

“JEP” – SPECIAL JURISDICTION FOR PEACE

PRESS RELEASE

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STATEMENT 148

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The JEP issues its first ruling on the kidnappings: the last Secretariat of the FARC-EP is sentenced to the maximum special sanction and will work for eight years on the search for missing persons, comprehensive mine action, environmental recovery, and symbolic reparation.

- As established in the Final Peace Agreement, the members of the Secretariat of the FARC-EP received restorative special sanctions after laying down their arms, contributing to the truth, and acknowledging their responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- This is a historic milestone: these perpetrators had never been held to account before the ordinary justice system, where impunity for these crimes reached 92%.
- Those sanctioned by the Peace Tribunal’s Section for Acknowledgment of Truth are: Rodrigo Londoño Echeverri, Pablo Catatumbo Torres Victoria, Pastor Lisandro Alape Lascarro, Milton de Jesús Toncel Redondo, Jaime Alberto Parra, Julián Gallo Cubillos, and Rodrigo Granda Escobar.
- The FARC-EP perpetrators will carry out works and activities for eight years—the maximum term established in the Final Peace Agreement—to contribute to the reparation of victims.
- As part of the sanction, priority was first given to a project for the search, identification, and dignified return of persons reported missing in the cemetery of Palmira, Valle del Cauca. The JEP further determined that, in addition to this, the perpetrators will undertake other projects to be progressively implemented throughout the duration of

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an electronic device, and participate in restorative projects for the period set forth in the ruling.

- Those sanctioned will remain subject to a Regime of Conditionality that obliges them to continue contributing truth whenever required in the various JEP investigations in which they remain implicated for other crimes committed during the conflict.
- The restorative works will be monitored by the Mechanism for the Monitoring and Verification of Special Sanctions, formed by the JEP and the UN Verification Mission.
- The National Government bears responsibility for guaranteeing the resources and measures necessary for the execution and enforcement of the sanction.
- In addition, this Section issued further orders to state entities, including the Victims' Unit, to reassess the inclusion of victims in their registries so that, where applicable, they may access administrative reparations.
- The judicial process undertaken by the JEP in the kidnapping case has made it possible to reconstruct the magnitude of the crimes charged, the evolution of the practices, the dynamics that fueled the atrocities, the psychosocial impacts suffered by the victims and their families, the harm inflicted on communities and territories, as well as the policies that led to their commission.
- This first ruling in the kidnapping case sanctioned those most responsible for macro-criminal policies and patterns implemented between 1993 and 2012. It will not be the last: additional rulings will follow against those responsible for the actions of the extinct guerrilla's blocs. To date, 41 signatories have been charged with these crimes, and all have acknowledged their responsibility for the patterns documented by the JEP.
- In Case 01, the Tribunal established that a phenomenon of macro-victimization and systemic harm had taken place. The harm suffered by the victims was recognized across multiple dimensions: property, income, physical and mental health, identity, existence, sexuality, moral integrity, environment, and territory.

Bogotá, September 16, 2025. In compliance with the Final Peace Agreement, the JEP issued its first restorative sentence against seven former members of the last Secretariat of the extinct Farc-EP for the kidnapping policy that spread throughout the country and resulted in at least 21,396 victimizing events. This is a judicial milestone: these

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perpetrators had never been brought before the ordinary justice system, nor had they ever acknowledged their responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Until now, the justice system had not documented the magnitude of these crimes, the evolution of the practices, the dynamics that fueled the atrocities, the psychosocial impacts on the victims and their families, the harm to communities and territories, and the policies that made them possible.

After the conclusion of the trial stage, the Tribunal for Peace's Section for Acknowledgment of Truth issued the ruling, defining the sanctions imposed on

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the perpetrators once they had laid down their arms, contributed truth, accepted the crimes charged, and demonstrated that they have upheld their commitment to non-repetition. They are Rodrigo Londoño Echeverri, Pablo Catatumbo Torres Victoria, Pastor Lisandro Alape Lascarro, Milton de Jesús Toncel Redondo, Jaime Alberto Parra Rodríguez, Julián Gallo Cubillos, and Rodrigo Granda Escobar.

