

## [Transcript] Global News Podcast / Trump: Charges are "election interference"

Hello, this is the Global News podcast from the BBC World Service with reports and analysis from across the world, the latest news seven days a week. BBC World Service podcasts are supported by advertising. This is a special edition of the Global News podcast from the BBC World Service. I'm Charlotte Gallagher and three hours GMT on Wednesday the 5th of April. This is an update on the criminal charges brought against the former US President Donald Trump. Shortly before we recorded this podcast, Mr Trump addressed his supporters at his Mar-a-Lago retreat in Florida, describing the case as election interference and saying his only crime had been to defend America from those who would destroy it. Earlier at a hearing in New York, he pleaded not guilty to all 34 charges brought against him, accusing him of falsifying business records to hide damaging information during the 2016 presidential election. We'll report from New York, Florida and the traditional Republican stronghold of Arizona. Even by the standards of his four at times tumultuous years in office, it's been an extraordinary day for Donald Trump and America. He made history by becoming the first serving or former US president to appear in court charged with criminal offenses. At the hearing in New York, he pleaded not guilty to the 34 charges filed against him. They relate to three hush money payments ahead of the 2016 election, including one to the porn star Stormy Daniels. Mr Trump later flew back to Florida and addressed supporters at his Mar-a-Lago mansion. The only crime that I have committed is to fearlessly defend our nation from those who seek to destroy it. From the beginning, the Democrats spied on my campaign. Remember that? They attacked me with an onslaught of fraudulent investigations. Russia, Russia, Russia. Ukraine, Ukraine, Ukraine. Impeachment hoax number one. Impeachment hoax number two. The illegal and unconstitutional raid on Mar-a-Lago right here. Our correspondent Barbara Pletcher was at Mar-a-Lago to hear Mr Trump's speech. He was back to his regular platform with his regular crowd and I think he seemed heartened by their cheers and their claps but he also actually seemed pretty intense and angry still throughout the speech and he did talk about of course the New York investigation saying several times that it was aimed at interfering in the 2024 election and lashing out at the district attorney who brought it but he didn't actually talk about it very much. He did talk about other cases. He talked at some length about the case involving the classified documents that he brought from the White House here to Mar-a-Lago and got some good booze from the crowd about that and he talked about the Georgia case which is this investigation into whether he tried to overturn the election in that state so it could be that he's more concerned about the implication of those cases than this one. Earlier in the day prosecutors in Manhattan said they'd identified serious criminal conduct by the former president and would lay out their case at trial. Analyst suggests that could begin early next year. From New York, Gary O'Donohue reports. This was a day like no other in American history. A former president up before a judge on criminal charges. Amidst the crowds of protesters both pro and anti-Trump and the world's media is the Trump's motorcade snaked its way from Trump Tower to the courtroom where he spent around two hours. Having railed against the proceedings in public Mr Trump wore a sober serious expression in the courtroom itself speaking quietly to enter not guilty pleas on the 34 charges brought against him. The charges relate to falsifying business records in combination with an attempt to

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contravene New York state election law. What that means in real terms is that he's accused of passing off payments to his lawyers as legal expenses when in fact they were to reimburse him for hush money payments. They included \$130,000 to Stormy Daniels to keep quiet about an alleged sexual encounter. Alvin Bragg is the Manhattan District Attorney. It is a felony to falsify business records with intent to defraud and intent to conceal another crime. That is exactly what this case is about. 34 false statements made to cover up other crimes no matter who you are. We cannot and will not normalize serious criminal conducts. Prosecutors are also accusing the former president of a broad so-called catch-and-kill scheme whereby potentially damaging stories were brought up by friendly publications and then sat on. Apart from the money to Stormy Daniels, they also referenced money paid to a former playboy model and to a Trump Tower doorman who threatened to publish information about an alleged love child fathered by Mr Trump. One of Mr Trump's lawyers Joe Takapina said the case should never have been brought. Today's unsealing of this indictment shows that the rule of law died in this country because while everyone is not above the law, no one's below it either. And if this man's name was not Donald J. Trump, there is no scenario we'd all be here today. Please understand that based on these charges. These are felony charges Mr Trump is facing, the more serious level of criminal conduct in the U.S. legal system. In theory, they could carry jail terms of up to four years. But the Trump team have vowed to fight the charges every step of the way and the next few months could see a whole series of motions, challenging everything from the very basis of the case itself to where a possible trial should be held.

