

US Congressman Vows that Trump will be Impeached "before Christmas"

By: Dr. Abdullah Robin

The challenges to President Trump's leadership never stop growing and articles of impeachment against him have been drawn. Impeachment is a power given by Article II, Section 4 of the United States Constitution, which states, "The President, Vice-President, and all civil Officers of the United States shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other High Crimes and Misdemeanors." The power to impeach is held by the House of Representatives and impeachment by a majority sends the case to the Senate, which must convict the impeached official by a two-thirds majority. Powers of impeachment are included in Western democratic systems because heads of state and human legislators are considered above the law, and their crimes cannot be prosecuted by the judiciary. Since 1789, there have been 19 impeachments of federal officers in the US, and two of them have been presidents; the last of which was Bill Clinton in 1998. Results of a survey by 'Public Policy Polling' were released on the 31st of October showing that 49% of US voters now supported impeaching Trump, while 41% were opposed.

Congressmen Brad Sherman and Al Green have called individually for impeachment. Brad Sherman of California submitted a resolution to the House of Representatives on the 12th of July charging that: "Knowing that Federal law enforcement authorities were investigating... the conduct of his campaign personnel and associates acting on behalf of the campaign, to include the possible collusion by those individuals with the Russian government, Donald John Trump sought to use his authority to hinder and cause the termination of such investigation(s) including through threatening, and then terminating, James Comey, who was until such termination the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation." Al Green of Texas submitted a resolution to the House of Representatives on the 16th of October, but both resolutions looked unlikely to be effective, as the Democrats are a minority in both chambers of Congress. However, on the 8th of November, Al Green vowed: "I now announce that before Christmas, there will be a vote on the 'Chief Inciter' of racism, bigotry, hatred, xenophobia, sexism, ethnocentrism... There will be a vote in the U.S. House of Representatives, Mr. Speaker, on the impeachment of the president." He spoke in Washington as Democrats celebrated victories in securing key state legislative seats and governorships across the US.

On the same day as Al Green's announcement, a group of Democrats promised to file new articles of impeachment against President Trump before the 'Thanksgiving' celebration on the 23rd of November, according to Luis Gutiérrez, Representative for Illinois: "It is clear to us that he [Trump] is unfit to be president of the United States of America". When asked to say what grounds for impeachment the articles will cite, Gutiérrez said: "I assure you we will not leave you lacking for reason".

Democratic leaders have so far discouraged impeachment efforts against Trump, and are waiting to see the outcome of the collusion with Russia probe being conducted by Robert Mueller, the special prosecutor appointed by the Justice Department. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said, "There may be a time. It is premature. And to call for [impeachment] now you might blow your shot when it has a better chance of happening. It is serious, serious, serious. And so... [pause]... you wait." However, the time for waiting is over according to Representative Gutiérrez, and indictments against several former Trump campaign figures were announced by Mueller's team on the 6th of November with one aide already pleading guilty to lying to the FBI.

The day after Gutiérrez's announcement, billionaire Tom Steyer said he is doubling his impeachment campaign against Trump. Steyer launched a campaign to impeach Trump last month with a petition that has gathered more than 1.9 million signatures. He spent "well over" \$10 million for his first television advertisement to run in all 50 states, and is now funding two more impeachment advertisements. In an interview with TIME Magazine, he called the Trump Administration an "immediate danger to the health and safety of America".

The US Constitution gives Congress power to curb presidential abuse of power, but with Congress divided upon Party lines the process of impeachment will be slow until Democrats secure mid-term election gains next year, unless the Russia probe reveals enough incriminating information to force the Republican Party to join Democrats against Trump.