



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on January 6, 2026

DOJ Updates Court on Epstein Records. Millions of Documents Still Under Review

In its latest update to the federal court overseeing the implementation of the [Epstein Files Transparency Act](#), the Department of Justice (DOJ) told Judge Paul Engelmayer that more than 12,000 documents have been released so far. Still, more than two million additional records remain under review. At the center of that process sits Attorney General Pamela Bondi, who holds broad authority to classify or redact material. That authority applies not only to victims' identities, but also to anything the government decides is tied to U.S. "national security."



AP Images
Pam Bondi

That power exists because of the very statute created to compel disclosure. In other words, the same law designed to open the files created a mechanism to close large parts of them. As a result, even when the public finally sees what is released, large portions may look less like documents than black tiles, with entire pages reduced to blocks of redaction.

Taming Two Million Documents

Bondi's office portrays the Epstein files review as massive, meticulous, and resource-intensive. According to the letter filed on Monday ([pdf](#)),

To date, the Department has now posted to the DOJ Epstein Library webpage approximately 12,285 documents (comprising approximately 125,575 pages) in response to the Act, and there are more than 2 million documents potentially responsive to the Act that are in various phases of review.

At that pace, the DOJ has been releasing roughly 261 documents a day since the law took effect on November 19. A straight-line projection pushes full release into the mid-2040s, around 2047. DOJ says improvements in processing and deduplication may shorten that timeline. Perhaps. But the scale problem is obvious.

The Department explains that the real challenge is not only how much material exists, but how it exists. Records are scattered across agencies and years. Some are duplicated across different systems. Others survive only as fragments that must be reconstructed before anyone can even determine what they say.



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Before a single page reaches the public, reviewers have to determine what is new, what repeats earlier collections, and what overlaps in ways that still require fresh scrutiny. All of that happens before redactions begin. It is a process built as much around triage as disclosure, and it is one the Department controls entirely.

Where Transparency Meets Procedure

From there, the process becomes especially scrupulous, in DOJ's telling. Reviewers upload documents into a screening system, examine them by hand for victim names, privileged communications, and sensitive investigative material, and then redact them. After that, the files move through multiple rounds of quality control. The Southern District of New York performs an additional review focused specifically on victim privacy. Only after those checks are complete do files appear on the DOJ's [Epstein Library webpage](#), where the releases are centralized. When victims or members of the public spot mistakes, the Department removes the documents, corrects them, and reposts.

"This work has required and will continue to require substantial Department resources," the letter notes, citing more than four hundred lawyers and over one hundred FBI analysts assigned to the task.

At the same time, DOJ says it is actively modifying how it works through the remaining material. According to the letter, the Department is now deduplicating records collected from multiple components, prioritizing documents that are likely both responsive and non-duplicative, and "classifying documents in broad types" based on their likelihood of containing victim information. The most sensitive categories are being routed to attorneys who routinely handle victim and other "sensitive" matters.

Victim protection remains the stated priority, with "hundreds of individuals" placed on a standing redaction list. But each of these modifications has the same practical effect. The flow of files is controlled, staged, and constantly adjusted. And the pace of transparency remains fully in the Department's hands.

The National Security Division's Quiet Role

The DOJ letter briefly notes that attorneys from the National Security Division are among those assigned to the Epstein files review. The reference is short. But it points to a component of the Department whose work is highly specialized and tightly defined.

The [National Security Division](#) (NSD), created in 2006 under the Patriot Act reauthorization, is the branch of the Justice Department responsible for enforcing federal national-security laws and coordinating national-security investigations. To fulfill its mission, it works closely with the FBI and the intelligence community.

One of NSD's core duties is legal oversight of surveillance conducted under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). NSD lawyers prepare and present the government's applications to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court and monitor compliance with court orders. The division also works with intelligence agencies and prosecutors to ensure that information collected for national-security purposes is used consistently with federal law and constitutional protections.

In addition, NSD plays a central role in national-security prosecutions. It helps supervise cases involving espionage, terrorism, foreign agents operating in the United States, sanctions violations, and illegal transfers of sensitive technology. When classified material intersects with these prosecutions, NSD coordinates internally to ensure that litigation proceeds while still protecting sensitive



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intelligence.

The DOJ letter does not describe what specific Epstein-related records require NSD involvement. It simply states that NSD is participating in the broader review effort, alongside criminal prosecutors and FBI analysts. That detail, however, explains why the Department repeatedly refers to “related obligations and policy considerations” beyond ordinary privacy and privilege rules. NSD’s presence signals that at least part of the review sits inside the Justice Department’s national-security legal framework, with all the procedures that come with it.

Transparency, Classified

The Epstein Files Transparency Act was sold as sunlight. At last, the public would see what federal agencies knew about the notorious pedophile and the world that enabled him.

The petition also allowed certain materials to be withheld. Naturally, that included the identities and personal details of victims, which should never be turned into public spectacle.

But beyond that legitimate protection sat something far more consequential. The Act explicitly authorized attorney general to withhold material implicating “national defense and foreign policy” and “national security.” In a case built on power, leverage, and access, that clause did more than protect victims. It effectively drew a curtain around the network that, by all indications, made Epstein possible. To reassure skeptics, the Act requires Bondi to explain redactions to Congress and publish those explanations in the Federal Register. In reality, explanations that touch classified matters can themselves be classified or reduced to summaries. The state tells the public that secrecy is necessary.

Far from indulging in private vice, Epstein moved in circles where political power, intelligence services, and global finance intersect. Allegations that his operations overlapped with blackmail networks, including possible links to the CIA and Israel’s Mossad, have circulated for years. Whether every claim is accurate or not, those allegations place crucial portions of the record in territory where secrecy tends to expand, not recede.

The Trump administration’s position became explicit last July, when DOJ and the FBI [announced](#) that their “exhaustive review” uncovered no incriminating client list. It also found no credible evidence of blackmail or basis to pursue uncharged third parties. They reaffirmed that Epstein died by suicide.

After months of delay, Congress [produced](#) a “transparency” law with an elastic loophole built into its center. That effectively ensured that the core questions surrounding Epstein remain unanswered.



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