

Websites of Israel bourse, airline brought down

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A man walks past an office of Israeli airline El Al in Tel Aviv, whose website -- along with that of the city's stock exchange -- was offline on Monday morning hours after they were reportedly threatened by a Saudi hacker

The websites of Israeli national carrier El Al and the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange (TASE) were both offline on Monday morning, hours after they were reportedly threatened by a Saudi hacker.

Both sites had a temporary message posted which said they had been taken down for "maintenance," but by early afternoon the El Al site was back up and running, although the TASE website was still inaccessible.

The websites of two small banks were also attacked, of Bank Otzar HaHayal and Bank Massad, according to media reports.

A spokeswoman for the stock exchange confirmed the site had come under attack but said only the website and not the trading systems themselves had been affected.

"There is someone that has been attacking the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange (TASE) website since this morning," Idit Yaaron told AFP, describing what appeared to be a distributed denial of service attack (DDOS).

"The trading systems are okay, there is no problem (with them)," she said.

Earlier on Monday, a hacker who calls himself 0xOmar warned he was going to attack both websites, Israeli media reported.

The attack was the latest in a series of incidents over the past two weeks which have seen details of tens of thousands of Israeli-owned credit cards posted online and Israeli websites defaced by hackers claiming to be from Saudi Arabia or Gaza.



A display in the Tel Aviv stock exchange. The websites of Israeli national carrier El Al and the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange (TASE) were both offline, hours after they were reportedly threatened by a Saudi hacker.

The cyber attacks were hailed by the Islamist Hamas movement which rules Gaza, with spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri saying it was a sign of the "creativity" of Arab youngsters.

"The Arab hackers are resisting Israel in cyberspace and are a sign of the Arab youth's creativity in inventing new forms of Arab and Islamic resistance against the Israeli occupation," he told AFP.

"Hamas praises the Arab hackers and calls on the Arab youth to play their role in cyberspace in the face of Israeli crimes," Abu Zuhri said, urging the hackers to "ignore" threats by Israel to use force against anyone attacking the Jewish state.

Danny Dolev, a computer science professor at the Hebrew University, said such attacks were unlikely to have any serious impact as they only affected public pages.

"Most of these attacks appear right now to be on the surface, attacking only the websites that present information to the public, but happily it didn't touch the internal information systems," he told AFP.

"Right now these attacks don't seriously damage any function, either economic or otherwise."

But a cyberattack could turn serious if it hit systems tied to critical infrastructure such as the water board, the electricity grid or the telephone network, he said, stressing Israel was "seriously working on strengthening them."

0xOmar first struck on January 3 when he claimed to have posted details of 400,000 Israeli-owned cards online.

Three days later, he said he had published another 11,000 card details

but the links turned out to contain malware that infected anyone who downloaded the information.

Israel's main credit card companies said about 20,000 valid cards had been affected.

In response, an Israeli hacker going by the name "0xOmer" published details of more than 200 Saudi-owned cards, sparking a spate of tit-for-tat attacks.

Last week, Gaza-based activists hacked the website of Israel's deputy foreign minister Danny Ayalon, and on Friday they hacked the website of the Israel Fire and Rescue Services, posting a message saying "Death to Israel."

"This is the beginning of cyberwar against Israel, you are not safe any more," 0xOmar wrote in a posting on Pastebin.com last week, urging hackers from across the Arab and Muslim world to target Israel.

"We'll hack Israeli servers for different purposes like leaking Israeli data, sensitive and hidden information extraction and defacing websites," he wrote.

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