

ACICE Issue 4/22 (April)

# ACICE Monthly Digest

A monthly roundup of significant news around the world



ADMM Cybersecurity and  
Information Centre of Excellence

# Information and Cybersecurity

## Rise in Malicious Actors Using Methods to Beat Multifactor Authentication

- Multifactor Authentication (MFA) is the most effective defence in preventing accounts from being hacked. In addition to the basic requirements of usernames and



passwords, MFA ensures that users have to incorporate an additional security configuration, such as fingerprint, physical security key or one-time password, before they can access their accounts. Many MFA providers also allow users to accept a push notification from a phone application, or to receive a phone call and press a key as an additional authentication factor.

- In the past few months, suspected hacker groups like Lapsus\$ data extortion gang and Cozy Bear have successfully bypassed these additional security measures. They have used methods such as (i) issuing multiple MFA requests to the end user's legitimate device until the user accepts it; (ii) sending one or two MFA prompts per day; and (iii) calling the targets and pretending to be part of their company.

- Currently, the strongest forms of MFA are based on a framework called FIDO2, where users were given the option of using dedicated security keys or fingerprint readers and cameras that were built into their physical devices. As FIDO2 is relatively new, it is not susceptible to the methods used by threat actors. Additionally, the authentication is tied to one physical device and cannot be used on other devices.
- According to *Ars Technica News*, even though FIDO2 provides robust security, companies or organisations should be prepared to deal with contingencies such as an employee losing the key or device required to send the multifactor authentication.
- It bears reminding that even with the most secure set-up, the user is often the weakest link for malicious actors to target. Hence, it is important for individuals to keep themselves updated and informed on the latest tactics used by malicious actors.

## Twitch's New Policy will Ban Users who Spread Misinformation



- On 3 March 2022, Twitch announced its new policy and community guidelines. With the implementation of the new policy, users who repeatedly spread harmful misinformation on the platform will be banned.
- According to *The Verge*, this new policy would only apply to users whose online presence is dedicated to persistently sharing widely disproven and broadly shared harmful misinformation topics.
- Topics under Twitch's misinformation ban included false information about: (i) COVID-19 vaccines; (ii) harmful health misinformation; (iii) election fraud; (iv) content that undermines the integrity of a civic or political process; (v) promotes violence; as well as (vi) misinformation that targets certain protected groups.
- According to *New York Times*, Twitch acknowledged the real-world harms that could come with the increasing popularity of the live-streaming site. Hence, the new rules were aimed at clamping down on egregious purveyors of misinformation.

# Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

## The Benefits of Drones in Disaster Relief and Humanitarian Aid

- Over the past few years, drones have become increasingly popular not only in film-making, but also to gather information for effective disaster management, conduct search and rescue operations, as well as deliver aid to secluded areas.
- For instance, as *Fierce Electronics* reported, search-and-rescue drones were used to deliver medical supplies and humanitarian aid equipment to several dangerous and hard-to-reach Ukrainian cities.
- Similarly, according to *TODAY*, drones were deployed across a mountainous area in China where a plane had inexplicably crashed. Drones can reach remote areas with little or no human interference and with minimal effort, time and energy, hence making them one of the most useful tools in humanitarian aid and disaster relief.



Photo of a drone delivering first-aid kit

# Climate Security

## Increasing Levels of Radioactive Pollution near Pripyat



A satellite image of the power plant

- According to reports by *Unilad*, over 10 hectares of forest were found burning in the Exclusion Zone near the Chernobyl Power Plant in Pripyat, Ukraine, on 22 Mar 2022.
- The fire caused high levels of dangerous radioactive pollution within the area, and officials had called for immediate action to be taken by the International Atomic Energy Agency to prevent irreparable consequences.
- Due to combustion caused by the fire, the radionuclides<sup>1</sup> released into the atmosphere could be transported over long distances by wind to other parts of Ukraine, Belarus, and other European countries. Therefore, there could be adverse effects on more countries if the fire continued to burn.
- Officials said that the relevant authorities would continue to monitor the situation using radiation detectors near the area.

<sup>1</sup> A radionuclide is a type of atom that is unstable due to excess exposure to nuclear energy.

# Terrorism

## ISIS's Opportunism During Festive Periods

- ISIS typically publishes propaganda featuring leadership messages, announcement of new strategies and materials to motivate supporters during festive periods.
- Recent announcements could motivate ISIS supporters to conduct attacks during Ramadan. They include the announcement of the new ISIS leader named Abu Hassan al-Hashimi al - Qurayshi on 11 Mar 2022, and ISIS's claim of responsibility for an attack in Israel on 27 Mar 2022.
- In a related development, the pro-ISIS militant group Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) released a video featuring an audio speech by its leader Esmael Abdulmalik on 24 Mar 2022. In the video, Esmael called for the creation of a new unit of suicide fighters for attacks in 2022.
- In view of potential opportunistic attacks by ISIS, governments have stepped up their security measures recently. For example, as reported by *The National* on 4 Apr 2022, Iraqi Prime Minister called for the country's security leadership to "adopt new and special measures that fit the social activities and needs during Ramadan". The news article noted that since 2003, extremist elements have exploited Ramadan as a catalyst to launch attacks in Iraq.

# Maritime Security

## The Threats of Maritime Piracy



Armed pirates on the sea

- The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) – a specialised department under the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) – has reported 37 piracy and maritime armed robbery cases within the first three months of 2022.
- According to *The Maritime Executive*, the Southeast Asian waters have accounted for nearly half of the piracy incidents in the first quarter of the year. Volatile waters such as the Gulf of Guinea, Peruvian waters, the Macapa anchorage off the coast of Brazil, and the Gulf of Aden are also areas of concern.
- Most perpetrators were found to be armed, putting crews at risk even in low-level opportunistic incidents. Hence, coastal states are strongly encouraged to enhance efforts to identify and apprehend these criminals to boost maritime security across waters of importance.
- Even though fewer piracy cases were reported during the first quarter of 2022 as compared to 2021, it is imperative for coastal states to remain vigilant and maintain efforts to enhance maritime security around volatile waters.



# Annex

## Sources

### Information and Cybersecurity

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