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Harmonizing the Hijri Calendar: A Comparative Insight of Indonesia's *Imkān al-Ru'yah* Crescent Visibility Criteria with Malaysia and Saudi Arabia

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Abstract
The determination of the beginning of Hijri months in Indonesia reflects significant diversity, particularly in the methods adopted by different Muslim organizations. This study aims to examine the potential conflicts arising from the implementation of the new Imkān al-Ru'yah criteria in Indonesia and to compare them with the criteria used in Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. This research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing in-depth interviews and literature analysis. The collected data is analyzed through content analysis to understand the underlying factors contributing to the differences in Hijri month determination. The findings indicate that the new Imkān al-Ru'yah criteria have intensified long-standing disputes due to variations in crescent visibility in the eastern hemisphere. Key discrepancies arise from differences in hisab criteria, interpretations of Islamic legal principles regarding Ulil Amri, and the symbolic meaning of the crescent moon. The study also reveals that Muhammadiyah's KHGT criteria align with those of Saudi Arabia, whereas the new Mabims criteria differ from those of Saudi Arabia. This study provides a comparative analysis of Hijri month determination criteria across multiple countries, highlighting the underlying theological and astronomical factors that shape different methodologies. The research offers insights into the complexities of Hijri calendar determination in Indonesia and contributes to discussions on standardizing crescent sighting criteria. The findings may serve as a basis for fostering greater alignment among Islamic organizations and regional authorities.
Keywords: Hijri Month Determination; *Imkān al-Ru'yah* Criteria; Islamic Calendar; Islamic Law; Visibility Criteria Comparative.

Abstrak

Penentuan awal bulan Hijriah di Indonesia mencerminkan keragaman yang signifikan, terutama dalam metode yang diadopsi oleh berbagai organisasi Muslim. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji potensi konflik yang timbul dari penerapan kriteria *Imkān al-Ru'yah* yang baru di Indonesia dan membandingkannya dengan kriteria yang digunakan di Arab Saudi dan Malaysia. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, dengan menggunakan wawancara mendalam dan analisis literatur. Data yang terkumpul dianalisis melalui analisis isi untuk memahami faktor-faktor yang mendasari perbedaan penentuan bulan Hijriah. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kriteria Imkān al-Ru'yah yang baru telah memperuncing perselisihan yang telah berlangsung lama karena variasi visibilitas hilal di belahan bumi bagian timur. Perbedaan utama muncul dari perbedaan kriteria hisab, interpretasi prinsip-prinsip hukum Islam tentang Ulil Amri, dan makna simbolis bulan sabit. Studi ini juga mengungkapkan bahwa kriteria KHGT Muhammadiyah selaras dengan kriteria Arab Saudi, sedangkan kriteria Mabims yang baru berbeda dengan kriteria Arab Saudi. Penelitian ini memberikan analisis komparatif mengenai kriteria penentuan bulan Hijriah di berbagai negara, dengan menyoroti faktor-faktor teologis dan astronomis yang mendasari metodologi yang berbeda. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan tentang kompleksitas penentuan kalender Hijriah di Indonesia dan berkontribusi pada diskusi tentang standarisasi kriteria penampakan hilal. Temuan-temuan ini dapat menjadi dasar untuk mendorong keselarasan yang lebih besar di antara organisasi-organisasi Islam dan pemerintah daerah.

Kata Kunci: Penentuan Bulan Hijriah; Kriteria *Imkān al-Ru'yah*; Kalender Islam; Hukum Islam; Perbandingan Kriteria Visibilitas.

Introduction

The recurring discourse on the unification of the Hijri calendar surfaces annually, particularly before the months of Ramadan, Shawwal, and Zulhijjah, due to the pressing need among Muslims to confirm the exact start date of these months. This demand for temporal certainty highlights the essential role the Hijri calendar plays in Islamic religious life (Hambali, 2012). Time in Islam is intrinsically tied to acts of worship, yet classical religious texts offer limited explicit directives regarding the measurement and demarcation of time, such as the duration of months or the onset of specific days. As such, while the significance of time is emphasized, its precise boundaries must often be inferred through the integration of textual interpretation and astronomical observations (Wahidin, 2022).

