

SA now hostage to cyber ransom



Picture: 123rf

Shadow Kill Hackers target financial sector, government

MALIBONGWE DAYIMANI, SOYISO MALITI and GENEVIEVE QUINTAL

The threat cyber attacks pose to the financial sector and government is now a stark reality in SA after the banking industry received “ransom” demands from a group calling itself Shadow Kill Hackers.

The attack, which prompted the City of Johannesburg to immediately shut down its billing systems, has shone a troubling light on the country’s strengths and weaknesses in terms of guarding against cyber crimes.

Renowned SA information and communications technology analyst Arthur Goldstuck has warned that the ransom attacks are a “re-

al threat to the local government and businesses”.

On Friday, the SA Banking Risk Information Centre (Sabric) confirmed that the attack on the industry had happened on Wednesday, targeting various public-facing services across multiple banks.

The cyber crime took the form of a wave of ransom-driven distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks.

A DDoS attack attempts to disrupt normal traffic of a targeted server, service or network by overwhelming the target or its surrounding infrastructure with internet traffic.

The attacks started with a ransom note, which was delivered via e-mail to both unattended as well as staff e-mail addresses, all of which were publicly available.

Sabric said threat intelligence which had surfaced, showed that this was a multi-juris-

ditional attack with entities from several countries being targeted and should not be viewed as a targeted attack on SA companies only.

Because the attacks did not involve hacking or a data breach, customer data was not at risk, Sabric said.

It did, however, involve increased traffic on networks necessary to access public-facing services which might cause minor disruptions.

The City of Johannesburg shut down its website and billing systems after Shadow Kill Hackers found its way into the authority’s system and demanded a ransom of four bitcoins worth about \$30,000 (R438,000).

Several city employees received the ransom note, which reads: “All your servers and data have been hacked. We have dozens of back doors inside your city. We have control of ev-

everything in your city. We also compromised all passwords and sensitive data such as finance and personal population information.”

Both Standard Bank and Absa informed customers on Thursday of the internet problem, but at least five banks are believed to be affected.

Sabric said defensive strategies had been invoked across the industry and it was confident that the effects on customers would be kept to a minimum.

Looking ahead, Goldstuck said it was essential that software and security services were up to scratch.

“Vulnerability exists in software that has not been updated. Hackers are always looking for public systems that have not been updated. You have to ensure that your personal user data isn’t accessible to the same system that is available to the public,” he told the Dispatch.

He said user data should be separate from the network itself.

Responding to the attacks, co-operative governance spokesperson Makhaya Komisa said: “We are of the view that such reports of a well-organised crime are suited for the intelligence services.

“We really feel it is something that must be dealt with at national level.”

In a statement to the Dispatch on Friday, security expert and J2 Software CEO John McLoughlin said the demand for cyber security solutions was huge and security spend had already started outpacing IT spend.

“Adoption in SA is not yet growing at the same rate, but there is a strong growth in interest and understanding the requirement to do more to protect themselves from cyber threats,” said McLoughlin.

Annual global cyber losses are expected to hit \$6-trillion (R87,74-trillion) by 2021, with cyber security spending projected to exceed a total of US\$1-trillion (R14,62-trillion) for the five years leading up to 2021.

Mystery grows over province’s R23.7m Lotto ‘boxing arena’

BONGANI FUZILE and MESULI ZIFO

Boxing arena? Where? This was the response of Boxing SA (BSA) in the province to the news that the National Lotteries Commission (NLC) more than a year ago paid R23.7m to build a state-of-the-art boxing facility in the Eastern Cape.

NLC spokesperson Ndivhuwo Mafela confirmed the commission had approved a grant in the 2017/18 financial year.

It was made to a company called Nunnovation Africa Foundation.

Mafela said the arena was in the Storms River area in the Koukamma municipality and it was near completion.

However, BSA Eastern Cape manager Phakamile Jacobs said while they longed for such a facility, he knew nothing about the province getting one and had never heard of Nunnovation.

“What you are telling me is news as we know nothing about a boxing arena that has been built in the province.

