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N.J. taking potential threats to state buildings following Capitol riot ‘very seriously,’ Murphy says

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Gov. Phil Murphy affirmed residents right to protest but asked people to stay home in the coming days amid concerns of more violence, as states grapple with the fallout of last week’s deadly rampage in the nation’s capital.

“It isn’t just one building or one community” officials are protecting, Murphy said Monday during a press conference in Trenton. “Any public building, any ‘soft target’ as it were, is something that we’re looking very seriously at.”

The comments came partially in response to an ABC News report saying an internal FBI memo warned of “Armed protests” at “all 50 state capitols” starting Saturday.

The FBI’s press office did not immediately respond to a request to confirm the contents of the reported memo. The State Police previously declined to comment if any additional security measures were being taken at New Jersey’s Statehouse.

Murphy asked people to not publicly protest in the state as coronavirus cases rise, but he added, “if they do it peacefully, they have the right to protest, whether we agree or disagree.”

Officials were working to head off potential violence and more announcements about preventative measures may be coming, said Jared Maples, director of the state Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness.

Five people died last week after a mob loyal to President Donald Trump attacked the U.S. Capitol.

Col. Patrick Callahan, acting superintendent of the New Jersey State Police, said he was not aware of any troopers present at the protest.

Dozens of State Police have since been deployed to help keep the peace.

Officials also asked residents to report possible threats online or by calling 1-866-4-SAFE-NJ.

NJ Advance Media staff writer Matt Arco contributed to this report.