ThreatMon
Under Cyber Wings



Financial Sector

Threat Landscape 2026

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1 Executive Summary

This report assesses cyber threats to the global financial sector from 1 February to 10 November 2026. Across the cases reviewed, a recurring risk was the abuse of trusted access. Compromised employee devices, developer environments and supplier credentials can give attackers a route to sensitive customer records, payment systems and transaction approvals.

Data breach-related activity accounted for 984 of 1,145 monitored records (85.9%), including alleged compromises, dataset offers, reposts and buyer requests. The remaining records covered initial access (84), website defacement (62) and distributed denial-of-service activity (15). Of the 813 records linked to 79 countries and territories, the United States accounted for the largest country total (254). Listings that paired customer identities with account, policy or transaction details illustrated how exposed data could make bank or insurer impersonation more convincing. AI-generated voice and video can help scale such fraud.

Ransomware leak-site monitoring recorded 380 financial-sector victim listings, with the highest monthly count in August (58). The listings reflect public extortion claims involving banks, insurers and investment firms. An incident at a shared software or service provider can expose several financial institutions to data theft or disruption.

Operations targeting digital asset platforms showed how social engineering, employee device compromise and abuse of transaction approvals can lead to direct asset theft. The FBI attributed the 29 October Binance theft to North Korean Trader-Traitor activity. Chainalysis estimated the value of the unauthorized transfers at approximately USD 6.4 billion.

Static analysis of approximately 4,500 public container images identified through payment-related searches flagged potential exposures of private keys, database connection strings, cloud credentials and API tokens. Historical versions and shared image layers can preserve the same credentials across multiple builds, extending exposure beyond the original image.

Financial institutions should restrict privileged access, isolate payment and custody systems from employee and development environments, and independently verify high-risk transactions. Monitoring should cover underground access offers and public development assets, including historical and derivative container images published by suppliers.

1.1 Financial Sector Threat Landscape

Data breach-related activity dominated the reporting, accounting for 984 of 1,145 records (85.9%). The category includes alleged compromises, dataset offers, re-posts and buyer requests. The listings point to demand for data that can be resold or used in financial fraud.

Initial Access (84 records, 7.3%) included offers and requests for entry into financial networks. Defacement (62 records, 5.4%) centered on public websites, while DDoS claims (15 records, 1.3%) focused on the availability of banking, payment and trading services.

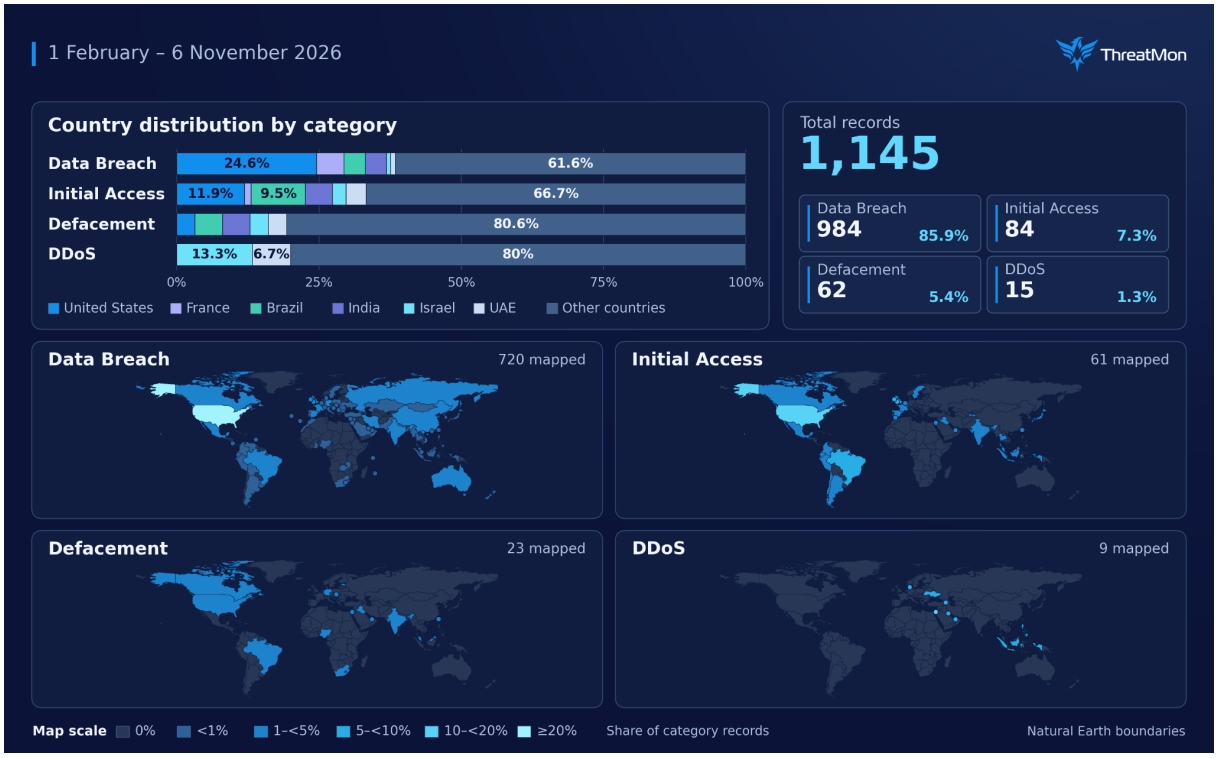


Figure 1: Distribution of monitored records by category and geography.

Geographic analysis linked 813 records to 79 countries and territories. Data Breach drove the U.S. lead, accounting for 242 of the 254 records linked to the country. Brazil and France followed with 48 each, then India with 44. Defacement had the least complete geographic attribution, with 39 of 62 records (62.9%) lacking a country or territory attribution. In DDoS, each record accounts for 6.7 percentage points, making country shares sensitive to individual claims.

2 Dark Web Intelligence

2.1 Data Breach

Credilink, Alleged Database Sale

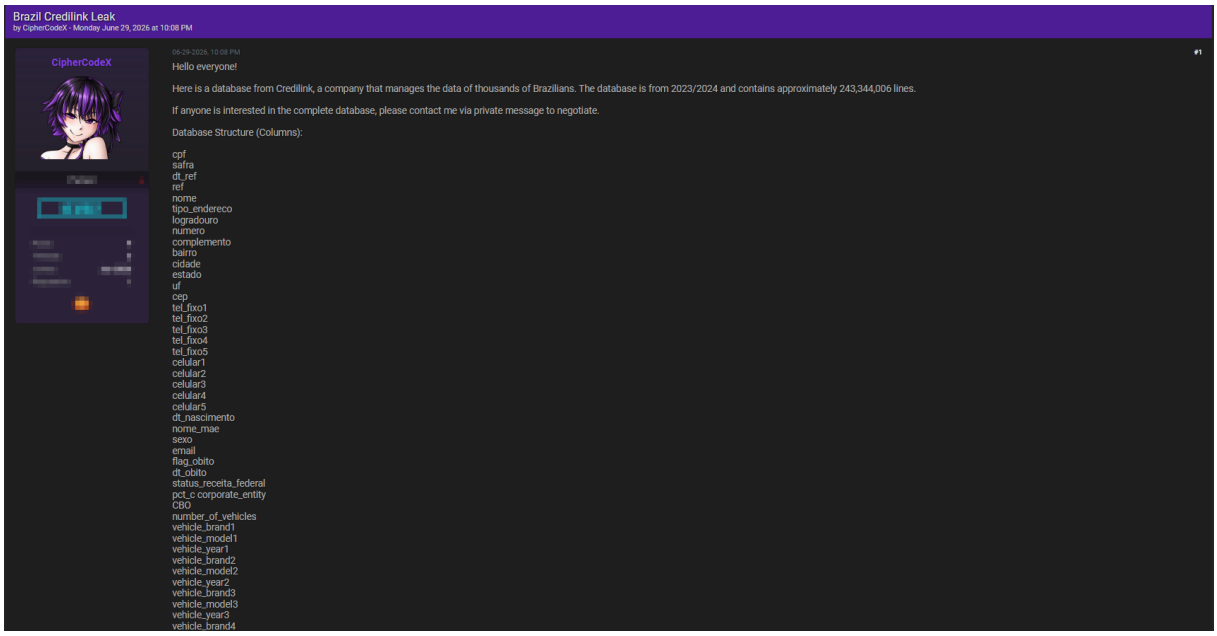


Figure 2: Credilink Database Sale Claim

Forum listing posted on 30 June 2026 in which CipherCodeX advertised approximately 243 million records allegedly obtained from Credilink and dated 2023–2024.

A threat actor using the alias “CipherCodeX” advertised a database allegedly obtained from Credilink, a Brazilian credit information and risk analysis company. The seller claimed it contained approximately 243 million records dated 2023–2024, including CPF numbers, full names, addresses, phone numbers, dates of birth, email addresses, vehicle information and income data. The account was registered in June 2026, and buyers were directed to negotiate by private message.

Listings dated 8 and 15 May 2026 cited the same record count, a pattern consistent with recirculation. The dataset’s origin and advertised volume remain unconfirmed. If the details remain current, CPF numbers, contact information and income data could make fraudulent credit offers appear more credible.

BancoSol, Alleged Client and Transaction Data Exposure

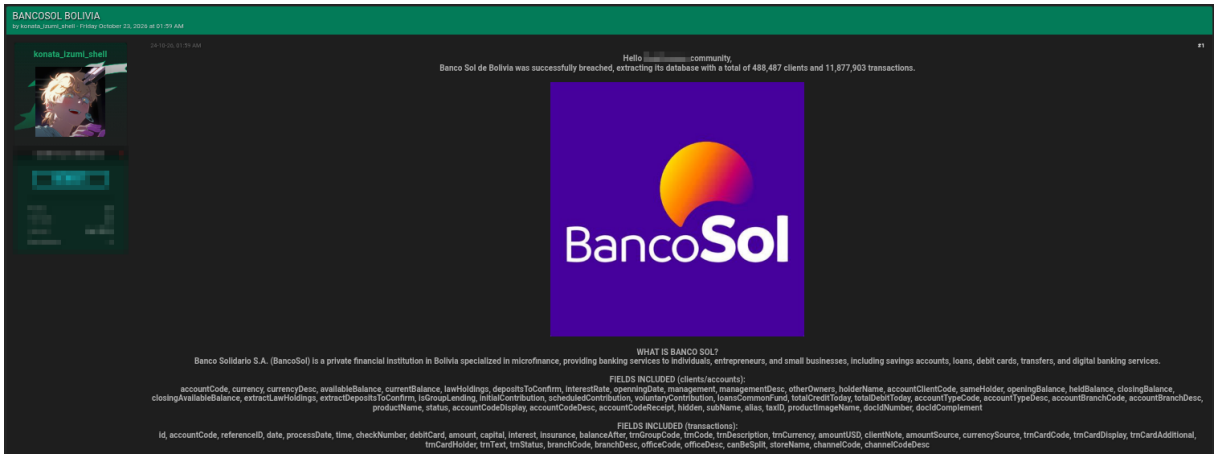


Figure 3: BancoSol Client and Transaction Data Claim

Forum post dated 24 October 2026 in which konata_izumi_shell claimed to hold records covering 488,487 BancoSol clients and 11,877,903 transactions and offered a purported 1,000-record sample.

