

Trump's former adviser Steve Bannon gets four months in prison

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Steve Bannon, former chief strategist under ex-President Donald Trump, was found guilty of contempt of Congress charges in July [Jonathan Ernst/Reuters]

Washington, October 22 (RHC)-- Steve Bannon, a former top adviser to former U.S. President Donald Trump, has been sentenced to four months in prison for refusing to cooperate with lawmakers investigating last year's attack on the US Capitol. United States District Judge Carl Nichols imposed the

sentence on Friday and also ordered Bannon to pay a fine of \$6,500.

Earlier this week, US prosecutors had asked the judge to sentence Bannon to six months in prison, while Bannon's lawyers had sought probation, after the 68-year-old in July was convicted of two counts of contempt of Congress. Each count was punishable by 30 days to one year in prison and a fine ranging between \$100 to \$100,000.

Prosecutor JP Cooney said at Friday's hearing that Bannon chose to "thumb his nose at Congress" by refusing to testify or provide documents subpoenaed by the congressional committee probing the January 6, 2021, Capitol riot and efforts by Trump's allies to overturn his 2020 election loss. He "is not above the law, and that's what makes this case important", Cooney said.

Outside the courthouse, Bannon, delivered fiery remarks as protesters at times tried to drown his voice out with shouts of "Traitor!" "Today was my judgement day by the judge," Bannon told reporters. "But ... on November 8 [midterm elections], they are going to have judgement on the illegitimate Biden regime, and quite frankly, [House Speaker] Nancy Pelosi and the entire committee."

Bannon has two weeks to file his appeal, which his lawyers said they intend to do. If he fails to file it on time, he is required to turn himself in by November 15th.

Steve Bannon was a key adviser to the Republican Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, then served as his chief White House strategist in 2017 before a falling out between them that was later patched up. He helped articulate the "America First" populism and stout opposition to immigration that helped define Trump's presidency. He also has played an instrumental role in right-wing media and has promoted right-wing causes and candidates in the US and abroad.

During his trial, prosecutors called only two witnesses while Bannon's defence team called none. Bannon opted not to testify. Bannon's lawyers said he was not acting in bad faith by refusing to testify, but trying to avoid running afoul of executive privilege objections Trump had raised when Bannon was first served with a committee subpoena last year.

In addition to Bannon, prosecutors have charged former Trump White House adviser Peter Navarro with contempt of Congress for defying a subpoena from the same committee, with a November 17 trial date set. Navarro has pleaded not guilty.

Friday's sentencing does not end Bannon's legal troubles. He was indicted in New York state in September on charges of money laundering and conspiracy, with prosecutors accusing him of deceiving donors giving money to help build Trump's promised wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Bannon, who pleaded not guilty, could face up to 15 years in prison if convicted on those charges. Trump pardoned Bannon last year on similar federal charges.

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