11556 - They work in an area where no people live; do they have to pray Jumu’ah?

the question

We are a group of men working far away from our homes and families, in a place where there are no people living, and no buildings or mosques. The time we spend at work is equal to the time we spend in our homes, i.e., we work for 28 days in return for 28 days off. This continues all year round, and we work for 12 hours each day.
What about holding Jumu’ah prayers in this place – is it obligatory or not?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It is not obligatory to pray Jumu’ah in this place, rather you should pray Zuhr, because you are not permanent residents there and there are no permanent residents with whom you can pray Jumu’ah.

The scholars of the Standing Committee were asked about some people who left the city to work in agriculture, and they stayed there for as long as the work lasted, no less than two to four months each year. It is difficult for them to go back to the city to pray Jumu’ah whilst they are working. Is Jumu’ah prayer obligatory for them? Is it permissible for them to hold Jumu’ah prayers in their work place or not, or do they have to go to the city even though that is difficult for them? Or is it waived in their case as it is for travellers? What is the length of time in the workplace at which Jumu’ah is waived for them?

They replied:

If the farms on which they work are permanently inhabited, then they have to pray Jumu’ah, with the permanent residents. They can pray with them or with others with whom it is easy for them to pray Jumu’ah, because of the general meaning of the evidence which indicates that Jumu’ah is

obligatory and it is obligatory to make the effort to attend Jumu’ah prayers.

If those who work on these farms can hear the adhaan for Jumu’ah from their village or from another village near their farms, then they must go and pray with the congregation (jamaa’ah) of the Muslims, because of the general meaning of the verse in which Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O you who believe (Muslims)! When the call is proclaimed for the Salaah (prayer) on Friday (Jumu‘ah prayer), come to the remembrance of Allaah [Jumu‘ah religious talk (Khutbah) and Salaah (prayer)]”

[al-Jumu’ah 63:9]

If there are no permanent residents on these farms and they cannot hear the adhaan for Jumu’ah from the village that is near their farm, they do not have to pray Jumu’ah but they should pray Zuhr in congregation.

There were tribes and farms in the al-‘Awaali districts around Madeenah at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and he did not command the people there to come to Jumu’ah prayers. If he had, that would have been narrated. This indicates that it is not obligatory for such people because of the hardship involved.

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah li’l-Buhooth al-‘Ilmiyyah wa’l-Ifta’, 8/221, 222

And they also said:

If the company for which you are working is not in a place where Jumu’ah prayers are held or near such a place, and there are no permanent residents in the company for whom Jumu’ah is obligatory, you do not have to offer Jumu’ah prayers, rather you have to pray Zuhr. But if the company is in a place where Jumu’ah prayers are held or near such a place and you can hear the adhaan, or there are permanent residents for whom Jumu’ah is obligatory, then you have to pray Jumu’ah with the permanent residents of that place or company.

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah, 8/220.

Shaykh Ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked about some students living away from home and the ruling on holding Jumu'ah prayers in foreign lands. He replied:

The scholars have stated that you and people like you do not have to hold Friday prayers, and there is some dispute as to whether Friday prayers offered by you are valid. Rather what you have to do is to pray Zuhr, because you are more akin to travellers and those who live in the desert. Jumu'ah is only obligatory for permanent residents. The evidence for that is the fact that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not command travellers or those living in the desert to pray Jumu'ah, and he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not do that when he was travelling, and neither did his companions (may Allaah be pleased with them). It is proven in the saheeh ahaadeeth that during the Farewell Pilgrimage the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) prayed Zuhr in 'Arafah on a Friday; he did not pray Jumu'ah or command the pilgrims to do so, because they came under the ruling on travellers. I do not know of any differing opinion among the scholars of Islam regarding this matter, praise be to Allaah, apart from some odd views among some of the Taabi'een, with which we need not concern ourselves.

But if there are some permanent Muslim residents who pray Jumu'ah there, then it is prescribed in sharee'ah for you and others like you who are staying in that place temporarily in order to seek knowledge, do business, etc, to pray with them so that you may attain the virtue of praying Jumu'ah. Some the scholars have stated that it is obligatory for the traveller to join the permanent residents if he stays in a place where Jumu'ah prayers are held and his stay exceeds the period during which shortening the prayers is allowed.

Fataawa Ibn Baaz, 12/377.