# US Justice Department to Seek Tougher Sentences for AI-aided Election Crimes



On January 18, 2023, Deputy US Attorney General Lisa Monaco announced that federal prosecutors will aim for harsher sentences in cases where artificial intelligence (AI) is employed to commit election-related crimes. This announcement was made during a Justice Department news conference in Washington, D.C. The updated policy targets crimes including threats of violence against election workers and voter suppression, particularly when AI technologies like deepfake audio and video are involved in intensifying the offenses.

This policy shift by the Justice Department comes as a response to growing concerns over the role of AI in the electoral process, especially as these tools have become more capable of convincingly imitating public figures to spread misinformation. The urgency of addressing these issues is heightened by the approaching 2024 presidential election.

Monaco’s announcement was part of a broader discussion with the Justice Department’s Election Threats Task Force, underscoring the evolving challenges that election workers face due to technological advancements. These challenges are not only domestic but international as well, with federal officials preparing for potential interference from foreign entities using AI technologies in disruptive tactics similar to previous incidents. For example, an AI-generated robocall mimicking President Joe Biden urged New Hampshire voters not to participate in a primary election, an act commissioned by a political consultant.

The Justice Department has been increasing efforts to address the myriad threats against election officials, noting a significant number of election workers have reported harassment and threats, which contributes to broader concerns about their safety and the integrity of the electoral process.