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South Korea hit with over 114,000 cyberattacks in 5 years

On Friday it was revealed that the country's government had been hit by 114,035 cyber attacks since 2011.



Tech Industry

September 20, 2015
10:56 PM PDT



by **Philip Iglaur**

South Korea may have the fastest Internet speed in the world, but it looks like the country needs to ramp up its security. On Friday it was revealed that South Korea's government has been hit by more than 110,000 cyberattacks in the past five years.



Picture by Duesride (CC BY-SA 3.0)



Im Su-kyung, a member of the National Assembly's Public Administration & Security committee, made the findings of the organisation's report public on Friday. Filtering data given to it by the National Computing & Information Agency (NCIA), the National Assembly's report compiled 114,035 detected cyberattacks committed against government organisations from 2011 to June of this year.

"Cyberattack" generally refers to any attempt made by hackers to damage or destroy a computer system or network, however the figures above don't include attempted hacks that were automatically filtered out by the web security systems of the targeted government agencies. It also excludes numbers recorded by South Korea's Ministry of National Defense and its National Intelligence Service, which are not kept by the NCIA.

cases that involved an IP from North Korea. In 2012 there were just two. Despite this, South Korea has **pointed the finger at North Korea** following various cyberattacks in recent years.

The Ministry of Foreign affairs was attacked most frequently, being targeted 8,663 times. The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy was hit 5,735 times, while the Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs was attacked 5,224 times. The National Police Agency and the Ministry of Health and Welfare were each targeted around 3,000 times.

"If confidential state information leaks out, the consequences can be immense and

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more than 100,000 cases of hacking against government facilities have taken place," Su-kyung said. "We must do more to stop the growing number and the growing number of types of cyberattacks."

The hardest problem in finding the source of these attacks is geographical attribution. Each package of data sent over the web contains source and destination information, but that source data can be tweaked to make it seem like the attack has a different point of origin.

Officially, the IPs used in the attacks point the finger at a number of countries. At 66,805, most of them came from within South Korea. China was next with 18,943, while 8,092 came from the USA. North Korea did not even register a percentage point.

There were four main types of cyberattacks listed in the report. The most prevalent, at 33,544 occurrences, was defined as "attempts to access information without permission." Behind it, with 18,607 cases, was "information leakages," which refers to customer/user information such as name, address, phone number, and national identification number being stolen and distributed.

The third type of cyberattack was termed "authorization acquisition attempts" and made up 16,243 attacks. Least frequent was of the four was classified as "information collections," which had 14,077 recorded instances.

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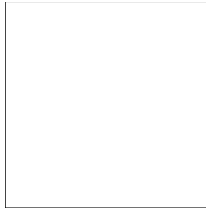
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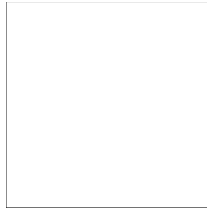
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By Tim Stevens / September 17, 2015

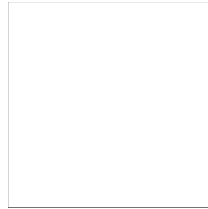
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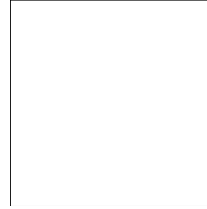
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In the shadow of Tel Aviv, Ramallah's young tech scene takes flight

A tech sector largely fueled by low-level outsourcing work is starting to see its own startups thrive. We made a stop there on CNET Road Trip.

Tech Industry

September 18, 2015
5:00 AM PDT



by **Ben Fox Rubin**
[@benfoxrubin](#)

RAMALLAH, West Bank -- "The Entrance For Israeli Citizens Is Forbidden, Dangerous To Your Lives And Is Against The Israeli Law."

