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How to Handle Unidentifiable Corpses in Makkah

Fatwa no. (10484):

Praise be to Allah alone, and may peace and blessings be upon the final Prophet!

The Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and Ifta' has read what was submitted to His Eminence The Chairman by the inquirer, Deputy Chairman of the Makkah Municipality for Municipal Affairs, through the courts of Makkah, which is registered in the Scientific Research Department with number 3609 in 14/9/1407 A.H. The question was as follows:

Having received the letter sent from the Head of the Police Department in the capital, which carries the number 1542, in 1/8/1407 A.H., and which is directed to the Deputy Chairman of the Holy Makkah Municipality, concerning the inquiry whether the decayed bodies which show only the remains of a skeleton should be enshrouded and buried in the graves of the Muslims, as some of them their identity could not be revealed. Having asked the Department for Managing the Affairs of the Dead, they replied in their letter no. 80, dated 27/8/1407 A.H. which is attached therein, that a skeleton should be washed by water, enshrouded, the Funeral Prayer offered for it and buried. This is all they know. They asked that we refer the matter to Your Honor so that you may issue a legal Fatwa in order for us to act accordingly.

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Having examined the question, the Committee gave the following answer:

First, if the anonymous person is in a hospital in Makkah, they are considered Muslims in washing, enshrouding, offering the Funeral Prayer and burial in the graves of the Muslims. If they had been non-Muslims, most probably they would not have been moved to the hospitals of Makkah.

Second, if the anonymous person is in another hospital, and there is no sign on their being non-Muslims, they should be considered Muslims as well, as Islam is prevalent in this country and out of precaution.

May Allah grant us success! May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions!

Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and Ifta'

