

Wisconsin judge convicted as Trump administration escalates attacks on immigrants and political opponents

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In a split decision on Thursday, a Wisconsin jury convicted Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge Hannah Dugan of felony obstruction while acquitting her of a related misdemeanor charge. Dugan was arrested by the FBI this past April as part of the Trump administration's ongoing efforts to establish a political dictatorship and subordinate all branches of government to the White House.

Dugan is facing up to five years in prison for the crime of instructing Eduardo Flores Ruiz, a Milwaukee resident at the time, to use a side door to exit her courtroom as a gang of federal agents waited outside. After exiting the courtroom, Flores Ruiz and his attorney proceeded down a public hallway where two federal agents were waiting and arrested him. Prosecutors argued that even though Flores Ruiz did not evade arrest, Judge Dugan intended for him to avoid federal agents by using a stairwell and exit not typically accessible to the public.

Under previous administrations, courts and other so-called "sensitive areas" were generally off limits to ICE kidnapping operations in part because the government sought to ensure immigrants would appear for court hearings without fear of arrest.

The arrest and conviction of Dugan is one of the most consequential actions taken by the Trump administration in its drive to erect a presidential dictatorship. The Trump White House, which directed Dugan's arrest, has demonstrated its willingness to imprison political opponents, including members of the judiciary, who take any action that impedes the ongoing mass deportation operation.

While Dugan was found guilty of obstructing federal agents, she has not yet been sentenced. Her attorney has already stated that the conviction will be appealed. If the

verdict stands, Dugan faces up to five years in prison.

Dugan's conviction comes nearly 11 months after Trump, in one of his first official acts after returning to office, pardoned more than 1,500 fanatical supporters who stormed the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021 in an attempted coup. Many of those pardoned had been convicted of obstructing a federal proceeding for conspiring to block Congress from certifying the Electoral College vote.

While Trump's fascist foot soldiers walk free, Judge Dugan now faces the prospect of imprisonment.

Underscoring the political character of the prosecution, Trump administration officials and Republican politicians responded to the verdict by gloating and issuing threats. Attorney General Pam Bondi wrote on X, "NO ONE IS ABOVE THE LAW. No one can obstruct law enforcement as they carry out their basic duties. This Department of Justice will not waver as our agents and law enforcement partners continue to make America Safe Again."

FBI Director Kash Patel echoed the same slogan, posting, "No one is above the law" alongside a Fox News headline about the trial.

On Friday, Wisconsin Assembly Speaker Robin Vos and Assembly Majority Leader Tyler August released a joint statement demanding that Dugan immediately resign or face impeachment proceedings.

As Republican officials circle, no prominent Democrats have spoken out in defense of Dugan. At the time of her arrest, Senate Democratic leader Charles Schumer described the prosecution as an attack "on the separation of powers" and pledged to "fight this with everything we have." As of this writing, more than 24 hours after the conviction, Schumer has issued no further public statement. Wisconsin Democratic Governor Tony Evers,

who previously denounced Dugan's arrest and Trump's assault on the judiciary, has also remained silent.

The attack on Dugan is part of a broader campaign by the Trump administration against democratic rights. *The Guardian*, citing records obtained by Property of the People, reported that the FBI has initiated domestic terrorism investigations into anti-ICE activity in 23 regions across the United States. Some of these investigations were launched under Trump's National Security Presidential Memorandum 7, "Countering Domestic Terrorism and Organized Political Violence," issued on September 25.

The memorandum asserts, without evidence, that "Common threads animating this violent conduct include anti Americanism, anti capitalism, and anti Christianity; support for the overthrow of the United States Government; extremism on migration, race, and gender; and hostility towards those who hold traditional American views on family, religion, and morality."

Although the FBI document provides few specifics, an accompanying chart shows that 54 percent of pending investigations related to anti-ICE activity concern "civil unrest," meaning the FBI is investigating individuals for protesting illegal, violent and brutal immigration kidnapping operations.

Further escalating this campaign, Thursday marked the first deadline in a memo issued earlier this month by Attorney General Pam Bondi ordering all federal domestic law enforcement agencies to submit intelligence files on "Antifa" and "Antifa related" activities to the FBI. The December 4 memo outlines how federal agencies are to implement NSPM-7 against those who oppose capitalism and fascism and express support for socialism.

Defending these actions, White House spokeswoman Abigail Jackson told the *Washington Post* that "Left wing organizations have fueled violent riots, organized attacks against law enforcement officers, coordinated illegal doxing campaigns, arranged drop points for weapons and riot materials, and more," a claim made without evidence.

The Trump administration has seized upon virtually any violent incident to intensify its assault on immigrants and democratic rights. Following the shooting at Brown University and the murder of MIT Professor Nuno Loureiro at his home in Brookline, Massachusetts by Claudio Neves Valente, a former Brown grad student and Portuguese national, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem announced on Thursday night the suspension of the diversity visa lottery program, even

though DHS does not administer the lottery.

The lottery program is run by the State Department. DHS's role is limited to issuing green cards to individuals already granted legal permanent resident status. By halting the issuance of green cards under this program, DHS is effectively placing legal residents at risk of detention by ICE for failing to carry documentation.

Hundreds of thousands of people have entered the United States through the diversity visa lottery since Valente did in 2017. Suspending the program will do nothing to address gun violence but will instead expose hundreds of thousands of people to immigration raids and detention.

The Democratic Party, which has just voted to provide Trump with a \$1 trillion war budget, has demonstrated that it is both incapable and unwilling to defend democratic rights. As Trump launches daily attacks on the Constitution, the judiciary and the working class, Democrats have supplied the votes needed to keep the government and the detention camps operating.

This is a government of the oligarchy waging war on the working class. It is dismantling vital social programs on which millions depend. This week Republicans confirmed there would be no vote to extend Affordable Care Act subsidies, ensuring that health insurance costs for millions will rise sharply in the coming year.

The decisive question is one of political leadership and organization. The Democratic Party will not oppose Trump's drive toward dictatorship because, like him, it represents the financial aristocracy and is committed to the defense of the capitalist state and the wealth of the super-rich.



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