

Author

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## Summary

Hi all. [@matthewb](#) and I have been JuiceboxDAO contributors for the last two years and recently we've been working on the legal defense fundraiser for Roman Storm & Alexey Pertsev. We are looking for feedback on the proposal below to contribute to their defense fund. We believe that Roman and Alexey's cases are existential for the crypto industry and will set important precedent for protocols, developers, and users worldwide. They are facing significant legal costs on a monthly basis and are running out of resources to defend themselves. We hope that the Aave community will consider helping Roman & Alexey defend our rights to privacy and to publish open-source code.

## Motivation

### Context

Alexey Pertsev and Roman Storm, two developers who contributed to Tornado Cash, were arrested in different jurisdictions following OFAC's sanctions in 2022. Their 2024 trials are setting important precedents for developers, privacy protocols, and the crypto industry more broadly. Alexey's first trial took place on March 26 of this year (with verdict and further potential legal action scheduled for mid-May), and Roman's trial is scheduled for late September.

The government's attempt to criminalize Roman and Alexey for a third party's misuse of open-source software is unjust and unlawful. But while [legal advocates are spending enormous effort and money](#) to defend Storm and Pertsev, the developers are faced with two governments using all of their resources to prosecute them and treat them like terrorists.

Roman and Alexey need your help to build a strong legal defense not just for their sake, but for crypto users and developers worldwide. Justice DAO is advocating on their behalf and helping to raise funds for their legal defense. However, time and money are running out and we need support from influential protocols and organizations within the Ethereum ecosystem. This donation will not only help to fund ongoing legal defense work but also send a message of solidarity to Roman and Alexey while they fight against government overreach and abuse of power.

View Roman Storm's statement here:

[twitter.com](#)

### [Roman S](#)

[@rstormsf](#)

2024 is the year that will define the rest of my life. Honestly, I'm scared. But also hopeful that this community cares with a passion. Please donate towards my legal defense. [wewantjusticedao.org](#)

[5:52 PM - 22 Jan 2024](#) 5.9K

2.3K

Alexey and Roman's legal defense fund on Juicebox:

[Juicebox | Crypto Fundraising & DAO Management](#)

### [Free Alexey & Roman | Juicebox](#)

Legal Defense Fund support for Alexey Pertsev and Roman Storm

Complete breakdown of associated funding and costs:

[docs.google.com](#)

[

]([https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1P69NhyLshl6kwfo7KqaA\\_rNUV5vpRw9JTJOtFAsdqAk/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1P69NhyLshl6kwfo7KqaA_rNUV5vpRw9JTJOtFAsdqAk/edit?usp=sharing))

### [Free Alexey & Roman – Expenses](#)

## Expenses

Year,Amount Raised,Currency,Amount Expended (Actual),Remarks,Remarks 2023,In-network Donors,320,ETH,Legal,-\$818,000 Admin,-\$61,000 Total 2023,320,ETH,,-\$879,000 Amount Expended (Actual Year-To-Date),,Projected 2024: 2024,Juicebox: last...

## Specification

### Voting Options

1. Yes, donate \$250k
2. Yes, donate \$500k
3. Yes, donate \$750k
4. Yes, donate \$1M
5. No, do not donate
6. Abstain

There are two ways to contribute to the legal defense fund:

1. ETH or ERC-20 tokens directly via [Justice DAO](#) (requires KYC for the entity donating)
2. Mainnet ETH via the [Juicebox project](#)

## Disclaimer

### Addressing Legal Concerns and Reasons to Donate

#### A. Hundreds of donors have already stepped up to defend open-source code

1. Since 2022, over 800 donations totalling ~750 ETH have been received. Some of the most reputable figures & organizations in crypto have supported and/or donated, including:
2. Edward Snowden
3. Vitalik Buterin
4. Gnosis
5. Moloch DAO
6. Matter Labs
7. Bankless
8. BGD Labs
9. Nouns DAO
10. MetaCartel DAO
11. Donations are managed by Justice DAO, a US-based decentralized autonomous organization registered in the state of Wyoming. Justice DAO is operated for charitable purposes by sympathizers of Roman Storm and Alexey Pertsev.
12. Donations are processed in compliance with US laws. Donated funds are paid to the outside counsel representing Storm and Pertsev and are applied to outstanding invoices for legal fees and costs.

#### B. Donations are legitimate, legal, and ethical

1. This campaign will make history and donors should decide which side they want to be on.
2. A number of well-known industry participants have already decided to stand with Roman & Alexey and against government overreach.
3. This is not just about defending developers – although that is important – it is also about demonstrating that the crypto community is full of good people who comply with the law. It is about defeating the government's narrative that crypto is only used by criminals and others who have wrongful motives.

4. Donating to a defense fund is legal in the United States. So is discussing and supporting donation efforts publicly on platforms (as in the case with governance forums and voting portals, for example).
5. There is no legal or ethical prohibition against defense funds. And in the US, donors arguably have First Amendment rights to contribute to causes like this one, free from government interference or retaliation.
6. Both Alexey Pertsev and Roman Storm are represented by reputable counsel based in the Netherlands and the state of California, respectively. There is an obvious, legitimate need for defense funding because they are in the middle of defending themselves against two different governments that have vast resources to use against them.
7. Several advocacy groups including [Coin Center](#), [Blockchain Association](#), and [DeFi Education Fund](#), have already recognized the need here and have filed public amicus briefs in support of the defense efforts. Confidentiality issues limit how much can be said between now and then, but there is substantial and increasing community support for Mr. Storm and Mr. Pertsev, including organizations that are willing to make public statements in court in support of this cause.
8. The fundraising campaign is compliant with the law.
9. Donors have the option of contributing to the cause directly through JusticeDAO's website <https://wewantjusticedao.org> or by contributing ETH via [juicebox.money](https://juicebox.money).
10. All incoming donations are screened for risk indicators, including money laundering and sanctions risk. Details about the process are not publicized in order to maintain the integrity of the process, but anyone who has questions can reach out directly via Twitter/X [@FreeAlexeyRoman](#).
11. Once donated, funds are used to pay for legal fees and costs (e.g., expert witnesses and consultants) actually incurred. The lawyers for Mr. Storm and Mr. Pertsev have to submit their invoices for review and approval, and any extra funds are held in a trust account to be applied for payment of future legal fees and costs.
12. Donations will NOT be used to cover legal or any other costs of Mr. Roman Semenov, who currently holds the status of a Specially Designated National (SDN) according to the US Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

Please note that the foregoing statements are not intended to be legal advice to any DAO, Delegates, or any other person or organization. Anyone with specific concerns about legal issues pertaining to their own circumstances should contact their own counsel.

## Next Steps

1. Get community feedback on TEMP CHECK
2. Snapshot vote
3. If Snapshot is successful then move to AIP