

# U.S. Malware Hits 200,000 Victims in 150 Countries



People inside a Megafon mobile phones shop in Moscow, May 13, 2017. A top Russian mobile operator said Friday it had come under cyberattacks.

LONDON (Dispatches) -- The global cyberattack has hit more than 200,000 victims in more than 150 countries, Europol executive director Rob Wainwright said Sunday.

"We've never seen anything like this," he told Britain's ITV television. "The latest count is over 200,000 victims in at least 150 countries. Many of those victims will be businesses, including large corporations."

The global cyber attack described as unprecedented in scale forced a major European automaker to halt some production lines while hitting schools in China and hospitals in Indonesia on Saturday, though it appeared to die down a day after its launch.

Capitalizing on spying tools believed to have been developed by the U.S. National

Security Agency, the cyber assault has infected tens of thousands of computers in nearly 100 countries, with Britain's health system suffering the worst disruptions.

Cyber extortionists tricked victims into opening malicious malware attachments to spam emails that seemed to contain invoices, job offers, security warnings and other legitimate files.

Once inside the targeted network, so-called ransomware made use of recently revealed spy tools to silently infect other out-of-date machines without any human intervention. This, security experts said, marked an unprecedented escalation in the risk of fresh attacks spreading in the coming days and weeks.

The ransomware encrypted data on the computers, demanding payments of \$300 to \$600 to restore access. Researchers

observed some victims paying via the digital currency bitcoin, though no one knows how much may have been transferred to extortionists because of the largely anonymous nature of such transactions.

Researchers with security software maker Avast said they had observed 126,534 ransomware infections in 99 countries, with Russia, Ukraine and Taiwan the top targets.

The hackers, who have not come forward to claim responsibility or otherwise been identified, took advantage of a worm, or self-spreading malware, by exploiting a piece of NSA spy code known as "Eternal Blue" that was released last month by a hackers group known as the Shadow Brokers, according to researchers with several private cyber security firms.

Renault said it had halted auto production at several sites including Sandouville in northwest France and Renault-owned Dacia plants in Romania on Saturday to prevent the spread of ransomware in its systems.

Nissan's manufacturing plant in Sunderland, northeast England, was also affected by the cyber assault though "there has been no major impact on our business", a spokesman for the Japanese carmaker said.

German rail operator Deutsche Bahn said some electronic signs at stations announcing arrivals and departures were infected, with travellers posting pictures showing some bearing a message demanding a cash payment to restore access.

# Macron Inaugurated as France's New President



France's newly elected president Emmanuel Macron arrives at the Elysee presidential Palace in Paris for the handover and inauguration ceremonies on May 14, 2017.

PARIS (Dispatches) -- Emmanuel Macron was inaugurated as France's youngest ever president on Sunday, saying the country had chosen "hope" and promising to relaunch the flagging European Union.

Macron, a 39-year-old centrist, took the reins of power from Francois Hollande a week after he won a resounding victory over far-right leader Marine Le Pen in a tumultuous election.

After a warm welcome from Hollande at the Elysee Palace, the two men held a closed-doors meeting during which Macron was handed the codes to launch France's nuclear arsenal.

In a moment heavy with symbolism, 62-year-old Hollande -- who launched Macron's political career by appointing him first as adviser and then economy minister -- was then driven away from the palace to return from his staff and the new president.

The former investment banker who had never even contested an election before was then proclaimed president by Laurent Fabius, president of the Constitutional Council.

In his first speech, Macron said the French people had chosen "hope" and shown a willingness to change in the election.

He promised that the EU, hit by the imminent departure of Britain, would be "rejuvenated and relaunched" during his time in office.

"The world and Europe need France now more than ever and they need a strong France with a sense of its own

destiny." To underline his European ambitions, Macron will visit German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin on Monday in his first foreign trip.

The new president faces a host of daunting challenges including tackling stubbornly high unemployment, fighting Islamist-inspired violence and uniting a deeply divided country.

