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ANALYSIS

Critics are skeptical Trump will release tax returns

IRS audits ending, so what's his excuse now?

Josh Meyer
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump's long-lasting explanation for not releasing his tax returns was upended on May 19 when acting Attorney General Todd Blanche issued a Justice Department document that effectively shut down any existing IRS audits, investigations and enforcement actions against Trump, his family and his sprawling business empire.

Since his 2016 campaign, Trump has declined to follow the tradition of U.S. presidents releasing tax returns, saying he couldn't do so because of on-going IRS audits.

"I may even release my current returns," Trump told reporters May 20 when asked about the agreement between the president and his own administration.

Meghan Faulkner, communications director for the watchdog group Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, called on Trump to release his taxes now that the audits have ended.

"Donald Trump has previously claimed that an ongoing audit prevented him from releasing his tax returns, and now that the IRS has agreed not to audit him, he is seemingly free to release them by his own standard," Faulkner told USA TODAY. "He absolutely should release his taxes, as every president except him has for the last 50 years."

But Trump has said he will release the returns before, and whether he actually will now is unclear.

White House, Trump Organization offer no comment

The White House told USA TODAY on May 21 that it had no comment on whether or when Trump might release past tax returns, while also disclosing exclusively that the president – and Vice President JD Vance – have not yet filed their 2025 tax returns.

"The president and vice president requested and received a 45-day extension in order to compile the necessary financial information and complete the report," a White House official said on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

The White House referred USA TODAY to the president's statement to reporters about how he might release his "current returns," and to the Trump Organization, which oversees Trump's real estate empire and other businesses.

Alan Garten, the Trump Organization's executive vice president and chief legal officer, did not immediately

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