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Iran Morality Official Suspended After Gay Sex Tape Leak



MORTEZA NIKOUBAZL/NURPHOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

Reza Tsaghati had created a “Chastity and Hijab Workshop” in the country’s north.

BY DONALD PADGETT
JULY 31 2023 11:48 AM EST



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Gilan province after the video was first posted by Radio Gilan on its Telegram channel. The story was later widely reported by the **BBC**, which said it was unable to confirm the video’s participants.

The video was reportedly filmed on the premises of the General Directorate of Culture and Islamic Guidance in Gilan. Government officials have denied any advance knowledge of Tsaghati’s alleged sexual preferences and activities, however.

Homosexuality and same-sex sexual relations are illegal in Iran and punishable by death. Critics of the country’s anti-LGBTQ+ laws claimed the case showed the hypocrisy of the government and the two-tiered system of justice that allows favored individuals to escape punishment for crimes that would bring prosecution, imprisonment, and even death for ordinary citizens.

News of Tsaghati’s suspension was first reported on July 19 by the *Gil Khabar* news site according to *IranWire*, saying he was dismissed “due to scandals” without providing any further details. Days later the general directorate of culture and Islamic guidance announced it had ordered a “thorough investigation” of the matter and that Tsaghati had been replaced in order to “facilitate further research and ensure uninterrupted cultural and artistic activities.”

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Also according to *IranWire*, Peyman Behbodi of Gilan Radio’s Telegram channel reported Tsaghati’s sister and nieces were detained by authorities, although it is unclear if Tsaghati had been taken into custody as well.

Tsaghati had been elected to the position in 2021, and had held several positions in government in the past. In ▲ he founded the Hosseinieh Honar Rasht religious center and became a board member of the religious group Gilan

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Government officials have been removed in the past for extra-marital sexual relations. Speculation has grown that the video might have been released as part of a power struggle in the region. Accusations of homosexuality and same-sex sexual behavior against political opponents are not uncommon.

While Radio Gilan exposes alleged financial and political corruption and sexual improprieties of the ruling mullahs and members of the government, it also recently revealed the identities of those engaged in same-sex sex acts with a different government official and referred them to the authorities for prosecution.

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