Due to the ambiguous nature of scriptural references, determining the start of Hijri months has long relied on two primary methods: *rukyat* (moon sighting) and *hisab* (astronomical calculations) (RN., 2016). Although both aim to uphold the prophetic tradition that a lunar month consists of 29 or 30 days (Makhrus, 2019). Their application varies. Traditionalists favor rukyat, often treating hisab as a supplementary tool rather than a definitive standard (Lusdianto, 2023). The rukyat method has gradually incorporated the Imkanur Rukyat criteria, which include conditions like the minimum hilal height after *ijtimak* before sunset (Anas et al., 2023). However, within hisab itself, diverse

techniques lead to internal disagreements (Zufriani et al., 2023), contributing to persistent variations in calendar determinations across Muslim communities.

This study aims to explore the root causes, scientific developments, and institutional responses to the differences in criteria used for determining the start of Hijri months in Indonesia. It will focus on how national and international efforts have attempted to harmonize rukyat and hisab-based methodologies, with particular attention to the implications of new criteria such as those from MABIMS and Muhammadiyah. By assessing the outcomes of scholarly meetings and organizational policies, this research intends to reveal how these evolving criteria influence religious observance, societal perceptions, and the potential for unified timekeeping in the Muslim world.

Despite significant scholarly efforts and numerous international meetings—such as those held in Istanbul, Rabat, and Abu Dhabi—the unification of the Islamic calendar remains elusive. While the 2016 Istanbul Congress marked a breakthrough by adopting a bizonal calendar model through majority vote (Rohmah, 2017), it also exposed the deep divisions among Islamic authorities. In Indonesia, these differences persist through the coexistence of various criteria: the government's adoption of the New MABIMS standards in 2022 (Irfan, 2023), NU's alignment with these parameters via IRNU (Hasan, 2023), and Muhammadiyah's commitment to a global Islamic calendar model with its own distinctive criteria (Saksono, 2017). These discrepancies not only cause public confusion but also reignite theological and methodological debates each year, reinforcing the need for a more universally accepted solution.

Methods

This study adopts a qualitative field research approach aimed at capturing and interpreting the complexity of social phenomena in their natural settings. As described by Lexy J. Moleong, qualitative research is intended to deeply understand the experiences of research subjects—including their behaviors, perceptions, motivations, and actions—through descriptive narratives expressed in words and language. This approach is particularly relevant in analyzing phenomena that are influenced by cultural, religious, and social contexts, such as the conflicts surrounding the determination of the beginning of the Hijri month. To support this inquiry, the researcher gathered data primarily from real-life cases within the community where conflicts over the Hijri calendar's commencement were observed. These primary data sources were supplemented by secondary references, including scholarly works and other relevant documentation, to enrich the analysis and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issue. The integration of field

observations with theoretical references allows for a more holistic interpretation of the underlying social dynamics and the religious contestations at play.

Result and Discussion

National-Level Implementation of *Imkān al-Ru'yah* in Indonesia

Despite Indonesia's long-standing differences in determining the beginning of Islamic months between proponents of *rukyat* (moon sighting) and *hisab* (astronomical calculation), the issue has not significantly disrupted public religious practices. Generally, society remains tolerant, even though these differences sometimes cause social tensions when religious organizations assert their interpretation as the most legitimate. The call to unify the Islamic calendar through the adoption of the New MABIMS criteria or the Single Global Islamic Calendar (KHGT) has intensified the debate (Mufid & Djamaluddin, 2023). This tension reached a peak when a BRIN researcher, AP Hasanuddin, controversially targeted Muhammadiyah on social media, leading to his legal detainment for attempting to impose his views unilaterally. This highlights that the issue is not merely ritualistic but represents a broader symbolic effort to foster unity among Muslims, especially regarding Ramadan and Eid celebrations (Alamsyah et al., 2023).

The Indonesian government introduced the *imkān al-ru'yah* approach, which evaluates the visibility of the crescent moon not solely based on its position above the horizon but also by considering the visual contrast between the moon and twilight (Nawawi et al., 2024). Key parameters include the moon's height, elongation, and age. This system aims to bridge the gap between the *hisab* and *rukyat* camps, reducing observational errors and discouraging reliance on *hisab* alone without defined criteria. In response to ongoing needs, astronomers have formulated updated visibility standards intended to support calendar unification efforts at national, regional, and global levels. These culminated in Indonesia proposing a new set of criteria—minimum 3° altitude and 6.4° elongation—starting with a 2010 initiative and culminating in the adoption of the revised MABIMS standard in 2021 by the religious ministries of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. This new standard was first applied in Indonesia for the beginning of Ramadan 1443 H (April 2022) (Djamaluddin, 2023).

