

## SUDAN

Date of Elections: April 21 to May 2, 1968

### Characteristics of Parliament:

Elections were held to renew the Constituent Assembly comprising 218 members, following the dissolution of the previous House, elected in 1965, on February 8, 1968 —three weeks before the expiry of its mandate.

### Electoral System:

All mentally sane Sudanese citizens at least 18 years of age, of both sexes, can take part in the elections provided they have resided for more than six months in the constituency in which they are registered. Nomads and semi-nomads are not required to fulfil this last condition.

The election is held under the supervision of an Electoral Commission which is also responsible for its conduct. Its agents in the provinces are granted a certain amount of latitude in the organization of the poll at the local level. Voting in the single ballot is direct and uninominal. Each of the 218 constituencies elect one deputy on the basis of a relative majority.

In half the constituencies, the voter receives a list bearing the names and symbols of all the candidates: he indicates his preference by marking an easily recognizable sign opposite the square containing the name of his candidate. In the 109 other constituencies, there are as many ballot-boxes as candidates: the voter simply places a counter in the box bearing the name and symbol of the candidate he wishes to support.

As regards the problem of identifying voters, they are required to produce two witnesses who can vouch for them. In order to prevent an elector from voting more than once, his left hand is marked indelibly as soon as he has cast his vote.

**General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections:**

On February 7, 1968, following the resignation of a third of its members, the Constituent Assembly was no longer able to obtain the necessary quorum for a vote on constitutional matters: the Government therefore decided to go to the country and requested the Supreme Council to dissolve the House.

The opposition, which was in favour of the prorogation of the 1965 Constituent Assembly's mandate by one year, protested against this measure which it qualified as "unconstitutional and a conspiracy against the law". The form of the petition for annulment of the dissolution order laid before the Supreme Court was declared unacceptable and rejected.

The Unionist Democratic Party (UDP), led by the President of the Republic, Mr. Ismail El Achari, improved its position as a result of the general elections in which it won 101 seats. This party was formed in December 1967 by a merger of the Unionist National Party and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) of Sheikh Abdel Rahman. The leaders of these two political groups had been collaborating since May 1967 in the Government formed by the Prime Minister, Mohammed Ahmed Mahgoub.

The latter is himself leader of a segment of the Umma Party which remained faithful to the Imam El Mahdi. The other segment, headed by Mr. Saddik El Mahdi, the Imam's nephew, belongs to the opposition. Between them, the two fractions of the Umma Party obtained 66 seats, but Mr. Saddik El Mahdi himself was not re-elected.

For the most part, political life in northern Sudan is dominated by the rival families of the Mahdis, the most powerful element in the Umma Party, and the Maghanis, who influence the PDP.

In the south, inhabited by four million non-Arabs whose ways of life and values differ widely from those of their compatriots, the outcome of elections still depends to a large extent on tribal affairs. The Sudan African National Union (SANU), in alliance with the Umma Party (Saddik segment), won 15 seats in the new Assembly.

Whereas the SANU is working for the autonomy of the three southern provinces, its chief opponent, the Southern Front, which is led by Mr. Celement Mboro, former Minister of the Interior, is in favour of their secession. The Southern Front has ten deputies.

The Sudanese Communist Party, which had won ten seats in the 1965 elections, was outlawed on December 9 of the same year.

Finally, the unsettled composition of political forces is reflected in Parliament, where deputies frequently change allegiance and move from the majority to the opposition, or vice versa.

Statistics:

Number of registered voters			3,049,813
Valid votes . . . . .			1,825,510
	Political Group	Votes obtained	Number of Seats in the Constituent Assembly
	Unionist Democratic Party . . .	742,836	40.78
	Umma Party (Saddik segment) . .	386,213	21.2
	Umma Party (Imam segment) . .	328,497	18.04
	South African National Union . .	59,940	3.29
	Southern Front . . . . .	39,822	2.19
	Independents. . . . .	70,046	3.85
	Umma Party (South). . . . .	43,309	2.38
	Mithag Front . . . . .	47,975	2.63
	Beja Conference. . . . .	15,388	0.84
	Nuba Mountains Union . . . . .	3,171	0.17
	Labourers' Union. . . . .	668	0.04
	No political affiliation. . . . .	8,264	0.45
	Workers' Forces. . . . .	5,204	0.29
	The Nile. . . . .	2,704	0.15
	Various other parties. . . . .	67,653	4.55