ACICE
ADMM Cybersecurity and
Information Centre of Excellence

ACICE Monthly Digest

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MONTHLY ROUNDUP OF SIGNIFICANT NEWS AROUND THE WORLD

Information and Cybersecurity

1 **Twitter Launches New Feature Reporting Misinformation**

- On 17 Aug 2021, Twitter announced that it will begin testing a new reporting feature for users to flag tweets containing possible misinformation, as part of its latest effort to rely more on its community to identify misinformation.

- In the new test, Twitter users will be able to flag a misleading tweet and specify that a tweet is misleading about "politics", "health" or "something else".

- According to Twitter, not every report will be reviewed as the platform continues to test the feature. However, it will observe how users use the new feature to see if user reporting can be an effective method in identifying potential misleading harmful tweets.

- For now, the new feature will only be available for most users in the U.S, Australia and South Korea.

- Sources:

  https://www.theverge.com/2021/8/17/22629097/twitter-misinformation-health-covid19-reporting-feature-white-house

  https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-58258377
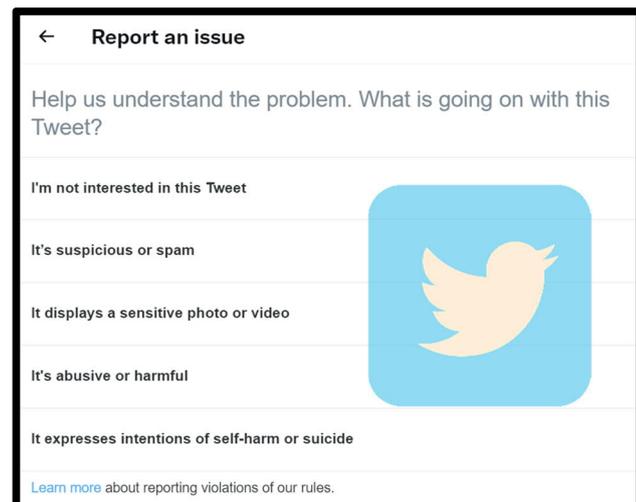
Information and Cybersecurity

2   Twitter to Work With News Agencies to Tackle Disinformation

- Twitter is collaborating with international news agencies *Reuters* and the *Associated Press* to debunk disinformation on its platform.

- Both news agencies will help Twitter give more accurate context and background information on events that generate a high volume of tweets. This will help to counter the spread of false information.

- Twitter said that the collaboration will allow it to ensure accurate and credible information is rapidly available "when facts are in dispute".

- Sources:

  https://blog.twitter.com/en_us/topics/company/2021/bringing-more-reliable-context-to-conversations-on-twitter

  https://www.bbc.com/news/business-58065463

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

1   Haiti Earthquake

- On the morning of 14 Aug 2021, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit Haiti, leaving more than 2,100 people dead and thousands more injured. The earthquake also destroyed more than 7,000 homes and damaged more than 12,000, leaving many families homeless.

- Shortly after the earthquake, many Haitians took to social media, especially Twitter, and shared videos showing the initial destruction and panic that followed. Scenes of rescue efforts were also posted.

- Before news agencies and reporters could reach the affected region, social media was a vital source of information about the earthquake's destruction. Videos and images on social media showing the destruction were picked up by multiple media reporters and news agencies.

- There were also instances of misinformation, where a video from 2018 was misrepresented as showing how the earthquake affected a home in Haiti. The video actually showed an earthquake in Alaska and not Haiti.

- Sources:

  https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/14/world/americas/haiti-earthquake-photos-news-social-media.html

  https://apnews.com/article/fact-checking-280874290705

  https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/haiti/article253500349.html
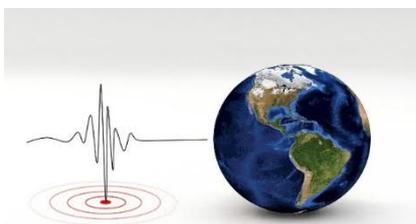
Regional Terrorism Updates

1 Taliban Takes Over Afghanistan

- Two weeks before the U.S was set to complete its troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Taliban managed to seize power in the country. They stormed across Afghanistan captured all major cities, including its capital Kabul, in a span of a few days.

