

Statement from the JMC on the US Capitol Attack and its aftermath

On January 6th 2021, the US Capitol building was attacked by a violent mob of white supremacist militants and their allies. This deadly attack was publicly planned, incited, and facilitated by elected officials at the highest levels of the government. It was aided by a sympathetic Capitol Police force, some of whom treated the mostly white male invaders like tourists, when just this past summer they met peaceful Black protestors with tanks, teargas, rubber bullets, and physical violence.

This attack was not about addressing a supposedly fraudulent election. It was a reaction to the electoral power of Black citizens and thus an attempt to violently reinstall whiteness as the sole guiding principle of governance in the US.

This show of force was a shocking yet unsurprising addition to a long sequence of deadly attacks perpetrated with the intent of preserving the dominant system of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy in the US. The contrast between the state's preparation for and response to this attack and its long history of highly militarized, reactionary violence to peaceful demonstrations in support of Black, immigrant, and Indigenous lives is remarkable. It was also completely predictable.

We are deeply concerned that our society's response to these attacks will be a further entrenchment and empowerment of the mass surveillance and militarized police state, much of which was created after the attacks on September 11, 2001. The past two decades have seen these weapons of state oppression turned not only on Muslims across the world, but on organizers and movements supporting the lives of people who are Black, Brown, Indigenous, immigrants, LGBTQ+, or are otherwise marginalized.

Mathematicians have played a well-documented role in providing the technical foundations and philosophical veneer of scientific objectivity to our society's main oppressive institutions, from governmental entities like the NSA, CIA, and the Department of Defense to private-sector tech companies like PredPol and Facebook. We have previously written at length ([link](#)) about the role our community has played in facilitating white supremacy, so we will not reiterate those arguments here.

We are now writing again to ask our colleagues to boycott any activities--scholarly, professional, or otherwise--which support oppressive governmental organizations and the wide constellation of public entities which empower them. This includes boycotting all new opportunities for funding that these and other like-minded institutions will offer in the reaction to the attack on the Capitol. The fundamental guiding principle of these organizations is the preservation of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, and any act in support of them is a political act with unequivocal meaning.

Instead, we encourage our fellow mathematicians--especially our white, cisgender, heterosexual colleagues--to engage in necessary dialogues about white supremacist capitalist patriarchy with their colleagues. Mathematical institutions are still wildly inequitable and oppressive, and this will not change until we all address it head-on, especially those of us who benefit the most from the status quo. We encourage all mathematicians to actively pursue structural changes within

their departments, universities, and companies aimed at achieving concrete goals toward equity and justice for marginalized groups. We further encourage our colleagues to join or create organizations which aim to disassemble the white supremacist power structure in society by using the tools of mathematics ([link](#)).

We mathematicians have a choice about the future of our community and world. We can either choose to continue enabling white supremacy and thereby abet its oppression and violence, or we can commit ourselves to reshaping our community and to using our expertise and influence to help reshape society for the good of everyone.