“We dream of having such a facility. We are constantly using municipality halls like the Orient Theatre.

“I can say there’s no such boxing arena that we know of as BSA in this province.”

Adding to the puzzle is the fact

that the Storms River area does not feature on the boxing map, unlike areas like Mdantsane, Duncan Village and Port Elizabeth, which are known for producing some of the best boxers in the world.

BSA Eastern Province representative Nceba Dladla, whose jurisdiction covers the Koukamma municipality, said he had never handled a boxing event in Storms River.

“I did not even know that Storms River is under my jurisdiction,” he said.

“I am surprised now if you say there is a boxing arena there, and the question is, who does it serve?”

The Koukamma local municipality ward councillor in Storms River, Hester Pullen, said she was also not aware of a boxing arena in her area.

“There’s a hall that was built with the support of Lotto. But there’s no sign that it is a boxing arena, but maybe it’s a multipurpose centre,” she said.

The provincial department of sport, recreation arts & culture similarly pleaded ignorance.

General manager Bafundi Makhubalo said he had heard talk of the need for such an arena by the then sports minister Fikile Mbalula.

“I know for a fact that minister Mbalula mentioned the need for

a boxing arena but I never heard if it was built,” he said.

Mafela confirmed the building of such a facility in Storms River but said it has not yet been occupied.

“The organisation [Nunnovation] was allocated the said amount in June of the 2017/18 financial year.

The boxing arena has not been occupied as yet. However, the structure is complete with roof and plastering and the contractor is now busy with fencing, to be followed by plumbing and electrification.”

Two years after its registration, Nunnovation, which is based in Centurion, Pretoria, received the multimillion-rand funding to build a boxing arena in the Eastern Cape.

The executive chair of Nunnovation, Khathu Mashau, said they had changed the venue an indoor sports centre, rather than a boxing arena.

“Engagements with the local municipality moved the project to not only focus on boxing, but consider other sporting codes. Thus it is now an indoor sports facility,” said Mashau.

He would not answer to whether BSA was aware of such a venue.

Asked how much they had received and spent for the hall, he referred the Dispatch to NLC.

There’s a hall that was built with the support of Lotto. But there’s no sign that it is a boxing arena

NTABANKULU LOCAL MUNICIPALITY



BID NOTICE AND INVITATION TO BID BID NO: NLM/SFFP03Y/2019/2020

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST: SOURCING OF FUNDING FOR A PERIOD OF 3 YEARS

Ntabankulu Local Municipality invites experienced and suitably qualified professionals to submit their expression of interest to be appointed in a panel of consultants for sourcing of funding in different sectors that will be contained in the terms of reference.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of reference will be uploaded on the Municipal website www.ntabankulu.gov.za at no cost.

TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

Your technical proposal will have to indicate the sector of your specialization in this exercise. The formal review and analysis of this proposal will be done to select the most suited methodology, approaches, and plans to address out technical requirements. You will be required to download our Integrated Development Plan on our website to get a clear picture of our long-term objectives. Clear and well presented technical proposal is expected. To enable us to administer contracts efficiently and effectively, your proposal must be clear on which delivery system to follow in terms of Private-Public Partnership.

FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

Your financial proposal will constitute part of your bid and therefore will be evaluated as your financial offer. PPPRE regulations will apply.

COMPULSORY BRIEFING SESSION AND CLOSING DATE

A compulsory briefing session will be conducted at Ntabankulu Local Municipality, erf 85, Main Street, Ntabankulu, on Thursday the 31st of October 2019 at the Municipal Boardroom at 10:00

Technical enquiries may be directed to XN Venn Tel: 039 258 2452/071 273 8746 or by email to: vennx@ntabankulu.gov.za. SCM related enquiries may be directed to Mr. O. Mdudi on 039 258 0314/082 786 0772 or emailed to: mdudio@ntabankulu.gov.za during office hours i.e. between 08h00 and 16h30.

For More information and detailed advert please visit www.ntabankulu.gov.za

Issued by
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