The actor konata_izumi_shell claimed to have breached BancoSol, a Bolivian microfinance bank, and extracted records covering 488,487 clients and 11,877,903 transactions. The listing described account holder names, account codes, balances, tax and identity document numbers and branch details. Reported transaction fields included amounts, dates, card data, descriptions, channels and branches. The actor offered a purported 1,000-record sample and directed inquiries to Telegram.

The claimed breach and full dataset scope remain unconfirmed. If genuine, the combination of account and transaction details could help someone impersonating the bank make a verification request more convincing by citing a payment amount or date the customer recognizes.

Prudential Financial, Alleged Policyholder and Beneficiary Data Sale

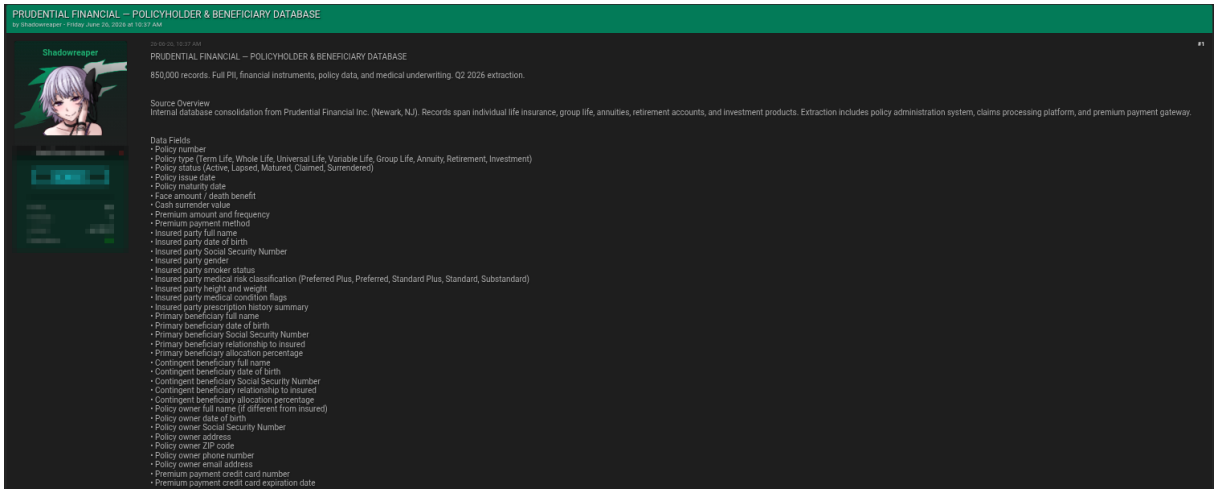


Figure 4: Prudential Financial Policyholder and Beneficiary Data Sale Claim

Forum listing posted on 26 June 2026 in which Shadowreaper offered 850,000 policyholder and beneficiary records allegedly extracted from Prudential Financial in Q2 2026.

A threat actor using the alias “Shadowreaper” offered 850,000 policyholder and beneficiary records allegedly extracted from Prudential Financial. The actor claimed the extraction took place in Q2 2026 and identified policy administration, claims processing and premium payment systems as the sources. The listing described Social Security numbers, medical underwriting data, policy financial details and card and bank account information used for premium payments. The account profile showed a July 2025 join date and four posts.

The claimed extraction and access to the named systems remain unconfirmed. If the advertised fields are genuine, policy and payment details could lend credibility to a fraudulent premium notice that appears to come from the insurer.

Al Barid Bank, Alleged SMS Banking Data Sale

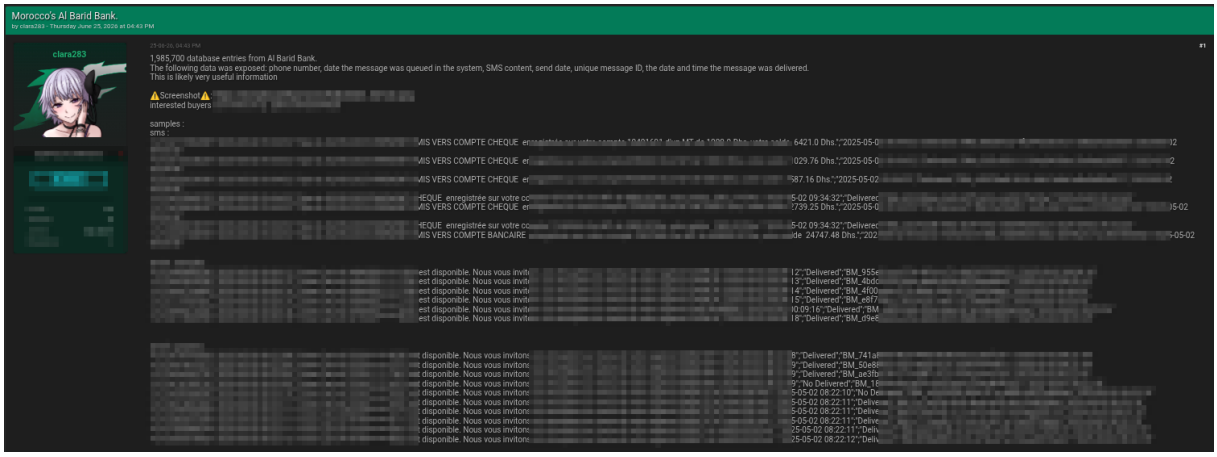


Figure 5: Al Barid Bank SMS Banking Data Sale Claim

Forum listing posted on 25 June 2026 in which clara283 advertised approximately 1.98 million entries allegedly obtained from Al Barid Bank, including SMS notifications with account and transaction details.

A threat actor using the alias “clara283” offered approximately 1.98 million entries allegedly obtained from Al Barid Bank, Morocco’s postal bank. The listing described customer phone numbers and SMS banking notifications containing account numbers, transaction amounts and balances in Moroccan dirhams. The sample reportedly showed transaction activity as of May 2025. The account was registered in September 2025.

The dataset’s origin and advertised volume remain unconfirmed. The reported sample activity predates the listing by more than a year. Where phone numbers and account details remain current, recognizable payments or balances could make fraudulent SMS messages or calls impersonating the bank more convincing.

2.2 DDoS

The 15 DDoS records, dated 3 April to 29 August, include advance announcements and claims of service disruption. Eleven appeared on Telegram. Announcements that named targets provided early visibility into the institutions and services actors intended to disrupt.

GORZ_ROSTAM appeared in four records and framed threats to banks as part of named political operations.

Date	Target and source	Reported activity and evidence
17 Apr	**Bank of the Philippine Islands** Philippines · Telegram	**Keymous Plus** claimed it disrupted the bank's InstaPay service and included an image as purported evidence. The duration and effect on customers remain unverified.
20 Jun	**Discount Bank and First International Bank of Israel** Israel · Forum post	**GORZ_ROSTAM** announced planned attacks against the two banks under Operation Haft Khan. The post threatened to make services and transactions unavailable.
24 Jun	**WhiteBIT** Ukraine · Telegram	**IT ARMY OF RUSSIA** claimed a two-day disruption of the cryptocurrency exchange and a suspension of transactions. The duration and trading impact remain actor claims.
28–30 Jul	**Trademo.io** Country unassigned · Telegram	**deepstresser and Scarlay** published three posts about the same domain with matching reported attack parameters. The posts referenced public reachability checks. The overlap is consistent with repeat reporting of a single event.
29 Aug	**DigiPay Satu** Indonesia · Telegram	**XH4X CYB3R** claimed an attack against a payment platform operated by Indonesia's Ministry of Finance and referenced a public reachability report. The effect on payment processing remains unverified.

2.3 Initial Access

Central Bank of Iraq, full access sale

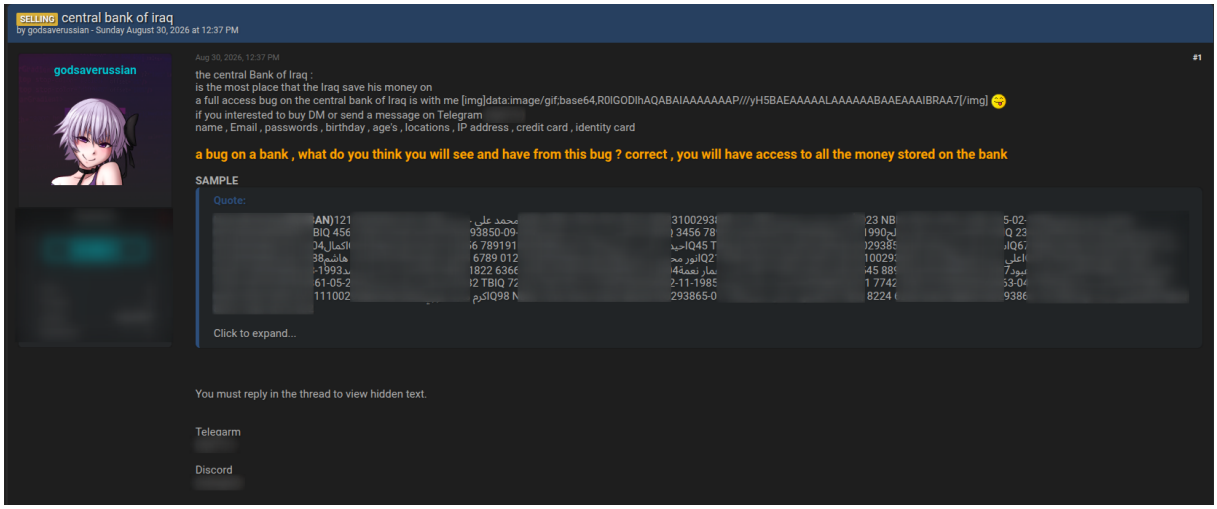


Figure 6: Central Bank of Iraq Full Access Sale Claim

Forum listings published between 30 August and 1 September 2026, in which "godsaverussian" advertised alleged full access to the Central Bank of Iraq, claiming exposure of customer and financial data.

godsaverussian posted three listings in three days, on BreachForums and CraxPro, claiming full access to the Central Bank of Iraq. The posts listed customer names, emails, passwords, dates of birth, IP addresses, and credit card and identity card data. They also claimed the access could reach funds held at the bank. The actor's accounts were created in late August, and buyers were sent to Telegram and Discord. A central bank is a high-value target, and posting the same offer on several forums suggests the actor was trying to sell quickly.

