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# LATIN AMERICA'S EXPERIENCES OFFER LESSONS FOR POSTCOUP EGYPT

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As Egypt enters a new phase of polarization following a military intervention in the wake of massive protests against its elected leader, recent Latin American experience points to the risks of moving forward without addressing the roots of this polarization. It also shows some requirements for constructing a democratic bargain to overcome the social and political exclusion of important sectors of society.

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Latin America holds lessons for understanding—and pointing the way through—the current up-

Universal international condemnation of the coup soon gave way to divisions, as donor governments, including the U.S., accepted subsequent elections as signifying a return to constitutional rule, while much of Latin America, with recent memories of military coups, held out for Zelaya's reinstatement. Though never reinstated, Zelaya was eventually allowed to return to Honduras. But the social grievances that led to his ouster remained unaddressed, and violence and the trappings of state failure continue to plague Honduras.

These examples and other Latin American experiences teach us that removing an elected president by force does not resolve the problems that prompted his or her overthrow. First, even if the removal of a president is followed by new elections, in the absence of a democratic bargain on the rules of the game and distribution of resources, the underlying conflicts and societal polarization will continue.

Second, if one group is forcefully excluded from negotiations and elections through a ban, arrests or violence, or if a group excludes itself by boycotting talks or elections, no sustainable agreements on moving forward will be reached. Forced removal of an elected leader can also weaken his or her supporters' trust that institutions will protect their rights and interests, and thus reduce their incentives to continue to participate in the political game as structured.

Third, leaders must recognize that newly enfranchised citizens will use both the ballot box and the streets to express grievances, with protests often escalating to demands for an unpopular leader to step down. It is incumbent on social and political leaders to explain policy constraints to impatient populaces, and to call for only peaceful and legal protests. Clear impeachment mechanisms and presidential recall provisions can provide a midterm legal recourse when leaders abuse their power or become extremely unpopular. Otherwise, elected leaders should be held accountable, along with their political party, in the next scheduled elections.

So far Egypt's postcoup transition has included the arrest and detention of hundreds of Muslim Brotherhood leaders and members; violent clashes between security forces and supporters of deposed President Mohammed Morsi; a potentially exclusionary constitutional reform process; and