

Arab Republic of Egypt

Ministry of Awqaf

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## **Neighborhood: Concept and Rights**

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, Who says in His Ever Glorious Book, **“Worship Allah; join nothing with Him. Be good to your parents, to relatives, to orphans, to the needy, to neighbors: near and far.”** I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger. May Allah’s Peace and Blessings be upon him, his Household, Companions and upon those who follow their path to the Day of Judgment.

Kindness to neighbors is a noble value that strengthens the bonds of love and fraternity, spreads the spirit of cooperation and solidarity, and promotes stability among members of society. Therefore, Islamic Shari’ah has paid great attention to the value of being kind to neighbors to the extent that the Prophet (PBUH) said, “Jibril kept recommending treating neighbours with kindness until I thought he would assign [them] a share of inheritance.”

It goes without saying that the concept of neighborhood extends to include neighbors at home, neighbors at work, and the neighbor during travel. The Almighty Allah said, **“Worship Allah; join nothing with Him.**

**Be good to your parents, to relatives, to orphans, to the needy, to neighbors: near and far, to travellers in need, and to your slaves. Allah does not like arrogant, boastful people."**

The right of neighborhood is an inherent right in Islam. Our Prophet (PBUH) said, "He who believes in Allah and the Day of Judgement, let him not harm his neighbor." In another Hadith, the Prophet (PBUH) said, "By Allah, he is not a believer! By Allah, he is not a believer! By Allah, he is not a believer." He(PBUH) was asked, "Who is that, O Messenger of Allah?" He said, "One whose neighbor does not feel safe from his evil." Also, the Prophet(PBUH) said, "He who believes in Allah and the Last Day should do good to his neighbor."

One of the manifestations of good treatment with neighbors in Islam is the saying of the Prophet (PBUH) that, "When you buy fruit, give part of it to him [i.e. for the neighbor] as a gift. Otherwise, you should bring it to home secretly." This means "one should not boast before his neighbors with his material potentials and capabilities." The Prophet (PBUH) added in the Hadith, "Do not let your children go out with the fruit before your neighbor's children." This may make the neighbor's children sad and upset, and thus it would promote hatred and envy among neighbors. Then, the Prophet (PBUH) added, "And do not hurt him (neighbor) with the smell of your food, unless to send some of it to him as a gift."

The rights of the neighbor include: visiting him if he gets sick, congratulating him on happy occasions, consoling him on bad incidents, helping him in misfortunes, and observing the highest degrees of goodness with him. Our Prophet (PBUH) said, "The best friend in the sight of Allah is the best for his friends, and the best of neighbors is the best for his neighbors."

Umar Ibn al-Khattab considered that a testimony made by a person in favor of or against his neighbor is the highest level of recommendation or criticism. A person may be able to deceive some people for some time, but he cannot deceive his neighbors all the time. When a man came to the Prophet (PBUH) asking him, "O Messenger of Allah, tell me of an action that will bring me to Paradise?" He (PBUH) said, "Be good." The man asked again, "How can I know that I am a good man?" The Prophet (PBUH) replied, "Ask your neighbors! If they say that you are a good man, then you are good; and if they say that you are a bad man, then you are bad."

The Islamic Shari'ah urges us to treat all neighbors well in accordance with the due rights stated in Islam. Abu al-Dardaa used to tell his wife, "When you cook food, increase it so that we can send some of it to our neighbors." Also, Abd Allah Ibn Umar Ibn al-Khattab used to say when he would slaughter sheep, "Send part of its meat to our Jewish neighbor."

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All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds; may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), his companions and followers:

Our Prophet (PBUH) strongly warned against harming neighbors. When some people came to our Prophet (PBUH) and mentioned to him a woman is performing much prayer and Fasting, but she insults her neighbors, he (PBUH) commneted, "She is in the Hellfire."

However, we affirm that the rights of a neighbor are not limited to avoiding harming him and causing evil to him in any form, either verbally or physically. Al-Hassan al-Basri said: "Good neighborhood is not limited to prevention of harm. Rather, it includes sharing the troubles of the neighbors, as such trait is the trait of good people, and an act that highly pleases Allah, as He (Glory be to Him) said, "Though if a person is patient and forgives, this is one of the greatest things." Allah also said, "Good and evil cannot be equal. Repel evil with what is better, and your enemy will become as close as an old and valued friend."

We affirm that the right of neighborhood is not only limited to the rights of individuals, but also includes the rights of States. Just as individual have neighborhood rights, neighboring countries have rights,

the most important of which are: protecting boundaries, keeping covenants and agreements, guarding neighboring countries, and providing help and assistance in case of need.

We ask Allah to protect our country Egypt and all other countries of the worlds!