These individuals were declared top leaders of the FARC-EP and found criminally responsible, as perpetrators, for the war crimes of hostage-taking and homicide, as well as for the crimes against humanity of serious deprivation of liberty, murder, and forced disappearance. They were also declared responsible, under command responsibility, for the war crimes of torture, cruel treatment, outrages upon personal dignity, sexual violence, and forced displacement, as well as for the crimes against humanity of torture, slavery, and other inhumane acts committed by units under their command.

After a rigorous investigation, the JEP concluded that the former members of the FARC-EP Secretariat turned kidnapping into a criminal policy based on three patterns: financing their armed organization, pressuring the Colombian State for prisoner exchanges, and exercising social and territorial control. For these acts, the Tribunal for Peace imposed a special sanction of eight years, to be served through restorative projects, including initiatives related to the search for missing persons, acts of memory and symbolic reparation, environmental recovery, and humanitarian demining.

This is the maximum sanction established in the Final Peace Agreement for those who acknowledge their responsibility and provide full truth before the JEP. Those most responsible will be afforded the necessary guarantees to comply with the restorative component of the sanction under dignified and safe conditions, as with any defendant in the Colombian justice system. However, they will not receive any remuneration for the Works, Tasks, and Activities with Restorative Content (TOAR) in which they must

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participate as part of their sanction.

While serving their special sanctions, the former FARC-EP leaders will also remain subject to the retributive component, which entails effective restrictions on rights such as freedom of residence and movement. They will be subject to

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a permanent supervision regime by the JEP, carry an electronic device that allows the Tribunal for Peace to verify their location and activities in real time, remain within a specific geographic area—without this implying imprisonment—and comply with the schedules and tasks derived from the sanction imposed.

The ruling was issued in the framework of Case 01, which addresses kidnappings committed by the extinct FARC-EP and other crimes committed in the context of captivity. This means that the perpetrators must continue to provide truthful, complete, and detailed information whenever required by the JEP, including in other macro-investigations in which they are involved. In addition, the Section for Acknowledgment warned that it may order additional or complementary restorative projects if necessary to complete the eight-year sanction period or to reinforce the satisfaction of victims' rights. These projects do not, in any case, extend the duration of the sanction.

"This sentence does not erase the suffering, but it is an act of acknowledgment. It is the voice that tells Colombian society and the world that what happened was unjustifiable and inhumane. It not only closes a judicial chapter; it also opens a new page for the memory, justice, and peace of our nation. This justice demands much more from those responsible than being locked up in prisons: they had to publicly acknowledge their crimes, provide truth, face the victims, and now they must work on their behalf in the light of the communities, with a firm commitment not to non-repetition. This strengthens us as a society," said Judge Camilo Suárez Aldana, rapporteur of this judicial decision.

With the fulfillment of the special sanction imposed by the JEP, the ordinary penalties and criminal liabilities of these perpetrators for the same acts are extinguished. However, the JEP emphasized that non-compliance with the special sanction or with the Regime of Conditionality may result in the loss of the benefits granted by this transitional tribunal.

"The justice pronounced today forced us to peel back, one by one, the layers of silence, fear, and denial that had covered the truth. And although it hurts, that pain became the



treatment we chose for the wound to heal (...) Two forces brought us to this moment: the truth of those responsible and the persistence of the victims. It had never happened before. Nowhere else in the world had those most responsible acknowledged their crimes. Today's ruling is a milestone. But the meaning of the JEP is not found only in this ruling,

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but also in the road traveled by victims and perpetrators, and in the road that remains ahead: the implementation of the sanctions,” said JEP President Judge Alejandro Ramelli.

