

Iran-Linked Hackers Breach FBI Director Kash Patel's Personal Email

An Iran-linked hacker group publicly claimed Friday it had broken into FBI Director Kash Patel's personal email inbox, publishing personal photographs and other documents online. The Justice Department confirmed the breach.

The group, called Handala Hack Team, posted a statement on its website saying Patel "will now find his name among the list of successfully hacked victims." The hackers published personal photographs of Patel smoking cigars, riding in an antique convertible, and taking a selfie in a mirror while holding a large bottle of rum. They also published what they claimed was his resume.

Handala has been linked to previous cyberattacks targeting Israeli and American interests. The group operates a public website where it posts claims and stolen materials.



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A Justice Department official confirmed that Patel's email account had been compromised and said the material posted online appeared authentic. The FBI did not respond to a request for comment. The hackers also did not respond to messages.

Western cybersecurity researchers describe Handala as one of several front organizations used by Iranian government intelligence units, despite the group's self-description as pro-Palestinian vigilante hackers. Handala previously claimed responsibility for a March 11 hack of Stryker, a Michigan-based medical devices company, in which the group said it

deleted a large volume of company data.

Reuters, which first reported the breach, said it could not independently authenticate the Patel emails. However, the personal Gmail address Handala claimed to have accessed matches an address linked to Patel in separate data breaches, according to dark web intelligence firm District 4 Labs. A sample of the leaked material reviewed by Reuters included a mix of personal and work correspondence from 2010 to 2019.

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