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# Earthworks Executive Director's statement on violence in the U.S. Capitol

[Jennifer Krill](#) | January 7, 2021

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The white supremacists who stormed the U.S. Capitol Building violently assaulted American democracy and provided a shameful culmination to the Trump presidency.

Earthworks condemns the fatal attack that forced elected lawmakers out of the Capitol as they were certifying the electoral college results – a hallmark of the peaceful transition of power since the Constitution was ratified.

We cannot take our democracy for granted. Neither we nor any other environmental organization can do our jobs, and protect communities, biodiversity, and the global climate, without a functioning government grounded on basic democratic freedoms.

The benefits of American democracy have accrued disproportionately to different populations: communities of color are more likely to be disenfranchised at the ballot box, and are disproportionately harmed by polluting industries. Environmental racism is not abstract: it means that real people live with poisoned air and water and suffer real harm.

That racism played out shamefully yesterday in the disparity between how violent white extremists were treated in comparison to Black Lives Matter protesters, at the same building. Freedom to protest is our Constitutional right. But where

violent white extremists who assaulted the Capitol walked away freely, Black Lives Matter protesters in the same city were battered, tear gassed, and arrested en masse.

What has unfolded this week—a grassroots get-out-the-vote effort in Georgia showing the power of a multiracial coalition led by Black women followed by a white supremacist insurrection against our federal government—underscores the need for us to be organizing within our own communities. A functioning democracy must be responsible to *all* the people it governs.

Most immediately, the Vice President and remaining cabinet members have an urgent constitutional obligation to declare Trump unfit to serve the short remainder of his term in accordance with the 25th Amendment. Earthworks [endorses a House Resolution](#) condemning and censuring those seeking to overthrow the election and we are committed to supporting similar efforts as they arise.

I have confidence that democracy will prevail. And I hope that this will serve as a wake-up call that shocks our collective national conscience into strengthening our democracy such that nothing like this ever happens again.

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