Projects to be worked on by the former FARC-EP leaders

In defining the sanctions imposed, the Section for Acknowledgment of Truth of the Tribunal for Peace verified the connection between the crime of kidnapping, the harm caused, and the restorative measures ordered. It further required that the projects demonstrate real transformative capacity for the victims collectively and for their communities, and that reparations encompass social, cultural, environmental, and symbolic dimensions. The Section also emphasized that victims’ proposals were evaluated for their relevance, reparative approach, and feasibility, so as to avoid generating unrealistic expectations.

In determining the sanction projects, the Tribunal took into account the provisions of the Final Peace Agreement and applied criteria to ensure the coherence and viability of the restorative actions. It considered, among other factors, the compatibility with the political commitments derived from the Agreement, the average age of the perpetrators (69 years), their physical and mental health conditions, the sanction projects they themselves presented, and, centrally, the observations and proposals of the victims. This established a framework that ensures the sanctions are viable, sustainable, and enforceable within the timeframe set by the ruling.

On this basis, the Section determined that the perpetrators must work over the next eight years on, among other measures:

- 1) **Search for Missing Persons:** Of the more than 4,325 kidnapping victims



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Missing Persons (UBPD), which has identified 132,877 victims of forced disappearance in the country. This work includes collecting and systematizing data, providing coordinates, preparing thematic maps, and accompanying field visits for prospecting and recovery purposes. The project also contemplates training and adaptation of facilities for the custody of remains, participation in the methodological design of territorial spaces, and the conduct of acts of acknowledgment, repentance, and forgiveness, agreed upon with the victims. As its first sanction project, the Section prioritized the search, identification, and dignified return of remains of missing persons in the Central Cemetery of Palmira, Valle del Cauca.

Within this line of action, the Tribunal also ordered a circuit of restorative acts with dignifying narratives in emblematic locations, including Cali and Neiva, to highlight differentiated impacts and promote the historical memory of kidnapping.

- 2) **Comprehensive Action Against Antipersonnel Mines Project (AICMA):** In their effort to exercise territorial control—one of the three kidnapping patterns identified by the JEP—the FARC-EP laid anti-personnel mines that continue to restrict the right to mobility and hinder the development of communities. To contribute to the recovery of these territories, the perpetrators must work on collecting, updating, and systematizing information on risk areas. They will also be required to take part in mapping and prioritizing intervention zones, as well as in conducting workshops with affected communities.
- 3) **Environment, Nature, and Territory:** The JEP concluded that the kidnappings disrupted the normal course of development in the territories. These events triggered forced displacements and simultaneously undermined the economic



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and community development of affected areas. To contribute to repairing this harm, the perpetrators must engage in land preparation, the installation of nurseries, and the propagation of native species and crops for the benefit of victims. They will also participate in implementing planting strategies, ecosystem maintenance, and agricultural initiatives, alongside educational training programs on environmental conservation and

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nature tourism. In addition, they are expected to contribute to identifying points of environmental impact, installing signage, and developing ecotourism routes.

- 4) **Memory and Symbolic Reparation:** To honor and preserve the memory of the kidnapping victims of the armed conflict, including those who did not survive this crime, the perpetrators must carry out symbolic reparation actions such as transcribing victims’ testimonies, constructing and installing memory artifacts, and contributing to audiovisual, radio, and digital products—including a microsite—with reparative content. In addition, they must organize events to ask victims for forgiveness, participate in restorative meetings with victims, perpetrators, and communities, produce reports, and systematize these actions.

How are sanctions enforced?

The JEP and the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, within the framework of the Final Peace Agreement, oversee the monitoring and verification of special sanctions. The Monitoring and Verification Mechanism provides a space for coordinating, collecting, exchanging, and analyzing information on compliance with the ruling and on the conditions necessary for its implementation. It supports the Section for Acknowledgment of Truth in its role of supervising effective compliance with the Tribunal’s decisions. In other words, the verification of special sanctions combines a judicial component, an independent and impartial international component, and the perspective of the communities in the territories where they are carried out.

