

# South Africa's Far Left, Far Right React to 6 January Violence at US Capitol Building

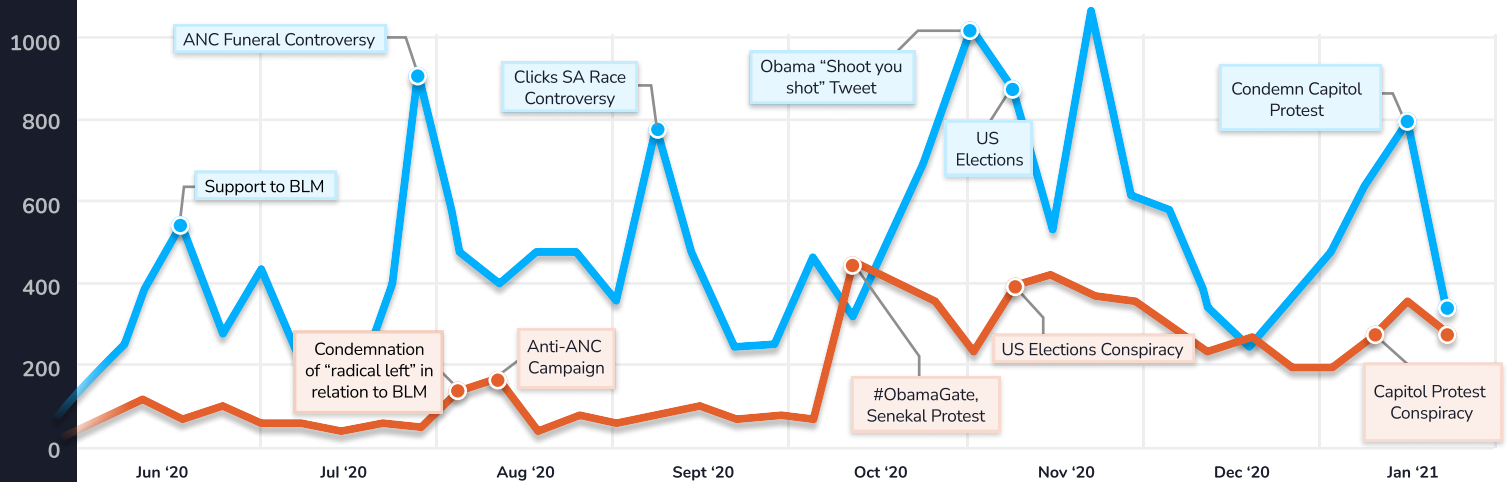
Contemporary political events in the United States often resonate in South Africa and shape its political discourse. Mob violence at the US Capitol on 6 January, for example, brought many of South Africa's far left and far right political and social narratives to the fore and underscored the country's increasingly polarized political

landscape. VoxCroft judges South Africa's most prominent far left and far right politicians and social media influencers will continue to seize on America's tumultuous political environment during the coming months, particularly as it relates to race and minority issues.

**METHODOLOGY** VoxCroft Analytics maintains a list of Twitter accounts of South Africans who represent the far left and right of the South African political spectrum. Tweets posted by the top 10 most influential members of each group were collected from June 2020 to January 2021 and analyzed for prominent themes. In addition, tweets posted from 6-7 January by all members of these two groups were collected and analyzed.

## KEY SOUTH AFRICAN FAR LEFT, RIGHT NARRATIVES

on Twitter June 2020 - January 2021



# Timeline of Notable Themes in Posts by Far Left, Right South African Users June 2020 - January 2020

10 JUNE 2020 - 10 OCTOBER 2020

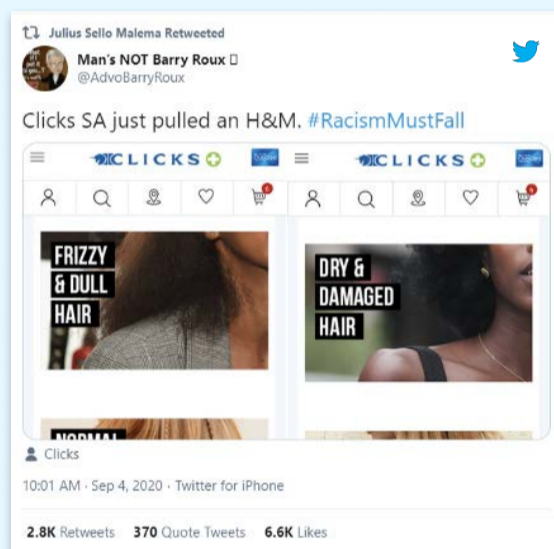
## LEFT - CRUCIAL TWEETS



**CONTEXT** Popular leader of South Africa's leftist opposition party the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), Julius Malema, reshapes photos of a statue of Christopher Columbus which was "beheaded" in support of BLM protest movement.



