view to coming out with a very acceptable and Shari'ah compliant system – if, when and where possible?

Allah (SWT) created humans from a clot of congealed blood and nurtured them into mature human beings in several years. So also in a similar fashion did Allah create plants, animals, birds, etc. If He wanted, He would have created all His creations as matured beings, but He chose the gradual method. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was allowed to fully "mature" to 40 years of age before he was formally installed as a Messenger of Allah. So was the Glorious Qur'an revealed gradually over 23 years. Laws, rules and regulations in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* were enacted about 1400 years ago but the Laws derivable from *Ijmaa* and *Qiyas* are still being enacted as and when the need arises. As an example, the Glorious Qur'an initially allowed the drinking of alcohol but warned that its harm outweighs its benefits. The Qur'an later gradually banned alcoholism in four stages (Qur'an 16:67, 2:219, 4:43 and 5:90-91 in that order). Allah (SWT) therefore prefers the gradual system.

The Astronomers of the NSCIA should therefore gradually be educating the *Ummah* and gradually be introducing their computer technology.

## EVIDENCES OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FAILURES

**Astronomy** is a branch of Science and Science Students are taught that Science is, “*an organised body of knowledge gained by experimentation and observation*”. This writer was taught this in 1964 as a Secondary School Student! The Yahoo Online Dictionary defines Science as, “*the observation, identification, description, experimental investigation, and theoretical explanation of phenomena*”.

Certainly, any scientific knowledge that is gained by experimentation, observation, identification, description, estimation, calculation, theoretical explanation, research, etc., **is bound to contain errors**, therefore Science Experts always allow for margins of error. They are never absolutely definite in their conclusions on any matter. After all, several scientific findings have been faulted, corrected or outrightly erased, as they were from humans and humans err! Only Allah (SWT) knows all and knows best. Humans should always give room for equipment/tools malfunctions and failures and learn to always give rooms for errors and uncertainties in their forecasts and predictions of all future events, as only Allah (SWT) has absolute and unmistakable knowledge of the future! He may give His knowledge to whomever He wills, but whosoever receives any knowledge from Allah, should use it with caution and should desist from making inflammatory statements that may transgress Allah’s bounds.

Few examples (out of millions covering a period of many centuries) of high-grade Science and Technology failures are given below. Such high-wonder failures are classified as “**acts of Allah**” by Muslims and as “**mysteries**” by the West; as nobody in this whole-wide-World has been able to explain them, despite the high level scientific knowledge and available high-tech tools and equipment. Therefore it is only logical, wise and sensible to leave all matters to the Supreme Being, the One and only One Who Knows All - Allah (SWT). The following examples should remind the NSCIA Astronomers that their computers could fail!!!

### **The “Wow!” Signal**

The “Wow!” signal was a strong narrowband radio signal detected and recorded by a renowned Astronomer, Dr. Jerry R. Ehman, on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1977, while he was working on a SETI Project at the “Big Ear Radio Telescope” of The Ohio State University, then located at Ohio Wesleyan University's Perkins Observatory in Delaware. The signal was from constellation Sagittarius and bore the hallmarks of non-terrestrial and non-Solar System origin. It lasted for a full 72-second window that Big Ear was able to observe it, but has not been detected again and up to this day no one is sure about the origin of the signal. It derived its name from the “wow!” that Dr Ehman wrote in the margin of the printout.

### **SS Ourang Medan**

What happened to SS Ourang Medan Ship or “Man from Medan” in Malaysia is perhaps one of the most fascinating and mind-boggling mysteries that ever existed in seafaring history. Everything began with an SOS message in 1947 that mentioned that the captain, along with the rest of the crew, were dead. What’s worse, even the telegrapher died during the transmission of the message. When the Silver Star Ship was able to receive the distress call and went to inspect the ship, they confirmed the deaths of all aboard and up to today there is no conclusion as to what actually happened.

### **Bermuda Triangle**

The Bermuda triangle is an area of water in the North Atlantic Ocean in which a large number of planes, ships and boats have gone missing in mysterious circumstances. Over the years many explanations have been put forward for the disappearances, including bad weather, alien abductions, time warps, and suspension of the laws of physics. Despite all these, there is still no explanation for the unusually large number of disappearances in the area.