BlackRock, internal infrastructure exposure

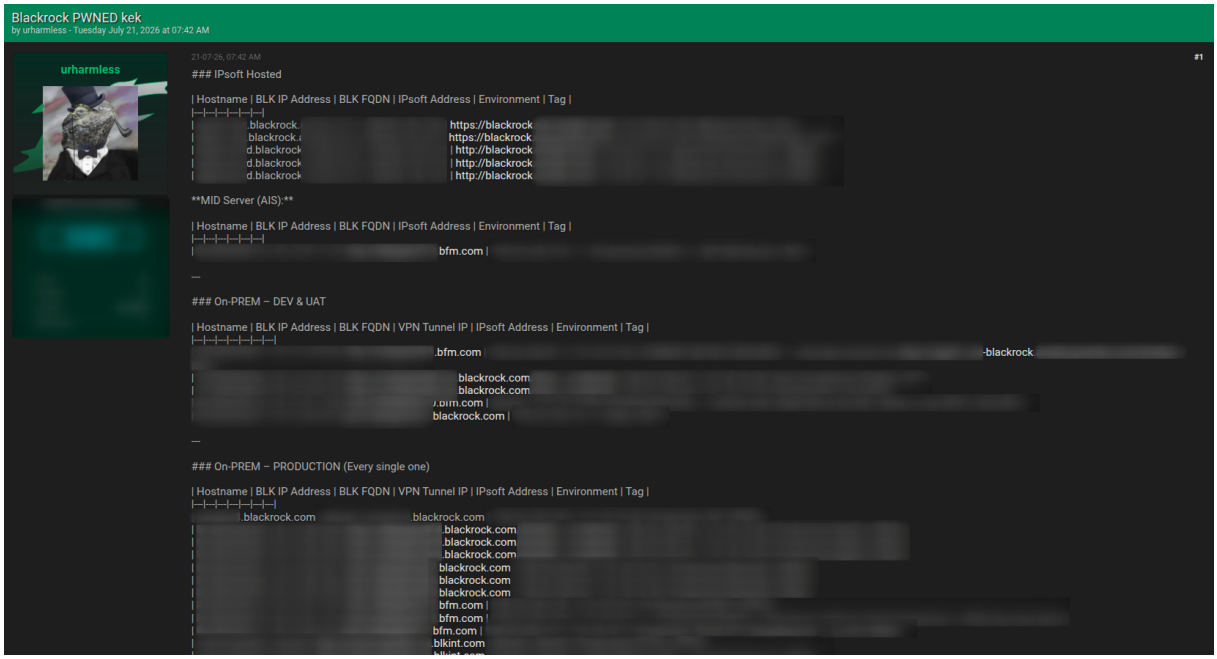


Figure 7: BlackRock Internal Infrastructure Exposure Claim

DarkForums post published on 21 July 2026, in which “urharmless” shared an alleged BlackRock internal network map containing hostnames, IP addresses, VPN details, and environment identifiers.

On DarkForums, urharmless shared what was described as BlackRock’s internal network map. It included hostnames, internal and external IP addresses, VPN tunnel IPs, and environment tags for development, UAT and production systems. The account was opened the same month the post was made. Whether or not this proves direct access, the information could be used to plan later attacks.

Undisclosed UK bank, GitLab and CI/CD access

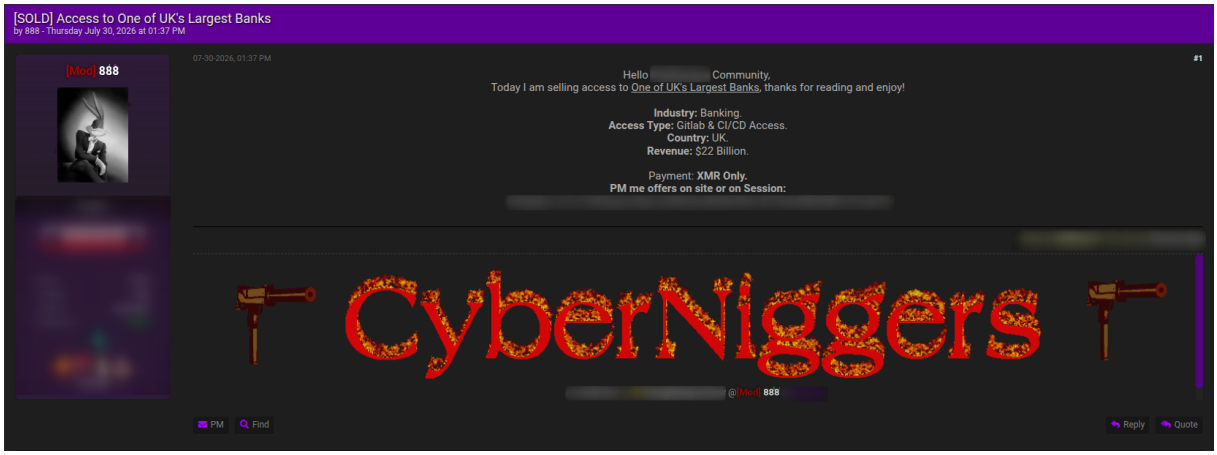


Figure 8: Undisclosed UK Bank GitLab and CI/CD Access Sale Claim

PwnForums listing published on 30 July 2026, in which "888" offered alleged GitLab and CI/CD access to a major UK bank, reportedly generating $22 billion in annual revenue.

On PwnForums (Tor), the actor 888 offered GitLab and CI/CD access said to belong to one of the UK's largest banks, with stated revenue of $22 billion. Payment was requested in Monero. The account was created in August 2023 and has a reputation score of 4,469, which makes this one of the most credible sellers in the dataset. Access to a CI/CD pipeline could let an attacker change source code or the build process, which goes beyond ordinary network access.

Three Japanese banks (SMBC, Mizuho, MUFG), help wanted to bypass Akamai WAF

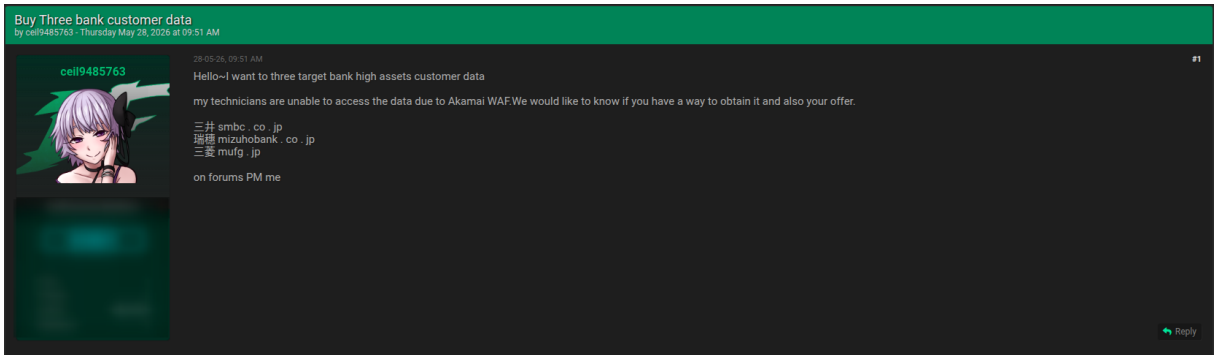


Figure 9: Japanese Banks Akamai WAF Bypass Request

DarkForums post published on 29 May 2026, in which “ceil9485763” requested assistance bypassing Akamai WAF protections at SMBC, Mizuho Bank, and MUFG to obtain customer data.

On DarkForums, ceil9485763 asked for methods to bypass the Akamai WAF at three major Japanese banks: Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, Mizuho Bank and MUFG. The stated goal was to steal valuable customer data. The actor said their own team was being blocked by the WAF, which points to a targeted data theft operation already underway. Unlike a sale listing, this buyer request names the targets directly, so it gives the banks advance warning.

BNP Paribas, verified online banking account access

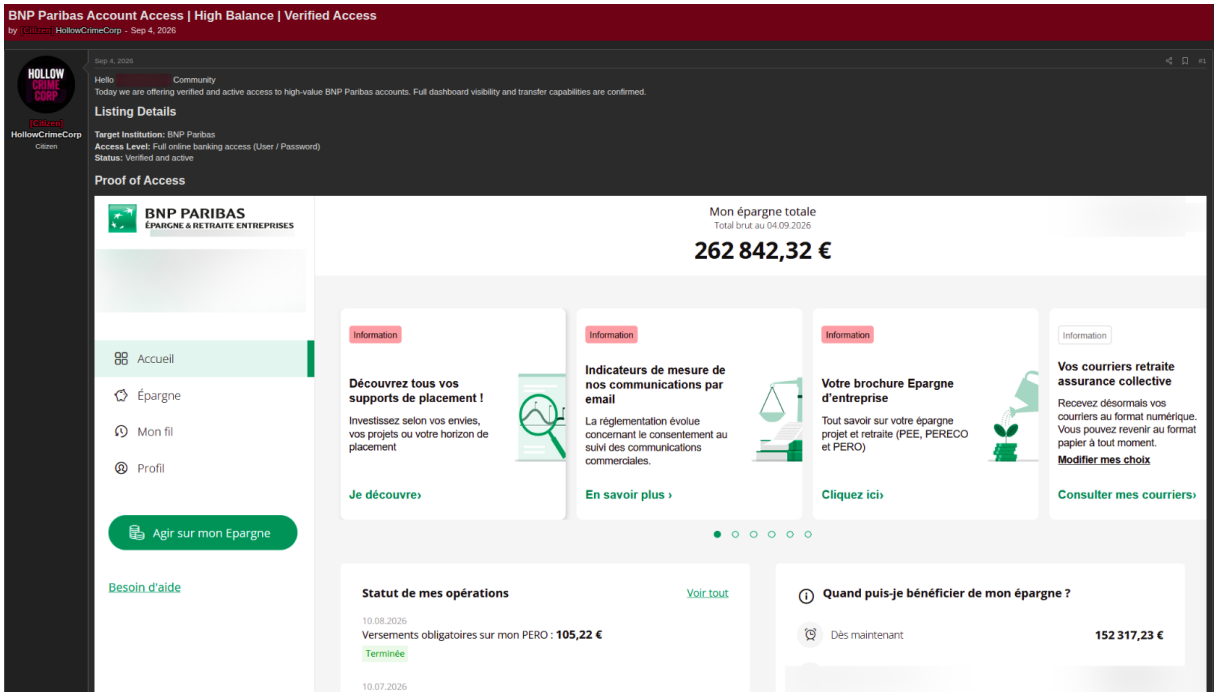


Figure 10: BNP Paribas Online Banking Account Access Sale Claim

Breached listing published on 4 September 2026, in which "HollowCrimeCorp" advertised the sale of alleged active BNP Paribas online banking accounts with dashboard access and transfer capabilities.

On Breached, HollowCrimeCorp claimed to be selling verified, active access to high-value BNP Paribas online banking accounts. The listing said buyers would get full dashboard visibility and the ability to make transfers. Sales went only through escrow, and buyers were told to get in touch through forum DMs. Unlike network-level access, this offer gives direct control of customer accounts, so it carries an immediate risk of fraud and money theft.

