

**HOW TO RESPOND TO DONALD TRUMP'S THREATS**

# **MAKE IT SAFE TO SPEAK UP**

**SAFEGUARDING  
OUR MOVEMENTS  
AGAINST  
REPRESSION**





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**MAKING  
RED**

# READY

It's always difficult to tell how seriously to take Trump's performative declarations. He makes wild statements to see what plays to his audience, throwing things against the wall to see what sticks, and then doubles down wherever there is no pushback. But this time around, his administration has stuck very close to the classic fascist playbook, with one supporter going so far as to declare without any

irony that the shooting of Charlie Kirk "is the American Reichstag fire." The obvious next step in that playbook is to expand from targeting immigrants to go after anarchists, leftists, and other opponents of the regime as well.

Yes, Trump has previously declared that he would designate "Antifa" a "terrorist organization," most famously at the outset of the George Floyd Revolt. But at that

time, the rest of the federal government largely acted as a brake on his impulses<sup>1</sup>—whereas today, the entire executive branch of the federal government is comprised of toadies and sycophants who are incapable of distinguishing their interests from his.

Granted, there is no law authorizing the president to designate domestic terrorist organizations. But even without new legislation or an executive order, Trump has direct control over the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, and other federal agencies. What he says on social media is probably indicative of what he will direct his underlings to do.

The fact that “Antifa” is not an organization at all, but rather a nebulous category that could include virtually anyone who disapproves of Trump’s autocratic agenda, is convenient for Trump.<sup>2</sup> This means that, regardless of who you are or what you do, you, too, could become a target. That’s why everyone should review the following suggestions, whether or not you think they apply to you. Rather than spreading panic, preparing ourselves in concrete ways will enable us to approach this situation calmly and effectively.

While no “domestic terror organization” designation currently exists—and nor does any obvious mechanism to establish one—far-right prosecutors already have a track record of groundlessly pressing trumped-up terrorism charges as a means of terrorizing activists and supporters of social movements. Trump has explicitly called for the use of racketeering charges to suppress his critics. Far-right Republican senators are already sponsoring a bill that would add rioting to the list of offenses that the Justice Department can use as part of a probe under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations [RICO] Act.

There are obvious precedents for how this might go. Two years ago, a wide range of defendants in Atlanta, Georgia were randomly charged under the RICO act as part of the repression of the Stop Cop City movement. The cases have been endlessly delayed—and earlier this month, a judge dismissed most of the charges on a technicality.

Under Donald Trump, many federal agencies are disorganized and focused chiefly on managing perceptions. This precisely describes the authorities who brought the haphazard RICO charges in Georgia two years ago. If the trajectory of the Stop Cop City RICO case offers any indication of how other RICO persecutions of accused activists might go, the chief threat may not be that the crackdown Trump is calling for will send people to prison, but rather that the charges will discourage and immobilize people, creating the conditions for the Trump administration to eventually supersede this form of repression with something worse.

It remains to be seen how seriously the administration will carry out Trump's threats, and whether they will start by attacking grassroots groups or proceed from the top down, targeting massive liberal institutions and fundraising platforms. In either case, our long-term prospects will depend on whether we can enable large numbers of people to act in solidarity with each other, taking up the kind of grassroots direct action tactics that can be effective regardless of whether the people who control the state wish to listen.

# HERE ARE SOME STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR COMMUNITY, PROCEEDING FROM THE IMMEDIATE TO THE GENERAL.

## **DON'T BE INTIMIDATED**

Keeping your morale up is essential to resistance. Do not surrender in advance. Our adversaries aim to cow us into submission because they know that they cannot subdue us by brute force alone. Remember, managing perceptions is core to the fascist project—they seek to project strength at all times precisely because they are not invincible. Even when things seem grim, keep your hopes up and keep fighting. *Defeatism only serves the enemy.*

Several recent examples show that a determined movement can beat repression. On January 20, 2017, only a few hours into Trump's first presidency, hundreds of people were arrested in proximity to his inauguration. They were charged with eight identical felonies apiece—two of which were not even on the books as legitimate charges—and threatened with decades in prison. The defendants could have reacted by taking plea deals or going it alone in the court system. Instead, in an astonishing display of solidarity, nearly two hundred people committed to fighting the charges together—and after a stressful year and a half, they beat every single one of the charges.