Monitoring includes on-site visits and real-time supervision through electronic devices. All of this is designed to guarantee the location and activity of those sanctioned, protect their dignity, and ensure transparency in the enforcement of transitional justice



provisions.

The JEP orders and supervises, but does not define contracting procedures nor assume disciplinary or fiscal responsibility for the administration of resources needed

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to comply with special sanctions. It is the National Government that bears the obligation to guarantee the resources and conditions necessary for perpetrators to comply with their special sanctions in conditions of dignity.

In this regard, the Ministry of Defense must implement specialized protocols for restorative projects that ensure the protection of victims, perpetrators, communities, public servants, and international partners. This instrument must be prepared before the start of the projects, submitted to the Jurisdiction for approval, and disseminated within the security forces, accompanied by the corresponding training.

Other Orders in Favor of Victims

Regarding compensation or individual reparations, the JEP clarifies that these do not fall within its competence and that it cannot order economic payments either from the perpetrators or from public entities. This responsibility lies with the State institutions charged with administrative reparations. Nevertheless, the Jurisdiction recognizes that for the accredited victims, inclusion in the administrative route of individual economic or material reparation remains a concern, since many of them were left bankrupt, indebted, and without sufficient resources to rebuild their lives after the kidnappings. For this reason, the Section for Acknowledgment of Truth ordered measures aimed at guaranteeing or contributing to the comprehensive reparation of accredited victims.

Specifically, it ordered the Unit for Attention and Comprehensive Reparation to Victims (UARIV) to inform victims, within 30 days, of the progress of their administrative reparation process and to submit reports on the actions taken to the Section for Acknowledgment of Truth. In addition, the UARIV must reassess applications for inclusion in the Single Registry of Victims currently classified as “not included,” taking into account the new facts and evidence recognized in Case 01, and determine whether compensation payments are appropriate.

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The Section also ordered the Land Restitution Unit to inform victims, within 90 days, of the status of their proceedings and to give priority to those still pending, both at the administrative and judicial stages. Likewise, it ordered the prioritization of applications filed by victims of Case 01 that remain unsolved as of the date of notification of this decision.

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The Threshold of Truth was Surpassed

This ruling follows a rigorous judicial investigation that documented in detail what the victims endured, as well as the impacts on communities and territories resulting from the kidnappings and the consequences that persist to this day. These facts were investigated by the JEP’s Chamber for Acknowledgment of Truth and confirmed at the trial stage by the Tribunal for Peace’s Section for Acknowledgment of Truth, through a correspondence order that corroborated, among other aspects, the relationship between the facts, the acknowledged conduct, the evidence submitted, the legal qualifications, those responsible, the proposed sanction, and the conditions of contribution to truth and reparation within the framework of the Comprehensive System for Peace.

The work of the JEP has expanded the evidentiary basis for attributing responsibility to those identified as most responsible for serious war crimes and crimes against humanity. Through this process, the causes that transformed their conduct into systematic and widespread attacks against the civilian population have been brought to light. This marks a milestone in Colombia’s judicial history by offering an unprecedented and comprehensive view of both responsibility and the suffering inflicted. Such understanding is essential for the processes of reparation and reconciliation that the country demands. In addition, this process shed light on how the guerrillas operated, the structures they used, and the logics under which they waged war—knowledge that is fundamental to the construction of judicial truth and historical memory.

To achieve this, the Chamber for Acknowledgment of Truth summoned 402 perpetrators from the FARC-EP to testify about the kidnappings. During the Covid-19 pandemic, virtual tools were incorporated, along with support for perpetrators and the judiciary to ensure their effective use. Over two years, the JEP heard, as no other tribunal had, the testimonies and observations of 795 victims and received 1,200 written submissions

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regarding the accounts given by perpetrators from the FARC-EP. This made it possible to further document the mistreatment and other crimes suffered by victims in captivity. Reports from the Attorney General’s Office and civil society organizations were also reviewed to cross-check the information.