**CONTEXT** Malema reshapes a journalist's juxtaposition of a seemingly well-attended funeral for a member of South Africa's ruling African National Congress (ANC) despite COVID-19 regulations prohibiting large gatherings, and a funeral of an ordinary citizen.



**CONTEXT** Launch online campaign condemning an alleged racist advertisement by a local retailer.

## CRUCIAL TWEETS - RIGHT



**CONTEXT** Far right commentator **Dan Roodt** reshapes condemnation of the "radical left" in the US.



**CONTEXT** Far right voices lend support to an anti-ANC campaign.



**CONTEXT** Far right activity on Twitter accelerates after the murder of a white farmer and subsequent violent protests against his murder and the suspects in the case in the community of Senekal.



**CONTEXT** Far right also amplifies "#ObamaGate" conspiracy.

28 OCTOBER 2020 - 10 NOVEMBER 2020

## LEFT - CRUCIAL TWEETS



**CONTEXT** Amplify former US President Obama's "Shoot your shot" tweet.



**CONTEXT** Amplify reporting that Trump had lost the US election.

## CRUCIAL TWEETS - RIGHT



**CONTEXT** Amplify doubts on the US election result as called by "mainstream media."



**CONTEXT** Conspiracy theories about the US election are amplified.



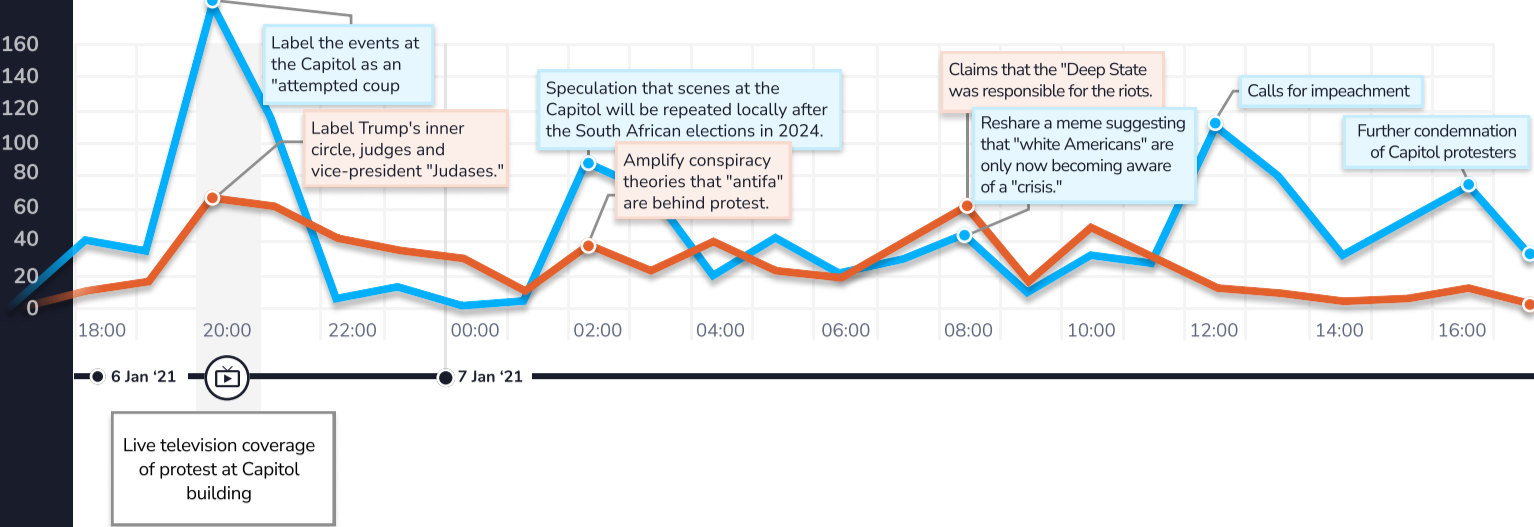
# Timeline of Notable Themes in Posts by Far Left, Right South African Users 6-7 January

Both groups reacted to the 6 January 2021 protests at the US Capitol. The themes contained

in their tweets from 6 - 7 January are outlined below.