The Stop Cop City RICO case has foundered thus far for similar reasons. RICO and conspiracy cases often hinge on whether some of the defendants can be frightened into cooperating with the prosecution. If the defendants form a united front and their communities stand resolutely beside them, the chief advantages of the state evaporate. **Solidarity is power.**

### **MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR STRENGTHS**

Donald Trump and the institutions he presides over are hierarchical, centralized, formally structured, and profit-driven. They would prefer to fight a symmetrical adversary. By contrast, the movements that challenge them are largely decentralized and horizontal, without formal roles or funding. This is a good thing—not only because it undermines prosecutors’ concocted narratives, but also because it makes it more difficult to figure out who to target in the first place. If they have to focus on the population at large, if resistance could come from any direction, they won’t be able to concentrate their forces.

The autocrats are not in a position to repress everyone who opposes fascism. Remember, on June 14, 2025, the day of the No Kings demonstration, well over 5 million people flooded the streets to defy Trump. Safety will not come from hiding from the authorities, permitting them to go after their targets one at a time, but rather from spreading resistance tactics, strategies, and momentum as widely as possible.

**Everyone who is against fascism is an anti-fascist.** In seeking to target everyone who opposes fascism, Trump is biting off more than he can chew—provided we don’t roll over and let him win.

### **PREPARE FOR FEDERAL VISITS AND RAIDS**

Review what to do in the event of a visit from police or federal agents, whether they are simply making inquiries, show up with a subpoena, or execute a no-knock raid. Back up your electronics and store the backups somewhere secure that cannot be easily connected to you. Remove items from your house that should not fall into the wrong hands. Get legal representation in place ahead of time, so you know what lawyers you will work with.

If you learn of someone else's house being raided, show up and take video footage. The more attention is focused on every state assault, the safer everyone will be.

Instruct your friends in advance as to how they can support you in the event of a raid or arrest, whether that means feeding your cat, providing childcare, or reaching out to your employer or family members. Make your preferences known in advance: for example, if you are arrested, would you prefer to be bailed out immediately, or to wait to see if your bail is reduced? The more precisely you can specify your desires in advance, the better—in a worst-case scenario, you don't want rival factions of your support committee to be wrangling over what you would prefer without any way of resolving the question.

### **BE TRANSPARENT ABOUT REPRESSION**

If you are the target of repression, talk openly about it. They want to isolate you and make you paranoid. If you're already on their radar, you gain nothing from trying to hide that they are targeting you. Don't draw any connections for them that are not already clear for all to see, don't make yourself unnecessarily easy for them to find, but double down on your public connections. If federal agents visit you or subpoena you, the best way to get the support you need and maintain the trust of your community is to refuse to cooperate, document everything about the encounters, and publicize it so that everyone knows what is going on.

### **REDUNDANCY MEANS RESILIENCE**

If you play a role in a project or community effort, however formal or informal, make sure others know how to do what you do. That goes for you as an individual and for any groups you participate in as a whole. Spread your skills and knowledge far and wide. Copy the key to the bookstore; share the login to the social media account with someone you trust. Help people to found another food distribution or legal aid project like your own. Making it easy for others to replace you can diminish the incentive to target you.

Likewise, make information about how to counter repression as widely available as possible. Hold regular educational events in your community

about security culture and distribute materials about it. Educate people about how to respond if agents pressure them to become informants or subpoena them to a grand jury. The more people know these things, the better, as federal agents sometimes begin by exerting pressure on those they perceive to be on the periphery of social movements.

## **COORDINATE TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER**

Reach out to others in a similar situation. For example, if you run a radical bookshop or student group, you could create a network of similar projects so that all of you can move into action as soon as one of you is targeted for repression. Brainstorm about what forms of leverage you can employ to maximize the cost of targeting you and to ensure that any assaults on you mobilize people rather than intimidating them.

