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CIVIL RIGHTS

DOJ Threatens to Sue Sheriff Joe Arpaio for Civil Rights Violations

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BY DEBRA CASSENS WEISS ([HTTP://WWW.ABAJOURNAL.COM/AUTHORS/4/](http://www.abajournal.com/authors/4/))

The U.S. Justice Department is threatening to sue a controversial Arizona sheriff for civil rights violations because of his treatment of Hispanics.

The department's civil rights division revealed a possible lawsuit after settlement talks broke down with Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, according to Reuters (<http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2012/04/03/world/europe/03reuters-usa-immigration-arizona.html?scp=16&sq=lawyer&st=nyt>) and the Washington Post (http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/arizona-sheriff-rejects-court-monitor-justice-department-threatens-to-sue/2012/04/03/gIQA8P8ztS_story.html). "We believe that you are wasting time and not negotiating in good faith," the department said in a letter to Arpaio's lawyer.

A Justice Department report released in December (http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/arpaio_maricopa_county_sheriff_racial_profiling_report_DOJ/) accused the sheriff's department of using racial profiling against Hispanics in police stops and denying them services in jail.

The DOJ says Arpaio's lawyers have twice called off settlement negotiations at the last minute, according to the Post account. After cancelation of a March 1 meeting, Arpaio held a news conference to claim President Obama's birth certificate is a forgery. Now Arpaio is complaining about the feds' demand for a court-appointed monitor.

"To the Obama administration, who is attempting to strong arm me into submission only for its political gain, I say: This will not happen, not on my watch!" Arpaio said in a statement published by Reuters.

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