

Violence Prevention & De-escalation Resources for State & Local Officials

This document is a compilation of relevant links and resources; last updated January 13, 2021
Compiled by: Georgetown's [Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection](#), the [Crime and Justice Institute](#), [Over Zero](#), [Institute for Strategic Dialogue](#), [More in Common](#), the [Center for Strategic and International Studies](#), Princeton's [Bridging Divides Initiative](#), and the [Anti-Defamation League](#).



In the coming weeks, armed extremist groups are planning demonstrations in Washington, D.C. and state capitals across the country – events experts fear could escalate into the kind of violence seen during the deadly January 6th riots at the U.S. Capitol. Despite recent crackdowns by social media giants to limit the spread of extremist rhetoric surrounding Inauguration, the upcoming protests are expected to include unlawful armed militias and white nationalist groups.

Two days in particular are considered at high risk of coordinated and potentially violent activity: Jan. 17 and Inauguration Day on Jan. 20. Any moves by Congress to remove the President from office may trigger accelerated activity. Analysis of online networks suggests that state, local, and federal courthouses around the country should take heightened security precautions.

The purpose of this document is to help state and local officials anticipate the risks they face and respond. These resources help local leaders take four actions to mitigate violence (1) analyze risk; (2) understand state-specific laws and options for enforcing them; (3) build stakeholder engagement for high risk events; and (4) communicate insights and guidance.

1. Know your risk. Understand the blend of extremism and disinformation driving conspiracies and increasing risk. The first step is understanding your particular risk.

Beyond leveraging your internal capacity for threat assessment, and coordinating across departments, agencies, and at the state and local level, there are additional data sources that can inform your assessment and subject matter expert organizations that can support and brief you and your team:

- a. [U.S. Crisis Monitor](#): *Data tracking political violence and demonstrations - tagged and geographically mapped to facilitate focus on your particular state or locality as you consider what to expect in the future. Also accessible as a browsable incident map via Princeton's Bridging Divides Initiative's (BDI) [Ecosystem Map](#).*
- b. [Trends in Demonstrations at Homes](#): *BDI's issue brief on trends in protests directly targeting the homes of officials. To receive semi-regular, internal Situation Reports from BDI, email bdi@princeton.edu with your role and organization.*

- c. [Anti-Defamation League \(ADL\) H.E.A.T. Map](#): A first-of-its-kind interactive and customizable map detailing extremist and anti-Semitic incidents across the country. Useful for understanding risks to specific communities and informing outreach to community leaders.
- d. [Southern Poverty Law Center \(SPLC\) Hate Watch and Hate Map](#): A blog feed and map, filterable by location and ideology, monitoring and exposing the activities of American extremist groups. SPLC's Hate Map was compiled using hate group publications and websites, citizen and law enforcement reports, field sources, and news reports.
- e. [ADL Hate Symbol Database](#): A repository of symbols with known use among white supremacist groups and movements, as well as some other types of hate groups. Helpful for building awareness and vigilance among local leaders and law enforcement.
- f. [Countering Election-Motivated Violent Extremism In 2020 And Beyond](#): Identifies seven actions policymakers and local officials can take to better understand the threat of violent extremism, promote transparency and effective communications, and empower law enforcement to carefully execute its authority.
- g. [Institute for Strategic Dialogue's research database](#): Includes publications tracking online mis- and disinformation and the use of social media to promote violence.