Socialist Hollande's five years in power were plagued by a sluggish economy and bloody terror attacks that killed more than 230 people and he leaves office after a single term.

Security was tight, with around 1,500 police officers deployed near the presidential palace and the nearby Champs Elysees avenue and surrounding roads blocked off.

In June, Macron faces what the French media are calling a "third round of the presidential election" when the country elects a new parliament in a two-round vote.

Macron won one of the most unpredictable French elections in modern history marked by scandal, repeated surprises and a last-minute hacking attack on his campaign.

The election saw voters reject France's two traditional political forces of left and right. Their candidates were eliminated in the first round.

Unpopular Hollande was the first to bow to the rebellious mood in December as he became the first sitting president not to seek re-election in the French fifth republic, founded in 1958.

# Trump: No Need for Probe Into Collusion Claims



President Trump (center) meets with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (left) next to Russian Ambassador to the U.S. Sergei Kislyak in the Oval Office.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- U.S. President Donald Trump says he wants "to get to the bottom" of questions about alleged Russian influence in the 2016 election, but rules out an independent investigation.

In an interview with Fox News on Saturday night, Trump denied allegations of collusion between his campaign and Russia prior to the November presidential election. "Everybody's convinced, they

say there is no collusion," Trump said. "There is no collusion. We had nothing to do with Russia."

However, the president said it was "very important" that the issue of any foreign interference with the election was resolved.

"I want to get to the bottom if Russia or anybody is trying to tamper or play with our election," he said.

Asked whether he would allow an independent commission to

investigate the issue, Trump said, "I don't think you need it."

The president said the current investigations happening in Congress were sufficient as they were being conducted by "very ethical, very smart" people.

Trump said he would allow the congressional probes to last as long as they should because "I don't want it ever to be a question again."

"Let them do it," he said. "If it takes longer, it takes longer, but let them do the job right."

In the wide-ranging interview, Trump also defended his decision to fire FBI Director James Comey earlier this week.

The president said the Democrats were being "hypocrites" for their criticism about Comey's dismissal as they themselves were displeased with the FBI's handling of the investigations into Hillary Clinton's emails.

Trump's surprise decision to dismiss Comey has brought the issue of alleged Russian meddling back into focus. Congressional critics questioned whether the move was connected to the investigation into the issue.

# Austria to Hold Snap Parliamentary Elections

VIENNA (Reuters) -- Austria will hold a snap parliamentary election this year, Chancellor Christian Kern said on Sunday, as his foreign minister moved to take control of the main conservative party in their now moribund coalition.

An election would give the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) a good chance of entering national government less than a year after its candidate lost a close-fought presidential run-off.

The FPÖ is leading in opinion polls, just ahead of Kern's Social Democrats. But surveys also suggest the conservative People's Party would leap ahead if Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz took

over as its leader, as he is widely expected to do.

"There will definitely ... be an election, I assume in the coming autumn," Kern said in an interview with ORF TV. He had resisted the idea of a snap election, calling for the coalition to keep working until its term ends in more than a year's time.

Kurz, 30, is a star of Austrian politics who is widely seen as his party's best hope of reviving its fortunes. The current leader of the People's Party (ÖVP), Reinhold Mitterlehner, announced on Wednesday that he was stepping down, partly because of his inability to stop in-fighting among his ministers.

Kurz said on Friday he wanted a snap election but that he would only accept the ÖVP's top job if it came with sweeping powers on issues including staffing. The ÖVP leadership was due to meet on Sunday at 4 p.m. (1400 GMT) to pick Mitterlehner's successor.

"The ÖVP ended the coalition on Friday," Kern said, referring to Kurz's speech. Snap elections require a majority in parliament and Kern said he did not believe carrying on with a minority government was viable.

"It would possibly have a numerical majority but probably not a political majority," he said.