Muhammadiyah, through Prof. Dr. Syamsul Anwar, has actively promoted the *Single Global Islamic Calendar (KHGT)*. Anwar, a former chair of Muhammadiyah's Tarjih and Tajdid Council, is seen as a visionary advocate for calendar unification at the global level. His most prominent idea is the *unified Islamic lunar calendar* (*at-Taqwim al-Qamary al-Muwahhad*), which aspires to enable all Muslims worldwide to observe Islamic rituals like

fasting and Eid on the same date by referring to global time standards like GMT (Anwar, 2016).

His approach rests on four key pillars:

1. Full Reliance on *Hisab* – Acknowledging that global unification requires precise astronomical calculations rather than direct observation.
2. Global *imkān al-ru'yah* Transfer - Allowing the transfer of *hilal* visibility from one region to another as long as certain astronomical conditions are met.
3. Standardized Start of the Day – Emphasizing the need for a clear, agreed-upon reference for when a new day begins in the Hijri calendar.
4. One Global *Matla'* – Treating the Earth as a unified observational zone, so a hilal sighting anywhere would apply universally.

This model reflects Muhammadiyah's progressive stance in globalizing Islamic timekeeping, challenging more localized interpretations, and aiming for worldwide synchronization of Islamic observances (Anwar, 2016).

Comparison of Methodologies for Determining the Beginning of the Hijri Month Between Indonesia ad Malaysia and Arab Saudi

Malaysia and Saudi Arabia generally rely on the *ru'yah haqīqī* method, which emphasizes the actual visual sighting of the crescent moon (*hilal*) supported by testimonies from local observers. Historically, Malaysia established official crescent sighting locations as early as 1972, including Baitul Hilal Teluk Kemang, Johor Bahru, and Kampung Pulau Sayak, to determine important Islamic dates. In Saudi Arabia, decisions about the start of Ramadan are based on crescent sightings—often conducted at Hawtat Sudair—using data from institutions like Majmaah University's Astronomical Observatory (Azizah, 2024).

In comparing methodologies across Indonesia, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia, distinct differences emerge in how each country integrates *hisab* (astronomical calculations) and *ru'yah* (visual sighting). Indonesia and Malaysia adopt a shared regional standard known as the MABIMS criteria (endorsed by Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore), emphasizing the *imkān al-ru'yah* threshold—requiring a minimum crescent height of 3 degrees and elongation of over 6.4 degrees. This method seeks regional consistency, but practical differences in outcomes still arise. In Indonesia, this divergence is visible between major religious organizations: Nahdlatul Ulama favors visual sightings, while Muhammadiyah relies on calculations.

Saudi Arabia, by contrast, uses the Umm al-Qura calendar, a lunar system based on moon positioning over Makkah. While most months are calculated using hisab, the months

of Ramadan, Shawwal, and Dhu al-Hijjah still incorporate direct sightings. Although the calendar has been updated with more accurate astronomical standards, it continues to rely on visual confirmation for these religious months, which sometimes creates discrepancies between predicted dates and observed outcomes, affecting international observance of Islamic events (Rohmah, 2017).

Indonesia and Malaysia's adherence to MABIMS reflects a regional effort to standardize Hijri month determination, yet achieving uniformity remains difficult due to differing local atmospheric conditions, technical interpretations, and theological leanings. While *imkān al-ru'yah* aims to rationalize and harmonize the process, variation in understanding and implementation continues to cause divergence. Saudi Arabia's hybrid approach—combining *hisab* and *ru'yah*—shows an attempt to balance tradition and science, though inconsistencies in crescent sighting outcomes still raise questions (Kasim et al., 2024).

These methodological differences, when viewed through the lens of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, especially the protection of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), reveal significant implications. Confusion over the start of Ramadan or Eid dates can disrupt religious practices and communal harmony. Misalignment of observances not only causes social division but also affects the clarity and confidence with which Muslims fulfill religious obligations (Fikri et al., 2024).

