Twitter Thread by Apar



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NSO Group is an Israeli company owned by Novalpina Capital. As per it’s website, “NSO products are used exclusively by government intelligence and law enforcement agencies to fight crime and terror.” 1/n

CitizenLab is housed in the Munk School at the University of Toronto. It’s mandate includes, “study...digital espionage on civil society” 2/n https://t.co/tWT7SkVics

CitizenLab has been researching on the use of NSO Group spyware globally since 2016 from it’s first focus on the use in Suadi Arabia. It has been linked to the surveillance and killing of Saudi Journalist and Washington Post columnist Jamal Kashogi. 3/n https://t.co/O9EN4vTbCX

First India specific mention is in September 18, 2018 (Hide and Seek Report) post by CitizenLab in its report, “Hide and Seek”. Part of a technical analysis in which it identified about 45 countries for the installation of, “Pegasus”. 4/n https://t.co/OeKdj2w78j

Please click on the attached images for analysis on the infection model (how pegasus is installed), post infection capability ("pegasus" manual attached) and India specific findings. 5/n https://t.co/HJ36yvHxmf

5. **India specific reference in the report, "Hide and Seek":** The first India specific mention is in the September 18, 2018 (Hide and Seek Report) post by CitizenLab in its report, "Hide and Seek".

    a. **Infection model:** This is part of a technical analysis by CitizenLab in which it has identified about 45 countries in it and the installation of, "Pegasus". This software as per CitizenLab at that time (in September, 2018) required, "*the target to click on a specially crafted exploit link, which, when clicked, delivers a chain of zero-day exploits to penetrate security features on the phone and installs Pegasus without the user's knowledge or permission.*" (quote from above "**Hide and Seek Report**"). The, "exploit link" could be contained in a deceptive SMS, Email or any message.

    b. **Post-infection capability:** The technical capability of the Pegasus suit is available as per a training manual which shows capabilities of complete device control. This includes device level permissions to not only record and transmit ongoing data transmissions across all applications, but also to monitor real time location, remotely enable camera and microphone etc (Link to Pegasus Manual).

On October 29, 2019 CitizenLab published another report titled, "Over 100 hundred new abuse cases". These victims are Indian. In a list 121 persons include activists, lawyers and journalists 6/n https://t.co/Fu3jhyB97Z

Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister for Electronics and IT made a statement on Twitter on October 31 on "Pegasus". This is not been issued officially through a release on the Press Information Bureau. 7/n https://t.co/JHllHluZ3H

> Government of India is concerned at the breach of privacy of citizens of India on the messaging platform Whatsapp. We have asked Whatsapp to explain the kind of breach and what it is doing to safeguard the privacy of millions of Indian citizens. 1/4 pic.twitter.com/YI9Fg1fWro
>
> — Ravi Shankar Prasad (@rsprasad) October 31, 2019

Statements were attributed to officials from @MeityPib that Whatsapp did not inform them of the malware exploit. Contrary to such claim CERT-In issued a vulnerability note WhatsApp filed with Cert -In (CIVN-2019-0080) on May 17. 8/n https://t.co/MoqmEMpKps

NSO products can be sold only to Government vendors. Why? Click the image below. Also click on the link to a copy of a legal opinion to NSO's owner. 9/n https://t.co/J2Rpb3obzl

a. **Public Statement:** As per NSO's own website, "NSO products are used exclusively by government intelligence and law enforcement agencies to fight crime and terror."

b. **Isreali Laws:** It is regulated under an Israeli law that requires an export permit granted by the Isreali Defence Export Control Agency as per an opinion provided to Novalpina Capital legal due diligence by a lawyer, Daniel Reisner from the Law firm of Herzog Fox and Neuman on May 13, 2019. In para 10 it explains the entire licensing process which commences from an entity license, then a marketing permit and finally an export license. Hence, specific oversight is administered by a government agency under the Government of Israel (link to legal opinion).

At the @internetfreedom we have joined a group of civil society organisations in a amici filing against NSO in a california court. In addition we continue increasing awareness on why Pegasus is a threat to individual and national cyber security. 10/10 https://t.co/6SWx2t8n9t

Bonus : If you would prefer a timeline and a video explainer. Here is one! https://t.co/6G8cmnWL40