Prepare a contact list and a list of responses tailored to different scenarios. Give copies of these documents to comrades you can rely on to support you in the event of repression, so that as soon as something happens, everyone will hear about it and know what to do. For example, “If we are arrested and not immediately released, [group] will hold a press conference the next day, [person] will conduct an online publicity campaign, and [other person] will arrange a fundraising campaign.”

## **DISCREDIT THE POLICE AND COURTS.**

While Donald Trump and his henchmen have sought to bend the legal system to their will and sidestepped it outright wherever that was not possible, this involves some drawbacks, as it diminishes the perceived legitimacy of institutions that they nonetheless rely on. Promisingly, multiple grand juries have refused to indict defendants charged by prosecutors serving Donald Trump. We should popularize the tactic of jury nullification as a means by which ordinary jurors can throw a wrench in the gears of federal repression. Wherever possible, we should erode public faith in the institutions that Trump will use for his crackdowns.

Despite the false promises of liberal politicians, the wave of momentum towards defunding the police that crested in 2020 secured no major changes in legislation or budgets; the one lasting effect of the movement was that, through grassroots action, the participants

succeeded in compelling large numbers of people to quit the police force. Today, exerting continuous low-level pressure against the Trump administration and its lackeys will diminish the number of people who are prepared to serve Trump as traitors to their communities, whether as ICE agents or in some other capacity.

## **FRACTURE THE POLITICAL CLASS**

We need a strategy to compel “opposition” politicians to actually impede the police state rather than simply standing aside. Left to themselves, most politicians will simply cultivate an image rather than helping those who are under attack. But if their image depends on the perception that they are opposed to Trump, that can offer points of leverage via which to impel them to take a stand.

Identify every institution, group, and influential individual that you have access to that is not inextricably invested in the rise of fascism. Work out what forms of leverage you can exert on each of them. With some of them, a conversation will suffice; with others, it might require other means. Set concrete goals, such as dissuading jobseekers from working for ICE, getting influential figures to issue solidarity statements, or compelling local politicians to instruct police not to cooperate with federal operations. The police state requires the smooth functioning of the entire apparatus of power; that makes it vulnerable at countless different points.

The liberals who helped to create a fracture between Trump and Elon Musk simply by holding signs at Tesla dealerships have demonstrated how to divide the alliance that supports Trump. This should be repeated over and over, especially targeting those who are peripherally involved rather than those who are most deeply committed to his authoritarian project. Peel away the pillars of his support structure one by one.

The United States is polarized and divided, regionally as well as locally. If communities, cities, or whole regions can eventually put themselves concretely beyond the reach of federal repression, a model for real resistance will emerge.

## **TAKE THE OFFENSIVE**

In chess, once you become focused on defensive maneuvers, you have lost the game. To face down Trump's power grab, we need proactive strategies. Rather than simply reacting over and over, we have to choose the time and place of conflicts; this can be a way to tie up the resources and labor cycles that will otherwise be directed against us.

Trump's oligarchal policies are immiserating countless millions all around the world. We need to demonstrate means of addressing the urgent needs that he is creating, in a way that conveys a revolutionary vision of social change. **The best defense is a good offense.**

## **REFUSE TO DIVIDE**

When repression succeeds, its most damaging effect is not the immediate impact of the blow, but the fault lines it opens up. Trump's chief goal is to make us doubt ourselves and resent each other. Resolving misunderstandings and conflicts is a fundamental part of resistance.


Present criticisms in good faith, holding open the door for those who are currently your rivals to eventually become allies, provided that they learn to conduct themselves responsibly. Those spreading divisiveness and toxicity are doing the work of the state.



## NOTES

1. For example, Trump's tweet at the end of May 2020 was followed by a similar announcement from Attorney General William Barr, who had already publicly complained about Trump and was forced to resign only a few months later. Trump's director of the FBI at that time, Christopher Wray, acknowledged in testimony that "antifa" is an ideology, not an organization.
2. In Italy, for example, prosecutors have repeatedly treated vague movements such as Autonomia Operaia as if they were formal organizations, and fabricated imagined organizations where none existed, as in the case of the "Insurrezionale Anarchist Revolutionary Organization."





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