In 2022, for the first time in Colombia's history, the top leaders of the former guerrilla publicly acknowledged before the justice system, the victims, and the country their responsibility for

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war crimes and crimes against humanity. They were confronted with the pain, questions, and demands voiced by the victims. In direct response to these demands for truth, the JEP has moved down the chain of command and is investigating other FARC-EP structures below the Secretariat. It has identified those most responsible in the regions and documented the differentiated harm suffered by victims, communities, and territories.

To date, 41 former members of the FARC-EP have been charged by the Chamber for Acknowledgment of Truth with war crimes and crimes against humanity for kidnapping, including seven members of the Secretariat. All of those charged—100%—have acknowledged responsibility for the criminal patterns documented by the JEP.

Findings on the Kidnappings

The investigation established that the FARC-EP implemented kidnapping as part of a criminal policy structured around three patterns. Since 1993, they used it as a financing mechanism—although they had previously practiced kidnapping for ransom. Beginning in 1998, they expanded the practice to include the abduction of military personnel and civilians in an unsuccessful attempt to force exchanges for imprisoned guerrillas. At the same time, they resorted to kidnapping as an instrument of social and territorial control. These practices were systematically and widely extended throughout the country.

In all of these patterns, the so-called “good treatment” of captives amounted, in practice, only to keeping them alive, while subjecting them to conditions that wholly disregarded their human dignity.

The financial kidnappings, in particular, left consequences that persist even after 20 or 30 years. The JEP documented cases of victims who were never able to recover the money paid for their release, who were unable to open bank accounts again, or who are still paying off debts incurred to secure their freedom. In this pattern, the investigation revealed that most victims lacked the means to pay for their release, which intensified



the suffering of both the victims and their families. In regions such as the Caribbean, numerous mass kidnappings were carried out through illegal roadblocks known as *pescas milagrosas*. In many cases, victims paid sums not exceeding five million pesos, which nonetheless meant financial ruin and the destruction of their life projects.

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With respect to kidnappings for territorial control, many of the victims were particularly vulnerable people. These abductions took place in areas with little or no State presence, and were directed against individuals and the guerrilla suspected of collaborating with their enemies, such as paramilitaries or members of the security forces. They were also committed against those who refused to comply with guerrilla-imposed rules of coexistence, as a form of punishment.

In cases of kidnapping for exchange or for ransom, there was at least a rationale for releasing the hostages. By contrast, in the pattern of territorial control, the victims were perceived by the guerrillas as obstacles to achieving their goals. Consequently, this pattern shows a greater concurrence of other crimes, such as forced disappearance, homicide, forced displacement, and sexual violence.

The investigation documented that men from the Eastern Bloc—and on some occasions from the Southern Bloc—confined hostages in barbed-wire corrals, which victims described as “cages” or “concentration camps.” There, members of the security forces and civilians were held in order to prevent escapes and to pressure for exchanges of imprisoned guerrillas.

These were small spaces, lacking sanitary services, with limited or conditional access to water. Victims were forced to urinate and defecate in the same place of confinement or in inadequate containers, under constant surveillance by the guerrillas. This not only worsened the unhygienic conditions, but also constituted a deliberate form of humiliation.

The use of these cages went beyond the need to prevent escapes: it became a systematic method of mistreatment that violated human dignity. For this reason, such acts were classified as crimes against humanity, insofar as they constituted a grave form of deprivation of liberty.



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It was also established that women, minors, and older adults experienced kidnapping in differentiated ways, and that many victims continue to suffer lasting mental health impacts from their captivity.

The Section determined that the large-scale victimization produced systematic and generalized harm, characterized by the consistent repetition of the following effects: 1) The direct victims of Case 01 suffered humiliation and objectification of such magnitude that it caused profound and enduring moral harm, still present today in their inner lives.