Gary O'Donoghue. The southwestern U.S. state of Arizona has traditionally been seen as a Republican stronghold, but strong performances by the Democrats in recent years have challenged that view. Our correspondent Safi Long has been to its biggest city, Phoenix, to get reaction from Republican supporters. In presidential elections, Arizona is one of the most contested and coveted states. It was once reliably Republican, but in 2020, it elected a Democratic president for the first time in nearly a quarter of a century. And last year, voters here chose a Democratic governor. The Republican candidate who won Donald Trump's endorsement did not win the election. I've been a precinct comedian in this precinct right here for 50 years. Alberto Gutier is a lifelong ultra-conservative Republican. He voted for Donald Trump in 2016 and a bit more reluctantly in 2020, but even he's had enough. We need a change. We need to find someone else, okay, down the road. Others who are not as brash as Donald Trump that can carry and rebuild the Republican Party. I think he did a great job for this country. Alberto's wife, Miriam, disagrees. She thinks the indictment is politically motivated, and she wants to see Donald Trump back in the White House to support American businesses and strong border control. She and Alberto emigrated the right way, they say, from Cuba to the United States. Believe me, if Trump runs, either he votes for Trump or I will divorce him. How do you like it? After 62 years. Yeah. After 62 years, I will say goodbye. The many here, including these two of Alberto and Miriam's five children, think it's time to say goodbye to Donald Trump and bring in fresh candidates to unify the Republican Party in Arizona and across the nation, regardless of whether Donald Trump is found guilty or not.

Sophie Long. After Mr Trump addressed his supporters in Florida, I spoke to our correspondent Michelle Flurry. I began by asking her what impact today's developments might have on his chances

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of winning another presidential election. It felt more like a campaign rally, quite frankly, than it did, you know, reflections on the day we just saw outside the courthouse in Lower Manhattan.

And this is someone who knows how to take advantage of situations. And I think that's what he's done

from the moment we first saw the indictment. He immediately kind of used it as a rallying cry to his base, to his supporters, to kind of circle the wagons around him. He's used it to raise money, raising as much as \$10 million since the indictment dropped. So I think we know sort of what it does for him politically. Right from the beginning, people have been saying, you can't kind of separate this legal case from the political implications. And I think we're seeing that in real time right now.

You mentioned the money there that he's been raising. Donations have been flooding in. It's going to be really hard, I think, isn't it, for another candidate to match that kind of money?

And it's been fascinating to watch the response from Republicans. Mitt Romney, one of those who hasn't always been a fan, quite frankly, of Donald Trump, was out today saying that he was against this prosecution that has been brought by the district attorney here in New York. So he didn't think it was sort of appropriate. And I think you're seeing that from the rank and file of the Republican Party. Right now, no one is speaking out against Donald Trump. In fact, they're all backing him. And that is going to make it very challenging for any Republican presidential hopefuls for 2024. How do you go up against Donald Trump in that context? What is something to keep

an eye on is obviously the next court appearance. That's late December. And that comes just a couple

of weeks before we start to see those first votes in the Republican primaries. And it seems maybe decades ago that this kind of thing would finish someone's political career, even if they were found not guilty. But so many people are flocking to him now. It could almost have the opposite effect. But I mean, this was never a traditional candidate from the very beginning. As you say, before Donald Trump, if anyone had had to go through something like the Access Hollywood tape that was revealed, that would have ended their political career. That hasn't been the case for this president. He's faced two impeachments. And now he faces a criminal case. And yet he's rising in the polls. That was Michelle Flurry. And that's all from us for now. But there will be another regular edition of the Global News Podcast later. Remember, you can comment on this podcast

by sending us an email. The address is [globalpodcast@bbc.co.uk](mailto:globalpodcast@bbc.co.uk). You can also find us on Twitter at Global NewsPod. This edition was mixed by Caroline Driscoll and the producer was Harry Bly. The editor is Karen Martin. And I'm Charlotte Gallagher. Until next time, goodbye.