

CYBER GUIDANCE ISSUE 0276

TURKEY EARTHQUAKE PROMPTS DONATIONS SCAMS

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IMPACT	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
EASE OF EXPLOIT	HARD	MEDIUM	EASY

OVERVIEW

After Turkey was hit by a devastating earthquake, various humanitarian organisations rallied to collect donations in an effort to aid victims. Scammers have jumped to exploit legitimate platforms like PayPal and Twitter to trick people into giving money to fake charities.

BREAKDOWN

Last week Turkey was hit by a devastating magnitude 7.8 earthquake, the strongest recorded in Turkey since 1939. The natural disaster has caused extensive infrastructural damage and claimed more than 30,000 lives and various charity organisations, business, and government organisations are working to raise funds to help the victims. However, scammers are taking advantage of people’s generosity and compassion for others in need by creating Twitter accounts with links to convincing scam websites, purportedly a PayPal fundraising page, in an effort to steal money. To add to the deception, threat actors are also being found to be creating fake charities. Bitdefender, a Romanian Cybersecurity firm, reveals that scammers are sending phishing emails that claim to come from these charities urging recipients to support earthquake victims by making crypto donations. In another email scam, scammers portray themselves as world charity organisation and partners with UNICEF to lure people into donating for the cause.

REMEDATION STEPS

- Educate users to recognise key signs of phishing email attacks.
- Any emails received requesting donations, particularly in cryptocurrency, or any money of any kind, should be treated with caution. Assess and always verify that such a request and communications are associated with a legitimate, trusted organisation. Conduct your own research and contact the organisation by an alternative means, rather than information included in the email. Legitimate charities and government relief fundraisers list their authentic bank account numbers on their official websites.
- Approach charity organisations directly to donate or offer support.

REFERENCES & RESOURCES

The Bleeping Computer <https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/paypal-and-twitter-abused-in-turkey-relief-donation-scams/>