

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 8, 2024

## VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Merrick Garland  
Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20530

Attorney General Garland:

During your confirmation hearing you gave a “commit[ment] to transparency and explaining Justice Department decision making.”<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, you and the Justice Department are failing to uphold your promise.

In October 2021, I informed you that, on the rare occasion I received a response from the Justice Department, those responses were, at best, evasive, deficient, and several months late.<sup>2</sup> You and your department have ignored that letter too, and even more concerning, its warnings against politicizing the Justice Department. I questioned whether you sought input from experienced prosecutors to avoid partisan policies and odd misstatements.<sup>3</sup>

Since then, I have continued to write for information and received increasingly peculiar responses. For example, it may alarm you to learn the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is actively investigating a man who has been dead for nearly 14 years and is, therefore, unable to respond to my request for information.<sup>4</sup> Either this is a staggering waste of resources, or a stunning indication the Justice Department neither fully reads nor responds to congressional inquiries.

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<sup>1</sup> The Nomination of the Honorable Merrick Brian Garland to be Attorney General of the United State: Day 1 (Feb. 22, 2021), [The Nomination of the Honorable Merrick ... | United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary](#)

<sup>2</sup> Senator Grassley to Attorney General Merrick Garland (Oct. 22, 2021), [Judiciary-Full\\_electronic proof.pdf \(senate.gov\)](#).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Assistant Attorney General Uriarte to Senator Grassley, (November 11, 2023) [https://www.grassley.senate.gov/download/doj-to-grassley\\_-\\_garcia-luna](https://www.grassley.senate.gov/download/doj-to-grassley_-_garcia-luna); Robin Emmott, *Drug Hitmen in Suits Kill Key Witness in Mexico*, Reuters (Dec. 1, 2009), <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/drug-hitmen-in-suits-kill-key-witness-in-mexico-idUSTRE5B10LS/>

Then, in January 2024, I requested information on the closed case against Alex Saab.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Saab laundered illicit proceeds for narco-terrorist Nicolás Maduro and was a key connection between Venezuela and Iran. President Biden fully pardoned Mr. Saab as part of the Biden-Harris administration’s hostage negotiation with the criminal Maduro regime, in a failed attempt to secure democratic elections in Venezuela. Maduro has since declared himself the victor in a sham election and has detained thousands of dissenting Venezuelans—all while his top crony runs free.<sup>6</sup> This is the disastrous foreign policy of the Biden-Harris administration at work.

The political decision to release Saab was not based on “the law and the facts”, as your denial of my request falsely suggests.<sup>7</sup> To the contrary, the *Washington Post* reported that before granting clemency President Biden told his aides, “I want to get a read from the Hill”, and consulted a Democrat politician on the decision.<sup>8</sup> President Biden gave Democrats more input into the pardon of Alex Saab than he gave the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the agency tasked with dismantling the Maduro narco-terrorist regime. The DEA was not consulted.<sup>9</sup>

It appears the Justice Department’s “longstanding principles and duty... to avoid even a perception that [DOJ] efforts are influenced by anything other than the law and the facts” only applies when Republicans request information about the Justice Department’s political decisions after-the-fact. Your response also raised concerns about the privacy interests of uncharged third parties and investigative targets. To address those concerns, I have included a link in the footnotes with step-by-step instructions on blacking out text in PDF files for public releases.<sup>10</sup> Further, as you know, Congress often receives information not otherwise available to the public as a part of its oversight and legislative responsibilities.

With this guidance in mind, I ask that you revisit your response to my January 25, 2024 letter regarding Alex Saab. Please provide a status update by September 2, 2024.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley

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<sup>5</sup> Letter from Senators Grassley, Risch, and Rubio to Attorney General Merrick Garland (January 25, 2024), [https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley\\_risch\\_rubio\\_to\\_garland\\_-\\_alex\\_saab.pdf](https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley_risch_rubio_to_garland_-_alex_saab.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Vivian Sequera and Mircely Guanipa, *Venezuela Launches Investigation Against Opposition Leaders Amid Protest Crackdown*, Reuters (Aug. 5, 2024), <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/maduro-security-forces-round-up-venezuelans-involved-protests-operation-knock-2024-08-05/>

<sup>7</sup> Letter from Attorney General Merrick Garland to Senator Grassley (Aug. 8, 2024), [DOJ to Grassley - Alex Saab \(senate.gov\)](https://www.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley_risch_rubio_to_garland_-_alex_saab.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Tyler Page, *That One Last Phone Call Joe Biden Always Needs To Make*, The Washington Post (Mar. 8, 2024), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/08/that-one-last-phone-call-joe-biden-always-needs-make/>

<sup>9</sup> Press Release, *Grassley Highlights Nexus Between Chinese Money Laundering And State-Sanctioned Marijuana At Senate Drug Caucus Hearing* (Apr. 30, 2024), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/grassley-highlights-nexus-between-chinese-money-laundering-and-state-sanctioned-marijuana-at-senate-drug-caucus-hearing>

<sup>10</sup> How To Black Out Text in PDF Files, Adobe (last accessed Aug. 6, 2024), <https://www.adobe.com/acrobat/hub/how-to-black-out-text-in-a-pdf-file.html>

Cc:

The Honorable Anne Milgram  
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The Honorable Christopher Wray  
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