

Press Release

## Raising Gasoline Prices in Egypt

### How Do the Wealth of the Ummah Turn into a Tool for Impoverishing It?!

(Translated)

Raising gasoline prices in Egypt is no longer merely a passing economic decision, nor merely a financial measure to address a deficit in the budget as the regime tries to portray it. Rather, it has become a recurring phenomenon that reveals the nature of the policies by which the country is managed, and exposes the reality of the economic system imposed on the Ummah, a system that makes its wealth serve the creditors and the interests of the West, while the people bear its heavy consequences in their daily livelihood.

Egypt has witnessed during the past years a successive wave of fuel price increases, until the increase in some types of gasoline over about ten years reached hundreds of percent. After the price of a liter of gasoline a few years ago did not exceed a few pounds, today it approaches twenty pounds and exceeds it in some types. These increases did not come suddenly, but rather came within a clear path that began since the government adopted what was called the “economic reform” programs, one of the most prominent items of which was lifting the alleged subsidy on energy and linking prices to the global market.

However, the truth that must be considered is that the matter of gasoline in Egypt is not merely a matter of alleged government subsidy, but rather it is a matter related to enormous wealth possessed by the country. Egypt possesses large reserves of oil and gas, and produces a large part of its needs from petroleum derivatives. Yet the people live under the burden of continuous price increases, as if Egypt possesses no energy resources at all!

Here the stark contradiction appears between how the management of wealth should be in a state that cares for the affairs of the people, and what actually occurs under the capitalist economic system that rules the country. Capitalism views energy and natural resources as a commodity subject to calculations of profit and loss, whereas Islam views these resources as public property of the Ummah that may not be monopolized nor turned into a source of levying money from it.

The Sharia has determined that resources which are of the nature of public utilities, such as minerals and major sources of energy, fall within the category of public property in which all Muslims share. Therefore, it is not permissible for the state to deal with them as a source of profit or taxation; rather they must be managed in a manner that achieves the interest of the entire Ummah and the care of its affairs.

In this context appears the concept of “subsidy” which the regime raises as a slogan to justify raising prices. Whenever the state announces a new increase in fuel prices, people are told that this comes within the framework of “reducing subsidies,” as if it had been granting the people something from its own money. However, this narrative hides a completely different reality; subsidy in its essence is a political deception used to justify imposing the burdens of economic policies upon the people.

If these resources were managed correctly on the basis that they are public property as Islam has determined, the people would not need what is called subsidy at all, because the resources themselves are sufficient to cover the needs of society and lighten the burdens upon its members. But when wealth is managed according to the capitalist system that turns public resources into a source of taxation and profit, the people become as though they are begging for a small portion of their own rights under the name of “subsidy.”

From here the real reason behind the repeated waves of price increases can be understood. The state does not move in this file as a sovereign decision, but rather as part of commitments linked to

