



The U.S. military on Wednesday acknowledged it was unsure about how to address white nationalism and other extremism in its ranks, and announced plans for military-wide stand-downs pausing regular activity at some point in the next 60 days to tackle the issue.

The decision to hold a stand-down was made by Lloyd Austin, who made history by becoming the military's first Black defense secretary after a long career rising in the ranks of the Army. In his confirmation hearing, Austin underscored the need to rid the military of "racists and extremists".

Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said Austin ordered the stand-down after a meeting with the U.S. military branch leaders, who are under pressure to show progress in combating extremism after current and former military servicemembers were found to have participated in the siege of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6.

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