141148 - Differences between private and governmental organisations with regard to using their property for personal ends

the question

I am an employee in the National Petroleum Institute - the Ministry of Petroleum; I work as an accountant. I have been appointed to the board of directors of one of the foreign companies that operate in Libya and which have an agreement with the Institute, to supervise the work of the company in Libya, to work out the budget, training plans and work schedule for the company mentioned. This is in addition to my original work for the Institute. In return for being a member of the board of directors -- or for this new position -- we receive some payment from the foreign company. Please note that the committee mentioned is formed of four members: the president of the committee, who is Libyan, another Libyan member, and two members from the other side. The company has supplied mobile phones, with minutes already loaded, in response to a request from the head of the administrative committee of this company, who is also one of the employees of the National Petroleum Institute. This phone is mine to use throughout my term as a member of this company.
Is it permissible for me to make use of any privilege given to me by this company -such as a car, mobile phone, health insurance and so on?
Am I entitled to use the mobile phone, with its credit, for personal conversations?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

We ask Allah to guide you, and we appreciate your eagerness to find out what is right.

With regard to using work equipment for personal ends, that is not permissible except with permission from the boss or someone who has authority to give such permission.

If the one who has authority over these things gives permission to use them, and he has the authority to give them to employees outside of working hours, then there is nothing wrong with your using them, because they are the property of the company and it may dispose of them by renting them out, giving them away, and so on.

See the answer to question number 121959.

Based on that:

With regard to the privileges that have been given to you by the foreign company - such as a mobile phone and car - there is nothing wrong with you using them, according to the agreement that the company has with you. If the company allows you to use them for work purposes only, then it is obligatory to limit it to that. If these privileges are a gift from the company and they have allowed you to use them in all cases, it is permissible for you to use them.

Secondly:

There are some differences between the public and private sectors with regard to using things for personal ends that were given by an institution or company.

In the case of private companies, if the boss gives permission to use them for personal ends, there is nothing wrong with that, as stated above.

But in the case of the public sector - or government - even if the boss gives permission for that, it is not permissible to use them in such ways that they are consumed or used up. The reason for that is that this is public wealth and it is not owned by any particular person who could give permission to anyone to use it for personal ends.

For a more detailed discussion of that, please see the fatwas in questions nos. 47067, 106505 and 95389.

And Allah knows best.