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“Toward an Islamic Constitutional Government in Sudan”

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The issue of establishing an Islamic constitutional government in the Sudan has never ceased in its political debate and has become a subject of controversy between Islamists - the proponents of reinstatement of the *Shari'ah* order, and the modernists – the opponents who prefer western liberal democracy or socialism. Since the attainment of its independence in 1956, the Sudan experienced a series of governmental changes which have oscillated between a western-style parliamentary democracy and a military regime. It is noteworthy that traditional Islamic institutions in the Sudan have shown a remarkable strength primarily due to the special circumstances of the Sudan and the role played by its Muslim leadership. Historically, Islam has been intertwined with the political development of the Sudan through its direct and indirect involvement in politics. Islam played a more direct role in the Funj Sultanate (1504-1820) and the Mahdi State (1885-1899) providing the basis for legitimacy, identity and state ideology. After the Egyptian conquest of the Sudan and during the sixty years of Turko-Egyptian administration of the country, the Sudan was under the influence of British colonialism. For a proper appreciation of the modern struggle for an Islamic constitutional order and an assessment of its trend, this paper attempts to highlight the Islamic background of Sudan's modern history as well as analyze the role played by the Islamists in Islamizing both the constitution and the legal system, and establishing the *Shari'ah* order.