# Thousands in Madrid Urge End to Bullfighting



Protesters carry banners during an anti bullfighting demonstration march in Madrid, Spain, May 13, 2017.

MADRID (AP) -- Thousands of animal rights activists protested Saturday in Madrid to demand an end to Spain's long tradition of bullfighting.

The march went through the Spanish capital's city center, with several groups united under one clear-cut message: "Bullfighting is violence and you can stop it."

Animal rights activists say the gory fights are among the planet's most blatant forms of animal cruelty, with bulls lanced and finally stabbed through the heart. Matadors are praised for killing with a single stab, though some don't succeed in finishing off the animal with repeated thrusts.

The march, scheduled during the famed San Isidro weeklong fair featuring numerous bullfights in Madrid's famous Las Ventas bullring, is part of a

growing divide between those who see bullfighting as a blatant form of animal cruelty and others who defend it as part of Spain's traditional culture.

Protesters also demanded a change in legislation under which animal cruelty would be subject to Spain's criminal code.

Spokeswoman Laura Gonzalo called for an immediate halt to all bullfights. "It's time for all of society to unite and say 'enough,'" she said, while questioning the motive behind recent governmental tax cuts to bullfighting events.

Spain's deep tradition of bullfights was named part of the country's cultural heritage in a law passed in 2013.

Madrid's leftist Mayor Manuela Carmena hasn't banned bullfighting events, but she has eliminated annual subsidies for their promotion.



ABIDJAN (Reuters) -- At least five people were wounded by gunfire on Sunday during protests in Ivory Coast's second-biggest city, Bouake, against an army mutiny, according to a witness, as popular opposition to the three-day nationwide revolt over bonuses gathered momentum.

Mutinous soldiers now opened up access to the city, a leader of the uprising and Bouake residents said, allowing vehicles to move in and out for the first time since Friday. The mutiny began in Bouake and spread quickly to other cities and towns, mirroring an uprising by the same group in January that paralyzed parts of Ivory Coast.

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LONDON (Reuters) -- British Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative Party has an 18 point lead over the main opposition Labor Party ahead of a June 8 national election, according to an opinion poll conducted by Comres for the Sunday Mirror and the Independent.

The Conservatives were at 48%, down 2% from Comres' previous poll published on April 23, against Labor's 30%, an increase of 5 points. The poll put the centrist Liberal Democrats on 10%, down 2%, and the anti-European Union UK Independence Party at 5%, also down 2%.

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WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- Just 29% of Americans say they approve of President Donald Trump's decision to fire FBI Director James Comey, while 38% disapprove, according to results from a new NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll.

Another 32% of respondents don't have enough to say on the matter. Yet among those who say they have read, seen or heard "a lot" about the firing, 53% say they disapprove, versus 33% who approve. The NBC/WSJ poll -- conducted May 11-13, after Trump's dismissal of Comey -- doesn't show a significant change in the president's overall standing.

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ROME (Reuters) -- Rescuers saved 484 migrants from boats in the Mediterranean on Saturday and found the bodies of seven men who had died in the attempt to get to Europe, Italy's coast guard said.

More than 45,000 people have traveled Italy by boat from North Africa this year, a more than 40% increase on the same period of 2016, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) says. The new deaths add to a toll of 1,222 on the route as of May 10, compared with 966 by the same date last year, according to IOM calculations.

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TIRANA, Albania (AP) -- Albania's opposition mounted a national protest demanding a caretaker cabinet to guide the country to a free and fair parliamentary election next month.

Several thousand supporters walked peacefully along Tirana's main Martyrs of the Nation boulevard to Prime Minister Edi Rama's office, guarded by hundreds of policemen. Lulzim Basha, leader of the main opposition Democratic Party, was seen accompanied by his wife and two daughters. The opposition has boycotted parliament since February and pitched a tent in front of Rama's office. They claim Rama's Cabinet will manipulate the vote.