

Trump DOJ expands political vendetta with indictment of New York AG Letitia James

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The indictment of New York Attorney General Letitia James by the US Justice Department represents an escalation of President Donald Trump's ongoing campaign to subvert the rule of law for the purposes of personal and political vendetta against his enemies.

Announced with fanfare by Trump's handpicked prosecutor, the charges against James are part of the broader assault on democratic government in the US. A critical component of this assault is the implementation of the Führer principle in the White House, where everything and everyone is subordinated to the personal wishes of Trump.

On Thursday, a federal grand jury in Alexandria, Virginia, handed down indictments against James, charging her with one count of bank fraud and one count of making false statements to a financial institution.

According to the indictment, James is accused of misrepresenting her second residence on mortgage documents for a property purchased in Norfolk, Virginia, in 2020 and allegedly securing preferential loan terms by stating she would personally use the home, when it was instead rented to another family. The maximum penalties in this case are severe, carrying up to 30 years in prison and \$1 million in fines per count.

Lindsey Halligan, the acting US Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia and a personal legal protégé of the president, presided over the announcement with a level of hypocrisy that is a hallmark of Trump's rule. "No one is above the law. The charges as alleged in this case represent intentional, criminal acts and tremendous breaches of the public's trust," Halligan proclaimed in the Department of Justice press release.

The department further asserted: "The facts and the law surrounding this matter are evident, and we will persist in adhering to them to guarantee that justice is achieved."

James swiftly rejected these claims, calling the charges "unfounded, and the president's own public remarks clearly indicate that his sole intention is political vengeance at any cost. This president's behavior constitutes a serious breach of our Constitutional framework and has attracted significant

criticism from both sides of the aisle."

James added in her video statement, "This is nothing more than a continuation of the president's desperate weaponization of our justice system. He is forcing federal law enforcement agencies to do his bidding, all because I did my job as the New York State Attorney General."

This indictment cannot be understood apart from the context of Trump's direct and public threat to prosecute James. Trump has repeatedly urged criminal action against her in posts on X (formerly Twitter). His social media messages show that the case against James is the product of Trump's "revenge" and political retribution rather than a prosecutorial matter.

On September 20, 2025, Trump intended to privately message Attorney General Pam Bondi but mistakenly posted it publicly, urging her to take legal action against James and others. The message addressed Bondi by name ("Pam") and expressed frustration that "nothing is being done" to prosecute his opponents, stating: "They all guilty hell, nothing is to be done... We can't delay any longer, it's killing our reputation and credibility... JUSTICE MUST BE SERVED, NOW!!!"

This post is direct evidence of Trump's illegal intervention to pressure the Justice Department to target political adversaries, an unprecedented act by a sitting president.

Letitia James has been targeted for her successful summary judgment against Trump and his business associates on charges of large-scale financial fraud in 2024. The original civil fraud case found Trump and his business partners guilty of artificially inflating the value of their holdings to secure loans and evade taxes. Although the penalty for "ill-gotten gains" was overturned on appeal, the criminal judgment itself stands, and the facts of rampant corruption within the Trump business empire are a matter of court record.

Since regaining the presidency, Trump has made no secret of his desire for "retribution," openly demanding that the Justice Department be used to his to pursue criminal cases against his enemies with the full might of federal power. The

campaign included public calls for prosecution and back-channel threats to prosecutors who failed to comply, leading to resignations and a drastic reshuffling of DOJ staff.

The appointment of Halligan as the US Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia is a case in point. Trump appointed her in September after she previously served as his personal attorney and as a White House legal aide. Halligan had not worked as a prosecutor before this role and was handpicked by Trump, who praised her as a “tough, smart, and loyal attorney.” That is, she is personally loyal to Trump and is willing to do whatever he tells her to do, including violating the longstanding practice of the separation of the White House from the actions of the DOJ that goes back to the Watergate crisis of the Nixon administration.

Richard Nixon’s use of the Justice Department as a political weapon was exposed in the so-called “Saturday Night Massacre” of October 1973, when he attempted to force the firing of the special prosecutor investigating Watergate and then replaced top DOJ officials who resisted with assistants who were nothing more than toadies. This sequence culminated in the firing of Archibald Cox, the resignation of Attorney General Elliott Richardson, and the firing of Deputy Attorney General William Ruckelshaus.

Legal experts have denounced the merits of Halligan’s charges against James. Former US Attorney Erik Siebert, who previously refused to bring charges against James, has said repeatedly that the evidence was “pathetically weak,” a sentiment shared by career prosecutors who found no basis for federal fraud.

The response of the Democratic Party to Trump’s dictatorial intervention in the operations of the DOJ has been entirely predictable. California Attorney General Rob Bonta, who was appointed in 2021 by Democratic Party Governor Gavin Newsom, called on the DOJ leadership to “reassert the long-standing independence of the US Department of Justice and immediately end all politically-motivated criminal prosecutions,” and demanding impartiality and adherence to constitutional norms.

This plea to the fascists now in charge of the DOJ received the following response from spokesperson Chad Gilmartin, “As a matter of law, we will not comment on any grand jury proceedings ... but this Justice Department stands united as one team in our mission to enhance safety in America. The attorney general, deputy attorney general, and the entire team at Main Justice remain committed to empowering our US attorneys to pursue justice in every case.”

Exposing the atmosphere of panic operating within the Trump administration, however, were the reports that Justice Department officials, including AG Bondi and Deputy AG Todd Blanche, were blindsided by Halligan’s presentation

to the grand jury. This lack of coordination, which is also historically unprecedented, exposes both the lawlessness of Donald Trump and the chaos that prevails within the administration.

James’s indictment is the latest in a series of legal charges brought against Trump’s political opponents. Last month, former FBI Director James Comey was indicted by Halligan for making a false statement and obstruction in connection with his congressional testimony about the Russia investigation. Comey pleaded not guilty and demanded a speedy trial during his arraignment on Wednesday in the same court.

The Trump administration is expected to pursue criminal cases against his own former National Security Advisor John Bolton and Democratic Senator Adam Schiff of California, who have both been targeted by Trump for their criticism of the president. Trump has also publicly threatened the “arrest and prosecution” of Illinois Governor JB Pritzker and Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson, who have opposed the deployment of federal troops in that city.

Trump has centralized executive power in ways that mirror the authoritarian “leadership principle”—the *Führerprinzip*—where the will of the leader overrides law, precedent and constitutional checks.

The plan by the White House for a unitary executive—unchecked presidential power—is well documented. In an interview with CNN on Monday, White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller claimed that Trump has “plenary authority”—a term meaning complete or absolute power—over decisions to deploy the National Guard in US cities.

Miller paused abruptly after making this statement, which raised speculation about the implications of his blatantly stating the scope of presidential power that contradicts the US separation of powers principle.

The indictment of the New York attorney general is part of the larger, systematic attack on both political opponents and constitutional government. The transparently political charges against James are being used as an instrument of Trump’s personal revenge and a further escalation of dictatorial rule in the US.



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