From the standpoint of public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*), Islam mandates the promotion of unity and prevention of harm. Differing celebration times, even within a shared locality, may erode community cohesion and weaken the spirit of collective worship. Moreover, variations in Hijri date determinations can destabilize social and economic planning, undermining communal order (*ḥifẓ al-ijtima'ī*) (Musonnif, 2015).

Ultimately, efforts to determine the start of the Hijri month should align with the objectives of Islamic law, promoting benefit and minimizing harm. When methodological differences ignore the pursuit of consensus and broader welfare, they risk fragmenting the Muslim community. Thus, fostering collaboration between traditional visual methods and modern astronomical approaches is vital to upholding *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and ensuring religious unity and stability (Wahidi et al., 2021).

Analysis of Differences in the Determination of the Beginning of the Month in Indonesia New MABIMS and KHGT

Research Differences in the timing of 'ied celebrations have become a subject of interest to many individuals. Factors such as time zones, geographical location, calendar calculations, and sociocultural aspects, in this case the fundamental understanding of the

Ru'yat and *Hisab* postulates, have contributed to the variation in the timing of 'ied celebrations in different parts of Indonesia (Raharto et al., 2019). However, the following differences and similarities in the implementation of Eid al-Fitr over the next eight years have been analyzed based on these two criteria in Indonesia:

Table 1: Data Analysis of the Difference in the Beginning of the Month

Year	Month	KHGT Muhammadiyah	New Mabims	Description
1445H	Muharram	19/7/2023 M	19/7/2023 M	Same
	Syaban	11/2/2024 M	11/2/2024 M	Same
	Ramadhan	11/3/2024 M	12/3/2024 M	Different
	Syawal	10/4/2024 M	10/4/2024 M	Same
	Dzulhajjih	08/6/2024 M	08/6/2024 M	Same
1446H	Muharram	07/7/2024 M	07/7/2024 M	Same
	Syaban	31/1/2025 M	31/1/2025 M	Same
	Ramadhan	01/3/2025 M	01/3/2025 M	Same
	Syawal	31/3/2025 M	30/3/2025 M	Different
	Dzulhajjih	28/5/2025 M	29/5/2025 M	Different
1447h	Muharram	27/6/2025 M	27/6/2025 M	Different
	Syaban	20/1/2026 M	20/1/2026 M	Same
	Ramadhan	19/2/2026 M	19/2/2026 M	Same
	Syawal	20/3/2026 M	21/3/2026 M	Different
	Dzulhajjih	18/5/2026 M	18/5/2026 M	Same
1448h	Muharram	16/6/2026 M	Different	Different
	Syaban	09/1/2027 M	09/1/2027 M	Same
	Ramadhan	08/2/2027 M	08/2/2027 M	Same
	Syawal	09/3/2027 M	10/3/2027 M	Different
	Dzulhajjih	07/5/2027 M	08/5/2027 M	Different
1449h	Muharram	06/6/2027 M	06/6/2027 M	Same
	Syaban	29/12/2027 M	29/12/2027 M	Same
	Ramadhan	28/1/2028 M	28/1/2028 M	Same
	Syawal	26/2/2028 M	27/2/2028 M	Different
	Dzulhajjih	26/4/2028 M	26/4/2028 M	Same
1450h	Muharram	26/5/2028 M	26/5/2028 M	Same
	Syaban	17/12/2028 M	17/12/2028 M	Same
	Ramadhan	16/1/2029 M	16/1/2029 M	Same

	Syawal	14/2/2029 M	15/2/2029 M	Different
	Dzulhajjih	15/4/2029 M	16/4/2029 M	Different
1451h	Muharram	15/5/2029 M	15/5/2029 M	Same
	Syaban	7/12/2029 M	7/12/2029 M	Same
	Ramadhan	05/1/2030 M	06/1/2030 M	Different
	Syawal	04/2/2030 M	04/2/2030 M	Same
	Dzulhajjih	05/4/2030 M	04/4/2030 M	Different
1452H	Muharram	04/5/2030 M	04/5/2030 M	Same
	Syaban	26/11/2030 M	27/11/2030 M	Different
	Ramadhan	26/12/2030 M	26/12/2030 M	Same
	Syawal	24/1/2031 M	25/1/2031 M	Different
	Dzulhajjih	24/3/2031 M	25/3/2031 M	Different

Source: Research data processing results

In analyzing the table of results, it can be seen that the transition from adherence to *ru'yah* to *imkān al-ru'yah*, as well as the transformation of *hisāb haqīqī wujūd al-hilāl* to *Imkān al-ru'yah*, will not provide a unifying solution in Indonesia. Although both have adopted the *Imkān al-ru'yah* criteria, the differences in the parameters of these criteria have created new conflicts in society. In fact, the changes in the respective parameters not only widen the differences but also increase the complexity of the variations in the determination of the beginning of the month between the approaches. The table is analyzed using color to make it easier to identify the factors that cause the difference. In the table with the following explanation:

1) The red marking indicates that disparities in the determination of the beginning of the month will still exist in Indonesia, even though Muhammadiyah and NU do not implement changes to the new criteria. In the context of the table, it can be observed that in the coming eight-year period, there are seven times of differences in the determination of the beginning of the month, namely: Ramadan 1445 AH, Dhul Hijjah 1446 AH, Muharram 1447 AH, Dhul Hijjah 1450 AH, Shaaban 1452 AH, Shawwal 1452 AH, Dhul Hijjah 1452 AH.
2) The yellow marking indicates that the difference in the determination of the beginning of the month is caused by the change in the Muhammadiyah criteria, which switches to the *wujūd al-hilāl* criterion to KHGT. In the context of the table, it can be observed that in the upcoming eight-year period, there are five times differences in determining the beginning of the month associated with changes in

Muhammadiyah criteria, namely; Shawwal 1446 AH, Shawwal 1448 AH, Dhulhijjah 1448 AH, Shawwal 1449 AH and Shawwal 1450 AH.

Green marking indicates that the difference in the determination of the beginning of the month is caused by the change in NU criteria, which switches from Old MABIMS to New MABIMS. In the context of the table, it can be observed that in the upcoming eight-year period, there are four differences in the determination of the beginning of the month associated with changes in NU criteria, namely: Shawwal 1447 AH, Muharram 1448 AH, Ramadan 1451 AH, Dhulhijjah 1451 AH.

Analysis of Differences in the Determination of the Beginning of the Month in Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Indonesia using MABIMS and KHGT criteria

The implementation of the New MABIMS and KHGT criteria in Indonesia will cause some differences in the implementation of holiday times with these countries which have consequences in the implementation of Muslim worship. the following table analyzes the implementation:

Table 2: Comparison of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia

Year	Month	KHGT Muhammadiyah	New Mabims	Malaysia	Saudi Arabia	Description
1445H	Muharram	19/7/2023 M	19/7/2023 M	19/7/2023 M	19/7/2023 M	Same
	Syaban	11/2/2024 M	11/2/2024 M	11/2/2024 M	11/2/2024 M	Same
	Ramadhan	11/3/2024 M	12/3/2024 M	12/3/2024 M	11/3/2024 M	Different
	Syawal	10/4/2024 M	10/4/2024 M	10/4/2024 M	10/4/2024 M	Same
	Dzulhajjih	08/6/2024 M	08/6/2024 M	08/6/2024 M	08/6/2024 M	Same
1446H	Muharram	07/7/2024 M	07/7/2024 M	07/7/2024 M	07/7/2024 M	Same
	Syaban	31/1/2025 M	31/1/2025 M	31/1/2025 M	31/1/2025 M	Same
	Ramadhan	01/3/2025 M	01/3/2025 M	01/3/2025 M	01/3/2025 M	Same
	Syawal	30/3/2025 M	31/3/2025 M	31/3/2025 M	30/3/2025 M	Different
	Dzulhajjih	28/5/2025 M	29/5/2025 M	29/5/2025 M	28/5/2025 M	Different
1447h	Muharram	27/6/2025 M	27/6/2025 M	27/6/2025 M	27/6/2025 M	Different
	Syaban	20/1/2026 M	20/1/2026 M	20/1/2026 M	20/1/2026 M	Same
	Ramadhan	19/2/2026 M	19/2/2026 M	19/2/2026 M	19/2/2026 M	Same
	Syawal	20/3/2026 M	21/3/2026 M	21/3/2026 M	20/3/2026 M	Different

