

US lawmakers say DoJ rushed Southern Poverty Law Center indictment, citing whistleblower

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Todd Blanche, the acting US attorney general, speaks during a press conference at the justice department in Washington DC on Wednesday. Photograph: Kylie Cooper/Reuters

A justice department lawyer working in Todd Blanche's office pressured prosecutors to file [criminal charges](#) against the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) despite their concerns about the strength of the case, a whistleblower told House [Democrats](#).

The lawyer, [Aakash Singh](#), reportedly "ordered" federal prosecutors in [Alabama](#) "to rush through the indictment of the SPLC, despite serious concerns about the strength of the case", Jamie Raskin and Mary Gay Scanlon said in a [letter](#) on Friday. The Democrats also said they were opening an investigation [into the matter](#). The letter was first [reported](#) by MS Now.

Blanche, the acting US attorney general, held a press conference announcing the [11-count indictment](#) on 21 April, accusing the civil rights organization of committing wire fraud, making a false statement to a bank, and conspiring to launder money. The charges were in connection with

a now-defunct program in which the SPLC paid informants to infiltrate extremist groups and then shared information with law enforcement.



Aakash Singh, a top official at the Department of Justice. Photograph: Department of Justice

The organization has denied all wrongdoing and legal experts [have said](#) the charges [are weak](#). The indictment was widely seen as part of [Blanche's effort](#) to show Donald Trump he can effectively use the justice department to punish political rivals as he seeks to be appointed attorney general permanently.

The US attorney for the middle district of [Alabama](#) declined to comment. The justice department did not respond to a request for comment.

In a post on X following publication of the MS Now story that was later deleted without explanation, the justice department said it had “methodically built the case for YEARS”.

“The U.S. Attorney PERSONALLY presented the case and would not have done so without full confidence,” the justice department [said](#) in the now-deleted post.

Singh, 33, is an associate deputy attorney general who has emerged as a top enforcer for Blanche willing to push people inside the department to pursue political rivals.

Earlier this year, he told federal prosecutors that Trump was their [“chief client”](#) and that anyone uncomfortable should step aside, according to Bloomberg Law. Last year, he [reportedly](#) encouraged prosecutors to investigate a group funded by George Soros and suggested a wide range of criminal charges. He has also encouraged [cracking down on protesters](#) and was also involved in the push to [prosecute Kilmar Ábrego García](#).

Ever since the indictment, Trump, Blanche and other allies have made a number of false or misleading statements about the SPLC, suggesting that the organization was responsible for funding vast amounts of rightwing extremism and that it had never shared information with law enforcement. Earlier this week, [lawyers representing the SPLC](#) filed for a court order blocking the government from making further prejudicial statements against the organization.

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