Rapid Response 101

PREPARING FOR COORDINATED ACTION
What is political violence?

Violence aimed at political ends: controlling or changing who benefits from and participates fully in political, economic, and sociocultural life.

Includes harassment, threats, intimidation, and violence.

TACTICS

- Spreading Mis- and Disinformation
- Sowing Tensions
- Fomenting Fear
Impacts of Political Violence

- Decreases public participation in democracy
- Changes key institutions
- Justifies and normalizes violence as “protection” & revenge
- Bolsters fame and increases recruitment
Impacts of Political Violence

It is not enough to address the violence. We must also address its impact and the narratives that make it more likely to occur.
Fundamentals of Rapid Response

Harness Urgency, Cultivate Agency
Rapid Response: Remember the 3 As

**Appeal**
Gather the broadest audience by appealing to shared identities and values

**Affirm**
Unite the audience by setting and affirming positive norms

**Act**
Empower the audience to act by providing clear and positive actions
Appeal

- Mobilize those that don’t identify as “political”
- Minimize us vs. them dynamics
- Encourage cooperation

Gather the broadest audience by appealing to shared identities and values
Affirm

Unite the audience by setting and affirming positive norms

- Affirm your community’s values and what they believe
- Normalize pro-democratic values and behavior
- Norms provide people with guidance on how to act in ambiguous situations
Empower the audience to act by providing clear and positive actions

- Provide clear directions for action
- Encourage and reward positive actions that are already happening
Addressing Threats, Intimidation, and Violence
Remember:

Timely responses are better than rapid responses

Always verify information before sharing it
Before responding, ask yourself:

- What is the intent of the violence?
- Who is being targeted?
- Who is the best messenger?
What to **Do**: Create clarity, drive momentum

- **Model Respect**
- **Talk about responses to violence**
- **Affirm democratic values**
- **Activate unifying identities**
- **Build capacity and will**
What NOT to Do:
Do Not Create Confusion or Demoralize

Never:

• Engage in speculation
• Spread vague descriptions (e.g., natural disaster metaphors)
• Activate fear, anxiety, or defeatism
• Attribute incidents to identities
• Discuss violence without positive action

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