

# [***Exclusive: Attorney General Merrick Garland says there should be 'speedy trial' of Trump as 2024 election looms***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B4N-SY61-JBSS-S009-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Uvalde, Texas (CNN) &#8212; Attorney General Merrick Garland said in an interview with CNN that he believes there should be a "speedy trial" in the election subversion case against [*Donald Trump*](https://www.cnn.com/politics/president-donald-trump-45), while also pushing back on allegations that his department is targeting the former president for political reasons.

Garland said he agrees with special counsel Jack Smith's assertion that the "public interest requires a speedy trial" in the 2020 election currently set for trial in March in Washington, DC.

"The matter is now in the hands of the trial judge to determine when a trial will take place," Garland said during the interview taped Thursday.

Garland also defended the department against allegations of election interference when asked whether he thought the federal cases against Trump should have been brought sooner - in order to avoid the prosecution of a leading candidate unfolding months before a presidential election.

"The cases were brought last year. The prosecutor has urged speedy trials, with which I agree. And it's is now in the hands of the judicial system, not in our hands," Garland said. "Special prosecutors followed the facts and the law. They brought cases when they thought they were ready."

When asked about the perception that the Justice Department is prosecuting Trump for political reasons, Garland said: "Of course it concerns me."

"What we have to do is show by the acts that we take that we're following the law, that we're following the facts," he said.

The federal criminal case over Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election results has been put on pause while a dispute over Trump's claim of presidential immunity [*winds through the appeals process*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/09/politics/takeaways-from-the-appeals-court-hearing-on-donald-trumps-immunity-claims). It's unclear if that case - or the three other criminal cases pending against the former president and GOP presidential front-runner - will go to trial before the 2024 election.

Garland also defended his use of special counsels to lead several investigations into Trump, President Joe Biden, and Biden's son, Hunter, arguing that regulations keep investigators independent.

"With respect to the public, I hope they will see, not only from what we've done but the outcomes of the cases and the way in which special counsel have proceeded that we have kept ***politics*** out of this," Garland said.

By Evan Perez, Holmes Lybrand and Hannah Rabinowitz, CNN

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