2.4 Defacement

Iraqi Prime Minister's Fund

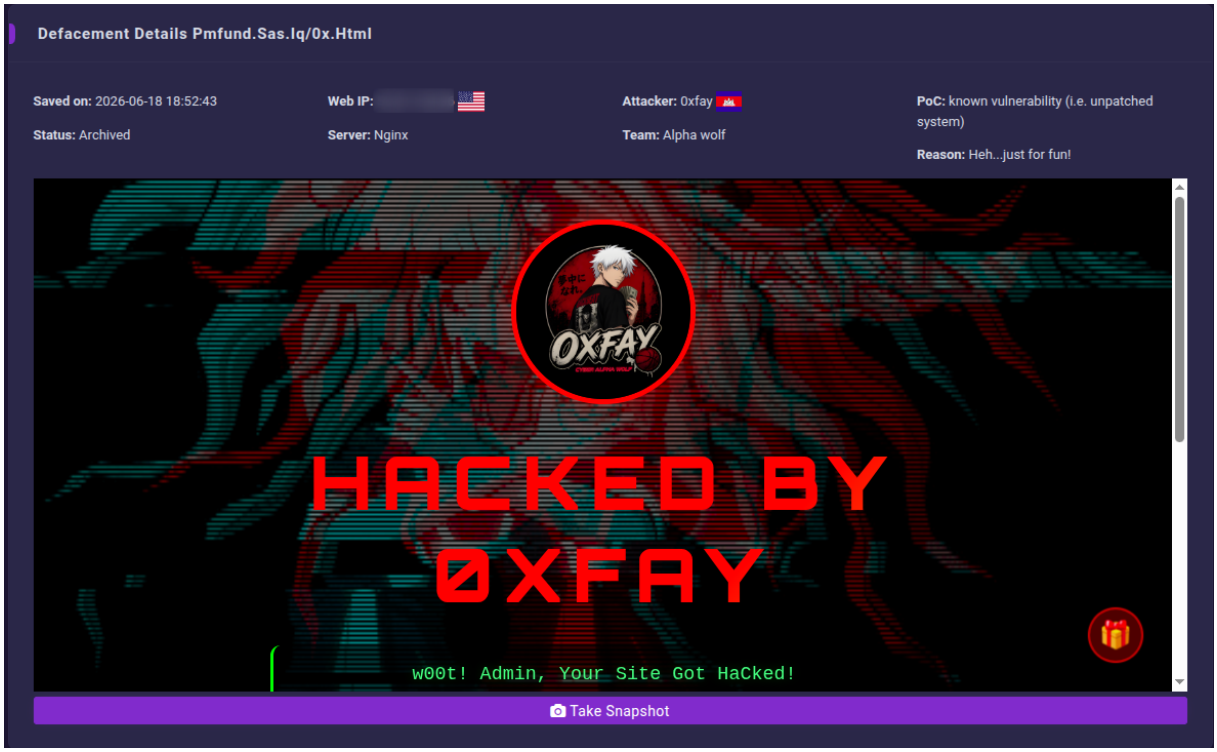


Figure 11: Iraqi Prime Minister's Fund Website Defacement

Website defacement reported on 18 June 2026, in which Alpha Wolf's "0xfay" allegedly defaced the Iraqi Prime Minister's Fund website during a mass defacement campaign.

0xfay of the Alpha Wolf team defaced the website of the Iraqi Prime Minister's Fund as part of a mass defacement campaign. The page was archived on Haxor. This is the only government-linked target in the defacement set, and it marks the start of 0xfay's activity, which continued until September.

Hidden Cyber Crime, one-day mass campaign against stock and diamond trading sites



Figure 12: Hidden Cyber Crime Mass Website Defacement Campaign

Forum activity reported on 16 May 2026, in which “Inside Alone7” allegedly defaced four stock and diamond trading websites, including easystock.co.il and diambroker.com.

On 16 May, Inside Alone7 of the Hidden Cyber Crime group defaced four sites: easystock.co.il (Israel), tbdstock.com, easystockdiam.com and diambroker.com. All were stock or diamond brokerage platforms running on Linux servers, and the mirrors were archived on Haxor. Hitting similar sites on the same day suggests the group was going after a shared hosting setup or a common weakness.

CNBC Brazil



Figure 13: CNBC Brazil Subdomain Defacement

Website defacement reported on 19 June 2026, in which Alpha Wolf's "0xfay" allegedly defaced a subdomain belonging to Brazil's Conselho Nacional das Bolsas de Câmbio (CNBC).

0xfay of Alpha Wolf defaced a subdomain of Brazil's Conselho Nacional das Bolsas de Câmbio (CNBC) as part of a mass defacement campaign. This came one day after the attack on the Iraqi Prime Minister's Fund. Together, the two incidents show that 0xfay targeted institutional finance organisations in June, before turning to small trading sites in September.

Zod, mass defacement campaign in India and Slovakia

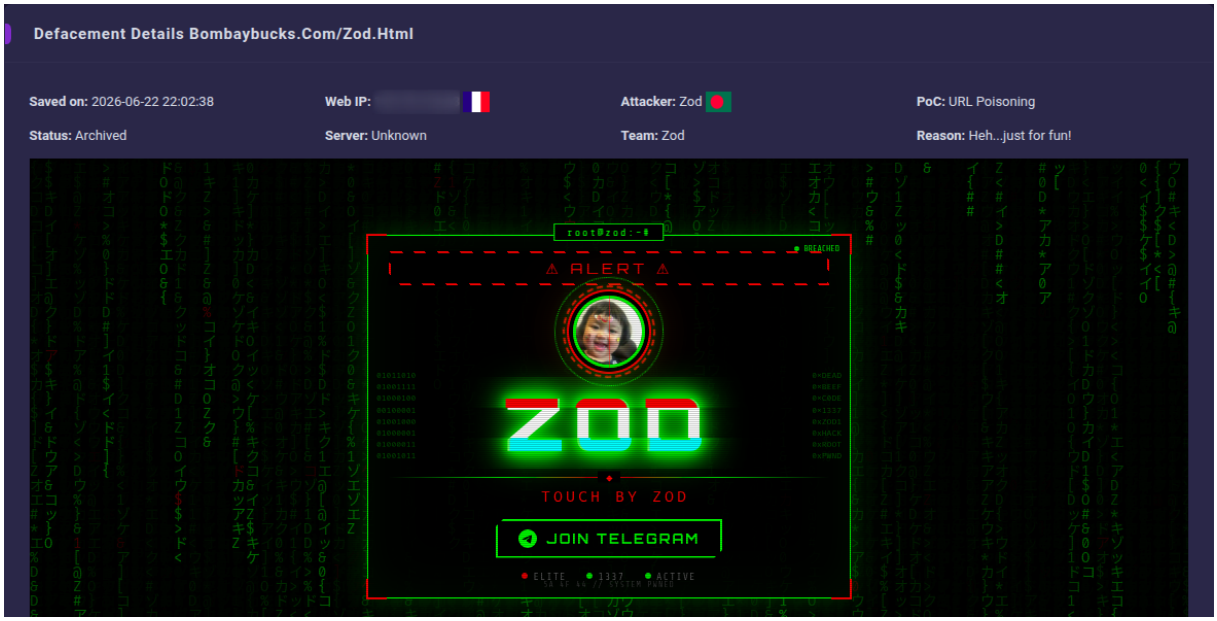


Figure 14: Zod Mass Website Defacement Campaign

Website defacements reported on 22–23 June 2026, in which “Zod” allegedly compromised BombayBucks in India and Finex in Slovakia, uploading defacement pages to Linux-based servers.

Over two days, the actor Zod defaced BombayBucks (bombaybucks.com), a financial services site that appears to be based in India, and Finex (finex.sk), a Slovak finance domain. In both attacks, Zod uploaded a defacement page to a Linux server using a fixed file name, /zod.html. Both incidents were archived on Haxor as part of mass defacement campaigns. Using the same file path on different sites suggests the attacks were automated with a script.

3 Ransomware Landscape

3.1 Ransomware Threat Overview

Ransomware remained a significant cyber threat to the global financial sector throughout the reporting period, presenting risks to operational continuity, sensitive financial information, customer trust, and critical payment infrastructure. Financial institutions, including commercial banks, insurance providers, investment firms, fintech companies, and payment service providers, represent attractive targets due to their reliance on highly available digital services and the sensitive nature of the information they process.

The ransomware threat landscape extends beyond traditional file encryption. Modern ransomware operations increasingly combine unauthorized network access, data exfiltration, extortion, and the threat of public disclosure. Ransomware groups such as Qilin, Akira, Clop, DragonForce, and The Gentlemen illustrate the diverse extortion threats facing organizations across the financial ecosystem. In some cases, threat actors pursue data theft and extortion without deploying encryption mechanisms, allowing them to exert pressure on affected organizations through the potential exposure of confidential information.

Throughout 2026, ransomware-related victim disclosures involved financial institutions and insurance providers across multiple regions. Notable examples included EFU Life Assurance in Pakistan, which appeared on Qilin's leak site in July, and Safeware in the United States, which was listed by The Gentlemen in August. Additional claims involved American Contractors Insurance Group in the United States, AYUDHYA TH Insurance in Thailand, and Interseguro in Peru. These cases illustrate the geographic reach of ransomware-related extortion activity and the exposure of insurance organizations within the broader financial sector. However, public leak-site listings do not independently confirm the extent of compromise, data exfiltration, or operational disruption.

For financial institutions, the consequences of ransomware activity can extend beyond immediate technical disruption. Compromised environments may contain customer identification records, account information, financial transactions, internal communications, and authentication material. Exposure of these assets can facilitate secondary threats, including financial fraud, identity theft, targeted phishing, and unauthorized access attempts. The targeting of insurance providers is particularly concerning because these organizations may process extensive policyholder

records, financial documentation, claims information, and other sensitive customer data.

Ransomware operations also present significant third-party risks. Financial organizations frequently depend on external technology providers, managed service providers, cloud platforms, and payment processing partners. A compromise affecting one of these organizations may indirectly expose multiple financial institutions through shared infrastructure, interconnected systems, or sensitive information stored within supplier environments. Groups employing data-theft-driven extortion models can exploit these dependencies to increase pressure on affected organizations.

From an intelligence perspective, ransomware-related activity must be evaluated beyond the number of victims published on data leak sites. Public victim listings represent claims made by threat actors and do not independently establish successful encryption, confirmed data theft, or the full operational impact of an incident. Repeated listings, previously compromised organizations, and unverified claims may further influence observed activity levels. Differences in ransomware groups' publication practices can also affect the visibility of their operations and the interpretation of victim statistics.

Consequently, the assessment of ransomware threats to the financial sector requires consideration of actor capabilities, victim characteristics, geographic distribution, operational methods, and the potential consequences of compromise. The observed activity highlights the importance of monitoring ransomware groups not only for direct attacks against financial institutions but also for incidents involving insurance providers, technology suppliers, and other organizations connected to the financial ecosystem.

3.2 Ransomware Activity and Statistical Analysis

Ransomware-related victim disclosures targeting the financial services sector fluctuated throughout 2026, with a notable increase in activity during the third quarter. August recorded the highest number of listings, with 58 reported victims, followed by September with 50 and July with 44. Activity subsequently declined in October, with 43 listings.

Between February and October 2026, a total of 367 ransomware-related victim listings were recorded. An additional 13 listings were identified between November 1 and November 10, bringing the total to 380 listings for the reporting period.

The monthly distribution presented in Figure 15 covers February through October 2026, while the November figures are excluded from the chart due to the incomplete reporting month.

These figures reflect publicly observed ransomware data leak site disclosures and should not be interpreted as confirmed successful attacks. Victim listings are based on threat actor claims, and the actual extent of compromise, data exfiltration, or operational disruption may remain unverified.

