

# Dealing with laws in non-Muslim countries

## Introduction

Various governments lay down laws to govern the conduct of the lives of their citizens, at times they would order people to do something and at times prohibit them from doing some other things; they would limit and restrict certain activities, etc.

Among those laws are the laws concerning public utilities related to the daily lives of the people in a given geographical area; and violating or disobeying these laws could lead to disarray and chaos.

## General Rules

222. It is not permissible for anyone to leave something on the **public road** that could cause harm to the pedestrians and others anywhere in Muslim and non-Muslim countries.

223. It is not permissible for a Muslim to **post bills** or write or engage in other similar activities on the outer walls or billboards that are owned by others except after obtaining the permission of the owner.

224. It is forbidden for a Muslim to **betray the trust** of someone who has entrusted him with an item or a deed, even if that person happens to be a non-Muslim.

225. It is similarly obligatory upon a Muslim to safeguard the deposit that has been given to him and give it back in full. Therefore, one who works as a cashier or accountant is not allowed to betray the employer and steal something that is under his control<sup>1</sup>(See the question-answer section below.)

226. It is neither permissible to **steal** from the private as well as the public property of non-Muslims, nor **vandalize** it, even if that stealing or vandalizing does not tarnish the image of Islam and Muslims. Such an act is counted as perfidy and violation of the guarantee given to non-Muslims indirectly when one asked permission to enter or reside in that country. And it is forbidden to breach the trust and violate the guarantee in regard to every person irrespective of his religion, citizenship, and beliefs. (See the

question–answer section below.)

227. It is not permissible to steal the property of non–Muslims when they enter Muslim countries.

228. It is not permissible for a Muslim to receive wages and subsidy through illegal means, and other similar methods, for example, by **giving false information** to the authorities.

229. It is permissible for a Muslim to purchase **insurance policy** from various insurance companies for insuring his life and property from fire, flood, theft, and other perils. The insurance agreement is considered binding and cannot be cancelled except with the consent of both parties.

230. It is not permissible for a Muslim to give false information to the insurance companies with the purpose of obtaining something that he is not entitled to just as he is not allowed to intentionally fake an accident like fire, for example, in order to gain something. Nor would the insurance benefits be lawful for him. (See the question–answer section below.)

231. At times the higher interests of the Muslims in non–Muslim countries demand that Muslims seek membership of **political parties**, enter parliaments, and representative assemblies. In such cases, it is permissible for Muslims to engage in such activities as much as is demanded by the interest [of the Muslim community] that must be identified by consulting the trustworthy experts.

232. Under no circumstance is it permissible to **cheat in school exams** irrespective of the fact that cheating is done by mutual help among the students or by the passing of notes or by duping the inspector and other illegal methods that are against the [education] system. (See the question–answer section below).

## Questions and Answers

233. **Question:** If a Muslim tries to get from the bank’s cash dispensing machine some of his own money and more money than what he had asked for is dispensed, is he allowed to take the extra money without the bank knowing about it?

**Answer:** It is not allowed.

234. **Question:** A Muslim buys a commodity from a foreign company in a non–Muslim country; the seller by mistake gives more than what was ordered. Is the Muslim customer allowed to take the extra? Is he obliged to inform the seller about the mistake?

**Answer:** It is not lawful for him to take the excess amount; if he did so, it is obligatory for him to return it.

235. **Question:** A Muslim employee of a non–Muslim company is in a position to misappropriate company’s products. Is he allowed to do this?

**Answer:** It is not permissible.

236. **Question:** Is it permissible to tamper with electric or water or gas meters, in non-Muslim countries?

**Answer:** This also is not permissible.

237. **Question:** A Muslim in the West claims that he used to drive in his country for many years and supports his claim with a document from a given source so that he gets a preferable rate for his insurance premium. Is he allowed to change the fact in his statement, even if it is by *tawriya* (equivocation)? Is it permissible to help him for this purpose?

**Answer:** Lying for the above mentioned purpose is not permissible, nor is it allowed to claim money in this way; and duplicity in this is helping in committing a sin.

238. **Question:** Is it permissible to cheat insurance companies in non-Muslim countries when one is confident that it would not tarnish the image of Islam and Muslims?

**Answer:** It is not permissible.

239. **Question:** A Muslim deliberately torches his insured house so that he may receive compensation from the non-Muslim insurance company. Is he allowed to do this? And is it permissible for him to receive the compensation?

**Answer:** It is not permissible for him to destroy and waste the property, nor is it allowed for him to give false information to the insurance company for the purpose mentioned above. The money received [in this process] is not lawful.

240. **Question:** Is it permissible to cheat [in the exams] at public schools in Europe? Is it permissible to cheat [in the exams] at the private Islamic and non-Islamic schools?

**Answer:** Cheating is not allowed in any of these [schools].

241. **Question:** In some means of transportation, there are signs that say, “No Smoking”. Is it permissible to ignore those signs and smoke?

**Answer:** If that sign is like an additional condition for riding in that vehicle, or an official by-law of the government, and the passenger has given commitment to abide by the official laws, it is necessary for him to act according to that condition and his undertaking.

242. **Question:** Is it necessary for the person who has got a visa to enter a non-Muslim country to abide by the laws of that country in all fields, like traffic laws, laws regarding work and employment, etc.?

**Answer:** If he has given an undertaking—even if indirectly [as is implied in the immigration documents]— to abide by the laws of that country, it is necessary for him to fulfill his commitment in

issues that are not contrary to the sacred laws [of Islam].

243. As for example, it is necessary to obey traffic regulations regardless [of the fact whether you have given a commitment or not], if not obeying those rules could eventually lead to harming people's lives and properties which are sacrosanct [in Islamic laws].

244. **Question:** Some governments offer social security benefits to their citizens as long as one does not find a job. Is it permissible for them to continue receiving these benefits, even after they have found work and have not informed the department concerned about it?

**Answer:** It is not permissible for them to accept the benefits except after informing the competent authorities in those countries about it.

245. **Question:** Is it permissible for a Muslim to steal from non-Muslims in non-Muslim countries? And is it permissible for him to cheat them in methods that are common among themselves in order to acquire their property?

**Answer:** It is not permissible to steal their private or public property, or vandalize it if that leads to tarnishing the image of Islam or Muslims in general.

Similarly, it is not allowed to steal, even if it does not lead to that [i.e., tarnishing the image of Islam or Muslims] but is considered as perfidy and violation of the guarantee given to non-Muslims indirectly when one asked permission to enter or reside in their country. And it is forbidden to breach the trust and violate the guarantee in regard to every person.

246. **Question:** Is it permissible for a Muslim to give false information to government agencies in Europe in order to gain monetary and non-monetary privileges and benefits through their lawful means?

**Answer:** It is not permissible because it is lying; and what has been mentioned is not a justified reason [for lying].

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1. Dalilu 'l-Muslim fi Biladi 'l-Ghurba, p. 89-90.

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