

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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[Drones offer extra eyes to combat illegal fishing activity](#)

Press release

Fisheries Officers in the South West are clamping down on illegal activities with the help of the Avon and Somerset Police drone unit.



Drone footage of the River Huntspill in Somerset

The unit is working in partnership with the Environment Agency to support fisheries officers in checking for illegal nets and out-of-season fishing.

A drone can scan miles of river bank in quick time and alert the Environment Agency to the presence of suspicious activity which may require further investigation on the ground.

Fisheries Officer, Richard Dearnley, said:

We take illegal fishing seriously. It's through partnership working like this that we can send a clear message to those who break the law.

Anyone committing offences can expect to be prosecuted and face a substantial fine. Not only does illegal fishing damage the sport, it also poses a serious risk of spreading fish diseases and invasive species.

The irresponsible and illegal actions of a few can have widespread consequences for fisheries.

Sergeant Colin Powell, at the Avon and Somerset Police drone unit, said:

Drones offer a supplement to officers on the ground and are increasingly used by police to assist in searches and to offer a different angle to crime scenes and major incidents.

It's been great to join up with the Environment Agency and expand the use of our drones in combatting illegal activity.

If you suspect illegal fishing to be taking place please report the matter to our hotline on 0800 807060 or to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Anyone fishing illegally can expect to be prosecuted and to face a fine of up to £2,500. Anyone who uses illegal methods faces a prison sentence of potentially two years and a fine of up to £50,000 for byelaw offences.

Buying a rod licence is quick and easy – you can [buy them online](#), starting at just £6.

Money raised from rod licence sales is reinvested in the environment, including a whole range of projects to improve facilities for anglers, protect stocks, plus fish restocking, invasive species eradication. The money is also used to work with partners to encourage people to take-up fishing.

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PM call with Irish Taoiseach Micheál Martin: 10 May 2022

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Irish Taoiseach Micheál Martin this morning.



The Prime Minister spoke to Irish Taoiseach Micheál Martin this morning.

Following last week's Northern Ireland Assembly elections, they both agreed on the vital importance of restoring the devolved institutions, both the Assembly and Executive, as soon as possible. The Prime Minister said that the UK Government would remain in close contact with the parties following initial engagement yesterday.

The Prime Minister made clear that the situation in respect of the Northern Ireland Protocol was now very serious. The balance of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement was being undermined and the recent elections had further demonstrated that the Protocol was not sustainable in its current form.

Despite repeated efforts by the UK Government over many months to fix the Protocol, including those sections related to the movement of goods and governance, the European Commission had not taken the steps necessary to help address the economic and political disruption on the ground.

The Prime Minister reiterated that the UK Government would take action to protect peace and political stability in Northern Ireland if solutions could not be found.

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[Mel Nebhrajani CB receives investiture](#)

News story

Director General Mel Nebhrajani was awarded a Companion of the Bath (CB) in the New Year's Honours 2021



Director General Mel Nebhrajani CB was awarded a Companion of the Bath (CB) in the Queen's 2021 New Year's Honours. She received the award in recognition of her public service, particularly to government law, the legal profession and specifically her leadership and work on the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic during her time as Director of DHSCLA.

Now, over a year later on Wednesday 4 May, Mel, accompanied by her husband (pictured), went to the Palace for the Investiture Ceremony, the first day that the Palace held Investitures since lockdown. For the first time since 1904 the ceremony was held in the Throne Room, making the occasion even more special. Mel described the ceremony as a 'pinch yourself moment'. It was one that made her reflect on how far she has come, and how thankful she is to those who have supported her over the years – her family, friends and colleagues.

Noting this support Mel said: "No-one does this alone, and I certainly haven't. I am grateful for the support of my wonderful family, friends and colleagues. This award is not just for me – it is also for them and recognises the incredible work done across government during extraordinary times.

Our response to COVID-19 and our continued work in delivering for government is outstanding – I want to thank you all for everything you are doing".

She also noted, "I am not the only GLD colleague to have been honoured. Lee John-Charles and Sam Ede recently received their CBEs and I want to congratulate them too."

[Bankrupt sentenced after concealing Spanish property](#)

William Paul Glen Haynes appeared at Bristol Crown Court where he received a 16-month sentence, suspended for 12 months, having been charged with 3 counts against the Insolvency Act 1986.

The court heard that William Haynes (61) was declared bankrupt in March 2018 and was legally obliged to disclose all his assets to the Official Receiver as his trustee in bankruptcy.

William Haynes, however, deliberately concealed a villa in Mallorca, Spain, as well as a Spanish bank account. He then went onto transfer €97,000 from the Spanish bank account from the proceeds of the sale of the Spanish property.

The Official Receiver gave William Haynes the opportunity to declare his assets but he continued to deny that he owned the Spanish villa.

William Haynes appeared at Bristol Crown Court on 13 April 2022 where he was sentenced by His Honour Judge Picton. In addition to the suspended sentence, William Haynes was ordered to complete 100 hours unpaid work and pay costs of £4,960 within 12 months.

William Haynes is also subject to a [9-year Bankruptcy Restriction Undertaking](#) after the Official Receiver considered him a risk to future creditors. The additional bankruptcy restrictions put constraints on William Haynes' ability to secure credit, as well as run companies.

Glenn Wickes, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

All bankrupts have a legal obligation to declare all their assets and William Haynes was no exception. William Haynes, however, continued to conceal significant assets from the Official Receiver, which should have rightfully gone to payback his creditors.

William Haynes' sentence should serve as a strong warning to others who think they can conceal assets to the detriment of their creditors that we will prosecute and bring offenders to court.

[Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is available.](#)

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on: