Vatican
News



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The Vatican announced late June 5 that it had arrested an Italian investor on charges of extortion, fraud and money-laundering relating to the city-state's controversial decision to take part in a development project in London.

In an unusual statement issued at 9 p.m. Friday evening, the Vatican press office said the city-state had arrested Gianluigi Torzi following an interrogation earlier in the day, and that he was now being held in custody.

The statement did not give many details, but said the crimes Torzi is charged with a carry possible penalty of up to 12 years imprisonment.

Torzi had previously been identified in Italian media reports as a broker who helped officials at the Vatican's Secretariat of State take part in a some $200 million fund to purchase an investment property on Sloane Avenue in London's prestigious Chelsea neighborhood.

Vatican police have been investigating the deal for months. Last October they conducted a highly unusual raid of the Secretariat of State's offices, collecting documents and electronic devices suspected to be connected to the deal.

In its June 5 statement, the Vatican said the development deal had also involved some staffers at the Secretariat of State.

The Vatican had previously raided the office and apartment of Msgr. Alberto Perlasca, a former department head at the Secretariat, in February.

Italian media have reported that the original plan for the property deal was to make a profit on upgrading office spaces into luxury apartments.

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