



In the name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Utilisation of Zakat for Welfare Projects

This fatwa assesses whether one can give zakat to general welfare projects, such as the building of wells, where the specific ownership of the Zakat monies or asset is not given to a specified individual, and then proceeds to conclude that giving Zakat to general welfare projects is not correct.

The fatwa discusses three areas:

- 1) General Recipients
- 2) Recipients “Fisabeelillah”
- 3) Broadening the categories of recipients

The Qur’an has defined eight categories of rightful recipients, these being:

1. A poor person **2.** A needy person **3.** Those employed to collect funds **4.** New Muslims whose hearts have to be reconciled **5.** Those in bondage **6.** Those with debt **7.** Those who serve in the way of Allah **8.** The traveller who has insufficient funds.

The fatwa details each category and discusses more specifically the eligibility criteria for ‘fisabeelillah’. According to general consensus, ‘fisabeelillah’ refers to a poor member of the armed forces. The poor pilgrim has also been included by some jurists, as well as needy students of Islamic Sacred knowledge. However general welfare projects have not been specified to fall under the category of ‘fisabeelillah’ by any of the four classical schools of thought.

The fatwa makes reference to the minority contemporary position pertaining to zakat ‘fisabeelillah’, whereby it is held that zakat can be utilised for all forms of good deeds, though the fatwa also explains the limitations on this opinion.

The fatwa concludes by opining the categories of Zakat are Divinely Ordained, with proof from hadith that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) could not alter or add to the list.