### **Shroud of Turin**

The shroud of Turin is a linen cloth bearing the image of a man who had apparently died of crucifixion. Most Catholics consider it to be the burial shroud of Jesus Christ. It is currently held in the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Turin, Italy. Despite many scientific investigations, no one has yet been able to explain how the image has been imprinted on the shroud and despite many attempts; no one has managed to replicate it. Radiocarbon tests date it to the middle ages; however apologists for the shroud believe it is incorrupt, therefore does not decay - and carbon dating can only date things which decay!

### **Malaysia Airlines flight 370**

Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, with a Boeing 777, went missing on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2014, after taking off from Kuala Lumpur airport bound for Beijing, China. It lost contact with air traffic control 40 minutes after take-off over the South China Sea and disappeared from radar. Its sudden disappearance has sparked a number of conspiracy theories; from alien abduction and a hidden weapon at work, to a military take out and pilot suicide. The theories keep on flowing, but the plane and its 239 passengers and crew are yet to be found.

### **Amelia Earhart’s Disappearance**

Pioneering American aviator Amelia Earhart disappeared in her Lockheed Electra Aircraft on July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1937, when she and her navigator, Fred Noonan, were trying to circumnavigate the globe. Earhart, who was the first woman to fly solo across

the Atlantic, disappeared near Howland Island in the Central Pacific Ocean. Theories about Earhart's fate have fascinated researchers - and nutcases - ever since; and she still remains missing!

### **Flight 19 and the Bermuda Triangle**

The "Flight 19" incident sparked the legend of the Bermuda Triangle. On the afternoon of December 5<sup>th</sup> 1945, six Aeroplanes disappeared into thin air at the Triangle. A training mission of five Navy Avenger Planes, led by experienced flight instructor Charles Taylor, took off from Fort Lauderdale, Florida. An hour and a half into the mission, pilots reported that they had become disorientated and couldn't recognise landmarks below them. In radio transmissions, Taylor told the Naval Air Station at Fort Lauderdale both of his compasses were out of action. Despite the efforts of the Air Station controllers, the team were unable to find their bearings. As the weather deteriorated, they couldn't find landfall and ditched into the sea, with the deaths of all 14 airmen and crew. Weirder aircraft, a PBM Mariner Sea Plane, which took off at 7.30 pm, to look for the lost training mission, also disappeared. They are still missing, up to today at the Bermuda Triangle!

### **Star Dust and the mystery Morse code**

When the BSAA Star Dust, a civilian version of the Lancaster Bomber, disappeared during a flight from Buenos Aires, Argentina to Santiago, Chile, it left behind a great many unanswered questions. The aircraft, owned by British South American Airways (BSAA) and piloted by Reginald Cook, a distinguished Air Force pilot, left Buenos Aires at 1.46 pm on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 1947 and headed over the Andes Mountains. The plane never reached its destination, but the radio operator managed to send out one final cryptic Morse code message - "STENDEC" - before the plane disappeared. Theories about what happened to the plane, and the meaning of the cryptic final message, have grown over the years, and include UFO attacks, sabotage and the deliberate explosion of the flight to destroy diplomatic documents carried by a passenger. But the plane remains missing and there is no clue as to how and why; and the Morse code remains un-deciphered!

### **Failures in Earthquake Predictions**

**Failure of Equipment in China:-** On July 28<sup>th</sup> 1976, a devastating 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck the Chinese city of Tangshan, located 150 km east of Beijing, and home to over one million people. The hypocenter of the earthquake was located directly beneath the city, at a depth of 11 kilometres, on a right-lateral strike-slip Fault. About 93 percent of all residential buildings in the city were destroyed, and at least 240,000 lives were lost thereby making it one of the highest earthquake death tolls ever. Though this area was **being extensively monitored**, there were few precursory signals before the main-shock, and so the earthquake

came as a total surprise to Chinese Scientists whose **equipment failed** to send any reasonable warning signals and therefore the residents of Tangshan were caught completely off-guard.