A series of these large, red signs -- written in English, Hebrew and Arabic -- greeted me last month

at the entryway to the Qalandia checkpoint, north of Jerusalem. The area around the checkpoint, separating Israel from the Palestinian-controlled West Bank, was dusty, jammed with cars and surrounded by concrete walls, guard towers and barbed wire. The scene seemed far removed from the glittery skyline of Tel Aviv, just an hour's drive away.

"This is a first-class occupation," my guide, Nuha Musleh, a motherly, assertive woman, told me as we met at the Qalandia entrance and walked to her Volkswagen sedan.

Yet the view at the wall -- built by Israel more than a decade ago to prevent terrorist attacks from the West Bank -- belied what I was about to see down the road. There stood Ramallah, a modern, bustling city with tall buildings made of glass and pale limestone. The seat of power for the Palestinian Authority is now home to a small startup community, which is emulating **Israel's internationally recognized tech**



Check out all the places we've been on CNET's Road Trip 2015.

scene and which offers new opportunities for young Palestinians to build up a territory still heavily dependent on outside aid.

□

Just past the Qalandia checkpoint, on the way to Ramallah.

Ben Fox Rubin/CNET

Musleh first drove me to see Mashhour Abudaka, a former Palestinian Authority minister and the executive director for the Palestinian Information Technology Association, or PITA. The business group, with about 160 members across the West Bank and Gaza, brings together a mix of software developers, hardware resellers, and, most of all, IT outsourcing companies. These outsourcing firms, tasked with completing menial projects in a tech firm's development process, have become the backbone of the West Bank's burgeoning tech sector. The jobs aren't glamorous, but the work from Israeli and international companies is steady.

With the blinds drawn in his office to keep out the hot morning sun, Abudaka -- a bald, thick-accented Gaza native with a mechanical engineering Ph.D. -- drank Turkish coffee from a small, striped mug and described the difficulties of growing a technology industry in the Palestinian territories. The Israelis, he said, control the Palestinians' international borders, wireless frequencies, and exporting and importing.

"If we did it in a different place, I don't know if we could've reached this far."

Khaled Abu Al Kheir, PinchPoint

The Israeli government says many of these restrictions are for security, though Abudaka countered that they have more to do with "political and economic domination."

"I think our IT industry can expand if it wasn't for the Israeli obstacles," he said. "I hope things will change."

'They called us crazy'

While outsourcing represents a sizable chunk of the West Bank's tech industry today, there are a handful of smaller Internet and mobile startups run by young Palestinian founders who hope to make it big by focusing on the underserved Arab world. They aim to become early entrants in that emerging market and to gain influence far beyond the West Bank by building online, where borders disappear.

Enlarge Image

One of those entrepreneurs is Khaled Abu Al Kheir, the 35-year-old co-founder and CEO of mobile gaming startup PinchPoint. His 18-person company, whose work space includes a poster declaring it "Palestine's Hottest Gaming Studio," gained a rush of media attention last year after it came out with its first title, Spermania. The cartoon-animation racing game lets users play as a sperm trying to dodge acid pools and white blood cells en route to inseminating an egg. Apple's App Store rejected the game five times, but it's available on the Google Play store for Android devices.

PinchPoint CEO Khaled Abu Al Kheir shows off Spermania, the company's first game.

Ben Fox Rubin/CNET

"Everyone we talked to about the game, they laughed," Kheir said in his small office, while a group of youthful employees seated nearby at two long wooden tables toiled away on PinchPoint's next titles. "Of course, they called us crazy."

The company started with worldwide ambitions but quickly realized that competition on that stage was staggering. Kheir thought it better to create games that speak to an Arab audience but still have some bite to them. A newer title is Al Mamlaka, which offers Middle Eastern card games that include virtual gambling -- a taboo subject among Muslims.

After releasing four games, PinchPoint is still waiting for its big hit. However, Kheir said that despite the limitations of being in the West Bank, including tight travel restrictions and some potential partners being scared off by the security protocols and checkpoints, he's happy to be a big fish in a small pond. Funding is relatively easy to come by since there isn't a lot of competition for it, and that money tends to last longer since Palestinian wages and rent are low.

dsc0568.jpg

[Enlarge Image](#)

At PinchPoint's offices, artist Yasmin Eid is hard at work making games.

