

Russia behind cyber-attack with Europe-wide impact an hour before Ukraine invasion

Press release

The UK, EU, US and allies have announced that Russia is responsible for a series of cyber attacks since the renewed invasion of Ukraine.



- New UK and US intelligence suggests Russia was behind an operation targeting commercial communications company Viasat in Ukraine.
- Incident on 24th February caused outages for several thousand Ukrainian customers, and impacted windfarms and internet uses in central Europe.
- Cyber security leaders from the 5 Eyes, EU and other international allies meet at the NCSC's Cyber UK conference in Newport today to discuss shared threats.

Russia has been behind a series of cyber-attacks since the start of the renewed invasion of Ukraine, the EU, UK, US and other allies have announced today (10 May). The most recent attack on communications company Viasat in Ukraine had a wider impact across the continent, disrupting wind farms and internet users in central Europe.

The UK's National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) assesses that the Russian Military Intelligence was almost certainly involved in the 13 January defacements of Ukrainian government websites and the deployment of Whispergate destructive malware. The NCSC also assesses that it is almost certain Russia was responsible for the subsequent cyber-attack impacting Viasat on 24 February.

On 24 February, a cyber-attack against Viasat began approximately one hour before Russia launched its major invasion of Ukraine. Although the primary target is believed to have been the Ukrainian military, other customers were affected, including personal and commercial internet users. Wind farms in central Europe and internet users were also affected.

Viasat has said that 'tens of thousands of terminals have been damaged, made

inoperable and cannot be repaired.'

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

This is clear and shocking evidence of a deliberate and malicious attack by Russia against Ukraine which had significant consequences on ordinary people and businesses in Ukraine and across Europe.

We will continue to call out Russia's malign behaviour and unprovoked aggression across land, sea and cyberspace, and ensure it faces severe consequences.

Today's announcement comes as cyber security leaders from the 5 Eyes, EU and international allies meet at the NCSC's Cyber UK conference in Newport to discuss the cyber threats facing the world.

The UK has already sanctioned the GRU after their appalling actions in Salisbury, and has frozen more than £940 billion worth of bank assets and £117 billion in personal net worth from oligarchs and their family members who fund Putin's war machine.

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