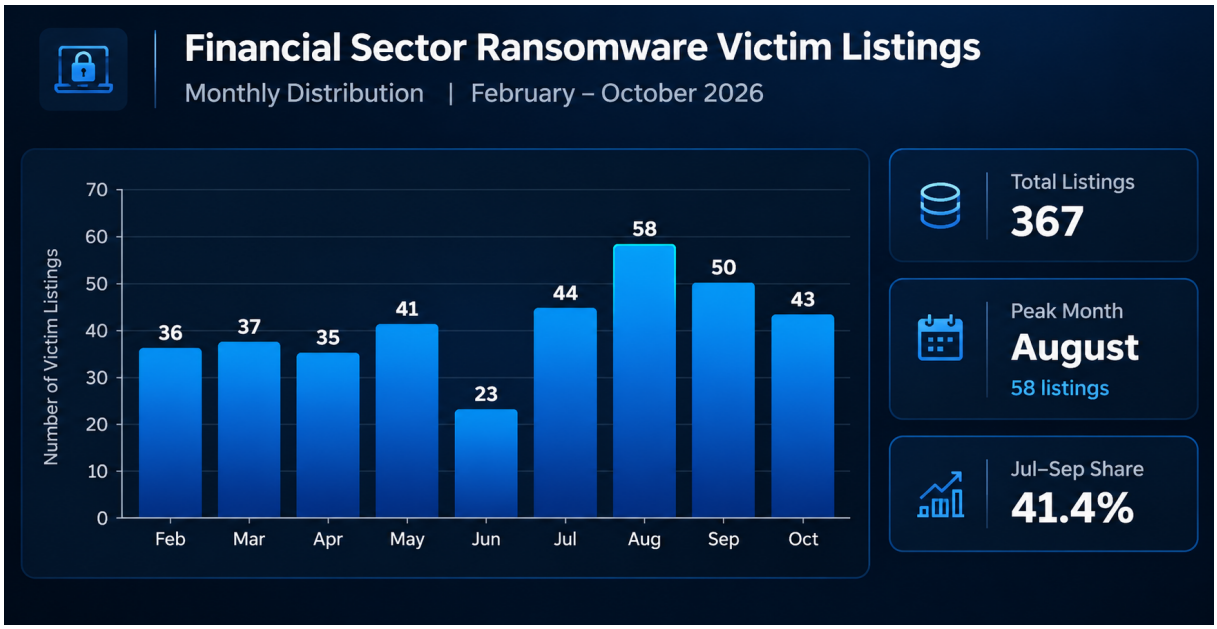


Figure 15: Financial Sector Ransomware Victim Listing

3.3 Key Ransomware Groups Targeting the Financial Sector

During the reporting period, ransomware activity affecting the financial sector involved multiple threat groups operating under different organizational structures, extortion strategies, and targeting patterns. Groups such as Qilin, Akira, Clop, DragonForce, and The Gentlemen represent relevant threats due to their data-extortion capabilities, enterprise targeting, and potential impact on financial institutions and their third-party service providers.

Although these groups differ in their operational approaches, their activities demonstrate several common characteristics, including the exploitation of exposed infrastructure, abuse of compromised credentials, unauthorized access to corporate networks, and the exfiltration of sensitive information. Some operations involve the encryption of critical systems, while others prioritize data theft and public disclosure as their primary extortion mechanisms.

Financial institutions face particular exposure because ransomware operators may exploit both direct access to banking and insurance environments and indirect access through technology vendors, managed service providers, and other interconnected organizations.

3.4 Key Ransomware Group Profiles

Qilin



Figure 16: Qilin Ransomware Threat Profile on the ThreatMon Dashboard

Qilin operates through a ransomware-as-a-service (RaaS) model and is associated with double-extortion operations involving data theft and encryption. The group's targeting extends across multiple industries, including financial services and insurance.

On July 22, 2026, EFU Life Assurance, a Pakistan-based insurance provider, appeared in ransomware-related victim disclosures attributed to Qilin. The listing illustrates the potential exposure of insurance organizations handling policyholder information, financial records, and sensitive customer documentation. The extent

of the alleged compromise and any resulting operational disruption remain unverified.

Akira

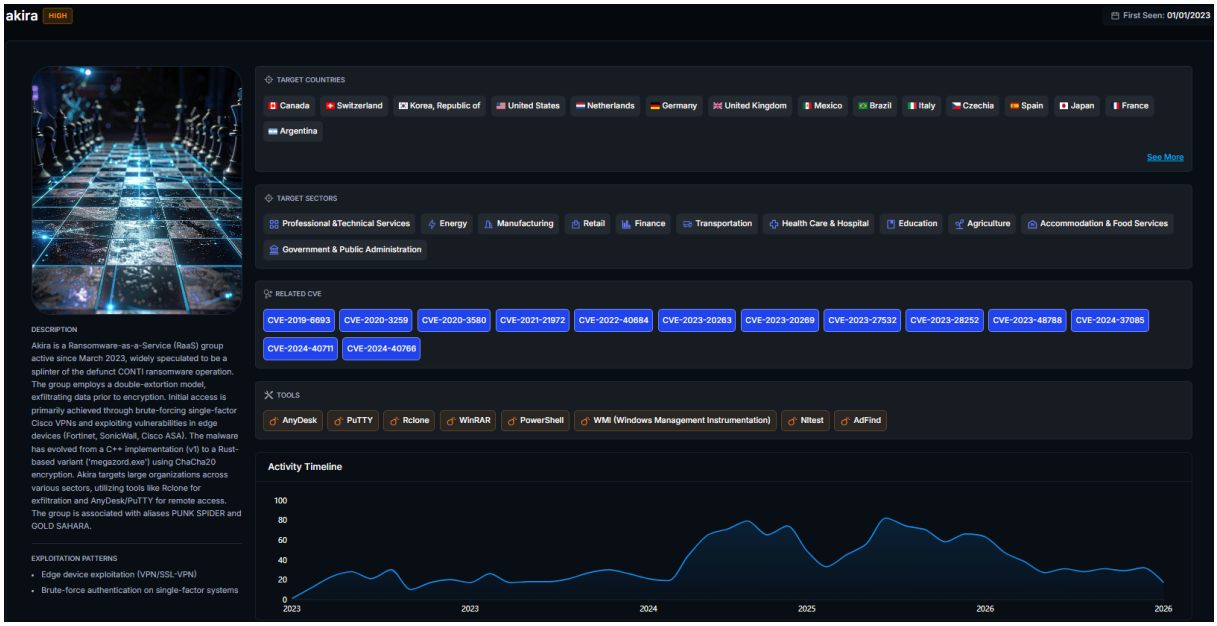


Figure 17: Akira Ransomware Threat Profile on the ThreatMon Dashboard

Akira is an established ransomware operation associated with attacks against enterprise networks, including Windows and VMware ESXi environments. Its operational methods include unauthorized network access, lateral movement, data exfiltration, and encryption of affected systems.

During the reporting period, Akira was linked to several incidents involving financial services organizations in the United States. Notable cases included Punch & Associates Investment Management in April 2026, followed by Associated Financial Consultants and Investor Services and Fox Valley Tax Solutions in May 2026. These incidents demonstrate the group's relevance to investment management, financial advisory, and tax-related services, extending its potential impact beyond traditional banking institutions.

For financial institutions, Akira represents a threat to business-critical infrastructure, particularly where compromised administrative credentials or insufficiently protected remote access services could provide access to interconnected systems.

Its ability to target virtualized environments and conduct data-extortion operations creates risks of operational disruption, sensitive financial information exposure, and reputational damage.

Clop



Figure 18: Clop Ransomware Threat Profile on the ThreatMon Dashboard

Clop is a prominent ransomware and data-extortion group known for large-scale campaigns exploiting vulnerabilities in widely deployed enterprise software and file-transfer platforms. Unlike conventional ransomware operations primarily focused on encrypting individual corporate networks, Clop has demonstrated the ability to conduct extensive data-theft campaigns affecting multiple organizations through shared technologies.

During the reporting period, Clop maintained a significant presence in the financial-sector threat landscape. On September 23, 2026, Columbia Banking System (Umpqua Bank), a United States-based financial holding company associated with regional banking operations, was identified in a ransomware-related victim disclosure attributed to Clop. The listing raised concerns regarding potential exposure of sensitive banking information, although the extent of any compromise, data exfiltration, or operational impact remains unverified.

Clop's operational model presents particular risks to financial institutions because banks, insurers, and payment service providers frequently depend on interconnected enterprise applications, third-party platforms, and managed data-transfer services. The compromise of a shared technology provider may expose sensitive customer records, financial documentation, and internal business information across multiple organizations without requiring separate intrusions into each institution.

The group's continued activity highlights the importance of assessing ransomware exposure beyond traditional network encryption, particularly where third-party software vulnerabilities and centralized data-processing environments create opportunities for large-scale financial data extortion.

DragonForce

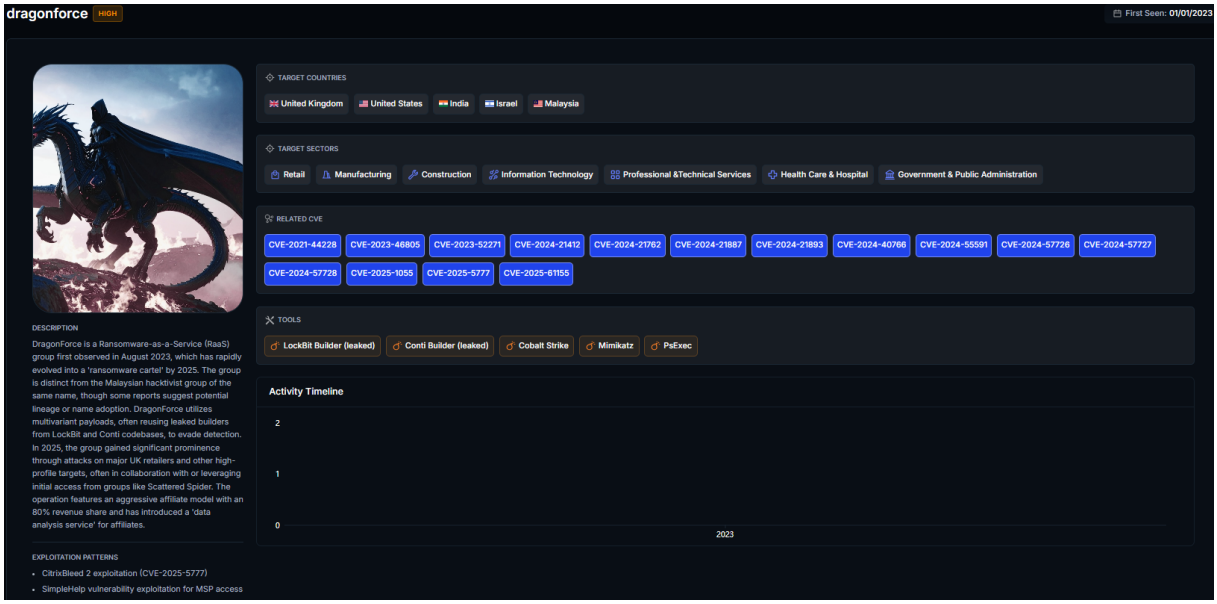


Figure 19: DragonForce Ransomware Threat Profile on the ThreatMon Dashboard

DragonForce is a ransomware-as-a-service (RaaS) operation that has expanded its activities through an affiliate-oriented model, allowing different operators to utilize shared ransomware infrastructure and extortion services. The group employs data theft, encryption, and public disclosure threats to pressure affected organizations, while its decentralized structure complicates the attribution of individual incidents.

During the reporting period, DragonForce was associated with ransomware-related disclosures involving financial and investment-related organizations in the United States. On February 16, 2026, FAS Wealth Partners, Inc., a financial services organization, appeared in a victim listing attributed to the group. Three days later, on February 19, Five States Energy, an energy investment-related organization, was also identified in a DragonForce ransomware claim. Both cases remain reported claims, with the extent of unauthorized access, data exfiltration, and operational impact unverified.

These incidents illustrate the potential exposure of investment management and financial services organizations to affiliate-driven ransomware operations. Compromise of such environments could expose confidential investment documentation, client information, financial records, and internal business communications.

DragonForce's operational model highlights the challenges of tracking ransomware threats through malware families alone. Affiliates may employ different initial access methods, tools, and extortion techniques, while changes in infrastructure and operational branding can further complicate attribution. For financial institutions, this creates a persistent risk of data exposure, business disruption, and secondary extortion activity.

The Gentlemen

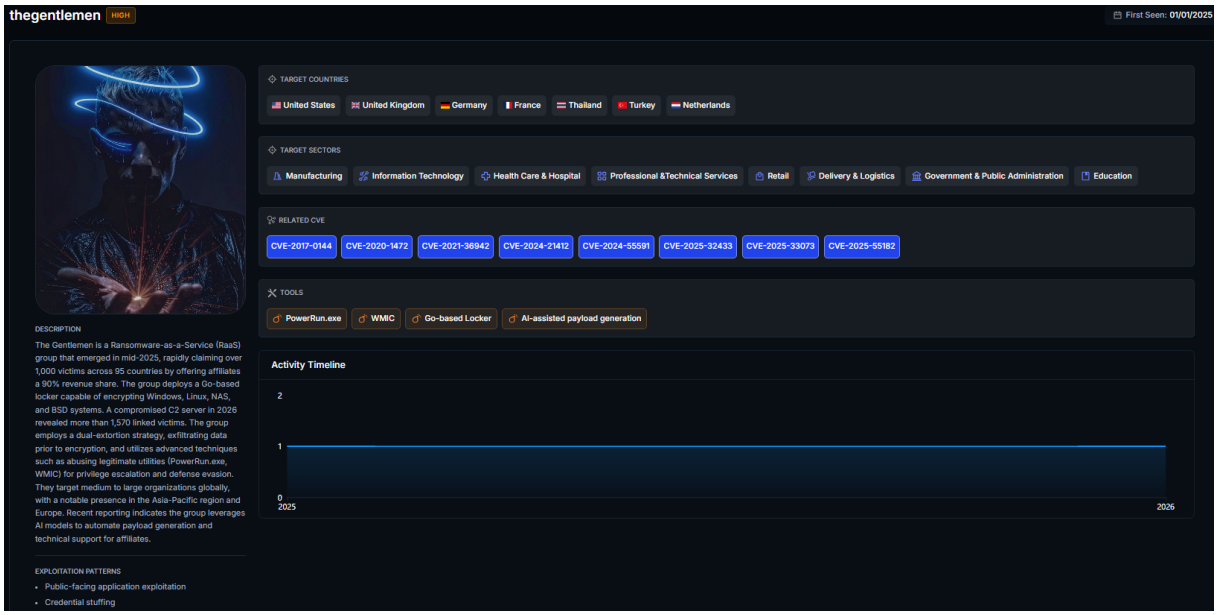


Figure 20: The Gentlemen Ransomware Threat Profile on the ThreatMon Dashboard

The Gentlemen emerged as a ransomware operation associated with enterprise victim disclosures and data-extortion activity. Its observed targeting includes organizations connected to financial and insurance services.

On August 13, 2026, Safeware, a United States-based insurance-related organization, appeared in a ransomware victim listing attributed to The Gentlemen. The disclosure indicates potential exposure within the insurance ecosystem, although the listing alone does not establish the extent of unauthorized access, the volume of information obtained, or whether encryption occurred.

The group's activity illustrates how ransomware-related extortion can affect financial-sector organizations beyond traditional banks, particularly those handling insurance administration, customer information, and business-sensitive records.

3.5 Comparative Assessment of Ransomware Groups

Ransomware Group	Operational Model	Primary Threat	Financial Sector Relevance
Qilin	RaaS	Encryption and data extortion	Insurance and financial institutions
Akira	Enterprise ransomware	Infrastructure encryption and data theft	Banking infrastructure and virtualized environments
Clop	Data-centric extortion	Mass data theft through exploited software	Financial data-transfer systems and third parties
DragonForce	Affiliate-based RaaS	Encryption and extortion	Financial institutions and service providers
The Gentlemen	Ransomware and extortion	Data exposure and operational disruption	Insurance and financial services

3.6 Analyst Assessment

The diversity of ransomware groups operating within the broader financial threat landscape demonstrates that financial institutions face multiple forms of extortion risk rather than a single, uniform ransomware threat.

While groups such as Qilin and Akira illustrate the risks associated with enterprise compromise and double-extortion operations, Clop highlights the potential consequences of vulnerabilities in widely used third-party technologies. Meanwhile,

affiliate-based operations such as DragonForce demonstrate how ransomware capabilities can be distributed across multiple operators, complicating attribution and defensive prioritization.

The presence of insurance-related organizations in ransomware victim disclosures further reinforces the importance of evaluating financial-sector exposure beyond traditional banking institutions.

The primary intelligence concern is the combination of sensitive financial data exposure, operational disruption, and third-party compromise, which can allow ransomware incidents to affect multiple interconnected organizations.

4 APT Threat Landscape

4.1 APT Threat Overview

Advanced Persistent Threat (APT) activity represented a significant threat to the global financial sector between February 1 and November 10, 2026, particularly within cryptocurrency exchanges, decentralized finance (DeFi) platforms, digital asset custody services, and financial technology organizations. During the reporting period, North Korean state-linked threat actors were associated with several high-impact intrusions involving unauthorized cryptocurrency transfers, compromised employee devices, malicious software deployment, and targeted social engineering.

The observed operations demonstrated a shift toward exploiting trusted identities, professional relationships, software development environments, and digital asset authorization mechanisms. Rather than relying exclusively on direct exploitation of financial infrastructure, attackers increasingly targeted employees, developers, and executives whose access could facilitate subsequent compromise of sensitive corporate systems.

Several incidents illustrated the potential financial consequences of these operations. In March 2026, Bitrefill disclosed a compromise involving unauthorized cryptocurrency transfers and exposure of customer purchase records. On April 1, Drift Protocol suffered a major exploit involving approximately USD 270–286 million in digital assets. On October 29, Binance experienced a substantially larger compromise involving approximately USD 6.4 billion in unauthorized cryptocurrency transfers.

These incidents demonstrate that state-linked financial cyber operations can combine prolonged reconnaissance, identity deception, endpoint compromise, and the abuse of legitimate financial infrastructure. The resulting consequences may extend beyond direct asset theft to include customer information exposure, disruption of financial services, and risks to interconnected organizations.

Attribution remains an important consideration. North Korean threat activity is tracked under multiple overlapping group names and operational clusters, and the available evidence does not always establish whether separate incidents were conducted by the same operators. Consequently, the following assessment distin-

guishes confirmed intrusions from suspected actor attribution and avoids treating overlapping threat actor labels as independent organizations.

4.2 Key APT Actors and Observed Operations

Lazarus Group / BlueNoroff — Bitrefill Compromise (March 2026)

Lazarus Group is a North Korean state-linked threat actor associated with financially motivated cyber operations, including cryptocurrency theft, targeted social engineering, and compromise of digital asset infrastructure. BlueNoroff is commonly associated with overlapping North Korean financially motivated activity, particularly operations targeting cryptocurrency organizations and investment-related environments.

On March 1, 2026, cryptocurrency payment and gift card platform Bitrefill experienced a cyberattack involving the compromise of internal systems and unauthorized cryptocurrency transfers. The incident was publicly disclosed on March 17, 2026.

The intrusion reportedly began through a compromised employee laptop, allowing attackers to access internal systems associated with the company's operations. The attackers subsequently obtained access to cryptocurrency hot wallets and conducted unauthorized transfers of digital assets.

The incident also involved unauthorized access to approximately 18,500 purchase records containing limited customer information. This created additional concerns regarding the potential misuse of customer transaction data and the exposure of information associated with cryptocurrency purchases.

The investigation identified similarities with previously observed Lazarus and BlueNoroff operations, including malware characteristics, infrastructure indicators, and cryptocurrency transaction patterns. However, the available evidence supports a suspected attribution rather than definitive confirmation that a particular Lazarus operational unit conducted the attack.

Analyst Assessment

The Bitrefill incident illustrates how compromise of an employee endpoint can create opportunities for attackers to access financial systems and sensitive transaction records. The combination of cryptocurrency theft and customer information

exposure demonstrates the potential for a single intrusion to produce both direct financial losses and secondary data security risks.

For financial technology companies, the incident highlights the importance of isolating cryptocurrency wallet infrastructure from employee environments, enforcing privileged access restrictions, and monitoring suspicious activity involving internal financial systems.

UNC1069 / BlueNoroff — Cryptocurrency Sector Intrusion (February 2026)

UNC1069 is a North Korean financially motivated threat cluster associated with targeted operations against cryptocurrency companies, financial technology organizations, software developers, and digital asset investors.

On February 9, 2026, a targeted intrusion involving an undisclosed cryptocurrency-sector financial technology organization was publicly documented. The operation involved the compromise of an individual through a sophisticated social engineering campaign combining trusted communication channels, fraudulent meeting invitations, and malicious software deployment.

The attackers initially contacted the victim through a Telegram account belonging to another cryptocurrency executive that had reportedly been compromised. After establishing communication, they sent a Calendly invitation directing the victim to a fraudulent Zoom meeting hosted on attacker-controlled infrastructure.

During the meeting, the victim was presented with simulated audio problems and instructed to execute troubleshooting commands. This technique, commonly known as ClickFix, resulted in malicious code execution on the victim's macOS device.

The attackers subsequently deployed multiple malware components, including WAVESHAPER, HYPERCALL, HIDDENCALL, SILENCELIFT, DEEPBREATH, SUGARLOADER, and CHROMEPUSH.

These components supported remote access, additional payload deployment, credential harvesting, browser information collection, and extraction of sensitive information. The operation also targeted Telegram-related data, authentication material, and other information that could facilitate further attacks.

The victim additionally reported encountering a video that appeared to impersonate a cryptocurrency executive using deepfake technology. However, the use of AI-generated video in this specific intrusion was not independently confirmed.

Analyst Assessment

The UNC1069 intrusion demonstrates how sophisticated social engineering can bypass traditional perimeter-focused security controls. By exploiting trusted professional relationships and routine business communications, attackers gained access to an individual operating within the cryptocurrency ecosystem.

The deployment of multiple specialized malware components against a single victim indicates an operation focused on extensive information collection. Compromised credentials, browser sessions, and internal communications could potentially support subsequent financial theft or further targeted intrusions.

UNC4736 / Citrine Sleet — Drift Protocol Exploit (April 2026)

UNC4736, also tracked as Citrine Sleet or AppleJeus in overlapping attribution frameworks, is a North Korean state-linked threat cluster associated with cryptocurrency-focused intrusions and financially motivated operations.

On April 1, 2026, Drift Protocol, a decentralized perpetual futures trading platform operating on the Solana blockchain, experienced a major security incident involving the unauthorized transfer of approximately USD 270–286 million in digital assets.

The attack followed an extended preparation period during which the operators allegedly presented themselves as representatives of a legitimate quantitative trading firm. The attackers established relationships with individuals associated with the platform, participated in professional interactions, and reportedly invested substantial funds to strengthen the credibility of their fabricated business identity.

The operation involved suspected compromise of developer environments and manipulation of transaction authorization processes. Reported attack vectors included a malicious application distributed through TestFlight and exploitation of weaknesses affecting development tools.

