

Giuliani Associate Asks Court to Allow Handing Over Documents Sought in Trump Impeachment

By Reuters

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WASHINGTON — Lev Parnas, an indicted associate of U.S. President Donald Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, has asked a court for permission to turn over the contents of Parnas' phone and other documents to a House of Representatives panel for use in the Trump impeachment inquiry, his lawyer said on Monday.

Lawyer Joseph Bondy said in a tweet that the Justice Department on Tuesday would be producing the documents and the contents of the phone seized from Parnas when he was arrested in October.

The government "does not object" to Parnas handing over the documents to the House Intelligence Committee, subject to approval by the court, Bondy wrote in a letter to U.S. District Judge Paul Oetken in New York.

Parnas, a Ukraine-born U.S. citizen, was charged alongside another Florida businessman, Belarus-born Igor Fruman, with illegally funneling money to a pro-Trump election committee and other politicians. Both have pleaded not guilty.

Giuliani has said Parnas and Fruman assisted him in investigating one of the Republican president's political rivals, former Democratic Vice President Joe Biden, and Biden's son Hunter, who served on the board of a Ukrainian energy company.

Trump was impeached by the Democratic-led House on Dec. 18 on charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress.

The House intelligence panel played a leading role in the investigation, which focused on Trump's effort to push Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to open investigations into Biden, a leading contender to run against Trump in the 2020 election, and a debunked theory on election interference.

In the letter to Oetken, Bondy said review of the material, which the House panel had subpoenaed, was essential for its "ability to corroborate the strength" of Parnas' potential testimony.

Bondy said he and Parnas did not know "whether we intend to produce the entirety of the materials, or a subset filtered for either privilege or relevancy."

Bondy said in early November that Parnas was prepared to comply with requests for records and testimony from congressional impeachment investigators.

(Reporting by Mohammad Zargham; Editing by Peter Cooney)