


Eleven ways Trump has violated democratic norms in his first month in power

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By Democratic Audit UK

2017-2-23

*Donald Trump was inaugurated on 20 January. In the past month, writes **Brian Klaas**, the President has already begun to erode democratic norms – and if we accept these violations as ‘the new normal’, American democracy is at risk. He sets out eleven ways in which Trump has undermined democratic institutions.*



Donald Trump is inaugurated on 20 January. Photo: [Karl-Ludwig Poggemann](#) via a [CC-BY 2.0 licence](#)

Democratic norms die slow deaths when citizens accept them as the new normal; it's important to catalogue their erosion in the past month.

1. The President called serious, legitimate journalists and their publications “enemies of the American people,” language used by dictators.
2. Trump attacked the independent judiciary as “so-called judges” for doing their jobs and insinuated he would blame them for a terror attack.
3. Trump cast bogus aspersions on the democratic process itself by lying about voter fraud in spite of clear evidence debunking his claims.
4. He repeatedly threatened to undermine public confidence in a pillar of democracy by calling serious, well-sourced reporting “fake news.”
5. His senior counsellor, Kellyanne Conway, clearly violated ethics rules, using the office of the president for private family gain without consequences.
6. Trump’s National Security Advisor Michael Flynn resigned but ONLY after the story about Flynn’s lies about private diplomacy with Russia became public.

7. Trump eagerly violated the [emoluments clause](#), not only in taking foreign payments but also the post-election Chinese trademark approval.
8. Trump (again) lied about the US murder rate as a way to stoke fear and yet did not apologise for it or correct himself – not once.
9. Trump’s surrogates fabricated terror attacks in Bowling Green and Atlanta, and he made one up in Sweden. No public apology from Trump.
10. Trump’s private club is selling access to the President and profiting off it – doubling the member fee for Mar-a-Lago recently to \$200k.
11. The President of the United States claimed that negative polls were “fake news” but that positive polls were real; 1984esque doublespeak.

This is just one month. If we accept these violations of basic norms, our democracy will die a death of a thousand cuts. We must speak out.

This post represents the views of the author and not those of Democratic Audit. It is adapted from a series of [tweets](#) by Brian Klaas.

[Brian Klaas](#) is LSE Fellow in Comparative Politics. Read an [extract](#) from his new book about democracy in decline, [The Despot’s Accomplice](#).

Also by Brian Klaas:

‘If something isn’t done we’ve hit democracy’s high water mark. That’s billions of people and their life chances’ – Brian Klaas