The attackers ultimately obtained the ability to manipulate privileged transaction approvals, enabling unauthorized transfers from protocol-controlled assets.

The operation was assessed as consistent with activity associated with UNC4736, although the attribution remains an intelligence assessment rather than a publicly established legal determination.

Analyst Assessment

The Drift Protocol incident demonstrates how long-term social engineering and trusted business relationships can facilitate attacks against decentralized financial infrastructure.

The compromise of transaction authorization mechanisms is particularly significant because multi-signature controls may provide limited protection when attackers gain influence over the individuals, devices, or workflows responsible for approving transactions.

The incident highlights the need to evaluate digital asset security beyond cryptographic controls, including the integrity of developer environments, privileged workstations, and transaction approval procedures.

TraderTraitor — Binance Cryptocurrency Exchange Compromise (October 2026)

TraderTraitor is a North Korean state-linked cyber threat activity cluster associated with sophisticated cryptocurrency theft operations. Its campaigns have historically involved targeted social engineering, compromised development environments, and attempts to obtain access to sensitive digital asset infrastructure.

On October 29, 2026, Binance experienced a major cyberattack resulting in approximately USD 6.4 billion in unauthorized cryptocurrency transfers from its hot-wallet infrastructure. On October 31, the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation attributed the incident to North Korean cyber activity tracked as TraderTraitor.

The attack followed a prolonged intrusion campaign involving social engineering and the compromise of employee development environments.

During the preparation phase, an attacker impersonated a recruiter and engaged a Binance software engineer through a fraudulent employment process. The engineer was instructed to download a coding assignment containing malicious software, resulting in the compromise of the employee's workstation.

The attackers subsequently expanded their access toward systems associated with cryptocurrency wallet operations. On October 29, compromised credentials and malicious execution within the affected infrastructure enabled unauthorized cryptocurrency transfers across multiple blockchain networks.

The attackers exploited access to wallet-related transaction execution mechanisms, demonstrating how compromise of trusted internal systems can undermine digital asset custody protections.

Following the attack, stolen assets were transferred through multiple blockchain addresses and converted into other cryptocurrencies. By November 3, approximately USD 2.8 billion in affected assets had reportedly been frozen through coordinated response efforts.

Analyst Assessment

The Binance incident demonstrates the potential consequences of combining targeted employee compromise, credential theft, and access to critical financial infrastructure.

The scale of the unauthorized transfers illustrates how a successful intrusion into cryptocurrency custody environments can result in substantial financial exposure within a short period.

For cryptocurrency exchanges and digital asset custodians, the incident reinforces the importance of isolating wallet infrastructure, restricting privileged access, monitoring transaction execution, and maintaining effective mechanisms for rapidly identifying and containing unauthorized transfers.

4.3 Comparative Analysis of Notable APT Operations

The examined incidents demonstrate different operational approaches used by North Korean state-linked threat actors against financial and cryptocurrency organizations.

Threat Actor	Target Organization	Incident Date	Attack Method	Reported Impact
Lazarus / BlueNoroff (suspected)	Bitrefill	March 1, 2026	Employee endpoint compromise and unauthorized wallet access	Cryptocurrency theft and exposure of approximately 18,500 purchase records

Threat Actor	Target Organization	Incident Date	Attack Method	Reported Impact
UNC1069	Undisclosed cryptocurrency-sector fintech organization	Publicly documented February 9, 2026	Telegram impersonation, fake Zoom meeting, ClickFix and malware deployment	Endpoint compromise and sensitive information collection
UNC4736 / Citrine Sleet (assessed)	Drift Protocol	April 1, 2026	Long-term social engineering and transaction authorization compromise	Approximately USD 270–286 million in stolen digital assets
TraderTraitor	Binance	October 29, 2026	Fraudulent recruitment, endpoint compromise and wallet infrastructure abuse	Approximately USD 6.4 billion in unauthorized transfers

The incidents highlight the importance of trusted identities and privileged access in financially motivated APT operations. In several cases, attackers focused on employees or business relationships before progressing toward sensitive financial infrastructure.

The operational patterns also demonstrate that technical vulnerabilities are not the only means of compromising financial systems. Fraudulent employment opportunities, impersonated executives, malicious development tools, and compromised communication accounts can provide effective initial access opportunities.

4.4 MITRE ATT&CK Mapping

The following MITRE ATT&CK techniques reflect the documented attack behaviors observed across the selected operations. Technique applicability varies by incident, and the mapping should not be interpreted as evidence that every technique was used by each threat actor.

MITRE ATT&CK Technique	Technique ID	Observed Activity
Phishing: Spearphishing Link	T1566.002	Fraudulent meeting invitations and malicious links
User Execution: Malicious File	T1204.002	Execution of malicious coding assignments and downloaded applications
Command and Scripting Interpreter	T1059	Execution of attacker-provided scripts and troubleshooting commands
Valid Accounts	T1078	Abuse of compromised authentication credentials
Credentials from Password Stores	T1555	Collection of stored credentials and authentication information
Data from Local System	T1005	Collection of sensitive information from compromised endpoints
Application Layer Protocol	T1071	Malware communication with command-and-control infrastructure
Exfiltration Over C2 Channel	T1041	Transfer of collected information to attacker-controlled infrastructure

The observed techniques demonstrate how initial access through social engineering can progress into credential compromise, remote access, sensitive information collection, and unauthorized financial activity.

In particular, attacks against development environments and privileged employee workstations represent significant risks because these systems may provide access to sensitive applications, internal infrastructure, and digital asset authorization mechanisms.

4.5 Strategic Analyst Assessment

The examined operations indicate that state-linked cyber threats targeting the financial sector increasingly exploit trusted relationships, privileged identities, and interconnected technology environments.

North Korean financially motivated threat activity demonstrates the ability to combine prolonged preparation with sophisticated social engineering and technical intrusion capabilities. The incidents affecting Bitrefill, Drift Protocol, and Binance

illustrate how compromise of employee devices, developer environments, or transaction authorization workflows can lead to substantial financial losses.

The UNC1069 campaign further demonstrates that attacks against individual employees and executives can serve as an initial stage of broader financial cyber operations. Compromised authentication material, browser sessions, and internal communications may enable subsequent attacks against connected organizations.

Three strategic risks emerge from the examined incidents:

- **Privileged Identity Compromise:** Unauthorized access to employee and administrative identities can facilitate movement toward sensitive financial systems.
- **Digital Asset Infrastructure Exposure:** Compromise of wallet management systems and transaction authorization mechanisms can result in substantial financial losses.
- **Trusted Relationship Exploitation:** Fraudulent recruitment, impersonation, and compromised communication channels can bypass conventional perimeter defenses.

Financial institutions should prioritize protection of privileged identities, separation of development and production environments, enhanced monitoring of digital asset transactions, and stronger verification procedures for external communications involving sensitive operations.

The overall assessment indicates that sophisticated financial cyber operations are increasingly dependent on the exploitation of trust, identity, and access rather than technical vulnerabilities alone. Effective defensive strategies must therefore address both the technological and human components of financial infrastructure security.

5 Emerging Threats & Attack Trends

In 2026, the most notable development in the financial sector's threat landscape was not so much the emergence of entirely new attack techniques, but rather the fact that existing attack techniques became faster and more scalable through their integration with artificial intelligence, identity theft, third-party access, and automation. Financial institutions are simultaneously facing AI-enabled fraud, deepfakes and social engineering, identity/session compromise, ransomware and data extortion, software/ICT supply-chain attacks, and mobile payment attacks.

A key consequence of this transformation is that attacks are increasingly becoming "trust-based." Rather than simply exploiting a vulnerability, attackers are attempting to gain access to corporate environments by misusing legitimate user identities, SaaS applications, third-party providers, and trust relationships.

5.1 AI-Enabled Fraud & Deepfake Social Engineering

INTERPOL's March 2026 Global Financial Fraud Threat Assessment report states that AI-enhanced fraud operations can be 4.5 times more profitable than traditional methods and that "agentic AI" systems can automate various stages of an attack chain, from the reconnaissance phase to the execution of the fraud operation. According to the report, the use of generative AI, deepfakes, and automated models is also lowering the barrier to entry for financial fraud operations.

From the perspective of the financial sector, this trend is particularly significant in relation to CEO/CFO impersonation, Business Email Compromise (BEC), vishing, investment fraud, account takeover, and fake customer support operations.

5.2 Identity, Credential & Session Compromise

The second major trend is that attackers are moving beyond traditional password theft to target sessions, tokens, cookies, API keys, and trusted user identities.

Recent threat assessments indicate that identity theft, session theft, credential theft, and the Initial Access Broker (IAB) ecosystem have gained prominence. The fact that stolen access credentials can later be reused for fraud, ransomware, data theft, or access to corporate SaaS/cloud environments transforms credential theft from a standalone incident into the initial access layer of a broader attack chain.

By 2026, the question "Which trusted identity did the attacker compromise, and which systems was the attacker able to access using that identity?" has become critical.

5.3 Ransomware and Data Extortion Target the Financial Sector

Ransomware attacks remain a significant threat to the financial sector. A notable trend in 2026 is the resurgence of ransomware activity directly targeting financial institutions. Financial services organizations continue to be high-value targets for ransomware and extortion.

5.4 Third-Party, Supply-Chain & ICT Concentration Risk

One of the most critical structural risks in the financial sector is that institutions are dependent on the same technology and service providers, regardless of their own security levels.

Rather than directly bypassing the high-budget internal security defenses of banks and financial institutions, cyberattackers use third-party service providers, software supply chains, and hosting infrastructure with lower security maturity as their primary attack vectors. This situation leads to a single security vulnerability originating from a third party escalating into a systemic crisis that spreads throughout the entire financial system.

ICT Concentration Risk: The sector's reliance on a limited number of global cloud providers (AWS, Azure, GCP), core banking SaaS platforms, and financial messaging/settlement infrastructures creates the risk that a failure or cyberattack at a single point could lead to a systemic outage that paralyzes the entire financial ecosystem.

Software Supply Chain and Codebase Threats: Vulnerabilities in open-source libraries (Log4j, OpenSSL derivatives), malicious dependency injections, and the compromise of CI/CD processes create opportunities for malicious code to be introduced into financial institutions under the guise of legitimate updates.

Fintech, Open Banking, and the API Ecosystem: API integrations established with third-party fintech providers and payment intermediaries create hidden backdoors for attackers due to insufficient authorization and weak authentication mechanisms.

Ransomware & Supplier Double Extortion: Ransomware groups targeting service providers go beyond encrypting the supplier's infrastructure; they directly pressure

financial institutions by threatening to leak the bank's and customers' financial data on the dark web.

5.5 Mobile Banking, Digital Assets & Payment Infrastructure

The shift of financial services toward mobile-first architectures, the widespread adoption of instant payment rails (FAST, FedNow, SEPA Inst), and the integration of traditional finance with digital assets (crypto custody infrastructure, tokenization, and CBDC pilots) have fundamentally transformed the external attack surface of financial institutions.

Rather than attempting to breach banks' corporate perimeter defenses, attackers now directly target user endpoints, transaction authorization mechanisms, and payment interfaces. The focus of attacks has shifted from data breaches to direct financial fraud that exploits automated transfer systems, session/account hijacking, and the irreversible nature of instant payment systems.

