An important new contribution to discussions of Islamic law in sub-Saharan Africa, *Sharīʿa in Africa Today: Reactions and Responses*, edited by John A. Chesworth and Franz Kogelmann, brings together a group of African junior scholars researching how Islamic law has influenced relations between Muslims and Christians in four African countries: Sudan, Nigeria, Kenya and Tanzania. As the editors note in their introduction, while there has been some strong scholarly attention to questions of Islamic law in sub-Saharan Africa, this volume is situated as a corrective to incomplete coverage of important issues, lack of empirical or up-to-date research, and the dearth of African scholars entering into the conversation. The result of a three-year research and mentorship project with African junior scholars, this volume is a valuable resource for those working on the issues of Islamic law in Africa, Muslim-Christian relations, and women in Islamic courts.

The book is organized according to level of national *Sharīʿa* implementation beginning in Part One with “Total *Sharīʿa*” in Sudan, which declared *Sharīʿa* as national law in 1983 with the implementation of the September Laws. Osman Mohamed Osman Ali begins the volume with his essay, “*Sharīʿa* and Reality: A Domain of Contest among Sunni Muslims in the District of Shendi, Northern Sudan.” Ali here gives a cogent explanation of the main Islamic groups operating in Shendi and their multiple attitudes toward *Sharīʿa*: the Ansar al-Mahdi who emphasize the importance of *ijtihād* in “modernizing the *Sharīʿa*”; the Ansar al-Sunna who see *Sharīʿa* as universal and permanent and advocate a return to the practices of the time of the Prophet; the Sufi orders who utilize esoteric exegesis (*taʾwīl*) to access hidden meanings to complement *Sharīʿa* knowledge; and the Republican Brothers who see the core message of Islam in the earlier Meccan verses (with the Medinan verses articulating a *Sharīʿa* more suited to that time and place), and advocate for a Second Message of Islam and “scientific” renewal of the original core teachings. Ali ultimately argues that the imposition of *Sharīʿa* is impossible in Sudan because none of the groups agree upon what it is. Salma Mohamed Abdalla complements Ali’s close study with a broader historical overview of *Sharīʿa* implementation in Sudan with particular concern for Muslim-Christian relations in her essay, “Contradicting State Ideology in Sudan: Christian-Muslim Relations among the Internally Displaced Persons in Khartoum—The Case of Mandela and Wad al-Bashir Camps.” Despite the historical and contemporary state policies discriminatory against Christians, Abdalla draws upon her interviews in two IDP camps to
show that in daily life Sudanese Muslims and Christians often share “common concerns, common problems and common mentalities toward the state.”

Part Two, on the “Re-Implementation of Šāriʿa” in Nigeria, focuses on recent developments in the context of the implementation of both personal and criminal Šāriʿa legal proceedings in northern Nigeria (supposedly a “re-implementation” of Šāriʿa courts as they existed before colonialism), including the proliferation of independent Šāriʿa courts in the south, Islamic education and the rise of reformist movements. After briefly reviewing the history of Šāriʿa implementation in south-west Nigeria, Abdul-Fatah Kola Makinde, in his essay, “The Evolution of the Independent Šāriʿa Panel in Osun State, South-West Nigeria,” describes the recent calls to introduce Šāriʿa courts in the wake of their implementation in the north, and the subsequent establishment of independent Šāriʿa panels in light of lack of state support. He reviews specific cases in detail and considers local responses to the panels, showing reservations not only in the Christian community but also internal debates among Muslims. Chikas Danfulani, in her essay “‘Education is Education’: Contemporary Muslim Views on Muslim Women’s Education in Northern Nigeria,” considers attitudes hindering women’s education—both Islamic and “western”—within those states in northern Nigeria which have implemented Šāriʿa courts. And Ramzi Ben Amara’s essay, “‘We Introduced Šāriʿa’—The Izala Movement in Nigeria as Initiator of Šāriʿa-reimplementation in the North of the Country: Some Reflections,” charts the evolution of an Islamic reformist group that capitalized on the implementation of Šāriʿa courts to claim credit and push their movement and agendas into the spotlight.

Part Three, focusing on the “Place of Šāriʿa in the Constitution” of Kenya looks primarily at the debates surrounding the constitutional referendum in 2005 on the place in Kenya of kadhi courts—kadhi being Swahili for the Arabic qāḍī (judge), meaning Šāriʿa courts that only adjudicate on family and personal status law. After reviewing the historical implementation of Islamic courts, particularly on the Swahili coast of Kenya, Halkano Abdi Wario, in his essay “Debates on Kadhi’s Courts and Christian-Muslim Relations in Isiolo Town: Thematic Issues and Emergent Trends,” attempts to “contextualize from below” by focusing closely on attitudes toward the courts in one locale. In so doing, he highlights the religious dimensions of what is often recognized as a politico-ethnic tension—given that the 2005 referendum gave rise to the establishment of the main opposition party, the Orange Democratic Movement, whose loss in the 2007 elections precipitated widespread ethnic violence. Esha Faki Mwinyihaji, in her essay, “‘Necessity Removes Restrictions’: Swahili Muslim Women’s Perspectives on Their Participation in the Public Sphere,” engages with popular Šāriʿa-based arguments for circumscribing women’s