## VOLUME OF POSTS BY SOUTH AFRICAN MEMBERS OF FAR LEFT AND RIGHT GROUPS

on Twitter 6-7 January 2021



**INSIGHT** Both groups reacted to live news coverage of the protest at the Capitol from 6-7 January. Major developments were marked in spikes in activity by both groups. The far left users continued reaction on 7 January, while far right activity tapered off. All times are local South Africa time (GMT+2).

### 6 JANUARY 20:00 - 22:00

#### LEFT - CRUCIAL TWEETS



**CONTEXT** Label the events at the Capitol as an "attempted coup", comment that if it were a BLM protest "live ammunition" would be used.



#### CRUCIAL TWEETS - RIGHT



**CONTEXT** Label Trump's inner circle, judges and vice-president "Judases." Accuse "leftists" of "hypocrisy" over reaction to BLM and "antifa" protests.

### 7 JANUARY 1:00 - 3:00

**INSIGHT** Speculation that scenes at the Capitol will be repeated locally after the South African elections in 2024. Calls on African regional leaders to condemn "domestic terrorist" events in the US.

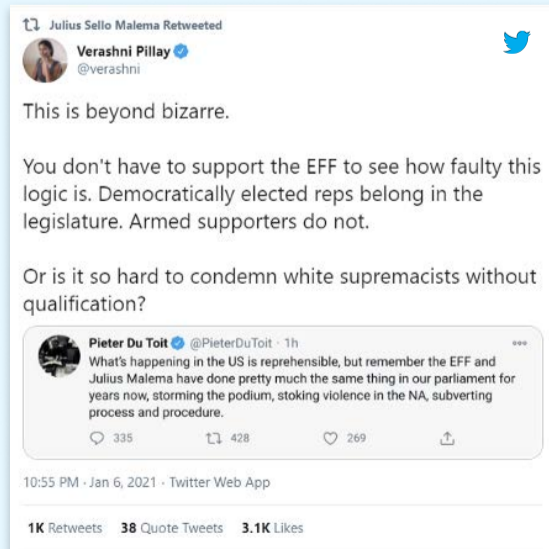


**INSIGHT** Reshare conservative commentators who frame the events in the context of the perceived role of the US Democrats in actions by "BLM and antifa rioters who burned down our cities." Amplify conspiracy theories that "antifa" are behind protest.

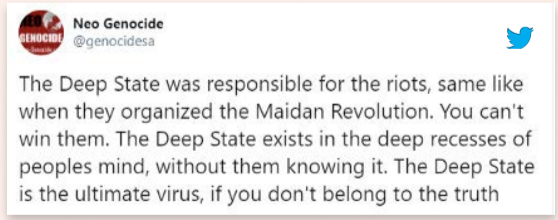


### 7 JANUARY 7:00 - 9:00

**INSIGHT** South African leftist party leader amplifies criticism of prominent local journalist who drew parallels between the Capitol protestors and the EFF. Reshare a meme suggesting that "white Americans" are only now becoming aware of a "crisis."



**INSIGHT** Claims that the "Deep State was responsible for the riots." Condemnation of prominent local, reputable media as "fake news" and allegation that the "biased media establishment is the stokers of division and violence [sic]." Opine that America is "dead" because of a "bottomless pit of hysterical demands and entitlement" which "awaits



# Timeline of Notable Themes in Posts by Far Left, Right South African Users 6-7 January

🔄 **Far left and right narratives in South Africa** often find parallels in the political narratives of the US, and both groups are sensitive to political developments in the US.

Below is a comparison of some of the long-running narratives of the far left and right in South Africa.

## LEFT 🔄

Struggle against perceived continued inequalities between minority white South Africans, and historically oppressed black South Africans. This extends to a sense of injustice that black South Africans are still treated brutally by the ruling black elite.

Campaign to return land seized during South Africa's colonial and apartheid eras to black South Africans.

Strong sense of Afrocentrism, rebel against perceived continued influence of historic colonial powers and the "West."

## 🔄 RIGHT

A drive to counter the perceived threat posed by the majority black-led South African Government against white-owned wealth. Strive to preserve a unique identity.

Desire for self-determination, including on the far extreme a separatist whites-only state within the borders of South Africa. Fierce opposition to land redistribution.

See a hero in the conservative right in the US, which is perceived to share the same values as the local right. Opposed to socialism.

🔄 **INSIGHT** Perceived shortcomings in the American political system, especially as it pertains to race and minority rights issues, and the polarization those issues evoke in the US, often resonate in the South African context. It is likely that in the near to longer term this divide and polarization between left and right narratives will grow wider.