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2) Acts of hostage-taking, serious deprivation of liberty, and other concurrent crimes inflicted grave existential harm on direct and indirect victims. These acts abruptly and harmfully altered their relationships, conditions of existence, and overall life projects—consequences that continue to affect their external living conditions. 3) Direct and indirect victims suffered serious damage to their property or tangible goods, to their income or expected income, and to their patrimony as a whole, regardless of race, sex, gender, age, economic capacity, or vulnerability status.

A Process That Has Already Been Restorative

The Transitional Restorative Justice applied by the JEP seeks to ensure that the process is restorative from the very beginning, not only at its conclusion. Victims therefore receive psychosocial and legal support to guarantee their participation. Their observations form an essential part of judicial contrast, and spaces are created where they can ask questions that have remained unanswered for decades and, in the best cases, obtain truths and acknowledgments that help alleviate their pain.

At the Farc-EP Secretariat Acknowledgment Hearing, for example, Edward Arias demanded that Pablo Catatumbo Torres publicly clear the name of his father, Oswaldo Diaz. The FARC-EP had justified his kidnapping by labeling him “corrupt,” without evidence, and later murdered him; to this day his body remains missing. At that hearing, Catatumbo admitted: “We acted irresponsibly and rashly, we accused him of a crime he had not committed (...) we committed an abominable crime against your father,” and offered his apology.

Likewise, Héctor Darío Muriel, a kidnapping survivor, had carried for 20 years the guilt of having escaped captivity while leaving behind his best friend, who was shot and killed by the FARC-EP. In response, Pastor Alape told him: “We were the criminals, and if you had not escaped, it would be your wife who would be enduring this pain.”



Rodrigo Granda, for his part, acknowledged victims such as Augusto Hinojosa and disclosed a truth he had been seeking for years: his cousin and brother were murdered after being kidnapped at an illegal roadblock, under the suspicion that they were collaborators of the

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State security forces. "Yes, we were responsible, and I am responsible for the deaths of Ismael and Enrique," Granda admitted, committing himself to search for their remains.

Milton de Jesús Toncel, for his part, acknowledged victims such as Diva Díaz, whose father was kidnapped and later exchanged for other family members to continue paying for their release. He was eventually killed after giving an interview in which he recounted the humiliations he had suffered during his abduction. "We unleashed a rampage against his family (...) the damage we inflicted is irreparable," Toncel admitted.

Regarding the chains borne by kidnapping victims from the security forces, Rodrigo Londoño acknowledged that they did not see "the human being, but only the uniform." And in response to accounts from victims of sexual violence and the abduction of minors by men under his command, he said: "I felt disgust at the very acts we committed in the name of revolutionary ideas."

The process is also transformative for the perpetrators, because today, in the silence left by the end of the war, they can acknowledge that what they did was inhumane, cruel, and that these crimes, given their gravity, cannot be pardoned by the courts and must never be repeated. Through the restorative work they must now undertake as part of their sanction, they will be able to contribute to repairing the harm caused while advancing their process of reintegration.

What' s next?

In the coming days, the perpetrators and the victims will be formally notified of the decision. Once this process is complete, the perpetrators will begin the preparation stage for the fulfillment of their sanctions. The next step will be the implementation of the restorative projects through which the JEP seeks to leave a lasting legacy for the victims and communities, even after the perpetrators have completed their penalties.



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publicly. The indictment of those most responsible for the kidnappings carried out by the Eastern and Southern Blocs will be announced soon.

If these perpetrators comply with the requirements of truth-telling and acknowledgment of the crimes, they too will appear before this Section of the Tribunal for Peace to receive their special sanctions, as has now occurred with the last Secretariat of the FARC-EP.



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END OF TRANSLATION

I, Lina Rosas, competent official translator, and interpreter, duly registered before the Ministry of Foreign Affairs pursuant to Certificate of Professional Proficiency in Official Translation and Interpretation No. 183 (English<>Spanish) issued on July 17, 2018, by the Universidad de Antioquia, certify that this is an accurate and complete translation to the best of my knowledge, ability, and belief.
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