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Trump Has Complained About Pam Bondi Repeatedly to Aides

President has privately criticized his attorney general as weak and ineffective in recent weeks

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Attorney General Pam Bondi once served as one of President Trump's personal attorneys. YURI GRIPAS/CNP/BLOOMBERG NEWS

President Trump has complained to aides repeatedly in recent weeks about Attorney General Pam Bondi, describing her as weak and an ineffective enforcer of his agenda, administration officials and other people familiar with his complaints said.

The criticisms appear to be part of an intense campaign by Trump to pressure the Justice Department to more aggressively pursue his priorities, some of the officials said. Trump has previously criticized Bondi at times but his vocal concerns about his attorney general have grown more frequent in recent months, officials said.

This month, Trump has talked with allies about how he could appoint special counsels at the Justice Department because he is so frustrated with what he sees as the slow progress of its work, people familiar with the matter said.

Chief among his grievances is what he sees as Bondi's failure to quickly and effectively

prosecute the investigators who had pursued him for years, including former FBI Director James Comey and New York Democratic Attorney General Letitia James, the officials and others familiar with his complaints said. [Both criminal cases were dismissed](#) in November by a judge who said the Trump aide who secured the indictment had been improperly appointed to her post. Trump has wanted to see the cases continue quickly.

A Justice Department investigation into another of Trump’s antagonists, Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell, became public on Sunday night. Powell, whom Trump has publicly berated and pressured to lower interest rates, disclosed that the Justice Department was pursuing [a criminal investigation](#) over his testimony last summer about the central bank’s [building-renovation project](#).

Trump has also complained frequently that Bondi’s handling of [the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s files](#) on convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein has created months of political and personal headaches for him, officials familiar with the complaints said. When White House chief of staff Susie Wiles told Vanity Fair that Bondi “whiffed” on her handling of the files, Trump told staff that he agreed with Wiles, two officials said.

He has also heard from conservative activists and influencers criticizing Bondi, and collected similar social-media posts that he has asked other aides about, the officials said. And Trump has expressed frustration that the Justice Department hasn’t done more to pursue those he claims helped steal the 2020 election, which he lost, some of the people familiar with the complaints said.

At times, Trump has complained to Bondi directly about his frustrations with the department, officials said.

Bondi has grown concerned in the past month about Trump’s complaints, people in touch with her said. A spokesman for Bondi said she has been focused on executing Trump’s directive to make America safe again.

In a statement to The Wall Street Journal on Friday afternoon, Trump said: “Pam is doing an excellent job. She has been my friend for many years. Tremendous progress is being made against radical left lunatics who are good at only one thing, cheating in elections and the crimes they commit.”

The White House also sent Friday statements from Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Wiles and other senior administration officials, all praising Bondi. Vance said Bondi has the “full support of President Trump and

myself,” and Wiles called Bondi “incredibly talented, smart and hardworking.”

Late Friday, the Fed [received grand-jury subpoenas](#) from the Justice Department that threaten a criminal indictment. The Bondi spokesman said she had “instructed her U.S. attorneys to prioritize investigating any abuses of taxpayer dollars.”

Trump is still at times warm personally with Bondi—a former Florida attorney general who was once one of his personal attorneys—including at the Kennedy Center Honors ceremony [Trump hosted last month](#), according to a person familiar with their interactions.



Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, President Trump and Attorney General Pam Bondi at a law-enforcement at the White House last year. JIM WATSON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Other officials at the Justice Department have also come under criticism from the president, people familiar with the criticisms said.

Trump’s comments on Bondi reflect those of some of his MAGA supporters. While she once enjoyed strong backing among the president’s voters given her history with the president, longtime Trump ally Steve Bannon said, Bondi is now “bleeding support from her and President Trump’s most loyal troops.”

“Folks are desperate for action and just haven’t seen it,” Bannon said, providing a list of topics that the president’s supporters want her to bring more cases on, including the 2020 election and the Justice Department’s investigation into Trump campaign ties to Russia in the 2016 election.

Bondi has been less visible around the White House in recent months, White House officials said. She didn’t appear with Trump to announce the extraordinary capture of

Venezuelian President [Nicolas Maduro](#), even though her agency was the one whose prosecution underpinned the arrest. (A Justice Department official said that Bondi was following Maduro's seizure in real time and that travel logistics, combined with the sensitive nature of the operation, kept her from attending.)

Vance on Thursday also unveiled an unusual arrangement: the creation of a high-ranking Justice Department post to investigate fraud and that would be run by the White House and answerable to Trump instead of Bondi. Bondi thanked Vance in [a post on social media](#). She worked with the White House on the position, the department official said, and she and Vance chose it over the appointment of a special counsel.

Trump's recent criticisms echo the fraught relationships he had with his first-term attorneys general. He pushed out Jeff Sessions over the Russia probe. William Barr [ultimately resigned](#) after saying investigators had found no widespread fraud that would have changed Trump's 2020 election loss.

"The better an attorney is, the more process-oriented they are going to be, and that is in direct opposition to what Trump wants, which is someone who is outcome-oriented," said Sarah Isgur, who served as a spokeswoman for Sessions at the Justice Department. "He can never find a great attorney general because, by definition, they can't be a great lawyer."

Bondi, 60 years old, has pursued many of Trump's priorities after taking the job in February, firing prosecutors who had worked on investigations of him and praising him in frequent Fox News appearances. She authorized a U.S. attorney in Florida [to reinvestigate the government's assessment](#) of Russian interference in the 2016 election, which Trump has portrayed as a criminal plot by Democrats to undermine his first presidency. Prosecutors have issued dozens of subpoenas as part of the inquiry but no charges have been filed.

Trump's building frustration with Bondi spilled into public view in September, when he pushed her to prosecute Comey and James in a social-media post that he [had intended to send](#) as a private message. He installed Lindsey Halligan, a White House aide, to run the federal prosecutor's office in Virginia handling the probes, and she indicted Comey and James within weeks of her arrival.

The cases have been on life support after a judge ruled Halligan's appointment was unlawful and dismissed both prosecutions. The Justice Department has failed to persuade at least two grand juries to indict James since then. Nearly a month after

the judge dismissed charges against Comey and James, the Justice Department filed notices of appeal in both cases.

The Justice Department's continuing release of the Epstein files has also kept Trump's past relationship with the disgraced financier in the spotlight, to Trump's exasperation. Trump has said he cut off ties long before Epstein was first arrested in 2006. As the [Justice Department released tranches](#) of new [Epstein files](#) over the holidays, Trump again complained about Bondi's handling of them, several officials said.

Amid the criticism, Bondi has sought to respond to Trump's requests. In November, hours after Trump demanded the Justice Department investigate prominent Democrats who were named in the Epstein documents, Bondi directed Manhattan's U.S. attorney to lead the probe and addressed it on social media. "Thank you, Mr. President," she wrote.

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