	Dzulhajjih	18/5/2026 M	18/5/2026 M	18/5/2026 M	18/5/2026 M	Same
1448h	Muharram	16/6/2026 M	17/6/2026 M	17/6/2026 M	16/6/2026 M	Different
	Syaban	09/1/2027 M	09/1/2027 M	09/1/2027 M	09/1/2027 M	Same
	Ramadhan	08/2/2027 M	08/2/2027 M	08/2/2027 M	08/2/2027 M	Same
	Syawal	09/3/2027 M	10/3/2027 M	10/3/2027 M	09/3/2027 M	Different
	Dzulhajjih	07/5/2027 M	08/5/2027 M	08/5/2027 M	07/5/2027 M	Different
1449h	Muharram	06/6/2027 M	06/6/2027 M	06/6/2027 M	06/6/2027 M	Same
	Syaban	29/12/2027 M	29/12/2027 M	29/12/2027 M	29/12/2027 M	Same
	Ramadhan	28/1/2028 M	28/1/2028 M	28/1/2028 M	28/1/2028 M	Same
	Syawal	26/2/2028 M	27/2/2028 M	27/2/2028 M	26/2/2028 M	Different
	Dzulhajjih	26/4/2028 M	26/4/2028 M	26/4/2028 M	26/4/2028 M	Same
1450h	Muharram	26/5/2028 M	26/5/2028 M	26/5/2028 M	26/5/2028 M	Same
	Syaban	17/12/2028 M	17/12/2028 M	17/12/2028 M	17/12/2028 M	Same
	Ramadhan	16/1/2029 M	16/1/2029 M	16/1/2029 M	16/1/2029 M	Same
	Syawal	14/2/2029 M	15/2/2029 M	15/2/2029 M	14/2/2029 M	Different
	Dzulhajjih	15/4/2029 M	16/4/2029 M	16/4/2029 M	15/4/2029 M	Different
1451h	Muharram	15/5/2029 M	15/5/2029 M	15/5/2029 M	15/5/2029 M	Same
	Syaban	7/12/2029 M	7/12/2029 M	7/12/2029 M	7/12/2029 M	Same
	Ramadhan	05/1/2030 M	06/1/2030 M	06/1/2030 M	05/1/2030 M	Different
	Syawal	04/2/2030 M	04/2/2030 M	04/2/2030 M	04/2/2030 M	Same
	Dzulhajjih	05/4/2030 M	04/4/2030 M	04/4/2030 M	05/4/2030 M	Different
1452H	Muharram	04/5/2030 M	04/5/2030 M	04/5/2030 M	04/5/2030 M	Same
	Syaban	26/11/2030 M	27/11/2030 M	27/11/2030 M	26/11/2030 M	Different
	Ramadhan	26/12/2030 M	26/12/2030 M	26/12/2030 M	26/12/2030 M	Same
	Syawal	24/1/2031 M	25/1/2031 M	25/1/2031 M	24/1/2031 M	Different
	Dzulhajjih	24/3/2031 M	25/3/2031 M	25/3/2031 M	24/3/2031 M	Different

Source: Research data processing results

The data indicate that both Indonesia and Malaysia apply the new MABIMS *imkān al-ru'yah* criteria similarly in determining the beginning of Hijri months. This is due to the *hilal* being visually observable when its altitude reaches 3°, making *ru'yah* possible in practice. However, the implication of using this criterion is the potential for as many as 16 discrepancies per year between the Hijri calendars of Indonesia and Saudi Arabia.

Likewise, the use of the KHGT criteria in Indonesia and Malaysia can also result in up to 16 discrepancies, particularly in situations where the *hilal's* position at sunset remains below the horizon in these countries, rendering it unobservable for Malaysia and nearby regions. Nevertheless, adopting the KHGT criteria does not cause such discrepancies with Saudi Arabia's calendar.

