

The US Capitol Siege, Election Violence, and Upcoming Inauguration

& Why it matters with or without US employees

1

Serious challenge to the peaceful transition of power in a constitutional democracy undermines global efforts to address election violence, disinformation, and disenfranchisement.

2

A right-wing mob breached one of the most secure government buildings in the world, for the purpose of maintaining their populist candidate. The rise of political violence in the UK and throughout the world may be linked to similar populist and autocratic sentiments.

3

Racial epithets, white supremacist iconography including the Confederate Flag pictured here warn of intensifying racial and political divisions in one of the world's largest economies.

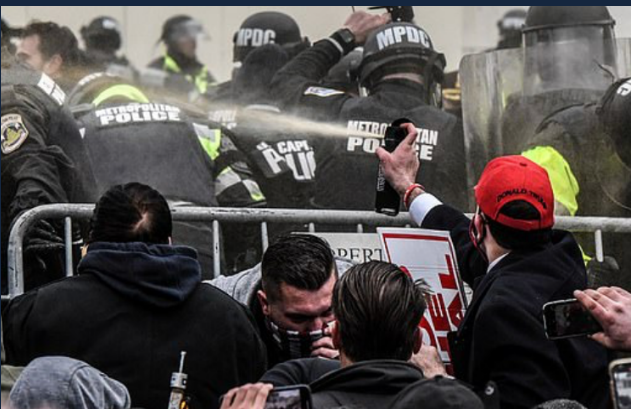
It's impossible for events like these to not impact us. Sociopolitical issues at home and abroad can make us stressed, scared, and unable to focus.

What can you do to help your people and your business?



What Happened in the US Capitol Seige on January 6th, 2021

- President Donald Trump denies the validity of the 2020 election, making false claims that he won, strong-arming state election officials, and publicly threatening the Vice President and other officials from his own party
- On January 6th his supporters marched on and broke into to the US Capitol, violently disrupting the Congressional Electoral College Certification presided over by Vice President Mike Pence
- Mob behaviour included trespassing, assaults on officers and press, pipe bombs, racist epithets and lynching threats against elected officials
- After 5 deaths, and a city-wide curfew, Congress reconvened to Constitutionally certify President-Elect Joe Biden's win
- The FBI and law enforcement around the country are warning that Trump supporters are planning armed resistance to the presidential transfer of power to continue in all 50 states from January 17th to the 20th



Talking about Current Events at Work

Behavioral Dos and Don'ts for HR, Managers, and Senior Leaders

DO

Create space (virtually)

- Let your team know you are aware
- Get Senior Leaders to send direct and personalised communications
- Allow room to express feelings about what's happened
- Clarify that it's also okay to not discuss it if they prefer

Acknowledge

- Show that you understand how difficult it can be to process traumatic events
- Clearly acknowledge and denounce violence, racism, discrimination, threats to democracy and the rule of law
- Reflect on the history of white privilege, power, and violence on display in and beyond the US

Affirm

- Recognise the negative relationship between trauma and productivity
- Demonstrate that you are taking in individual perspectives
- Share your own authentic reactions

Offer support

- Let your team know you stand ready to help them with tangible outcomes like time off or extended deadlines
- Share mental health resources and employee assistance programs

DON'T

- Assume business as usual
- Make equivalences to Black Lives Matter or other human-rights protests
- Use "domestic terrorist," because it perpetuates the war on terror and the disproportionate law enforcement focus on communities of colour
- Make assumptions or generalisations about how others feel
- Say "I can imagine as a person of colour you may feel upset/angry"
- Suggest employees "Leave these issues and event outside of the workplace"
- Assume everyone will react similarly or predictably
- Single-out Black or other marginalised people for their "take"
- Assume this is an anomaly or one-time event, instead speak about the history building to this moment
- Lecture or send out one-way communication
- Lead the conversation alone, instead facilitate a dialogue amongst participants and try to encourage different mediums to share



What Next?

Preparing for January 20 and beyond

- Embrace tumultuous events as opportunities to actualise corporate values
- Free speech and ideological difference are never excuses for disinformation, racism, or violence
- Offer support both 1-on-1 and collectively
- Recognise that trigger points are unique, and may vary with identity
- Active messaging from leaders that centres people over productivity
- Remind people of your personal and organisational commitment to employee wellbeing, democratic values, diversity, equity, and inclusion



Conversation Starters

- “I want you to know that part of being able to bring your whole self to work is not ignoring the things that impact us outside of it.”
- “What’s on your mind today?”
- “How did yesterday’s events affect you?”
- “How did that situation make you feel about the work you do here?”
- “I recognize you might not be able to articulate all your feelings, and that’s okay.”
- “I know it might be hard for any of us to get our heads around what happened.”
- “I understand that you might be distracted today.”
- “I appreciate you sharing how this looks and feels from your point of view.”
- “Thank you for opening up and speaking so honestly and vulnerably about this.”
- “I felt _____ when watching the news.”
- “Today _____ is really on my mind.”
- “Our leadership team remains committed to _____.”
- “I’m always going to stand up for this team and our values.”
- “I value you and your world view. I want to hear from you. I don’t assume I’m right.”
- “How about we identify the values we share, and then look at the issue with those in mind?”



Sources

[A Leader's Guide to Crisis](#)

[Blinding Exceptionalism: The Insidious Attacks on British Democracy Are No Less Dangerous than Trump's America](#)

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[High Impact Events Analysis: 2020 U.S. Presidential Election Protests](#)

["How HR leaders can address capitol riots"](#)

[How to Talk with Your Team About the Violence at the U.S. Capitol](#)

[How to Talk Politics at Work Without Alienating People](#)

[US braced for violence as pro-Trump protesters expected to descend on state capitol buildings](#)