Ben Fox Rubin/CNET

"I always say that if we did it in a different place, I don't know if we could've reached this far, even with less obstacles," he said.

Musleh then took me back to her store, an art gallery on the outskirts of the central district. From their second-floor kitchen, Musleh, her husband and I ate salad mixed with mint, along with plump orbs of pumpkin and zucchini stuffed with rice and meat, and doused in a goat milk-based sauce. Musleh invited her 19-year-old son, Abdel Naser, to join us for the rest of the day so he could absorb some of the entrepreneurial spirit and ideas of the West Bank's up-and-coming tech leaders.

'We're just hungrier'

The next stop was at startup Yamsafer, where CEO and co-founder Faris Zaher has built a 55-person company that offers hotel bookings in the Arab world. The brightly lit 11th-floor office overlooks the rest of Ramallah, and the interior was built to look like an outdoor promenade, complete with a bicycle, benches and street lamps. There was a buzz of activity at the marketing and hotel departments. Behind glass doors, a handful of workers wearing headsets chatted with customers in the 24-hour call center.

The irony is that Yamsafer is a travel-booking site with most employees restricted by Israel from freely traveling abroad.

dsc0640-2.jpg

Yamsafer CEO Faris Zaher hopes to encourage other Palestinian startups to grow in the West Bank.

Ben Fox Rubin/CNET

Early on, the 4-year-old company faced about five competitors from Jordan and Dubai, but Yamsafer outlasted them all. The firm is now the second-largest room-night provider in the Gulf Region, Zaher said, after Priceline's Booking.com.

"At the end of the day, we're hungrier," said Zaher, a UK- and Hong Kong-educated 28-year-old with a short-cropped beard and big smile. Referencing Palestinians' tougher lives when compared with some Arab neighbors, he added: "I think that just makes people fight much harder."

Yet even as his startup has grown quickly, Zaher said it has faced problems from its own government, which for years has been dogged by corruption. Yamsafer ended up in a payment dispute with one partner hotel, he said. In an attempt to intimidate Yamsafer's leaders, the hotel's owners got a government agency to raid his business.

The Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Information didn't respond to a request for comment about the incident.

A look at Ramallah and its young tech scene...



Despite such problems, Zaher said the West Bank was the best place to create his business. "The reason we think we're going to win," he said, "is because we're here and our customers are here."

As my day in Ramallah was ending, Abdel Naser asked if I wanted to see the real face of the city, considering that I'd been bouncing around office spaces all day. He drove me to the central market, a noisy area filled with jewelry and clothing storefronts, small fruit stands, and men darting through traffic in bright-red costumes selling sweet drinks out of long, brass flasks they hoisted on their backs.

We returned to Musleh's shop, where we drank tea. Musleh gave me a hug and asked me to return soon. Abdel Naser drove me back across the checkpoint, where two men with large guns on the Israeli side asked us a few questions and waved us through.

By then, the sun was setting and I was on my way back to the bright lights of Tel Aviv.

Tags: Road Trip 2015, Tech Industry

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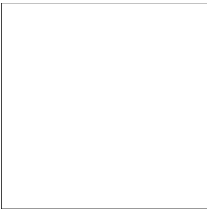
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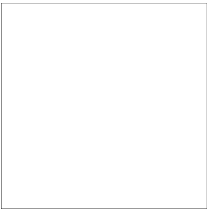
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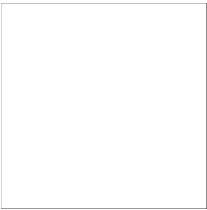
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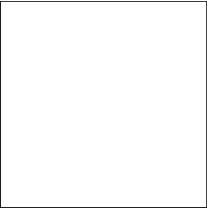
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