



US Political Violence Rapid Response Co-Created Peacebuilding Messaging

Messaging Resources (Please add your go-to resources here)

- [#ShineOnTheVote — +Peace](#)
- [+Peace Narrative Guide](#)
- [Social Media Graphics](#)
- [Fight Back Table Talking points - for Count Every Vote](#)
- [Color of Change Messaging Document](#)
- [Democracy RISING — a Social Media Toolkit \[UPDATED 1/6\]](#)
- [Trump supporters storm US Capitol: Latest updates - Vox Reporting](#)
- [The Frameworks Institute](#)
- [Political Guidance at A Glance](#)

Statements from the Peacebuilding Community (Please add your statements here so we can all amplify each other's work & messages)

- [AfP Condemns Violence at the US Capitol, Calls for Peacebuilding & Urgent Action to Address Increasing Fragility](#)
- [Statement on the Violence at the US Capitol - Peace Direct](#)
- [Carter Center Urges Americans to Support Transition](#)
- [FCNL Decries Attack on US Capitol By Violent Mob | Friends Committee On National Legislation](#)
- [Recommendations for A Peaceful Future for America - Khalifa Ihler Institute](#)
- [Statement from IREX President and CEO Kristin Lord](#)
- [TRUST Network](#)
- [+Peace Video](#)
- [+Peace Slide Deck on messaging and notes from call](#)

Overview:

Thousands of Trump supporters gathered in Washington, DC, for what President Trump dubbed a “Save America Rally,” a two-day protest meant to demonstrate support for Trump and a disproven theory that the elections were not free or fair. Close to 2pm EST, the US Capitol Building was breached by a mob of Trump supporters carrying confederate flags and other symbols and vestiges of white supremacy. In an apparent act of insurrection, Congress was evacuated along with other nearby Federal buildings, including the Library of Congress. Government offices were destroyed, public items were taken, and two explosive devices were found at the DNC and RNC offices. The violent day ended with four deaths, many injured, and over 50 arrests (mostly for not respecting curfew). Justin Bell, DC resident, and activist reported hearing, “Today is the day when we will overtake our government and kill elected officials.” Because DC is not a state, the Mayor does not control the DC National Guard, rather the President and the Department of Defense; they delayed the deployment by several hours. Reporting shows that Vice President Mike Pence eventually authorized the National Guard deployment. Control of the capitol was ultimately restored, and Congress met until 3am to certify President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect Harris’s election.



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Top Key Messages:

1. As peacebuilders, we know that healing will take more than civic engagement or voting. To weave our social fabric, it will take all of us coming together, with our differences and diversity, to listen and share openly and honestly.
2. We call for a national dialogue to address historic and current injustices, to listen, learn, and begin to build peace for our collective futures.
3. As peacebuilders, we know that healing and reconciliation begin with truth, so we call those who have participated and instigated this week's violence to be held accountable.
4. We have seen increased radicalization and violence, and finally, the festering boil of violence has popped.
5. As peacebuilders, we denounce violence in all its forms; cultural, structural, and direct. We especially denounce the violent rhetoric that motivated violent actors. We refuse to amplify the rumors, false reports, hate-speech, misinformation, and conspiracy theories.
6. The violence we saw this week was not merely a 'protest.' This is a threat to US democracy and a violent insurrection on the US Capitol.
7. The violence at the US capitol was made in the USA. It can only be fully transformed in the USA.
8. Historically, we acknowledge that there has been disproportionate police violence and response in communities of color and nonviolent protest movements. These are not new but grounded in hundreds of years of injustice.
9. Communities keep communities safe. Our communities need more resources, support, investment, and reformed policing that is accountable to communities. The answer is not merely more policing.
10. As peacebuilders, we commend civic, faith, and community leaders, especially congresspeople, who did not let violence win but showed their resolve and resilience in the midst of it.



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Values/Guiding Principles & Key Messages

We see...

