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Trump fires Pam Bondi as US attorney general, elevates Todd Blanche

Bondi came under fire for what critics called politically motivated prosecutions and her handling of the Epstein files.



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Attorney General Pam Bondi is seen during a Cabinet meeting at the White House, in Washington, DC, the United States [Alex Brandon/The Associated Press]



By Joseph Stepansky

United States President Donald Trump has announced that [Pam Bondi](#) is out as US attorney general, in his second major cabinet-level shake-up in less than a month.

Trump confirmed the decision in a post on Truth Social on Thursday, after a slate of media reports suggested he was considering removing Bondi from the top law enforcement role. Several cited his discontent over Bondi's handling of investigative files related to financier and convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

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Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche will temporarily replace Bondi in an interim capacity, he said.

“Pam Bondi is a Great American Patriot and a loyal friend, who faithfully served as my Attorney General over the past year,” Trump wrote.

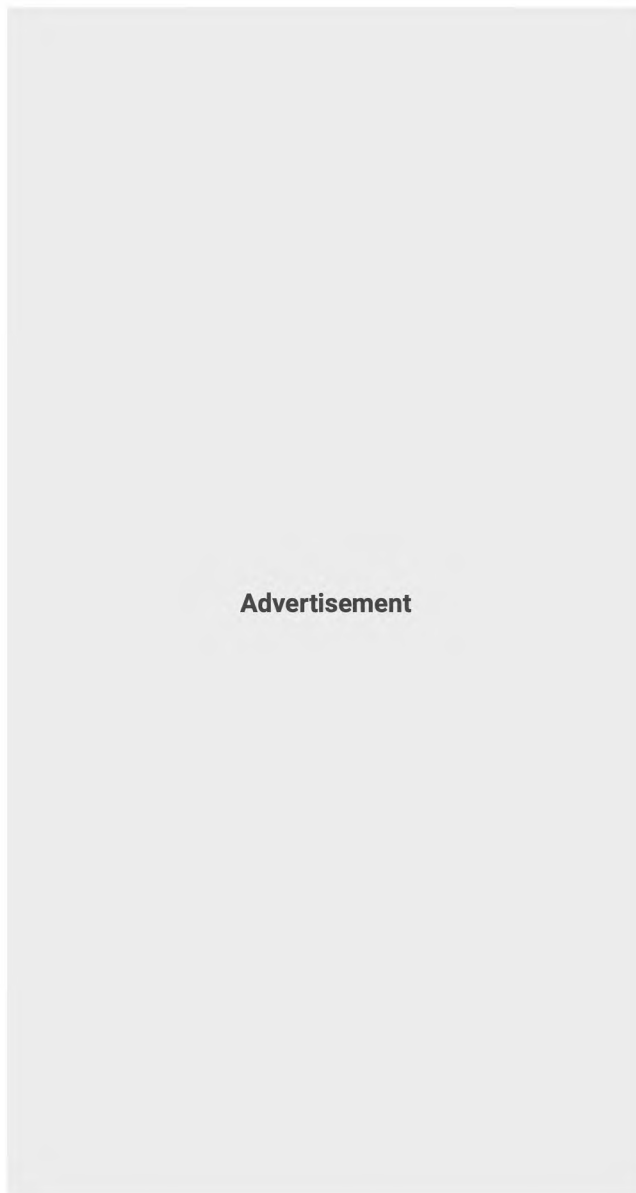
The US president also praised Bondi for leading the Department of Justice during a period when violent crime decreased in the US, part of a wider downward trend in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trump did not mention his reasoning for the decision, instead writing, “We love Pam.” He added that she would be “transitioning to a much-needed and important new job in the private sector”.

In a statement, Bondi said she would be transitioning the office to Blanche over the next month, adding she was moving to “an important private sector role I am thrilled about, and where I will continue fighting for President Trump and this Administration”.

“I remain eternally grateful for the trust that President Trump placed in me to Make America Safe Again,” she said.

Bondi's dismissal comes shortly after Trump abruptly fired Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, who oversaw the agency amid a mass deportation campaign that led to the killing of two US citizens.



The US media has reported that Trump was considering nominating Lee Zeldin, the current administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency, to take over the Department of Justice.

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Trump has not confirmed the plan. Any nomination would require Senate confirmation.

Questions over 'politicalisation'

Bondi, the former attorney general of Florida, had been a longtime supporter of Trump and closely aligned with the president's agenda as the country's top law enforcement official.

That led to concerns over the independence of the Department of Justice, particularly as top prosecutors under Bondi's command announced investigations and criminal charges against Trump's political opponents.

In one case, last September, Trump addressed a social media [post](#) directly to Bondi, appearing to call on her to take action against three critics: Senator Adam Schiff, New York Attorney General Letitia James and former FBI director James Comey.

