

Who is Guilty of Inciting Riots?

In the wake of the storming of the Capitol, many are blaming President Trump for the violence. Of course, he never instructed anyone to engage in violence. Nevertheless, his critics argue that he stoked people's passions, which he did, and can therefore be held accountable.
By Bill Donohue - Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights
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If this is the standard—inflammatory rhetoric—then Trump's critics are at best ethically compromised. Consider the following remarks, made by the kind of people who are now hammering the president.

- "I need you to get out and talk to your friends and talk to your neighbors. I want you to talk to them whether they are independent or whether they are Republican. I want you to argue with them and get in their face." - Presidential candidate Barack Obama, 2008
- "When they go low, we kick 'em. That's what this new Democratic Party is about." - Former Attorney General Eric Holder, 2018
- "Let's make sure we show up wherever we have to show up. And if you see anybody from that [Trump] Cabinet in a restaurant, in a department store, at a gasoline station, you get out and create a crowd. And you push back on them. And you tell them they're not welcome anymore, anywhere." - Maxine Waters, 2018
- "Please, get up in the face of some congresspeople." - Cory Booker, 2020
- "People will do what they do." - House Speaker Nancy Pelosi commenting on violent protesters, 2020
- "You know, there needs to be unrest in the streets for as long as there is unrest in our lives, and unfortunately there is plenty to go around." - Ayanna Pressley, 2020
- "They're [left-wing protesters] not gonna stop before Election Day in November and they're not gonna stop after Election Day. And that should be—everyone should take note of that on both levels, that this isn't, they're not gonna let up and they should not. And we should not." - Kamala Harris, 2020
- "And please, show me where it says protesters are supposed to be polite and peaceful." - CNN host Chris Cuomo, 2020
- "When you see a nation, an entire nation, simultaneously grappling with an extraordinary crisis seeded in 400 years of American racism, I'm sorry, that is not the same question as the understandably aggrieved store owner or the devout religious person who wants to go back to services." - New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio justifying illegal street protests that violated social distancing norms while he restricted church services, 2020
- "I can't imagine what it would look like if we said to people, 'Actually, you have to stay in. You have to ignore systemic racism—I'm sorry, just ignore it. Stay in.'" New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy justifying illegal street protests that violated social distancing norms while restricting church services, 2020
- "As public health advocates, we do not condemn these gatherings as risky for COVID-19 transmission. We support them as vital to the national public

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- "Destroying property, which can be replaced, is not violence." Nikole Hannah-Jones, New York Times journalist, 2020
- "We don't have to finger-wag at protesters about property. That can be rebuilt." David Remnick, New Yorker journalist
- "The notion that nonviolence is tactically more effective...has not only been proven wrong over the past week by sheer numbers; it cannot be historically supported." H. Lossin, Ph.D., The Nation magazine, 2020
- "A siege [of the White House] only works if it is sustained. We witnessed this—the multiplying power of a strategic occupation—nine years ago. You dig in, hold your ground, and the tension accumulates, amplifies, goes global." Adbusters, the group that started Occupy Wall Street, 2020

Many more examples could be given. In fairness, these comments, while incendiary, are not direct calls for violence. But it is also true that nothing Trump said was a direct call for violence either.

Left-wing commentators and activists (pretty much the same these days) have no moral authority to lecture the rest of us about violence committed by right-wing protesters. They nurtured a climate of violence over the past year by giving Antifa and Black Lives Matter their blessings.

If they were principled, they would do as the Catholic League does and condemn violent protesters regardless of their cause. But they are not.