

Trump Justice Department indicts Southern Poverty Law Center in frame-up to aid fascist groups

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In a politically motivated frame-up by the Trump administration, aimed at criminalizing the exposure of fascist and white supremacist organizations, the Department of Justice announced Tuesday a criminal indictment targeting the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). The SPLC has waged legal and political battles to expose criminal actions by fascist groups, beginning with the Ku Klux Klan during the civil rights era.

The charges, announced by Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche and FBI Director Kash Patel, turn the SPLC's use of informants inside violent far-right groups into a supposed fraud against donors, under conditions in which the Trump administration itself is packed with fascist operatives and is seeking to rehabilitate the very forces the SPLC has exposed for decades.

The 14-page indictment, filed in the Middle District of Alabama, charges the SPLC with wire fraud, false statements to banks and money laundering conspiracy. Its central allegation is that the organization solicited funds to "dismantle" extremist groups while secretly paying informants inside those groups. The indictment lists informants associated with the Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nations, National Alliance, National Socialist Movement, American Front and the online leadership group that planned the 2017 "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville.

The cynical character of the prosecution was underscored by the statements of Blanche and Patel themselves. Announcing the indictment, acting Attorney General Todd Blanche accused the SPLC of "manufacturing the extremism it purports to oppose by paying sources to stoke racial hatred." Patel claimed the organization used donor money to "actually pay the leadership of these supposed violent extremist groups." The indictment alleges more than \$3 million in payments between 2014 and 2023 to eight individuals tied to groups, including the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazi organizations.

But Blanche's own answer to a reporter exposed the

falsity of his claim. When asked about the government's legal theory, and specifically whether the indictment alleged that these payments benefited the organizations themselves, Blanche admitted that it did not. "To the extent that there's any link between that individual receiving the money and benefits to that organization, that's not in the indictment," he said.

In other words, the administration's headline accusation, that the SPLC was effectively funding fascist organizations, is not what the indictment actually says. The government's theory is narrower and more cynical: not that it is illegal to pay informants but that the SPLC did not spell out to donors and banks exactly how its informant network functioned.

This is a fraud case built on innuendo. The administration tells the public that the SPLC was funding neo-Nazi and Klan organizations, while its own acting attorney general admits the indictment does not allege that the money benefited those organizations as such. The real issue for the government is that the SPLC maintained informants inside fascist groups and concealed their identities and payment channels, precisely the sort of method routinely used by the FBI and other state agencies.

The fraud charge is grotesque coming from the Trump administration, which has transformed the presidency into a criminal mechanism for personal and family enrichment. Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and Middle East envoy, has continued to solicit and manage billions from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf monarchies through his private investment firm, including the \$2 billion investment he secured from the Saudi Public Investment Fund after leaving the White House, while now again functioning as a representative of US policy in the region.

The Trump family, meanwhile, has reaped vast sums from cryptocurrency ventures. Reuters estimated that the Trump

Organization earned roughly \$802 million from crypto ventures in the first half of 2025 alone, including World Liberty Financial and the \$TRUMP meme coin. The family's Trump Mobile venture announced a "made in America" gold-colored phone in 2025, took \$100 deposits from customers, and then failed to deliver the device by the promised deadline. Trump has also accepted or celebrated a stream of gifts and tributes, including a Qatari Boeing 747-8 valued at about \$400 million for use as a presidential aircraft, a FIFA "Peace Prize" trophy and medal and a 24 karat gold, mounted Apple plaque from Tim Cook.

While the Trump crime family gorges itself on bribes, it seeks to criminalize those who expose the fascist activities of their close political supporters, including the fascist groups that spearheaded the assault on Capitol Hill on January 6, 2021.

The indictment dovetails with the broader "Stop the Steal" mythology promoted by Trump, Alex Jones and other far-right figures, who claim that the presence of informants at right-wing events proves that these movements were manufactured by the FBI, "Antifa," the Democratic Party, the SPLC or other supposed enemies. This is an inversion of reality.

The presence of informants in organizations, such as the Oath Keepers, before January 6 did not prove that the coup was a set-up. It demonstrated that the state had warnings about the scale of the violence, and that powerful elements within the police, military and intelligence apparatus refused to act because they were sympathetic to Trump's effort to overturn the election.

SPLC interim President and CEO Bryan Fair called the allegations false and said the group's informant program had been necessary because of real threats to the organization and its staff. "In 1983, our offices were firebombed," Fair said, adding that the SPLC had faced "countless credible threats" in the decades since. He said the organization used informants to infiltrate violent extremist groups and that "what we learned from informants saved lives."

The SPLC was founded in 1971 by Morris Dees, Joseph J. Levin Jr. and Julian Bond, at a time when the late stages of the civil rights movement were still marked by Klan terror, church bombings and murders that had gone unanswered or unpunished by the state. The organization became known for litigation that bankrupted or disrupted fascist and white supremacist groups, including the United Klans of America in the 1980s and the White Aryan Resistance in the early 1990s. That history is what the Trump administration is seeking to reverse. Its message is that exposing fascists is itself criminal, while racist thugs and murderers are to be

recast as victims.

The political motive is underscored by the personnel and allies of the Trump administration. During Trump's first term, the SPLC reported on figures such as Stephen Miller and Jack Posobiec, both of whom have played central roles in the development of the contemporary fascist movement around Trump. Miller now directs policy from within the White House, while Posobiec functions as a propagandist and ally of Steve Bannon's far-right network. The attack on the SPLC is therefore also an effort to retroactively discredit its exposures of the individuals and organizations now integrated into, or politically aligned with, the Trump regime.

The most sinister element of the indictment is its implicit claim that fascist groups were not the organic product of American capitalism, racism, militarism and the decay of bourgeois democracy but were somehow "manufactured" by liberal organizations that monitored them. This is the same conspiracy theory used to explain away January 6. It seeks to whitewash the growth of fascism by claiming that those who documented, infiltrated or exposed fascist organizations were responsible for creating them.

Under conditions in which the president openly threatens to "wipe out" whole countries, neo-Nazis and Christian nationalists direct state policy, and the police and military apparatus is being mobilized against immigrants, protesters and workers, the prosecution of the SPLC marks a further stage in the destruction of democratic rights. The target is not merely one organization. The indictment is a warning to every journalist, civil rights group, researcher and political opponent of the Trump administration: Exposing fascism will be treated as a crime, while the fascists themselves are rehabilitated as victims.



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