2. Know your laws. Make a plan to enforce them. While details vary state-by-state, there are laws that can help you manage and respond to unlawful organized armed groups planning events in your town, city, and state. Know these laws and have a plan for how to use and enforce them. Ensure collaboration across relevant staff and departments. Make your intention clear and known. Resources to understand specific relevant laws and inform enforcement include:

- a. [Georgetown's Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection \(ICAP\) Protests and Public Safety: A Guide for Cities and Citizens](#): This guide contains legal principles, best practices, and creative solutions for local jurisdictions, concerned residents, and activists.
- b. [ICAP: Prohibiting Private Armies at Public Rallies](#): A catalog of relevant state constitutional and statutory provisions prohibiting private militias and paramilitary activity.state laws prohibiting private militias and paramilitary activity, and what to do if citizens see groups of armed individuals.
- c. ICAP, CJI, and CP21Solutions [Guidance for Law Enforcement Officials Regarding Unauthorized Paramilitary Activity](#)
- d. [Voter Protection Program Guide on Preparing for Post-Election Violence](#): Provides guidance to law enforcement on how to protect First Amendment rights while preserving public safety during public demonstrations. Clarifies the rights of demonstrators and identifies action law enforcement can take ahead of and during events.

- e. [*Crime and Justice Institute's Elections Public Safety Framework*](#): A framework for public safety agencies to advance planning for the election and post-election period.
 - f. [*Crime and Justice Institute's Protecting Public Infrastructure During Protests or Violent Demonstrations*](#): This short document provides public safety leaders with guidance on short-term preparations that should be taken to protect public infrastructure and offers up some long term considerations.
 - g. [*CSIS's Institutional Integrity: Learning the Right Lessons from the Capitol Siege*](#): The third installment of a series looking at how to reinforce institutional integrity with regard to the use of federal forces
 - h. Additional resource for people being targeted online:
 - i. [*Harvard Business Review's You're Not Powerless in the Face of Online Harassment*](#): Offers guidance to victims of online harassment and outlines concrete steps that can be taken to protect yourself and others.
 - ii. [*PEN America Online Harassment Field Manual*](#): Offers concrete strategies for those experiencing or witnessing online abuse on how to defend themselves and others.
- 3. Connect and coordinate with key stakeholders.** In addition to posing an immediate and tactical security risk, these events are planned with the intention of undermining democracy; of replacing debate, deliberation, and voting with violence and intimidation. It is essential to connect and coordinate with key stakeholders - internally and externally, from the local to the state level - to ensure a consistent and well-coordinated response that leverages the full power of civil society (including organizers, business leaders, faith leaders, etc.) and democratic government.
- a. [*Stakeholder Engagement for High Risk Events*](#) from [*Over Zero*](#): Underscores the critical role of stakeholders in helping state and local officials monitor risks, mobilize responses, coordinate messaging, and manage and allocate resources. Offers guidance on how to identify, connect with, and activate stakeholders to prepare for the threat of political violence.
 - b. [*Bridging Divides Initiative Ecosystem Map*](#): The [*Bridging Divides Initiative*](#) created this map as a resource for peacebuilders across the country. Use this map to see recent demonstrations and political violence in your area and connect with those working to build a strong, resilient community.
- 4. Communicate, communicate, communicate.** It is essential to use your communication platform in concert with a broad set of influential voices to assert your condemnation of violence and intimidation and your commitment to democracy, safety and security of all people, and accountability. Communicate early and often, and use your platform to amplify voices of influential leaders in your community.
- a. [*Messaging Guidance for State and Local Officials Amidst the Threat of Political Violence*](#) from [*Over Zero*](#): Outlines messaging guidance for state and local officials responding to threats of violence in the leadup to and throughout the state capitol protests and events planned for January 17-20, 2021.

- b. For examples of what communication can look like, [Western States Center](#) has pointed to this joint public letter: [Oregon State and Community Leaders](#)
- c. [Unite Against Hate and Election-Related Violence](#), [*A Joint Statement by Elected Officials and Civil Society Groups*](#) and [Letter to the Community: Local, State Leaders Stand in Solidarity with Community and Business Leaders Against Hate and Violence](#)
- d. More in Common's [Democracy for President](#): Democracy for President is an initiative from More in Common to empower Americans with cutting-edge data and unbiased information for how to communicate about issues of election integrity.
- e. The [National Task Force on Election Crises](#) provides resources and updates for accurate information about election-related processes and procedures.