

# Why We Can't Wait - Any Longer

Ubuntu Institute for Community Development

In light of the recent event -- the siege, the failed coup d'état, the insurrection, the riot...whatever semantics you choose to describe the terrorist act at the United States Capitol on January 6th, 2021 -- it again revealed the real America. Although many now agree that Trump must go, and sooner rather than later, several pressing questions remain: What difference will his departure from the White House make, really? Is the US finally willing to do what it takes to criminalize and eradicate domestic terror?

**The underlying deadly, toxic attitude or climate was there before Trump and will remain after his destructive Presidential tenure ends just days from now.** The conflict that America exposed so graphically to the world this week, will persist until its longstanding root causes are addressed.

Will we sit back and watch to see if every single one of those responsible for the deadly attack is prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law as was promised by the President-elect of the US? Will these people be identified and treated as terrorists, or as good citizens who were simply misled by alternative facts and just made a couple of bad decisions?

As the vicious terror attack unfolded in real time, streaming across screens and devices around the globe in shocking detail before our very eyes, most of us understood unquestioningly that if these people had been Black, there would have been a lot of bloodshed. There would be no need to create a reward line afterward to uncover the identities and whereabouts of the perpetrators. The media coverage exposing and demonizing them would have been swift and thorough. We have all seen how that works. The press coverage would include a full description of each person if Black, detailing all aspects of their personal lives and activities from any drug use history, to their credit reports, to any prior arrests, thus exposing them as lawless criminals. It was shockingly alarming to see the easy access and kid gloves with which the screaming, cursing, violent mob was greeted, allowing them to overrun the Capitol and disrupt a Congressional electoral certification proceeding while armed to the teeth. Make no mistake, the response would have been drastically different. We have only to look at how innocent, unarmed, peaceful Black Lives Matters demonstrators were treated in that vicinity just a few months prior. Without a doubt, had they been Black, there would have been no retreat from the police. There would have been no going home to spend the evening with loved ones.

**Why was the response so different?** The answer reveals two things about America;

1) the nature of racism and white privilege; and 2) the illusion of racial progress in this country.

In 1967, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, talked about the two Americas. The issues raised then are the same issues confronting us today. Issues related to healthcare, wages, housing, poverty, police brutality, lynching, character assassination, etc. While people speak of change or progress, it has only been achieved for a few individuals who are propped up to say "I made it, thus the

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system works". The truth is that America, for the overwhelming majority of Black people, has been an abject failure. It has been a failure in delivering the promises of equality for all of its citizens, even centuries after the atrocity of enslavement technically ended.

**What next?** Joe Biden spoke about what he would do in his first 100 days as President. The issues related to Black people do not go away with Trump and these must be at the top of the Biden-Harris 100 days agenda. Clearly, the speed and fervor with which the white nationalist agenda re-ignited under its most recent favored son, #45, is evidence that the question of race and racism in America "trumps" everything else. It is why we are all in the dangerous situation we currently face. Welcome to our world. While Wednesday's violent insurrection has left many white Americans in shock and awe, declaring they have never seen or even imagined they would ever see anything like this -- at least not "here" -- those of us living in Black skin within the reality of the real America daily, are not surprised.

So, will this be like every other short-lived awakening, epiphany, or potentially transformative moment? History suggests yes. That we will move on with the business of America as always. The business of America never deals with the elimination of racism in this country. And the coronavirus pandemic will be used as a reason for sweeping this insurrection under the rug and just moving on, given the truly pressing COVID-19 health threat. But the insidious public health threat of anti-Black racism, the other side of the white supremacist coin, is as deadly and devastating a virus as COVID. And there is no vaccine in the pipeline for white nationalism.

**Whose responsibility will it be**, if the insurrection wake-up call is actually heeded?

These issues go beyond an Executive Order or DOJ consent decree. It extends to all systems that currently are complicit, to local and national government, to law enforcement and the legal system. The party of Trump, formerly known as Republicans, has many still acting exactly as he does. [Florida's Gov. Ron DeSantis](#) has just drafted "anti-mob" legislation that would expand the state's Stand Your Ground law – a move that some worry would allow armed citizens to shoot and potentially kill anyone they suspect of looting. In addition to pardoning his criminal friends and reactivating executions in his final weeks in office, [Donald Trump](#) issued an Executive Order on Protecting American Monuments, Memorials, and Statues and Combatting Recent Criminal Violence. A report from the Brennan Center for Justice stated in this article, [Hidden in Plain Sight: Racism, White Supremacy, and Far-Right Militancy in Law Enforcement](#). And the miseducation system continues to be eroded even further toward a complete rollback to an earlier, blatantly racist era "[The Office of Management and Budget issued a directive prohibiting departments from using federal funds to administer diversity training for executive branch staff that incorporate teachings about critical race theory and white privilege.](#)"

**The answers are clear.** America cannot move forward without addressing these issues. There are laws, national and international, from civil rights to human rights, that address these issues but are consistently ignored by both political parties. In practice, unfortunately, America is still committed to the policies of "Make America Great Again", white nationalism, white supremacy

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and xenophobia. Donald Trump was only the poster boy - for a time. The image and ideology of "Uncle Sam" has been replaced with the image of Donald Trump in the psyche of far too many, both in the US and around the world. And that image and ideology will remain in place to stay unless dealing with it becomes a priority.

As African descendants born in this country, we recognize that even newly arriving immigrants have more voice and consideration than we do. Had the murderous mob of insurrectionists looked like me, the outcome of the attempted coup would have been very, very different. Letting them off with a slap on the wrist, (if that), will simply embolden these traitors to strike more forcefully the next time. The answer to America's dilemma is right here in black and white. What is required is full accountability for white nationalist hate crimes and domestic terrorism, en route to eliminating systemic racism from every level of US society.

**When is enough, enough?** We can't wait any longer!