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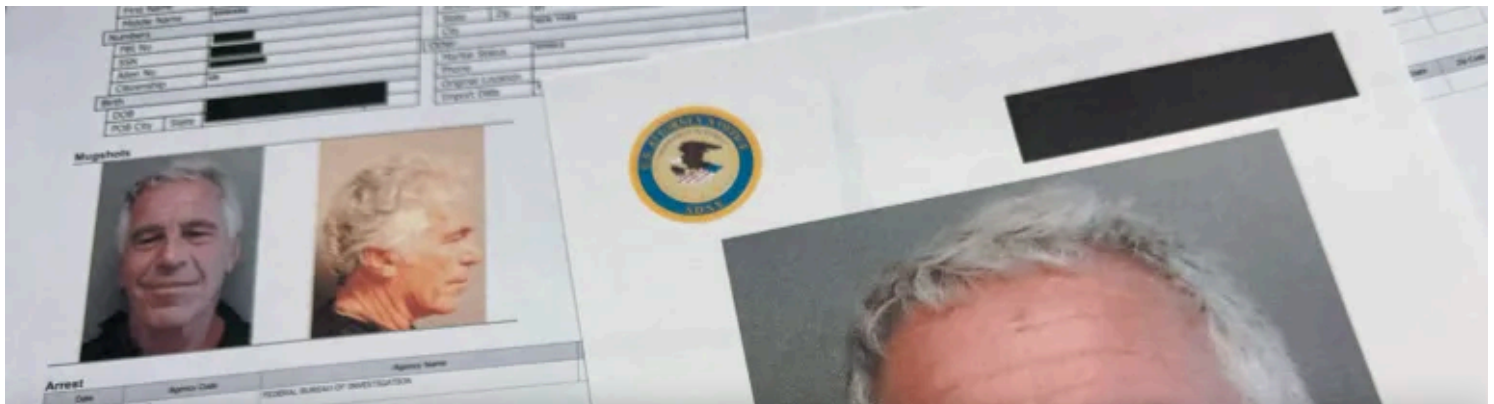
News | United Nations

UN panel says Epstein abuses may constitute 'crimes against humanity'

Experts say newly recently released documents show the need for an independent investigation into Epstein's sex-trafficking ring.

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Troves of documents were released over the past month under the Epstein Files Transparency Act in the US [File]
Jon Elswick/AP Photo]



By Al Jazeera Staff and Reuters

18 Feb 2026

A group of United Nations experts have suggested that abuses carried out by convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein could meet the definition of crimes against humanity.

On Tuesday, the independent experts appointed by the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) released a [statement](#) in response to the millions of files released by the United States government related to criminal investigations into Epstein.

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They explained that the records tell a story of dehumanisation, racism and corruption.

“So grave is the scale, nature, systematic character, and transnational reach of these atrocities

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The latest condemnation follows the January 30 release of 3.5 million pages of files from the US government's records on Epstein.

The files were required to be released as part of the Epstein Files Transparency Act, a bipartisan piece of legislation signed into law in November.

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But the 30-day deadline came and went, with only a partial release of the files. Even the January 30 publication has been criticised as incomplete, with reports indicating that there could be more than 6 million files in the government's possession.

The newly released documents have revealed new details about Epstein's relationships with influential figures, but few have faced accountability.

Critics have argued that Epstein himself faced scant legal consequences for the sex crimes he perpetuated. He reached a plea deal in Florida in 2008, wherein he pleaded guilty to soliciting a child for prostitution and sex trafficking, but he only served 13 months in custody.

He was in jail in 2019, facing federal charges, when he died by suicide in his cell.

Epstein's ex-girlfriend, Ghislaine Maxwell, has been sentenced to more than 20 years for her role in the sex trafficking scheme.

In Tuesday's statement, the experts on the UN panel slammed the heavy redactions in the Epstein files that appear to shield the identities of powerful figures.

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“Any suggestion that it is time to move on from the ‘Epstein files’ is unacceptable. It represents a failure of responsibility towards victims,” they said.

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