

# Trump quashes Adams prosecution to speed attacks on immigrants

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In an extraordinary effort to use the criminal justice system to serve his political ends, President Donald Trump has ordered a halt to the prosecution of New York Mayor Eric Adams on bribery charges, in return for Adams agreeing to fully cooperate with the Trump administration's onslaught on migrants and refugees.

Adams was indicted last September on charges of taking bribes, including both luxury travel and illegal foreign campaign contributions, in return for official acts like pushing through the approval of a new Turkish consulate in Manhattan despite building inspectors warning the structure was unsafe. In January, the federal prosecutor for the Southern District of New York said that he had found "additional criminal conduct" by the mayor.

The Democratic mayor proclaimed loudly last year that Democratic President Joe Biden and his Department of Justice had filed charges because of Adams' public opposition to the administration's immigration policy. Adams had claimed that the influx of immigrants shipped to New York City by Texas Governor Greg Abbott would "destroy" the city, although New York has throughout its history been the point of entry for vastly larger numbers of immigrants.

While those claims were preposterous and self-serving, there is a direct connection between the halt in the prosecution of Adams and his agreement to join in and fully cooperate with the Trump administration's persecution of immigrants. This was spelled out in a remarkably blunt memo from Acting Deputy Attorney General Emil Bove, instructing the Manhattan prosecutors to put the case on hold until after the mayoral election in November.

Bove wrote that the Department of Justice (DoJ) was "particularly concerned about the impact of the prosecution on Mayor Eric Adams' ability to support

critical, ongoing federal efforts 'to protect the American people from the disastrous effects of unlawful mass migration and resettlement.'" In an effort to disavow an explicit quid pro quo, he said the DoJ was "not offering to exchange dismissal of a criminal case for Adams's assistance on immigration enforcement."

This is precisely what is taking place, although the Trump administration is driving a somewhat harder bargain, putting the prosecution of Adams on the shelf but reserving the right to proceed against him if he fails to meet its demands, which include the use of New York Police Department personnel on immigration raids and ordering city employees to provide full cooperation with ICE and other federal agencies.

Despite the city's having previously passed legislation at least formally prohibiting collaboration with ICE in immigrant roundups, Adams, supported by Democratic New York Governor Kathy Hochul, allowed the NYPD to coordinate with the Department of Homeland Security in carrying out widespread raids on immigrants in Manhattan, Queens and the Bronx two weeks ago.

Last Thursday, a memo of Adams was leaked to the media that gave instructions to city agencies to allow ICE to enter city premises, including homeless shelters, schools and hospitals, sparking widespread outrage among city workers and immigration advocates. Adams told the local ABC television station Sunday, "I cannot have any city employee that would get in the way of them [ICE] carrying out their job as a federal authority. That would be irresponsible for me."

This coming Thursday, Adams is to meet with White House border czar Tom Homan to discuss joint efforts against alleged gang members. Homan told a radio interviewer, "Either he comes to the table or we go

around him, but he promised he's all in on arresting public safety threats that are here illegally." Homan went on to say that newly sworn-in Attorney General Pam Bondi "is already taking sanctuary cities to court. She's pulling federal funding from them."

Adams faces a difficult reelection bid, polling at little more than 20 percent among prospective voters in the Democratic primary set for June 24, 2025. Several challengers or potential challengers have amassed substantial resources or can tap them easily, including former Governor Andrew Cuomo, City Comptroller Brad Lander, and Assemblyman Zohran Mamdani, backed by the Democratic Socialists of America.

The mayor could well forgo the Democratic primary if he looks like a sure loser, and run for re-election as an independent or even as a Republican, provided he obtains Trump's backing for the race. The Justice Department intervention is directly linked to these political considerations.

Trump and congressional Republicans have made a deafening hue and cry over "weaponization" of the Justice Department, as though the cases brought against Trump, particularly over the attack on Capitol Hill he instigated on January 6, 2021, were an abuse of power by the Biden administration. The truth is that the Biden White House delayed the prosecution of Trump over January 6 as long as possible, while publicly declaring the desire to sustain a "strong" Republican Party.

In the case of Adams, the use of the Department of Justice as a tool for interference with an election is absolutely brazen. And Trump has combined this with further gestures aimed at winning over a section of the Democratic Party, particularly targeting those with the most right-wing political record.

On Monday, Trump granted a full pardon to former congressman and Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich, who was convicted of selling appointments and contracts for cash, including the Senate seat vacated by Barack Obama when he was elected president in 2008. Trump commuted Blagojevich's jail sentence during his first term in office, while the pardon now expunges the conviction.

Press reports indicated that an Adams-type deal might be on offer to Representative Henry Cuellar, a right-wing Democrat from South Texas who faces bribery charges brought by the Biden Justice Department. Former Democratic Senator Robert Menendez of New

Jersey, convicted last year in a corruption scheme in which he filled his living room with gold bars and wads of cash from the government of Egypt, hailed the quashing of the Adams prosecution and expressed the hope that Trump would look at his case as well.

On a broader scale, Trump seeks to immunize not just corrupt capitalist politicians, but corrupt corporate bosses and billionaires. He issued an executive order Monday suspending for 180 days all prosecutions under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, enacted to bar US corporations from paying bribes to foreign government officials.

Trump ordered Attorney General Bondi to pause the prosecutions and review the guidelines for bringing such charges, because the FCPA had been "stretched beyond proper bounds and abused in a manner that harms the interests of the United States." Because US corporations were barred from paying bribes, while their foreign competitors were not, suspending the law would "mean a lot more business for America."

A White House fact sheet added that "overenforcement" of the FCPA infringed on the president's authority in foreign policy and stopped US companies from "engaging in practices common among international competitors, creating an uneven playing field."

This action could have a direct impact on Trump's own business interests, since the Trump Organization has numerous overseas operations where it might be to its advantage to pay bribes to foreign government officials to gain access to lucrative sites for hotels, casinos and resorts.



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