The transition from older criteria to *imkān al-ru'yah* by various religious organizations was intended to promote unity. In reality, however, this shift has led to increased variations in determining the beginning of the Hijri month (Firdaus et al., 2022). While some argue that the adoption of more scientific methods—such as astronomical calculations—could help reconcile differences in Eid observance and reduce tension, there remain several underlying issues contributing to these divisions:

1. Different Interpretations of "Ulil Amri"

The term *Ulil Amri*, found in Surah An-Nisa (4:59), is interpreted differently by various groups. Some see it as referring to governmental authorities who hold legitimate power to issue binding decisions in religious matters. This view supports the legitimacy of the government-led *sidang isbat* (official moon sighting session) (Limbong et al., 2023).

On the other hand, others argue that *Ulil Amri* denotes religious scholars and jurists who have expertise in Islamic law (Khuluqi, 2020) From this perspective, a democratic state's rulings on matters of fiqh—particularly *ijtihadiyah* issues like moon sighting—should not be binding on all Muslims, especially those who follow different schools of thought. This ongoing debate contributes to fragmentation among Indonesian Muslims (Abdurrahman et al., 2023).

2. Divergent Understandings of the Term "Hilal"

Although the Quran does not explicitly use the word *hilal*, it discusses lunar cycles as time markers, notably in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:189). Interpretations differ on how this verse informs the method of determining Islamic dates (Fikri & Indriana, 2024).

One group views the *hilal* as something that must be sighted with the naked eye, in accordance with prophetic tradition. For them, visual observation is an act of worship and obedience, essential for determining the beginning of a new. Another group sees the *hilal* as an astronomical phase of the moon, which can be accurately calculated using *hisab*. (Hasan, 2023)They argue that mathematical precision provides clarity and aligns with the

Quranic purpose of using lunar cycles to determine worship times like Hajj. These differing interpretations have led to varying start dates for Ramadan and Eid in Indonesia, even though both methods are seen as valid by their respective adherents (Royyani et al., 2023).

3. Disagreement Over the Concept of a Global Islamic Calendar

The idea of a unified Global Islamic Calendar remains unresolved. While many Indonesian scholars agree on using the *imkān al-ru'yah* approach for a global calendar, there is no universal consensus (Angkat, 2017).

The concept of a *Single Global Islamic Calendar* was first proposed at a 2008 ISESCO conference in Morocco, which concluded that any unified calendar must rely on *hisab*, just like prayer times are calculated. The *Bizonal Global Islamic Calendar* offers a compromise by dividing the world into two time zones—east and west—allowing each zone to determine months either through observation or calculation. For instance, the eastern zone might rely on direct *hilal* sightings, while the western zone may use astronomical computation. These differing approaches reflect the lack of international standardization, contributing to ongoing disagreements in the global Muslim community about the start of the Hijri month.

Conclusion

This study concludes that despite the shared commitment by the Indonesian government and Muhammadiyah to adopt modern criteria—New MABIMS and KHGT—for determining the beginning of the Hijri month, significant discrepancies remain. These differences stem primarily from divergent interpretations of Islamic legal texts and the application of crescent visibility standards. For example, although both models utilize the *imkān al-ru'yah* approach, they apply different technical thresholds, such as the *hilal*'s altitude and elongation, which can lead to as many as 16 instances of divergence from Saudi Arabia's calendar in a given year. As a result, the lack of standardization continues to affect religious observance unity in Indonesia and the broader Muslim world. The strength of this research lies in its integrative approach, which bridges scientific astronomy and Islamic jurisprudence to analyze the practical implications of calendar standardization. By combining textual analysis with empirical data on *hilal* visibility and inter-country discrepancies, the study offers a comprehensive view of both technical and theological aspects. This interdisciplinary framework highlights the importance of fostering sustained dialogue between ulama and astronomers, which is essential for aligning the calendar with both *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and the lived realities of global Muslim communities. It thereby contributes to the discourse on religious harmony and scientific legitimacy in contemporary Islamic practices.

Nonetheless, this research has limitations that need to be acknowledged. The scope of analysis is geographically centered on Indonesia and Malaysia, limiting the broader applicability of its findings to other Muslim-majority countries with different sociopolitical and theological contexts. Furthermore, the study relies heavily on secondary data and does not include primary fieldwork or interviews with key decision-makers, such as government officials or religious scholars, who influence calendar determinations. Therefore, future studies should expand the regional scope and incorporate qualitative methods to gain deeper insight into the institutional dynamics and stakeholder perspectives involved in the ongoing calendar unification debate.

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