

PRESS RELEASE

Common Cause: DOJ's Attack on SPLC Part of "Campaign of Intimidation"

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Yesterday, President Trump continued his campaign of intimidation and coercion to weaponize the government against those whom he believes pose a threat to his political agenda.

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Statement of Common Cause President & CEO Virginia Kase Solomón

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Common Cause, our National Governing Board, our executive team, our staff, and the more than one million members we represent across this country, stands firmly with the Southern Poverty Law Center in the face of yesterday's attack by the Department of Justice.

We are clear that this is a sham case built on illegitimate claims, and it is meant to create a chilling effect on anyone standing on the side of justice and civil rights; particularly those fighting hate groups, white supremacist groups, and those standing up against this administration's corruption and self-dealing.

For more than 55 years, the SPLC has done some of the most difficult and most necessary work in American society: tracking the Ku Klux Klan, the Aryan Nations, neo-Nazi networks, and other violent extremist organizations that threaten the safety of Black communities, Jewish communities, immigrants, LGBTQ+ people, and anyone else these groups target.

The pattern here is unmistakable. This indictment follows a string of investigations into perceived opponents and critics of the Trump administration that have raised serious questions about whether the Justice Department has been turned into a political weapon. FBI Director Kash Patel publicly announced earlier this year that the FBI had severed its relationships with the SPLC, and the administration has made no secret of who it wants to protect and who it wants to destroy based on their loyalty to Donald Trump. Charging a civil rights organization with fraud for exposing the operations of violent hate groups turns the rule of law upside down.

The message this indictment sends is simple. If you investigate white supremacists, the federal government will investigate you. If you name extremism, you will be accused of manufacturing it. If you stand up to this administration, you will be targeted. That is the chilling effect, and it is by design.

The leadership, staff, and more than one million members of Common Cause will not be chilled. Democracy depends on civil society organizations being free to monitor hate, defend voting rights, challenge abuses of power, and speak the truth about those who seek to undermine our multiracial democracy. We have seen this playbook before, in other countries and in darker chapters of our own, and we recognize it for what it is.

We call on members of Congress, the legal community, philanthropic leaders, and our fellow civil rights and democracy organizations to speak out clearly until the Department of Justice drops its attack against the SPLC.

The SPLC has our full solidarity and support. We are confident they will prevail, and the entire Common Cause community will stand with them every step of the way.

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