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## Abrego Garcia released from detention facility



Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a sheet metal worker who entered the United States illegally in 2012, was living in Beltsville, Maryland, when he was detained by ICE agents on March 15. ELIZABETH FRANTZ/REUTERS FILE

### Judge blocks effort to have migrant returned to custody

Michael Collins and Natalie Neysa Alund  
USA TODAY

In a whiplash series of events, federal judge on Dec. 12 blocked an effort to have Kilmar Abrego Garcia returned to custody a day after his release from Immigration and Customs Enforcement

detention.

On Dec. 11, District Judge Paula Xinis ordered the immediate release of Abrego Garcia, the Salvadoran migrant at the center of a case that has spotlighted President Donald Trump's hard-line immigration policies.

Xinis said the Trump administration had no legal basis to expel him from the country and misled her at a November hearing.

Abrego Garcia left the detention facility in Pennsylvania at 4:45 p.m. ET Dec. 11, said his attorney, Simon Sando-

val-Moshenberg. He was en route to his family in Maryland.

However, an immigration judge then filed a new order saying Abrego Garcia must report back to ICE custody by 8 a.m. Dec. 12.

Abrego Garcia's lawyers asked the judge to issue a temporary restraining order to block the new detention order. Xinis did so, preventing immigration authorities from re-detaining Abrego Garcia.

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A protester holds up a photo of Donald Trump with financier Jeffrey Epstein at an Aug. 2 rally in Augusta, Georgia. Epstein, a convicted sex offender, died in a New York jail cell in 2019 while awaiting a federal sex trafficking trial.

KATIE GOODALE/AUGUSTA CHRONICLE FILE

## Dems release Epstein photos

Part of effort to pressure DOJ to release files

Bart Jansen, Sarah D. Wire and Zachary Schermele  
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – House Democrats received another trove of 95,000 pictures from accused sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein's estate and released 19 images Dec. 12 that show Presidents Donald Trump and Bill Clinton and other high-profile figures.

It was not immediately clear why Democrats on the House Oversight Committee chose to release these particular 19 photos, which included images of sex toys and, separately, snapshots of various VIPs whose past associations with Epstein were already widely known.

The photos were provided without any captions identifying or providing the occasions, dates, locations or context of the famous people shown in them.

One picture shows Trump, who had a long friendship with Epstein in the 1990s and early 2000s, posing for a photo with women whose faces are blacked out. He is seen chatting or sitting next to women in various pictures.

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## DOJ prosecution failures 'unprecedented'

Cases against Trump targets collapse

Aysha Bagchi  
USA TODAY

Dismissed indictments; two grand juries refusing to issue new charges; a judge blocking key evidence from being used for a fresh case: In trying to prosecute key targets of President Donald Trump, the Justice Department has faced failures on a scale rarely seen in federal prosecutions.

The most dramatic recent setback was a second federal grand jury's refusal on Dec. 11 to indict New York Attorney General Letitia James, after an earlier grand jury rejected the Justice Department's proposed charges last week. Abbe Lowell, a prominent lawyer who represents James, described the repeat failure as "unprecedented."

Shortly before that, earlier indictments against James and former FBI Director James Comey were thrown out, and a judge ruled the DOJ can't use evidence – at least for now – that was key to its first indictment against Comey.

The latest developments exacerbate the mounting struggles Trump administration lawyers have faced in trying to prosecute Comey and James. The president called for prosecuting both of them, as well as Sen. Adam Schiff, D-California, in a Sept. 20 social media post.

"This is an embarrassment," Neema Rahmani, a former federal prosecutor, told USA TODAY. "The last thing you want to be as a prosecutor is to be on the defensive, and that's exactly what's

See JAMES, Page 2A



A lawyer who represents New York Attorney General Letitia James described the Justice Department's repeat failure to prosecute James as "unprecedented."

JONATHAN ERNST/REUTERS FILE

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