- As peacebuilders, it is our job to shine a light on violence in all its forms, working to stop, interrupt, and prevent violence in all its forms in nonviolent ways.
- This is not merely a 'protest.' This is a threat to US democracy.
- This was an act of violence on the very heart of US democracy. As peacebuilders, the cultural violence and symbolism are not lost on us.
- This was a violent insurrection on the nation's capital and in the nation's Capital.
- This conflict is OURS. We all play a part in building our collective futures.
- The violence at the nation's capital was made in the USA. It can only be fully transformed in the USA.
- Domestic challenges require domestic solutions and that national challenges also require local solutions.
- This is not a new thing. The USA has over 400 years of history of Native American genocide, the enslavement of people kidnapped from Africa, and exclusionary policies that have laid the groundwork for the violence on Capitol Hill.
- White Nationalist radicalization in the US has been happening for a long time, has accelerated in the last four years, and accelerated acutely in the past four months.
- We know that there solutions and deradicalization programs that have worked and can serve our healing.
- This country has a deep history of hidden violence against marginalized populations. We have seen it on a global scale and now at the heart of US democracy.

We grieve...

- We grieve the loss of life; 4 Americans died in yesterday's violence.
- We grieve those injured by the violence.
- We grieve with Indigenous, Black, and Brown communities in the US. They have experienced disproportionate police violence and have felt the trauma of injustice.

We Hear...

- We hear the cries from Native, Black, and brown folks who want justice and accountability, not just for the violence of this week, but for the historic violence their communities have felt and experienced.
- We hear the calls for reconciliation, listening, building bridges in our country, and knowing that to begin healing, we must first acknowledge that harm that's been inflicted, immediately cease inflicting violence and harm on communities, and commit to doing no more harm in the future.

We Affirm...

- We affirm the humanity in everyone, even our enemies and opponents.
- When groups of individuals are currently behaving like 'militants,' 'far-right groups,' 'extremists,' or 'white supremacists,' we refer to their actions, not to their identities as such, because we know they can change and will always leave the door open for transformation.
- Those who cause and do violence should be held accountable. Those who support violence, implicitly or explicitly, should also be held accountable.
- We affirm that we need a different archetypal leadership to get through this moment—more nurturing energy to take care of each other and motherly energy to 'knock it off.'



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We Commend:

- We commend all civic, faith, and community leaders, especially the congresspeople from both parties who refused to let violence win.
- We commend members of the Congress that stayed till 3am to confirm President-elect Biden's election.

We Denounce:

- We denounce violence in all its forms; cultural, structural, and direct.
- We denounce the spread of and will not amplify rumors, false reports, hate-speech, misinformation, and conspiracy theories.
- We denounce the threats made against our elected officials and these extreme acts as undemocratic.
- We denounce the violence, demand an orderly transition of power befitting our democracy, and call on elected officials to turn down the temperature and reject calls for violence.
- Call it out for what it is—illegal and undemocratic. (Not targeting the President per se.)
- This is who we are. A peaceful transition of power and peaceful protesting is a hallmark of our democracy.
- We denounce the double standard in law enforcement's reaction to the violence between their response to Black and brown communities and the response to the violence on Capitol Hill this week.

We Remember:

- This is the America we live in; until we accept this and face it, we cannot move on and build the America we want to live in.
- Remind audiences about the history and legacy of the democratic transfer of power
- Center those who have historically experienced state violence and honor what they might be feeling in the light of soft response by police or 'failure by police.'
- Compare the Black Lives Matter protest police response (militarized) and the response to this attack.
- We have seen Black people protest for justice, and the National Guard is on standby with a militarized police force using violent tactics against nonviolent groups. When a white nationalist group comes to the nation's capital and attacks our country and government, their violence goes unchecked.
- The lack of DC statehood means the President controls the DC National Guard, who was hours late to the scene.
- This is the horrifying and inevitable endpoint of an ideology of a nation that has historically devalued the lives, livelihoods, votes, and voices of BIPOC.
- These actions were in support of authoritarianism, anti-democracy, and completely unacceptable.
- Do not use 'unamerican,' given our record of human rights, it can be challenging to walk backward.
- We've made progress, but this threat is severe and will continue.
- Messages of peace have not been heard because the messages of justice have not been meaningfully heard.