**Failure of Forecast in the USA:-** A similarly discouraging result came from the only official earthquake prediction attempt ever made in the United States of America. That prediction was made by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) in April 1985, and it stated that an earthquake of magnitude 6.0 would occur along the San Andreas Fault near the small town of Parkfield, California, sometime between 1987 and 1993. The USGS prediction was clearly a long-range forecast that was backed with high confidence, and did contain two precise details essential for useful earthquake prediction - location and magnitude. This forecast, called the Parkfield Prediction, was based primarily upon the rather reliable recurrence interval of the San Andreas Fault's Parkfield segment, which ruptures about every 22 years, according to seismograph records and historical accounts. Each of those ruptures seemed to be roughly the same - about magnitude 6. In preparation for the expected event, the countryside around Parkfield was peppered with seismic monitoring equipment, and all sorts of detectors. But up to today, 29 years after the forecast of the earthquake, nothing has happened!

### **THE WAY FORWARD**

Since his ascension to the exalted throne of the Sokoto Caliphate in November 2006, His Eminence Sultan Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, CFR, mni, who is also the Present General of Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and Jama'atu Nasril Islam, initiated far reaching reforms in the way Muslim and Islamic affairs are handled and run in Nigeria. One of such reforms was the institutionalisation of an annual PRE-RAMADAN CONFERENCE that is organised by Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) where issues pertaining to the sighting of the moons of Ramadan and Shawwal and the Fasting of Ramadan are discussed and agreed upon. At the same time, important Islamic issues are also discussed at the Conference.

Jama'atu Nasril Islam, in collaboration with Usmanu Danfodio University Sokoto, organised what is so far the most all-encompassing and most intensive National Conference on MOON SIGHTING in Nigeria at the National Mosque Auditorium, Abuja, Nigeria's Federal Capital from Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> Sha'ban 1433 Hijrah (Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2012). The Conference that had "**The Challenges of Moon-sighting in Nigeria: The Way Forward**", as its theme, focussed on the provisions of the Qur'an and the Sunnah and the contributions of Science and Technology (Astronomy) in sighting new moons that form the basis of the Islamic calendar and regulates the dating of Islamic religious activities.

The Conference was attended by the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency Architect Muhammad Namadi Sambo who chaired the Opening Ceremony and led a high powered Federal Government delegation that included Ministers, Ambassadors, Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Government Agencies and several other top Government Officials. His Eminence the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar CFR, mni, was the Chief Host. In attendance were the representative of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and those of the Governors of Sokoto, Katsina, Kaduna, Bauchi, Niger, Kebbi, Nasarawa, Adamawa, Borno, Kogi, and Zamfara States. There were also many former Governors, former and serving Senators and Members of Federal and States Legislatures and a host of top Muslim politicians from all the major political parties. Also present were two former Chief Justices of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Justice Dahiru Musdapha and Justice Alfa Belgore.

Also in attendance were HRH the Emir of Fika (who represented HRH the Shehu of Borno), HRH the Etsu Nupe (who is the Chairman of the National Mosque Committee), HRH the Emir of Argungu, HRH the Emir of Yauri, HRH the Emir of Birnin Gwari, HRH the Shehu of Bama, HRH the Etsu of Shonga, HRH the Andoma of Doma, HRH the Emir of Anka, HRH the Emir of Kaura Namoda, HRH the Emir of Moriki, His Majesty the Olofa of Offa, HRH the Otaru of Auchi Edo State, HRH the Eje of Ankpa, His Majesty the Timi of Ede Osun State, His Majesty the Oba of Agbede Edo State, His Majesty Eze Eme of Abia State and several other Royal Fathers. HRH the Emir of Gwandu was represented by the Waziri of Gwandu, HRH the Emir of Kano was represented by the Wambai of Kano, HRH the Emir of Bauchi was represented by the Ajiya of Bauchi, HRH the Lamido of Adamawa was represented by the Galadima of Adamawa, HRH the Emir of Katsina was represented by the Waziri of Katsina and HRH the Emir of Zazzau was represented by the Waziri of Zazzau. All other Emirs, Obas and Ezes who were not able to attend sent in their representatives.

