

**Jeffrey Epstein****US justice department under fire for removing Trump image from Epstein files**

Democrats raise questions over why some documents released on Friday were removed the next day



Ghislaine Maxwell and Jeffrey Epstein are seen in this image released by the Department of Justice on Friday © via Reuters

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Published DECEMBER 20 2025 | Updated 22:27

Donald Trump's administration faced new criticism of its handling of documents related to late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein after the justice department removed 16 files, including an image of the president, from a trove of information released on Friday.

The images deleted on Saturday without explanation included a document showing one of Epstein's desks in which two photographs of Trump were visible.

“This photo, file 468, from the Epstein files that includes Donald Trump has apparently now been removed from the DOJ release,” Democrats on the House Oversight committee posted on X on Saturday, referring to the image.

“Pam Bondi is this true? What else is being covered up? We need transparency for the American public,” they added, referring to the US attorney-general.

Links to the images were deleted from a list of documents on the DoJ website, while attempts to load the files directly were refused. Copies were also removed from the downloadable batch folders, which still contained nearly 1,500 other images from the property.

Users on social media drew attention to the missing documents, and the image containing the Trump photo was made accessible again hours later — but only directly from its URL, not appearing on the list of files on the DoJ website.

In a statement posted on social media, the DoJ said: “Photos and other materials will continue being reviewed and redacted consistent with the law in an abundance of caution as we receive additional information.”

The questions around the images that were posted and then deleted come as the Trump administration has already faced criticism for heavily redacting thousands of documents related to Epstein on Friday. The long-awaited disclosure was mandated by a law passed by Congress and signed by Trump last month.

Trump has been trying to put a lid on the furore surrounding his association with Epstein, the late disgraced financier, which has overshadowed the latter part of the first year of his second term in office.

Trump has not only faced criticism from Democrats but also some Republicans, including parts of his own “Maga” base, who want full transparency when it comes to Epstein.

The images that were removed on Saturday were unmarked and unlabelled, but appeared to be part of a cache of photos taken inside Epstein's Manhattan townhouse during a 2019 search by law enforcement officers.

Fourteen of the images show three large pieces of art featuring different nude women. In the final image, the edges of a fourth artwork are visible. Photos from other angles suggest that it shows a building.

Aside from the image that was posted and then removed, there are barely any references to Trump in the limited batch of documents that were posted on Friday.

Trump administration officials have said any redactions were made to protect the victims of sex trafficking and vowed to publish more documents in the coming weeks, after sifting through them to make sure no victims would be exposed.

Trump has not addressed the Epstein furore, which he has dismissed as a "hoax" in the past, since the documents were released late on Friday. He did not mention it during a rally in North Carolina that lasted more than an hour.

On Saturday, Trump played golf at the start of his holiday break at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida, but he did not speak to the press.

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