



Statement on Insurrection and Call for Trump's Removal

Release date: January 13, 2020

On Wednesday, January 6, 2021, just one day after the history-making elections of Georgia's first Black Senator and first Jewish Senator, President Donald Trump incited a violent and unruly mob animated by white supremacy and anti-democratic sensibilities, to take control of the Capitol building with the intent of disrupting Congress's deliberations to certify the election of President-elect Joseph Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris. This insurrection was the culmination of five years of dangerous white nationalist rhetoric by the Trump administration and its enablers. Participants in last Wednesday's insurrection marched through the halls of the Capitol with confederate flags and in clothing bearing antisemitic and genocidal slogans. They set up a noose across from the Capitol, ransacked offices, occupied congressional chambers, and endangered the lives of all U.S. legislators, their staff, and everyone who works in the U.S. Capitol.

By seeking to subvert the results of a free and fair election, by repeatedly lying to his supporters concerning that election, and by inciting an insurrection, Donald Trump has betrayed his oath of office and is clearly no longer fit to serve as President of our country. His incitement of the angry mob warrants his immediate and lawful removal from office, either through impeachment or invoking the 25th Amendment.

As the Society of Jewish Ethics (SJE), we would be remiss if we did not also condemn the Jewish participants in these seditious activities. Their participation reminds us that there is much work to be done within the Jewish community to repudiate white nationalism. We must also, at minimum, censure those legislators who so recklessly perpetuated the lie of a stolen election--a lie that animated the mob's seditious violence. There must also be investigations into the manifold failures of the various law enforcement agencies in Washington to anticipate and disperse the angry mob and prevent it from breaking into the Capitol. Finally, the individuals who participated in the insurrection should be arrested and brought to justice.

Over the summer, SJE was moved to speak out against militarized police violence toward communities of color and stand in solidarity with the protestors to affirm that Black Lives Matter. After witnessing the extreme restraint exercised by law enforcement faced with a violent predominantly white mob in a government building, we recommit ourselves to racial justice both in the academic field of Jewish ethics and in our country more broadly.

As scholars of Jewish ethics we denounce complicity with corrupt and immoral regimes that seek the erosion of democratic values and principles as this regime and its leaders has done for the past five years. We condemn the culture of violence and hate as well that white supremacy has produced in this country. We must hold those responsible for last Wednesday's violent insurrection accountable in order to restore legitimacy to our government.