Alhaji Abdulazeez Arisekola Alao the Aare Musulumi and Dr. Abdulateef Adegbite the Secretary General of Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs were represented by Alhaji Is-haq Kunle Sanni. Renowned Muslim Scholars in attendance included the King Faisal Laureate, Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Lemu, National Leader of the *Izala* Group, Sheikh Abdullahi Bala Lau and the representatives of the Leaders of the Tariqa Group, Sheikh Sharif Saleh al-Husainy, Sheikh Dahiru Usman Bauchi, Sheikh Qairbullahi Nasiru Kabara and Sheikh Habibullah Adam Abdullahi Al-Ilory. Present also were, Professor Sheikh Dawoud Noibi of Muslims In South West Nigeria (MUSWEN), Her Excellency Alhaja Lateefat Okunnu the former Deputy Governor of Lagos State, Sheikh Adam Idoko of

Enugu State, Chief Abubakar Orlu of Rivers State and Chief Haroun Ajah of Ebonyi State. There were also Hajiya Maryam Othman, Hajiya Aisha Aliko Mohamed, Alhaja Hassana Alade and Hajiya Bilkisu Yusuf all of Federation of Muslim Women Associations of Nigeria (FOMWAN). Also present were representatives of Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria (MSSN), Da'awa Coordinating Council of Nigeria, National Council of Muslim Youths Organisations (NACOMYO) and over 17 other Muslim Organisations. In attendance also were Chief Imams, Senior *Ulama*, Professors, Doctors and Muslim Scientists, Technologists and Astronomers. The heads of the two organising Institutions, the Vice Chancellor of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Professor Riskuwa Shehu and the Secretary General of JNi Sheikh Dr. Khalid Abubakar Aliyu were at hand to assist in running the occasion.

Indeed, all the Six Geo-political Zones of Nigeria were adequately represented at that well attended Conference where 209 Muslim Participants from all walks of life signed the Attendance Register in addition to the over 30 VIPs and over 50 members of their entourage who were in attendance. Twenty-two papers on the main Theme of the Conference, **“The Challenges of Moon-sighting in Nigeria: The Way Forward”**, were presented by Muslim Scholars, Astronomy Experts and Experts in the Sciences and related fields in either Arabic or English or Hausa languages. The main Speakers were drawn from all relevant professions and from all mature age groups that range between those in their thirties (like the University Scholars) to those in their eighties (like the Chief Imam of Sokoto).

At the end of the 4 days Conference and after intensive discussions on the papers presented and other sundry issues raised, several resolutions were passed and adopted. The communiqué issued at the end of the Conference and signed by the JNi Secretary General, Sheikh Dr. Khalid Abubakar Aliyu and Professor Sambo Wali Junaidu of Usmanu Danfodio University, was explicit on the great success achieved by the Conference. The following five items that are specifically related to moon sighting were extracted from that well articulated Communiqué:-

- 1. There was a consensus that physical sighting of the moon for the commencement and ending of Ramadan fasting and the observance of other Islamic events and activities should be in conformity with the provisions of the Qur`an and the *Sunnah*.**
- 2. Science and Technology could be employed to assist in sighting the new moon and in ensuring the adherence to the Shari`ah in this regard. However, the employment of science and technology should be complementary to the paramount physical sighting of the moon.**

- 3. For the purpose of eliminating misconceptions and confusions regarding moon-sighting, a strategy for comprehensive public enlightenment should be put in place.**
- 4. A round-table discussion should be organized for the *Ulama* and other Muslim Scholars to bridge the existing gap on all contentious issues on moon-sighting.**
- 5. The Conference re-affirmed the allegiance of the Nigerian Muslims to the central leadership of the Sultan of Sokoto and called on all Muslims in Nigeria to respect his authority and in particular abide by his announcements on moon-sighting.**

IF THE ABOVE RESOLUTIONS BY THAT HIGH POWERED CONFERENCE HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED, THERE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ANY RECURRING MOON SIGHTING CONTROVERSY TODAY !!!

