

Libyan assembly votes to follow Islamic law

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Vote counting begins in the election for the new president of Libya's General National Congress (GNC) in Tripoli June 25, 2013.

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(Reuters) - Libya's national assembly voted on Wednesday to make sharia, Islamic law, the basis of all legislation and for state institutions in a decision that may impact banking, criminal and financial laws.

Two years after the NATO-backed uprising that ousted Muammar Gaddafi, [Libya](#) is still in messy transition with no new constitution and its temporary assembly caught in deadlock between an Islamist party and political rivals.

As in [Tunisia](#) and [Egypt](#) where autocratic leaders were ousted in the Arab Spring revolts, [Libya](#) has seen fierce debate over the role of Islam in its new democracy with the rise of hardline Islamists long oppressed by Gaddafi

The immediate scope of the General National Congress's decision was not clear, but a special committee would review all existing laws to guarantee they comply with Islamic law.

"Islamic law is the source of legislation in Libya," the GNC said in a statement after the vote. "All state institutions need to comply with this."

The Muslim Brotherhood's Justice and [Construction](#) party is one of the most well-organized forces in Libya and promotes Islamic law. But the secular-leaning National Front Alliance formed after the revolt calls for a more liberal position.

The GNC's decision came shortly before a vote to form a 60-member committee that will draft the new constitution.

Unlike codified Western law, sharia is more loosely defined moral and legal guidelines based on the Koran, the sayings of Prophet Mohammad and Muslim traditions.

One reform may be a shift to more Islamic [finance](#) regulation, based on religious principles which avoid interest and pure speculation, which has grown with many sharia-compliant investment funds in the Gulf.

(Reporting by Firas Bosalum; writing by Patrick Markey; Editing by [Janet Lawrence](#))