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Fatwa no. 65:

Q: In the month of Shawwal, someone gave me 1,500 Riyals in cash without stating the reason. He did not say whether it was a grant, a price for goods, a loan, or a trust; he just gave me the amount without saying a word. Now eight months have elapsed since his death and I have waited to receive something from his heirs claiming the money with a bond, a transfer, a will or a record but they have not sent anything. His heirs are his brothers, as he did not marry and did not have any children and he had a middle income. I hope you can tell me what to do with this money.

A: Since you have received this money and know its exact amount, its owner and the owner's heirs, and you do not know the reason behind giving you this money, the basic ruling is that money belongs to its owner. It does not become the property of someone else without a Shari`ah (Islamic law) justification. Consequently, this amount is considered a trust with you that should be returned to the deceased's heirs through the ruler in order to free yourself from it. All praise be to Allah. May Allah grant us success! May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions!

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