72384 - Stealing electricity from the state on the grounds that it does not give its citizens their rights

the question

What is the ruling on stealing electricity from the state? Please note that the state does not give citizens their rights in all things.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It is not permissible to steal electricity from the state, whether that is done by tinkering with the electricity meter, or by using tricks to avoid paying bills, or by any other means, because that involves cheating, deceiving and consuming people’s wealth unlawfully.

The fact that the state does not give the citizens their rights does not make it permissible to steal from the public wealth. These resources, such as electricity and other things, belong to the Muslims as a whole, so stealing from them is a transgression against the public wealth, not only against the government and its employees.

The Standing Committee was asked: Is it permissible to stop electricity or water meters in a kaafir state so as to weaken that state? Please note that the state takes unjust taxes from me which I pay unwillingly.

They replied:

That is not permissible, because it is consuming people’s wealth unlawfully. End quote.

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah, 23/441

The Standing Committee was also asked: is it permissible to use tricks to avoid paying bills for electricity, water, television, gas and so on? Please note that most of these things are provided by

publicly owned companies.

They replied:

That is not permissible, because it is consuming people’s wealth unlawfully and is a failure to fulfil trusts. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O you who believe! Eat not up your property among yourselves unjustly except it be a trade amongst you, by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves (nor kill one another). Surely, Allaah is Most Merciful to you”

[al-Nisa’ 4:58]

“Verily, Allaah commands that you should render back the trusts to those, to whom they are due”

[al-Nisa’ 4:29]

end quote.

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah, 23/441

We have already responded to the specious arguments offered by those who regard it as permissible to steal electricity from the state. Please see the answer to question number 70274.

And Allaah knows best.