Three years after the uprisings of 2011, the initial euphoria that greeted the resurgence of mass politics in the Middle East has given way to a far more somber mood: a recognition of the limits of mass protests to bring about political change, and an acknowledgement that the region's entrenched authoritarian regimes are more resilient than many protesters imagined. In responding to the challenge of mass politics authoritarian regimes in the MENA have also changed, giving rise to new and more troubling forms of authoritarian governance. These new forms may enhance regime survival, but are unlikely to prove effective in addressing the underlying causes of mass protests. Regime adaptations to mass politics thus suggest that the turmoil of recent years may be only the beginning of an extended period of political instability, violence, and repression in many parts of the Middle East.

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