### RECOMMENDATIONS

This year's Shawwal Moon Sighting Controversy has come at a time when Nigerian Muslims are facing multi-faceted challenges that the dynamism of His Eminence the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, CFR, mni, was trying to contain. The current noble moves by the Sultan to unite Nigerian Muslims and bring them under one umbrella should not be allowed to derail.

It is time we, Nigerian Muslims, re-assessed ourselves and returned to proper order. Allah (SWT) in His infinite Wisdom and Mercy has given us a Central Leader who is striving day and night to unite us. We must therefore pay our full allegiance and respects to him, give him all the required support and encouragement and ensure that the goal of Nigerian Muslim Unity is achieved within the shortest possible time. This is the noble way forward!!!

TO THIS EFFECT, THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS ARE MADE WITH A VIEW TO ASSISTING IN CURTAILING THE RECURRING MOON SIGHTING CONTROVERSIES:-

- LET THE *AMIRUL MUMINEEN*, THE SULTAN OF SOKOTO, BE THE ONLY AUTHORITY TO MAKE PRONOUNCEMENTS ON THE SIGHTING OR OTHERWISE OF ANY NEW MOON. MUSLIM CLERICS, CHAIRMEN, SECRETARIES OR OTHER LEADERS OF ANY MUSLIM ORGANISATION OR ANY COMMITTEE THEREOF, SHOULD NEVER DELVE INTO MAKING PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS OR PRONOUNCEMENTS FOR THE SIGHTING OF ANY NEW MOON. IN ISLAM, THIS IS THE EXCLUSIVE PRESERVE OF THE LEADER OF THE *UMMAH*, THE *AMIRUL MUMINEEN*, OR ANY BODY HE LAWFULLY DESIGNATES AS AND WHEN HE CANNOT PERSONALLY MAKE THE PRONOUNCEMENT. IN NIGERIA, THIS RESPONSIBILITY RESTS ON THE SHOULDERS OF HIS EMINENCE THE SULTAN OF SOKOTO, AS HAS BEEN DONE SINCE 1945.

