



On Wednesday, January 6, 2021, an insurrectionist mob of white supremacists laid siege to the U.S. Capitol, at the behest of President Donald Trump. The events of that day shone a spotlight on what Black and Indigenous people, People of Color, the LGBTQ community, and religious minorities have expressed for decades: the violent ideologies of white supremacy and racial resentment that lies at the root of American society.

This right wing insurrection, and its brazen attack on the Capitol, was only the latest salvo in a series of violent conflicts that have escalated in both intensity and audacity. This racist cadre found a leader in Donald Trump, and an article of faith in stolen election lies. He gave them a purpose, he gave them a voice, and he gave them a target, culminating in an act of treason that left 6 people dead.

The DC National Lawyers Guild (DCNLG) stands in support of our community, who have borne the brunt of the MAGA rally's descent on the District not once, but 3 times in the last 3 months. Each time these violent white nationalists have been intent on attacking and harassing members of our community. And each time, law enforcement officers stood idly by, turning their enforcement intentions towards the victims of the fascist attack rather than the attackers. DC NLG Legal Observers have repeatedly been witness to and the recipients of police brutality and white supremacist violence while providing legal support to local activists. In collaboration with **Law4BlackLives DC**, we will continue to serve the organizers, protesters, and residents of the District of Columbia.

Throughout the summer, Black Lives Matter protesters in the District were attacked numerous times by Metropolitan Police and U.S. Park Police. Videos from the January 6 Insurgency shows law enforcement officers calmly opening barricades to the mob, while occasionally pausing to take selfies. The polite restraint exercised by law enforcement stood in stark contrast to the overwhelming show of force directed at BLM activists and advocates, at whom the police never hesitated to use tactical violence and lethal force. Questions surrounding police "unpreparedness" miss the point entirely. The events of that day were yet another instance where armed agents of the state coddled extremists while turning a blind eye to the violence those extremists inflict. This attempted coup served as a reminder that an unaccountable police force poses as great a threat to democracy as those who actively try to subvert it.

As the need for new domestic terrorism laws move to the forefront of the conversation, the DC NLG advises restraint and caution moving forward. It is inevitable that, regardless of the party holding power, any new laws on domestic terrorism will be used to further target and surveil people of color, and prosecute political activism. The disparity will be even more stark in the District of Columbia, a predominately Black city policed by more than 30 agencies, each empowered to arrest and employ lethal force.

The DC NLG and its Legal Observer program urge those watching the District of Columbia to keep their eyes trained on events in the upcoming weeks, and their aftermath. It is imperative that elected officials listen to communities that have been targeted by white supremacists and far-right hate groups. The appropriate answer is not a repressive backlash directed at political organizing, but rather solidarity with BIPOC and other marginalized groups demanding self determination and working towards liberation.