

## CYBERSECURITY ALERT

**Alert Status: High**

### Cyber Actors Targeting Financial Organisations with Brute Force Attacks

The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), through the National Cyber Security Center (NCSC), issues this advisory to alert all PNG Government departments, agencies, and organisations, particularly those in the financial sector, about ongoing cyber threats involving brute force attacks.

The Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) has reported that cyber actors are actively targeting financial organisations using brute force techniques, such as password spraying and credential stuffing. These attacks aim to compromise user accounts by exploiting weak or reused credentials.

#### Attack Methods:

- Password Spraying: Attackers attempt to gain access by trying common passwords across multiple accounts.
- Credential Stuffing: Attackers use previously leaked credentials to exploit reused passwords.
- Impact: Successful attacks can lead to unauthorised access to sensitive systems and data, potentially resulting in financial loss or reputational damage.

To defend against these threats, organisations should implement the following measures:

#### 1. Enforce Strong Passphrases:

- Ensure all accounts use strong, unique passphrases that are difficult to guess.
- Educate users on the importance of password security.

#### 2. Implement Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA):

- Enable MFA for all accounts to add an additional layer of security.
- Train users to deny any MFA requests they did not initiate.

#### 3. Monitor and Share Indicators of Compromise (IOCs):



- If your organisation is experiencing similar activity, share IOCs with the NCSC to assist in collective defence efforts.

This advisory focuses on cyber hygiene as the attacks are not linked to a specific vulnerability but rather exploit weak security practices.

Organisations are encouraged to review their security policies and ensure compliance with the above recommendations.

For further assistance or to report incidents, please contact the National Cyber Security Center (NCSC). Together, we can strengthen Papua New Guinea's cybersecurity resilience.

