



Elections in Dangerous Places: Democracy and the Paradoxes of Peacebuilding

David Gillies

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From Afghanistan and Iraq to Haiti, Cote d'Ivoire, and Egypt, ill-timed, fraudulent, or poorly managed elections have led to discord, violence, and even regime change. While much of the international community views elections as a critical milestone in the stabilization of war-torn societies, *Elections in Dangerous Places* shows how flawed elections can act as democracy in reverse and diminish political legitimacy and stable governance. Through a series of frank and incisive case studies of conflicted countries, contributors' chapters challenge the centrality and timing of elections as a key pillar of reconstruction at a war's end. They underline the dangers in rushing elections, compromising principles, and lowering the bar for what constitutes free and fair elections in situations of conflict. The authors also underline the economic cost of elections in uncertain political situations and argue that global taxpayers, who must bear the burden, are justified in questioning the value of ill-timed elections. A candid and important study of political turmoil, *Elections in Dangerous Places* provides valuable lessons and practical advice on how to better mitigate conflict and violence before, during, and after highly charged elections.

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