

FBI raids Fulton County, Georgia election center as Trump presses bogus claim of stolen 2020 election

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Dozens of FBI agents entered the Fulton County Election Hub and Operation Center in southwest Atlanta, Georgia on Wednesday, seizing large quantities of ballots, election records and other documents from the 2020 general election.

A warrant issued by US Magistrate Judge Catherine M. Salinas claimed this material “constitutes evidence of the commission of a criminal offense” and had been “used as the means of committing a criminal offense.” The two offenses alleged in the warrant are failure to retain records for the required time and intimidating voters or procuring false votes or false voter registrations.

These are long-disproven allegations made by Trump and his coterie of fascist plotters between the November 2020 election and the January 6, 2021 assault on the Capitol, in which several thousand thugs, summoned to Washington by Trump, stormed the Capitol and temporarily blocked Congress from certifying Trump’s election defeat.

The flimsy character of the claims of ballot-rigging in Georgia—and in Fulton County and Atlanta in particular—was demonstrated in the civil suit filed by two election workers against Trump’s top election lawyer, former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, which ended in a verdict awarding the election workers \$148 million for slander and persecution.

The FBI raid comes less than a week after Trump told an international audience of billionaires and government officials in Davos, Switzerland that it was now known to all that the 2020 election had been stolen and that he expected arrests shortly for this supposed crime.

As summarized by the right-wing,

pro-Trump *Washington Examiner*:

... federal investigators are seeking all physical ballots from Fulton County’s 2020 general election, including absentee, early voting, provisional, emergency, duplicated, and damaged ballots, as well as ballot envelopes. It also authorizes the seizure of tabulator tapes from every voting machine used in the county, including opening, closing, and zero tapes, as well as all ballot images generated during the initial count, recount, or any subsequent scanning related to the 2020 election. In addition, agents are permitted to obtain voter rolls associated with the 2020 election, including records showing to whom absentee ballots were issued, from whom ballots were received, and who voted early or in person. Federal investigators were also authorized to review both physical and electronic election records and to provide copies of seized digital data to DOJ attorneys and technical experts for further examination.

The raid was carried out without giving either Fulton County officials or the state’s top elections officer, Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, any advance notice. It was Raffensperger who received the notorious phone call from Trump on January 2, 2021, in which the US president demanded that he “find” the exact number of votes required to overcome Democrat Joe Biden’s lead in the state.

Raffensperger's refusal to bow to this pressure and falsify results made Trump his bitter enemy, and there are obvious personal political motives for the timing of the raid. Raffensperger is seeking the Republican nomination for governor in the upcoming May 19 primary, against Lt. Governor Burt Jones, a Trump-backed loyalist who has embraced the claim that the 2020 election was fraudulent.

The broader purpose is also clear: Trump has begun the process of rigging the 2026 elections by demanding voter rolls from numerous states to target Republican efforts at voter intimidation, such as concocting bogus cases of previous or current vote fraud. One of the demands made by Attorney General Pam Bondi, in an extraordinary letter last week to Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, was that the state hand over its voter rolls to the Department of Justice in return for a reduction in the number of federal agents terrorizing Minneapolis.

The entire conduct of the Fulton County raid stinks of dictatorship. Only days before the raid, the FBI special agent in charge of the Atlanta field office, Paul W. Brown, was suddenly removed, according to the Associated Press. Instead, FBI Deputy Director Andrew Bailey was at the site of the raid, according to a report by the pro-Trump NewsNation network.

The Justice Department official who obtained the warrant is not the US Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia, but Thomas Albus, appointed by Trump as US Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri. This St. Louis-based official received a secret, special appointment by Attorney General Bondi to investigate "election integrity" cases nationwide, which allows him to convene grand juries and obtain warrants in all 94 US attorney districts. The selection of Albus for this role only became public when his signature appeared on the Atlanta warrant.

Even more irregular and suspicious is the presence of Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard during the raid. The former Democratic congresswoman from Hawaii holds a position in the Trump cabinet which gives her responsibility to oversee the work of 18 agencies in the vast US intelligence apparatus, including the FBI. But previous holders of the position have focused on overseas operations, and have never accompanied FBI agents in a domestic policing activity.

Senator Mark Warner of Virginia, the ranking

Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, said that Gabbard had not informed the committee that there was any "legitimate foreign intelligence nexus" to the Fulton County election office. Conspiracy theories rife in fascist social media circles have blamed Trump's 2020 defeat on foreign interference, stemming from Iran, China and even "Italian satellites."

Gabbard, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem and Bondi will all appear Friday at the winter meeting of the National Association of Secretaries of State. This assembly, bringing both Democratic and Republican state election officials to Washington, may well give another indication of the ongoing efforts by the Trump administration to rig—or even suspend—the 2026 elections.



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