

FFRF warns that Bondi memo weaponizes federal law enforcement against non-Christians and dissenting viewpoints — Freedom From Religion Foundation

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Official White House Photo by Molly Riley

The Freedom From Religion Foundation is sounding the alarm that a deeply troubling directive issued by Attorney General Pam Bondi appears to be targeting non-Christians, nonreligious Americans and groups with viewpoints the administration disfavors.

[Bondi's Dec. 4 memo](#) addressed to all federal prosecutors and law enforcement agencies directs federal agencies to target “domestic terrorists” with added scrutiny towards organizations and individuals whose views do not align with conservative Christian ideology.

The memo directs agencies to focus on groups with “political and social agendas” that include “anti-Christianity,” “radical gender ideology” or “hostility towards traditional views on family, religion, and morality,” and suggests that such perspectives constitute [“anti-American sentiment.”](#)

“This directive recasts constitutionally protected viewpoints as national security threats,” says FFRF Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor. “There is nothing more American than expressing your beliefs freely, including disbelief. Atheists, Muslims and anyone who falls outside the administration’s preferred ideology should not be placed under suspicion as a class.”

[A press release about the internal directive from the law firm Arnold & Porter notes](#), “The key message is unmistakable: federal law enforcement will target individuals, organizations and funders whom the U.S. Department of Justice contends are ‘domestic terrorists,’ under a definition that links political violence to ‘anti-fascist’ ideologies.”

While the directive paints with a broad brush, referencing such things as “radical gender ideology” and support for immigrants as tantamount to terrorism, FFRF finds it particularly disturbing that “adherence to ... anti-Christianity” and “hostility towards traditional views on family, religion, and morality” are characterized as “dangerous” views related to domestic terrorism. The directive verges on establishing such views as “thought crimes” in which dissident belief appears to be considered a form of violence.

Bondi’s memo calls on federal law enforcement to investigate and prosecute crimes by “domestic terrorist organizations.” It charges that anti-fascist groups paint “conservative viewpoints” as “fascist” and asserts, without evidence, that this labeling is linked to recent political violence. This framing closely mirrors longstanding Christian nationalist rhetoric that depicts ideological opponents as inherently dangerous or un-American.

The memo also calls for law enforcement agencies to review their intelligence and provide it to the FBI. In addition, the FBI is directed to create a list of domestic terrorist groups and disseminate that information within 60 days. It directs that a tip line be established with cash rewards.

The memo must be viewed in light of recent bigoted statements from the Trump administration. Last week, President Trump referred to Somali immigrants in Minnesota, who mainly come from a Muslim background, as [“garbage,”](#) comments that drew applause from his supporters but alarm from civil rights organizations. His administration has also begun rebranding secularism itself as a form of [“anti-Christian bias.”](#)

“Federal law enforcement agencies are charged with preventing violence, not policing thought or belief,” Gaylor adds. “Bondi’s memo conflates dissent or unorthodox views with extremism and appears to revive the worst instincts of McCarthyism, targeting people because of their views, identities or lack of religion.”

FFRF warns that the memo could have chilling effects on nonreligious Americans, LGBTQ-plus people, Muslims, immigrants and any groups identified as holding “nontraditional” or non-Christian viewpoints. The organization urges Congress, civil rights groups and the public to scrutinize the directive and demand transparency and accountability.

The Freedom From Religion Foundation is a U.S.-based nonprofit dedicated to defending the constitutional principle of separation between state and church and educating the public on matters relating to nontheism. With over 41,000 members, FFRF is the largest association of freethinkers (atheists, agnostics and humanists) in North America. For more information, visit ffrf.org.

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