



By: Tomorrow's Affairs Staff

The indictment against Trump - What dilemma will torment both Democrats and Republicans?



A historical situation is expected in one of the police stations in Manhattan on Tuesday. For the first time, officials will take the fingerprints of a former US president, and write down his basic information.

He will be photographed by the last person in the world he would want to pose in front of, and then he will be detained for at least a few hours.

There will probably be no handcuffs, given that the accused's voluntary surrender is expected, which his representatives will negotiate with the police.

Donald Trump has made US history as the first former president to be indicted by a grand jury.

From that moment starts a procedure that is in many respects uncharted territory for the American judicial system.

A moment of surprise

Donald Trump was surprised by the notice he received from the grand jury that the indictment had been filed.

Two weeks ago, he alarmed his supporters by calling for street protests, as he was allegedly threatened with arrest.

"Gestapo", "This is Russia and China, but worse", Trump sounded the alarm, seeking to use mass street protests to discourage Manhattan DA Alvin Bragg from filing an indictment against him.

Since the arrest did not take place, and no indictment was filed, Trump believed

numerous media reports that the "danger" has been eliminated for a few weeks.

Employees in the Manhattan prosecutor's office were behaving not just like lawyers, but also like political strategists.

The indictment appeared before the grand jury earlier than the media anticipated, so that Trump would not repeat a similar alarm and call for protests. And they succeeded in that.

Imprisonment from one to four years

The details of the 30-count indictment accusing Trump of falsifying business records in the case of paying porn star Stormy Daniels to keep quiet about an alleged affair with Donald Trump have not been published.

The hush money payment itself is not punishable, and it applies to Trump's former personal attorney, Michael Cohen.

But it is a criminal offence to falsify documents at Trump's company, which reimbursed the lawyer for the cost of paying the actress (\$130,000) and paid a bonus, totalling \$420,000.

From this, it is possible to spread to other criminal acts, which were also the subject of the investigation. For example, did Trump falsify business records with the intent of committing another crime, or to aid or conceal another crime?

If this count also appears in the indictment, it will carry the threat of one to four years in prison for Trump.

What will happen with respect to Trump's popularity?

Whatever happens to Donald Trump in the coming months, in terms of accountability before the law, it will not change the legal status of his candidacy for another presidential term, which he filed last November.

Trump, quite simply, can run for president under the burden of an indictment, even if he is convicted in the meantime.

Also, whatever happens to him in this legal case, the number one issue Trump will use to gather votes for a new term is envisageable.

At the moment, he is by far the most popular presidential candidate within the Republican Party, but there is still time before the nomination, and even more time until next year's presidential elections.

Current trends may not continue, particularly after the indictment. In what direction will they move?

A common dilemma

The most prominent Republicans reacted furiously to the news that their former leader had been indicted.

"The weaponisation of the legal system to advance a political agenda turns the rule of law on its head", Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, one of the possible main contenders for the Republican presidential nomination, wrote on Twitter.

"The unprecedented indictment... is an outrage", former US Vice President Mike Pence, who is also considering running, told CNN.

Other senior Republicans also talked about a "witch hunt", about political abuse of the judiciary, and compared the US with Russia and other dictatorships.

The democratic camp is satisfied with the indictment. Everyone shares the view that all people are equal before the law, and that the indictment against the former president only proves the strength of American democracy.

Until this historical precedent is channelled into the sphere of law, its political dimension will not become secondary.

Regardless of the completely opposite reactions of Republicans and Democrats, both will be interested in the effect of the indictment against Trump in the coming months.

Will the indictment motivate or demotivate Republican voters when it comes to supporting Trump? No matter how much they strongly supported the former president at first, these are shocking moments for them.

Top Republicans also think about the damage the GOP could suffer if it goes to the polls with an accused, perhaps even convicted, candidate.

Will Republican voters believe more in a political leader who is a victim of persecution, or will they still believe in the centuries-old tradition of an impartial American judiciary?

As for Trump, he is also aware that such dilemmas will become stronger within his party.

He will do everything to convince supporters that he, for whom they voted in 2016, has not changed, but that their state has changed and become a dictatorship that persecutes political opponents.

"Everything" also means starting street riots and attacks on state institutions. He showed what he is capable of on January 6, 2021, by calling for an attack on Congress, so why not do it again?