Extremism and Antisemitism at the U.S. Capitol

January 2021

ADL Response and Impact

Since its founding more than 100 years ago, ADL has been at the forefront of the fight against extremism, white supremacy and hate in all its forms. In recent years, as the country faced the normalization of extremist viewpoints and violence unprecedented in modern times, ADL has engaged in crisis response on a national level.

The attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021 was yet another chapter in this ugly history. Those insurgents who stormed this bastion of our democracy represented both a "who's who" of modern right-wing extremism and a new breed of unknown insurrectionists. As American democracy faces an existential threat from right-wing extremism, ADL's work has never been more urgent.

As the January 6 attack made plain, it is online—particularly, on social media platforms—where extremists congregate, become radicalized and lay the groundwork for acts of violence and terror. The antisemitism, anti-immigration and other vile ideologies of white supremacists and other extremists are traded online by exploiting what has, until only in the last few days, been the "laissez-faire" nature of social media platforms. ADL continues to monitor and pressure these platforms and companies to remove extremist content across their platforms to stop extremists from connecting and communicating with each other from disparate locations with speed and deftness that was previously unimaginable.

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| ADL was mentioned in major media outlets including ABC News, CBS News and CNN |
Law Enforcement

In the days and weeks before the violent attack on the U.S. Capitol, ADL shared expert analysis and assistance regarding potential extremist threats with law enforcement representatives and organizations across the country. These analyses included background information on extremist individuals and groups likely to pose a violent threat and potentially inspire others. Subsequent to the attack on the Capitol, ADL staff collaborated with local, state and federal authorities to uncover the identities of participating criminal actors.

ADL has identified more than 60 extremists who took part in the insurrection and shared this information with federal authorities. Several of these extremists have now been charged with federal crimes. Additionally, ADL has disseminated multiple law enforcement assists to departments nation-wide. As the country continues to face an elevated risk of extremist violence, ADL is sharing ongoing, critical assessments with our law enforcement contacts to mitigate extant and emerging threats.

Government Advocacy

ADL was ready with specific policy recommendations for the new Biden/Harris administration, members of Congress and members of state legislatures to address the upsurge of violence that led to this attack. Our work has also highlighted the particularly toxic combination of antisemitism and racism that was on display during the attack on the Capitol.

In response to the attack on the Capitol, ADL:

- Called for the resignation or removal of Trump; first in ADL history. (Jan 8)
- Sent key recommendations to the House and Senate that included calls to:
  - limit influence of QAnon supporters in Congress;
  - form a joint select Congressional committee to investigate complicity between social media companies and extremists and to prove extremists’ use of platforms;
  - investigate inadequate law enforcement response to the violence;
  - reintroduce and pass the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act; and
  - created a comprehensive package of policies that can mitigate threats like domestic terrorism while preserving civil liberties.
Social Media and Technology Platforms

Since the attack on the Capitol on January 6, ADL’s Center for Technology and Society (CTS) had been pushing tech companies to suspend or deplatform Trump and QAnon supporters, pushed infrastructure companies to get recalcitrant actors to deal with hate and extremism on their platforms, instigated providers to stop processing payments and hosting sites that spread hate and disinformation, and contacted companies to stop the sale of merchandise that promote hate and violence.

In response to the attack on the Capitol, ADL

- Successfully advocated for the removal or suspension of QAnon supporters and Donald Trump’s social media accounts on various platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Reddit, Twitch, Discord, and others;
- Identified and notified platforms and e-commerce companies for action such as Amazon’s removal on January 11 of some QAnon-related merchandise; and
- Continues to pressure technology infrastructure providers (e.g., cloud service providers like Amazon and Google, as well as domain services like GoDaddy and content delivery networks like Cloudflare) to deny services to hateful and extremist apps and social platforms and to update their terms of service to ensure a minimum set of standards for the services they host.

ADL Research and Resources

ADL published over a dozen blog posts, education resources and hosted a timely webinar with House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Bennie Thompson and outgoing Counterterrorism Subcommittee Chairman Max Rose between January 4 and 14. Topics covered in our posts included extremist rhetoric in the lead-up to January 6, extremist involvement in the Capitol siege and antisemitism in response to the attack.

- Extremism and Antisemitism at the U.S. Capitol
- Discussing Political Violence and Extremism with Young People
- American Attitudes toward Extremist Threats: A Survey Following the Events at the U.S. Capitol
ADL spoke out during and after the violence at the Capitol. ADL was mentioned over 10,500 times from January 6 to January 12 in major media outlets with multiple appearances on ABC News, CBS News and CNN, including Special Edition The Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer, and stories in The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, Politico, The New Yorker, Forbes, JTA, The Forward and many others. Some of the articles where ADL was featured:

**TV**
- ADL CEO Jonathan Greenblatt to @GStephanopoulos: “In many ways, this was a bookend to Charlottesville.” (ABC News Special Report)
- Tech backlash after Trump ban (Bloomberg Technology -- Jonathan Greenblatt interviewed)
- ADL calls on President Trump to be removed from office (CNN’s Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer -- Jonathan Greenblatt interviewed)
- Kevin O’Leary, ADL CEO debate social media policy in wake of Capitol unrest (CNBC’s Squawk Box)
- Extremists intensify calls for violence ahead of Inauguration Day (CNN -- Jonathan Greenblatt interviewed)
- Los rostros y las historias de algunas de las personas que asaltaron el Capitolio (Univision’s Aquí y Ahora -- Monica Bauer interviewed)

**Print**
- Experts: Capitol riot product of years of hateful rhetoric (Associated Press)
- White Supremacism Is a Domestic Terror Threat That Will Outlast Trump (TIME Magazine -- Jonathan Greenblatt op-ed)
- Twitter, Facebook lock Trump's accounts amid D.C. riots (The Washington Post)
- ADL calls for Trump's removal from the presidency (JTA)
- The far-right Trump insurgency just scored a huge propaganda coup (The Washington Post)

**ADL Statements**

Excellent step by @Twitter, taking the necessary action that #StopHateForProfit demanded. A fitting end to a legacy of spreading hate and vitriol. President Trump incited the violent riots at the Capitol using social media & paid the price. #BanTrumpSaveDemocracy

We cannot allow the historic & horrific events of the past 48 hours to fade without significant consequences. In our 100+ years of history, @ADL has never called for the President of the United States to be removed from office. Today, that changes.

ADL Calls for President Trump to be Removed From Office @adl.org