- Following the fall, Facebook and TikTok reiterated that their ban on content promoting the Taliban will continue. The ban also applies to other Facebook-owned platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram.

- In response to their WhatsApp accounts being blocked, the Taliban criticised Facebook for blocking freedom of speech in Afghanistan.

- Meanwhile, other social media companies appeared to be less clear in their strategy to deal with Taliban-related content. Accounts belonging to Taliban spokespeople Suhail Shaheen and Zabihullah Mujahid were still up on Twitter and actively posting.

- The suicide bombing attack on Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul by ISIS-Khorasan has received a high amount of positive traction from the pro-ISIS camp in Southeast Asia. The attack was celebrated by pro-ISIS social media users and propaganda units in the region, who then called for more attacks in the region.

- Sources:

  https://www.cnet.com/news/the-taliban-thrive-on-social-media-despite-sites-bans/

  https://edition.cnn.com/2021/08/17/tech/facebook-twitter-taliban-hnk-intl/index.html

  https://www.theverge.com/2021/8/17/22628652/facebook-twitter-taliban-policy-ban-moderation-afghanistan-withdrawal

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Maritime Security

1   **For the period of 07 Aug – 17 Sep 2021, the number of incidents reported by the Information Fusion Centre within its Area of Interest[1] are as follows:**

Category	Number of Incidents
Theft, Robbery and Piracy at Sea (TRAPS)	9
Maritime Terrorism (MT)	0
Maritime Incidents (MI)	153
Illegal/ Unregulated/ Unreported Fishing (IUUF)	44
Contraband/ Weapons Smuggling (CS)	94
Irregular Human Migration (IHM)	12
Environmental Security (ENVSEC)	10
Cyber Security (CYBSEC)	0
Others	0

[1] Information Fusion Centre's Area of Interest refers to the body of waters surrounding Asia.

Maritime Security

2 Cyberattack Disrupts Major South African Port Operations

- In Jul 2021, Transnet, a state-owned South African rail, port and pipeline company, was hit by a cyberattack, which disrupted operations at several container terminals in Durban, Ngqura, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town.

- The cyberattack affected Transnet's official website and the main system responsible for container operations.

- The disruption was serious enough for Transnet to invoke the force majeure clause on its contracts.

- This incident highlights the importance of cybersecurity for the maritime industry and the negative implications a cybersecurity event can have for the affected party.

- Sources:

  https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/exclusive-south-africas-transnet-hit-by-cyber-attack-sources-2021-07-22/

  https://www.reuters.com/article/us-transnet-cyber-idUSKBN2EZ0RQ

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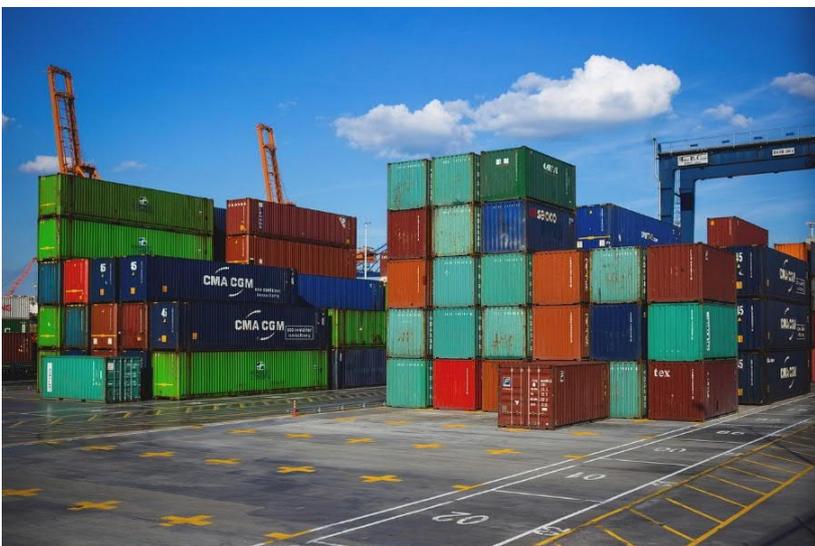
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