"We can't delay any longer, it's killing our reputation and credibility," Trump wrote in the post to Bondi. "JUSTICE MUST BE SERVED, NOW!!!"

Indictments against James and Comey were delivered in the subsequent weeks, although separate grand juries later moved not to indict the pair.

Critics and legal groups, including the American Bar Association, have warned that such actions have chipped away at the Justice Department's tradition of independence, leading to politically motivated prosecutions.

More recent investigations into Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell and the governor of Minnesota, a Democrat – as well as a pressure campaign against state election officials ahead of the midterm vote in November – have fuelled these allegations.

In a lawsuit filed in March, two former FBI agents accused Bondi of "political retribution", saying they were fired for their role in previously investigating Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election results.

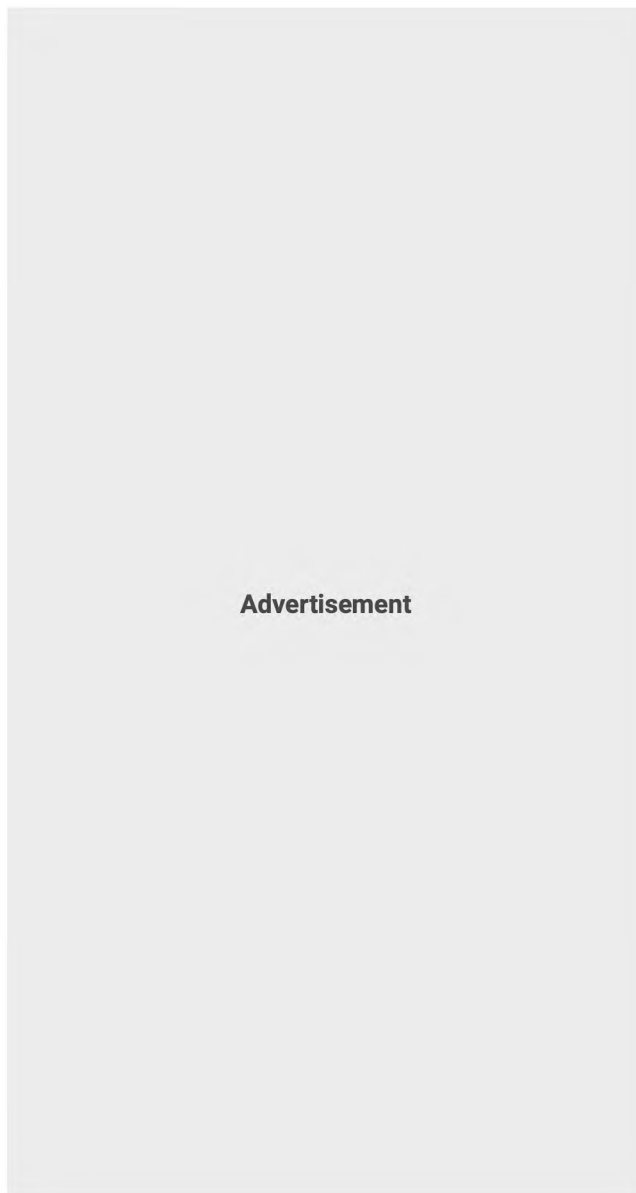
Handling of Epstein files

Bondi has also come under fire for her handling of the Epstein files, the contents of which have roiled governments and institutions across the world.

Shortly after being confirmed by the Senate, Bondi repeatedly vowed to review all documents related to Epstein, including a so-called "client list" of the powerful figures in his social circle. She told Fox News in February 2025 that the list was "sitting on my desk right now to review".

She further pledged to release a tranche of previously withheld documents.

However, the tone of Bondi and several other top officials in the agency changed dramatically in the following months, culminating in an unsigned department memo released in July that said investigators found “no incriminating ‘client list’” as well as no credible evidence “that Epstein blackmailed prominent individuals”.



It also said investigators found no evidence “that could predicate an investigation against uncharged third parties”.

Trump, a former friend of Epstein’s who repeatedly appeared in the files, also urged reporters to drop the matter. Nevertheless, the president eventually signed a bill passed by Congress that compelled the Department of Justice to release all related files.

Under Bondi, the Department of Justice has since released millions of files, but lawmakers have charged that the documents still appear incomplete.

A combative hearing before the House Judiciary Committee in February, during which Bondi made personal attacks on lawmakers and repeatedly sought to pivot to the economy, was seen as further damaging her public standing.

In one instance, Bondi refused to look Epstein victims in the eye.

Responding to Bondi's firing, several Democrats said she was still subject to a subpoena from the House Oversight Committee, which continues to investigate Epstein.

"Pam Bondi may be fired, but she still must be held accountable," wrote US Representative Shontel Brown on X. "She remains legally obligated to adhere to our subpoena and appear before the Oversight Committee."

Republican Representative Nancy Mace said in a statement she still expects Bondi to appear for an April 14 deposition.

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