

Trump indicted on seven federal charges in documents case

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Former President Donald Trump has been indicted by a federal grand jury in Florida, according to a statement by Trump on his own social media platform released Wednesday evening. He is to appear for arraignment in a Miami courtroom next Tuesday.

The charges all relate to Trump's having taken thousands of official documents, hundreds of which were classified, when he left the White House in January 2021, and his refusal to return them when subpoenaed by the Department of Justice, which was acting on behalf of the National Archives and Records Administration.

The DOJ and Special Counsel Jack Smith, who is overseeing the investigation, have said nothing officially and the indictment itself remains under seal until the arraignment. But press accounts, based on unattributed leaks, have detailed the charges as including willful retention of documents, false statements, conspiracy to obstruct justice, concealment, and "gathering, transmitting or losing defense information," an offense under the 1917 Espionage Act.

The full details of the charges and the supporting evidence will only be known after the Tuesday, 3 p.m. arraignment, unless the judge unseals the indictment before then.

In responding to the indictment, Trump demagogically declared that the DOJ was engaged in "election interference" and appealed to Republicans in Congress to make an investigation of the DOJ and FBI their "number one priority." His campaign immediately began fundraising on the indictment, sending out an email from Trump, declaring, "This is nothing but a disgusting act of Election Interference by the ruling party to ELIMINATE its opposition and amass total control over our country."

It is the first time in American history that a former president has faced federal charges of any kind, let alone felony charges that carry with them lengthy prison terms if prosecutors succeed in obtaining a conviction. Trump is both an ex-president and leading in the polls to become the Republican presidential candidate in 2024.

The indictment brings to a new level the political warfare within the US ruling elite, which has found expression in a series of unprecedented events: the special counsel investigation of a sitting president on charges of collaboration with Russia; two impeachments by the House of Representatives, which failed in the US Senate; the attempted fascistic coup by Trump aimed at overturning the 2020 presidential election and the Constitution and remaining in power; and now a battery of legal charges against an ex-president.

The series of legal moves against Trump over the past three months is remarkable.

- On March 30, Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg filed 34 criminal charges against Trump for falsifying business records to conceal his payoff to adult film actress Stormy Daniels in order to buy her silence on her allegations of a sexual relationship with him.

- On May 11, a civil trial culminated in a jury awarding a \$5 million judgement to retired magazine columnist E. Jean Carroll, who sued Trump, charging he raped her nearly 30 years ago and then engaged in defamation when she made the attack public for the first time, while he was president.

- On June 13, Trump will be arraigned on multiple federal felony charges in relation to illegal removal and retention of official documents, many of them classified.

Two more criminal cases, both far more serious, are still awaiting final prosecutorial action.

In Georgia, Atlanta prosecutor Fani Willis has said she will decide by August whether to bring charges against Trump over his efforts to manipulate the outcome of the 2020 vote in that state. This includes making false charges of vote-rigging by election officials in Atlanta, as well as his now notorious phone call to Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, pressuring him to “find” enough votes for Trump to overtake Biden’s lead of some 13,000 votes.

Special counsel Jack Smith, in addition to the documents case, is overseeing the DOJ and FBI investigation into Trump’s involvement in the events of January 6, 2021. A mob of his supporters, summoned by him to Washington and directed by him to the Capitol, stormed the building, fought pitched battles with the police, threatened the lives of representatives and Vice President Mike Pence, and temporarily halted the certification of electoral votes by Congress. More than a thousand direct participants in the attack have been prosecuted, but those behind the scenes who helped organize and inspire the violence have up to now gone uncharged.

It is clear that there is a concerted effort by the Democratic Party, the Biden administration and the national security apparatus to use the legal system to tie Trump up and disrupt his effort to return to power in the 2024 elections. At the same time—as made clear by the sequencing of the cases—they wish to avoid making the January 6 coup attempt the main focus, because that would undercut Biden’s goal of preserving a “strong Republican Party” and maintaining a bipartisan consensus behind the war against Russia in Ukraine.

The struggle against Russia is not only the central policy goal of the Biden White House, it is the basis of the entire Democratic Party conflict with Trump since he first entered the Republican presidential contest in 2015. Powerful sections of the US financial aristocracy and its national security apparatus regard Trump as unreliable and unpredictable on the question of Russia, and seek to prevent him from interfering with the war, either as a candidate or by returning to the White House.

Trump, of course, is not genuinely against the war, but rather seeks to divert the popular opposition to it behind his efforts to build a fascist movement in

America.



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