

Trump demanding \$230 million from Justice Department over past investigations

Barry Grey
22 October 2025

In a mafia-style shakedown, President Donald Trump is demanding that his hand-picked Justice Department appointees approve some \$230 million, paid for by taxpayers, in compensation for investigations conducted during and after his first term in office. The news, first reported Tuesday by the *New York Times*, comes in the midst of a government shutdown that is depriving hundreds of thousands of government workers of paychecks and threatening to close down food assistance programs on which millions rely.

Such damage claims by a sitting president are unprecedented, raising glaring conflict of interest issues. In Trump's case they are compounded by the fact that the Department of Justice officials tasked with ruling on his demands, known as administrative claims, are Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche, his former personal defense lawyer, and Associate Attorney General Stanley Woodward Jr., who represented Trump's co-defendant in one of the cases for which Trump is demanding compensation.

The *Times* quoted Bennett L. Gershman, an ethics professor at Pace University, as saying, "What a travesty. The ethical conflict is just so basic and fundamental, you don't need a law professor to explain it."

Gershman added: "And then to have people in the Justice Department decide whether his claim should be successful or not, and these are the people who serve him deciding whether he wins or loses. It's bizarre and almost too outlandish to believe."

Trump confirmed the *Times* story on Tuesday when asked about it by a reporter in the Oval Office. He said, "It could be," and went on to say, "I don't know about the numbers. I don't even talk about it. All I know is that they would owe me a lot of money."

He continued: "With the country, it's interesting,

because I'm the one that makes the decision. It's awfully strange to make a decision where I'm the one paying myself."

Trump has lodged two administrative claims. The first, submitted in late 2023, seeks damages over the FBI and special counsel investigation into alleged Russian interference in the 2016 election and possible connections to the Trump campaign. The second complaint, filed in the summer of 2024, accuses the FBI of violating Trump's privacy by searching his Mar-a-Lago estate in 2022 for classified documents. It also accuses the Justice Department of malicious prosecution in charging him with mishandling classified records after he left office.

Administrative claims are submitted first to the Justice Department to see if a settlement can be reached. If the DOJ rejects such a claim or declines to act on it, the claimant can then sue in court. "Still, that is an unlikely outcome in this instance," the *Times* wrote, "given that Trump is already negotiating, in essence, with his subordinates."

Deputy Attorney General Blanche said at his confirmation hearing in February that his attorney-client relationship with the president continued. He represented Trump in both the classified documents case and the case brought by Special Counsel Jack Smith over Trump's role in the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol by Trump's fascist supporters.

Associate Attorney General Woodward, who heads the DOJ's civil division, represented Trump's co-defendant, Walt Nauta, in the classified documents case. He has also represented a number of other Trump aides, including current FBI Director Kash Patel, in investigations related to Trump or the January 6 insurrection.

If and when a cash settlement of Trump's claims is

awarded, neither the Justice Department nor the White House is under any legal requirement to inform the public.

DOJ spokesperson Chad Gilmartin is responding to all press inquiries on conflicts of interest with the same one-sentence statement: “In any circumstance, all officials at the Department of Justice follow the guidance of career ethics officials.”

In fact, the Trump Justice Department fired its ethics chief in July, part of a purge of at least a dozen employees who had worked with the special counsel who brought the federal indictments against Trump.

Trump’s effort to extort \$230 million from the Justice Department is only the latest example of his utterly corrupt use of the presidency for self-enrichment. Trump’s family launched a \$TRUMP cryptocurrency memecoin before his 2025 inauguration that netted hundreds of millions of dollars. He and his allies also profited from stock sales in Truth Social, his publicly traded social media firm, which spiked following policy favors to investors. Trump accepted luxury assets while in office, including a \$500 million aircraft provided by Qatari interests for display in his planned presidential museum.

?Various Democratic lawmakers have denounced Trump’s demand for \$230 million in taxpayer money as a “shakedown” and “self-dealing,” but, as always, they propose nothing, not even impeachment proceedings, to stop it.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact