

Trump endorses “citizen’s arrest” of prosecutor and judge in New York civil trial

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On Tuesday, Donald Trump shared a post on his social media platform Truth Social from a supporter that advocated a “citizen’s arrest” of the attorney general and judge overseeing the civil fraud trial currently underway in federal court in New York City against the former president.

In the original post, a Truth Social user called for vigilante action to be taken against New York Attorney General Letitia James—who brought the case against Trump, his family company and its top executives—and Judge Arthur F. Engoron, the justice of the Supreme Court of the 1st Judicial District where the civil suit is being heard.

In the repost from Trump, which he later deleted, the Truth Social user had written, “My fantasy, I would like to see Letitia James and Judge Engoron placed under citizens [sic] arrest for blatant election interference and harassment.”

The call for a “citizen’s arrest” of James and Engoron followed a Truth Social post by Trump last Friday saying the civil lawsuit against him for falsely elevating the value of his properties was a “ridiculous political witch hunt.” Trump’s post went to say that the New York Attorney General was herself guilty of “fraud” and “[s]he should be prosecuted.”

Even though there is a law in New York which protects the right to a “citizen’s arrest” when a crime is committed in the presence of the citizen making the arrest, legal experts have stated that there is no basis for such an action in the Trump civil case and any attempt to physically hold either the judge or the attorney general would most certainly constitute a criminal act.

Nearly every day of the trial, Trump has issued similar statements and social media posts about the prosecutor and accused Judge Engoron of being biased against him. On the second day of the trial, Judge

Engoron issued a gag order barring anyone from making statements about his courtroom staff.

This ban was in response to a Truth Social post by Trump that day which included a photo of the court clerk Allison Greenfield with Democratic Party Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer. The post claimed Greenfield was the senator’s girlfriend and included a link to her Instagram profile. It said, “Schumer’s girlfriend, Alison R. Greenfield, is running this case against me. How disgraceful! This case should be dismissed immediately!!” Trump was subsequently fined \$10,000 by Judge Engoron for violating the gag order.

In the \$250 million civil case, Attorney General James has accused Trump of engaging in decades of fraud aimed at inflating his net worth to gain access to favorable credit terms and otherwise increase his business empire’s profits. The case is against Trump and his business associates—including his sons Eric and Donald, Jr.—in the Trump Organization.

In a summary judgment on September 26, Judge Engoron found the defendants liable for fraud by misstating the value of their assets. The judge said the defendants had a “propensity to engage in persistent fraud.” The trial has moved on to other issues, such as whether or not the fraud was committed intentionally. The judge has also ordered Trump’s business certificates to be canceled, although an appeals court has put that decision on hold.

Testimony from an expert witness on November 1 showed that lenders to Donald Trump lost \$168 million in potential interest between 2014 and 2023 due to the false property valuations.

The deleted post by Trump is the latest in the ongoing campaign by the fascist front-runner for the 2024 Republican Party nomination for US president to incite

his supporters against the multiple legal proceedings he faces for crimes committed in his personal, business and political affairs.

In the federal case over his attempt to overturn the 2020 elections, US District Judge Tanya Chutkan imposed a gag order on Trump that has been temporarily paused while an appeals court considers it. In that order, Judge Chutkan barred Trump from comments that target prosecutors, potential witnesses or court staff. The judge wrote that Trump's comments pose "grave threats" to the integrity of the court case and "pose a significant and immediate risk" that the people he names will "become targets for threats and harassment."

As the prosecutions have proceeded and the evidence supporting criminal convictions has mounted, Trump has turned ever more aggressively to fascist appeals against the courts, as well as in his 2024 presidential campaign. As reviewed by the *World Socialist Web Site* on Monday, Trump gave a speech on Saturday in which he used language akin to that of Adolf Hitler to threaten jail or death for his political opponents.



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