- THE SULTANATE MOON SIGHTING COMMITTEE, THE NSCIA NATIONAL MOON SIGHTING COMMITTEE AND ANY OTHER MOON SIGHTING COMMITTEE SHOULD COLLAPSE INTO ONE **NATIONAL CENTRAL MOON SIGHTING COMMITTEE** WITH THE SIX NIGERIAN ZONES HAVING AT LEAST A MEMBER EACH AND THE TOTAL MEMBERSHIP NOT EXCEEDING FIFTEEN (15) INCLUDING THE CHAIRMAN, THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN AND THE SECRETARY.
- THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE SHOULD BE DIRECTLY UNDER AND OPERATE AS THE CHIEF ADVISOR TO THE SULTAN ON MOON SIGHTING MATTERS. ITS OFFICE SHOULD BE LOCATED IN SOKOTO WITH COMPLEMENTARY PERMANENT STAFF FOR EFFECTIVE DAY-TO-DAY COORDINATION OF ITS ACTIVITIES. FUNDS SHOULD BE RAISED TO EMPOWER THE COMMITTEE TO PERFORM CREDITABLY AND EFFICIENTLY. MOON SIGHTING SUB-COMMITTEES MAY BE APPOINTED AT ZONAL, STATE AND EMIRATE LEVELS TO ASSIST THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND FORWARD MOON SIGHTING INFORMATION TO IT.
- THE CENTRAL MOON SIGHTING COMMITTEE SHOULD MOBILISE MUSLIMS MASSIVELY TO ALWAYS LOOK OUT FOR THE 12 NEW MOONS OF THE YEAR AND NOT TO RESTRICT THEMSELVES ONLY TO THE RAMADAN, SHAWWAL AND ZHUL-HAJJ MOONS. IN THESE REGARDS, THE CENTRAL MOON SIGHTING COMMITTEE SHOULD MEET IN SOKOTO ON THE 29<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF EACH MONTH SO AS TO ALLOW FOR PROPER COORDINATION WITH HIS EMINENCE THE SULTAN. ANNOUNCEMENTS SHOULD BE MADE ON THE SIGHTING OF EACH OF THE 12 NEW MOONS IN ORDER TO ALLOW FOR CONSISTENCY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.
- SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COULD BE EMPLOYED TO ASSIST IN SIGHTING THE NEW MOON. HOWEVER, THE EMPLOYMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SHOULD BE COMPLEMENTARY TO THE PARAMOUNT PHYSICAL SIGHTING OF THE MOON WITH THE EYES AS ENSHRINED IN THE SHARI'AH. COMPUTERS AND OTHER TECHNICAL TOOLS ARE MAN-MADE AND MAN-OPERATED THEREFORE COULD MALFUNCTION. ASTRONOMICAL CALCULATIONS AND PROJECTIONS ARE ALSO MADE BY HUMANS AND MAY THEREFORE FALL INTO ERRORS. SO, MARGINS OF FAILURES AND ERRORS MUST BE PROVIDED FOR AS ALL HUMANS AND THEIR TOOLS ARE PRONE TO ERRORS AND FAILURES! ERROR-FREE ACTS AND ACTIONS ARE THE EXCLUSIVE PRESERVES OF ALLAH (SWT).
- IF ASTRONOMERS FEEL SO STRONGLY ON THEIR ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, THEY SHOULD INTENSIFY EDUCATING THE *UMMAH* FIRST. ALLAH (SWT) CREATED HUMANS FROM A CLOT OF CONGEALED BLOOD AND NURTURED THEM INTO MATURE HUMANS IN SEVERAL YEARS. SO ALSO DID ALLAH CREATE PLANTS, ANIMALS, BIRDS, ETC. IF HE WANTED HE WOULD HAVE CREATED ALL HIS CREATIONS AS MATURED BEINGS, BUT HE CHOSE THE GRADUAL METHOD. PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SAW) WAS ALLOWED TO FULLY MATURE TO 40 YEARS OF AGE BEFORE HE WAS FORMALLY INSTALLED AS A MESSENGER OF ALLAH. SO WAS THE GLORIOUS QUR'AN REVEALED

GRADUALLY OVER 23 YEARS. ALLAH (SWT) CLEARLY SHOWED THAT HE PREFERS THE GRADUAL METHOD TO EVERYTHING. THEREFORE, ASTRONOMERS OF THE NIGERIA SUPREME COUNCIL FOR ISLAMIC AFFAIRS SHOULD GRADUALLY EDUCATE THE *UMMAH* AND GRADUALLY INTRODUCE THEIR TECHNOLOGY. THE PROPHET (SAW) SAID THAT THERE IS ALWAYS REGRET IN UNNECESSARY HASTE!

- GLADLY, AT THE SHA'BAN 1433 AH (JULY 2012) NATIONAL CONFERENCE, NIGERIAN MUSLIMS RE-AFFIRMED THEIR FULL ALLEGIANCE TO AND RESPECT FOR THE CENTRAL AUTHORITY OF THE *AMIRUL MUMINEEN*, THE SULTAN OF SOKOTO AS PROVIDED FOR IN ISLAM. THIS IS THE MAJOR PANACEA TO DISUNITY AND THE MAJOR ROUTE TO UNITY. THE UNIFYING EFFORTS OF HIS EMINENCE THE SULTAN, HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE SHEHU OF BORNO AND ALL THEIR LIEUTENANTS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO FALTER OR FAIL. THEY SHOULD BE GIVEN ALL THE LOYALTY, SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE IN ORDER TO ENABLE THE *UMMAH* REACH THE POSITIVE MUSLIM UNITY DESTINATION, *INSHA ALLAH*.

May Allah (SWT) make this Publication to be a source of succour and a means to the end of the endemic Moon Sighting Controversy, *ameen*.

May Allah (SWT) forgive our mistakes and our sins and may He, by His Mercy and Grace, make *Jannat Al-Firdaus* our final Heavenly abode, *ameen*.

*Wassalamu Alaikum,*

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