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- White supremacy is tightly woven into the American fabric. It will take all of us to unravel it.

We Hope:

- While one of the great strengths of the peacebuilding field is identifying signs of hope and shining light where the hope is. At times we can seem tone-deaf. We should balance where people are and acknowledge the pain and the anger that people feel with the seeds of hope for the future.
- Anchor your remarks in our shared values: democracy, freedom, fairness, love over fear, belonging, hopeful for a future for our children.
- There is progress happening; American voters have already said this is not the type of world we want. Yes, there is progress, but it also brings with its backlash.
- Our democracy is resilient. Despite the violence on Wednesday, our Congress gathered together until 3am to certify President-Elect Biden's election. Despite the more than 100 elected officials vocally and actively fighting the vote results without evidence, their voices were drowned out. Some elected leaders **continue** to incite violence.
- The next-generation is watching us. What future are we leaving for them? Those that are thinking it might not be so bad are not being responsible.
- While civic engagement and voting are key attributes of our democracy, as peacebuilders, we know that deep-rooted reconciliation and social cohesion work is vital to reweave our social fabric.
- While this was a distinct radicalized group committed to violence, we need to talk to each other and do a national deliberative dialogue. We are here to help convene that.
- Celebrate anyone who calls for an end to violence - give positive reinforcement.
- Identify where progress in equitably weaving the American social fabric.
- Be realistic about the severity of the threats to our social fabric and democracy threats if we do not start dialogue and social cohesion efforts.
- What happened was unprecedented and a severe blow to the democratic process. We must call out the illegal activity for what it was while not lumping everyone together.
- Focus on the acts, not on the actors.
- It's all of us, our democracy; we own it, we need a truth and healing committee.
 - Note: 'conciliation' implies that there's a past peace to restore that does not exist in the US context regarding the violence inflicted on BIPOC.
- We need to do the work of defending our democracy.
- There needs to be accountability. Without accountability and addressing what led us here, there will not be a resolution—meaning this will continue to happen and will get worse.
- Deliberative democracy could be the start for people to start talking to each other again—democracy is about ongoing dialogue.
- The peaceful transition of power is a hallmark of this nation.
- There needs to be accountability. Without accountability and addressing what led us here, there will not be a resolution, this can happen again; or worse



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We Believe:

- We believe people can change and can be supported in deradicalization by providing a way out without humiliation.
- We believe that all people who cause violence and those who suffer violence are impacted by the violent act.
- We believe in the intrinsic dignity of all people no matter their actions, affiliations or creed.
- We believe using nonviolence to fight violence brings positive social change more sustainably and for the longer term. Oppose the use of violence to address grievances, regardless of how legitimate those grievances may seem to be.

We use a systemic lens to see Injustice vs. blaming individuals.

- Once violence is systemic, it's hard to put it back in the bottle.
 - Make the invisible visible. Question who or what is actually being attacked? It's often communities who get hurt by hate speech and exclusionary language and attacks, who do not feel safe. Don't let people get away with dog-whistle politics. Label what's left unsaid. Ask, "That's interesting; why would you say something like that?"
 - We must not blame the current President alone—there is a whole system enabling and supporting his actions. Instead, use GOP actions, a violent system, etc.
 - Focus on the act, not on the actor.
 - The media and our collective narrative that has grown from a white supremacist system have normalized portraying Black, brown, immigrant, Muslim, etc., communities as violent actors. When the violence on the Capitol was primarily led by white people, it created a dilemma for the media, society, and peacebuilders. We will name the racial lens used in our policing and security systems. We will also name the disproportionate police responses to the Black Lives Matter protests compared to the response to the violence we have seen this week.
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