

# Ukrainian gang jailed for UK online bank scam

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The two Ukrainian ringleaders of a criminal network which siphoned nearly £3 million from British bank accounts have each been jailed for four years and eight months. Yuriy Konovalenko (pictured) and Yevhen Kulibaba ran a highly sophisticated fraud which attacked the banking accounts of hundreds of online customers, the Metropolitan Police Service said.

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Yuriy Konovalenko and Yevhen Kulibaba ran a highly sophisticated fraud which attacked the banking accounts of hundreds of online customers, Scotland Yard said.

"The fraud was perpetrated through the use of banking 'Trojans' to

infect the personal computers of bank account holders and subsequently secure funds from them," it said.

The malicious software programme was able to capture confidential information, such as usernames, passwords and account numbers. These details were then used to access those accounts without the knowledge of the owners. Funds were then transferred to a large number of receiving accounts controlled by the group, the Yard said

Konovalenko, 29, also known as Pavel Klikov, and Kulibaba, 33, were sentenced at Croydon Crown Court on Monday after previously pleading guilty to conspiracy to defraud.



Yevhen Kulibaba, 33, was the leader of an online banking fraud conspiracy. He was based in the Ukraine and was responsible for obtaining and allocating accounts to be attacked.

"This result is the culmination of a complex and protracted investigation,

codenamed Operation Lath, by detectives from the Met's Police Central e-Crime Unit which has seen 13 people jailed for their part in a sophisticated international online fraud that attacked the heart of the UK banking industry," London's police service added.

Kulibaba, the leader of the conspiracy, was based in the Ukraine and was responsible for obtaining and allocating accounts to be attacked. He also organising the UK based conspirators to set up and operate recipient accounts and remove funds from them.

Konovolenko was Kulibaba's right hand man in the UK. He had a co-ordinating role, organising the establishment and operation of recipient accounts and instructing those with responsibility for organising the removal of the money out of the recipient accounts, the Yard said.

During the investigation, codenamed Operation Lath, detectives worked closely with UK banks and colleagues from the FBI and the US Department of Justice.

On September 29, police arrested 20 people in London and the Home Counties. During house searches, computers, mobile telephones, false passports, banking documents and other exhibits were seized.

The total amount stolen through the fraud has not been established but the prosecution looked at the activities of 13 gang members between September 2009 and March 2010 and during this period the proven loss was at least £2,884,590. The total amount which the conspirators attempted to remove was at least £4,286,559.

DI Colin Wetherill, from the Metropolitan Police Central eCrime Unit said: "These defendants were part of an organised network of computer criminals operating a state-of-the art international online banking fraud, through which they stole many millions of pounds from individuals and

businesses in the UK and United States.

"The investigation involved unprecedented levels of cooperation between the Metropolitan Police, the UK banks, the FBI and other UK and international law enforcement agencies. We are working hard to reduce the harm caused by these activities, to put fear into the minds of those contemplating these conspiracies and to bring such offenders to justice."

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