

Throng Calls Loser Mexico's 'Legitimate' President

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MEXICO CITY, Sept. 16 — More than 150,000 supporters of the losing leftist candidate for president flooded into the capital's historic square on Saturday and declared him “the legitimate president” of [Mexico](#).

As his supporters roared approval, the candidate, [Andrés Manuel López Obrador](#), a former Mexico City mayor, vowed to set up his own government and to fight against “a band of white-collar crooks and corrupt politicians” who he has said stole the election from him.

“I accept the responsibility of being president because I reject the imposition of their candidate and rupture of the constitutional order,” he said. “They can keep their pirated institutions and their phony president, but they cannot keep our fatherland and our national dignity.”

Described as a national democratic convention, the massive rally seemed intended to keep Mr. López Obrador and his political agenda from fading out of the national debate.

Mexico's highest electoral court ruled Sept. 5 that Mr. López Obrador narrowly lost the July 2 election to [Felipe Calderón](#), a conservative from President Vicente Fox's party. The leftist maintains there was a broad conspiracy among business leaders, the Fox administration and news media barons to keep him from winning, using tactics like illegal attack ads and old-fashioned fraud.

Having lost a court battle for a full recount, Mr. López Obrador resorted Saturday to a tactic with deep roots in Mexican history: he convened a “national convention” of his supporters to draw up a new agenda for the country.

By a show of hands, the crowd unanimously denied Mr. Calderón had won. They declared Mr. López Obrador president, asked him to form a cabinet and supported a constitutional convention. “It's an honor to be with Obrador,” they chanted.

Some historians said the convention echoed the alternative plans for Mexico put forward by revolutionary heroes like Emilio Zapata and Francisco I. Madero 100 years ago.

“The slow, difficult, incremental construction of the Mexican nation and state has passed through dozens of plans, made in the heat of political conflict,” said one historian, Lorenzo Meyer. “The idea of conventions and plans is something very much part of Mexican history.”