5.6 Key Intelligence Findings

Threat Trend	2026 Observations	Impact on the Financial Sector
AI-Enabled Fraud	AI, deepfakes, and automation are scaling fraud operations.	Increased risk of BEC, impersonation, phishing, and payment fraud.
Identity Compromise	Credential theft, session hijacking, and abuse of trusted identities are increasingly prominent.	Facilitates account takeover and lateral movement within financial institutions.
Ransomware & Extortion	Ransomware and data-extortion threats targeting the financial sector remain significant.	Creates operational disruption, data leakage, and reputational damage.
Supply Chain & ICT Risk	Third-party vulnerabilities and growing dependence on critical technology providers increase exposure.	A single third-party incident can disrupt multiple financial institutions simultaneously.
Digital Finance Attacks	FinTech platforms, crypto services, SaaS environments, and payment infrastructures are increasingly targeted.	Increases the potential for direct financial losses and wider systemic disruption.

6 Third-Party Container Exposure in the Payment Ecosystem

Analysis Date: November 10, 2026

POS (Point of Sale) terminals and payment gateways are among the most heavily regulated systems due to their direct interaction with payment card data. However, security risks within this ecosystem are not limited to terminal manufacturers or payment providers and their own infrastructure. **Third-party developers, integrators, software vendors, and testing teams** operating around these organizations also represent a significant attack surface.

Containerized applications and services developed by these actors are sometimes published publicly through personal or corporate container registry accounts. Images created for testing, development, or temporary use may inadvertently contain sensitive information, including environment variables, private keys, database connection strings, and API credentials. Furthermore, deleting an image does not necessarily eliminate its previous layers or copies, which may remain accessible through different references or registry artifacts.

To investigate this exposure landscape, prominent organizations and technologies within the payment ecosystem were used as search keywords. The research covered major card networks (**Mastercard, Visa**), POS terminal manufacturers (**Ingenico, Verifone, PAX**), and technologies associated with payment infrastructure.

The searches identified approximately **4.5K publicly accessible container images** across public container registries. Rather than consisting primarily of official manufacturer products, these images included third-party applications and services associated with the payment ecosystem, such as backend services, data-processing tools, financial applications, integration components, and testing or laboratory environments.

The primary objective was not simply to examine image names and descriptions, but to identify potential exposure of sensitive information and credentials through static analysis of publicly accessible container image contents.

Exposed Secrets in Public Container Images



Figure 21: The most common critical findings among the analyzed containers

The sample of approximately **4.5K publicly accessible container images** provides an opportunity to examine the security risks associated with container-based development and deployment practices among third parties operating within the payment and POS ecosystem.

During static analysis, findings were evaluated across different confidence levels. In addition to potentially false-positive matches originating from password declarations, sample configurations, and documentation, particular attention was given to sensitive information categories with higher confidence levels.

The following finding categories are particularly relevant to third-party software and integration components operating within the POS ecosystem:

Finding Type	Associated Security Risk
RSA / EC / OpenSSH Private Keys	Exposure of private keys used in TLS, SSH, or digital signing processes
Database Connection Strings	Exposure of usernames and passwords associated with systems such as MySQL, PostgreSQL, and MongoDB
AWS Access Keys	Unauthorized access to cloud infrastructure and potential abuse of cloud resources
JWT / Telegram Tokens / Basic Auth	Session impersonation, unauthorized API access, or access to internal communication channels
API Keys and Environment Variables	Compromise of authentication mechanisms between third-party services and applications

The presence of such information in publicly accessible container images may allow attackers to download the relevant images and directly retrieve sensitive credentials. In particular, when private keys, database connection strings, and cloud access keys coexist within the same image, multiple systems may become exposed through a single security incident.

Private keys embedded in a container image should not be considered secure simply because the image is subsequently deleted. Once exposed, such keys should be treated as compromised, revoked or rotated, and all systems relying on them should be reconfigured accordingly.

Recurring Exposure Across Container Images

One of the significant risks associated with container image exposure is that sensitive information may not remain confined to a single image. Applications built upon a shared base image may inherit the same credentials and sensitive information from their underlying layers.

For example, if a developer publicly publishes a base image containing a private key or database connection string, other containers derived from that image may inherit the same exposed information. Consequently, a single configuration mistake can propagate across dozens of independently published images.

Similarly, different versions or copies of the same project published under separate names or tags may repeatedly expose identical sets of credentials across multiple repositories and image versions. This makes removing a single affected image insufficient and highlights the importance of examining all derivative images and historical layers associated with the exposed secrets.

Security Implications for the Payment Ecosystem

Credential exposure in third-party images associated with POS and payment infrastructure may affect not only the development environments in which the credentials were originally used, but also organizations integrated with these components.

The following risks are particularly noteworthy:

- **Indirect Access to Payment Infrastructure:** Credentials stored within third-party services may potentially be used to access integrated payment systems.
- **Database Security Compromise:** Exposed connection credentials belonging to application or testing environments may provide access to production databases.
- **Cloud Infrastructure Abuse:** Exposed AWS access keys may enable unauthorized access to storage resources, application services, or other cloud-based assets.
- **Compromise of Cryptographic Trust:** Exposure of private keys may undermine the security of TLS, SSH, or digital signing mechanisms.
- **Supply Chain Security Risks:** Security weaknesses within third-party developers and service providers may directly affect the security posture of the organizations they support.

These findings highlight that security assessments within the POS ecosystem should not focus exclusively on the internal infrastructure of Mastercard, Visa, or terminal manufacturers. Independent software developers, integrators, testing environments, and publicly accessible container registries also represent significant attack surfaces that require continuous monitoring.

In conclusion, the examination of approximately **4.5K publicly accessible container images** provides valuable visibility into potential sensitive information exposure across third-party components within the payment ecosystem.

The findings highlight the importance of extending security assessments beyond payment providers and POS manufacturers to include the wider network of software vendors, integrators, and independent developers supporting these technologies.

Container images should be regularly scanned not only at the time of publication but also across historical versions and derivative images. Identified credentials should be revoked or rotated, and the security practices of the relevant third-party providers should be assessed as part of a broader supply chain security strategy.

7 Strategic Risk Assessment

The findings from February to November 2026 point to a financial threat environment where risk is increasingly driven by connected attack paths rather than isolated incidents. Data breaches, ransomware, initial access activity, APT operations and third-party exposure often involve the same underlying weaknesses: compromised identities, trusted relationships and access to critical systems.

From a strategic perspective, identity and trusted access have become key points of exposure. Attackers are targeting employee credentials, developer environments, cloud platforms, internal networks and business accounts because these can provide direct access to high-value financial systems without requiring a conventional attack against the organization's perimeter.

Third-party dependency is another growing concern. Financial institutions rely on cloud services, software providers, payment partners, managed services and other external technologies. The container exposure findings in this report demonstrate how credentials, private keys and other secrets exposed in third-party environments can create risks beyond the organization's own infrastructure.

Ransomware remains a major operational and reputational risk, while APT activity shows that financial loss can also occur through the compromise of trusted users, developers and transaction-related systems. The combination of these findings suggests that the main strategic challenge is not simply preventing compromise, but controlling the impact when a trusted identity, supplier or connected system is compromised.

For financial organizations, resilience therefore depends on visibility across the wider digital ecosystem, strong control over privileged access, and the ability to identify and contain suspicious access before it reaches critical financial processes.

8 Conclusion & Recommendations

The findings examined in this report indicate that, in addition to protecting their own infrastructure, financial institutions must also focus on the identities, suppliers, technologies, and access points associated with that infrastructure.

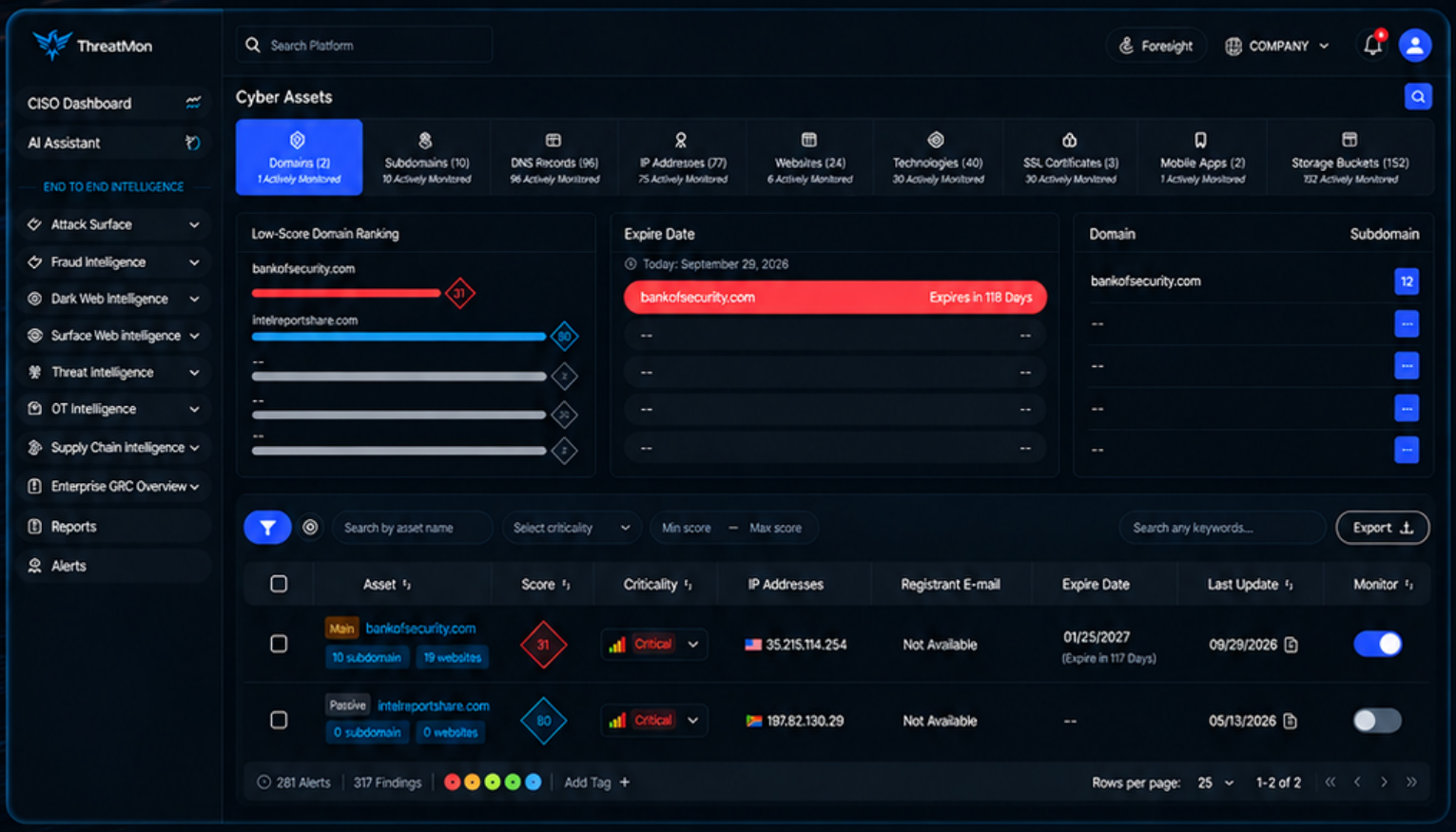
Based on the observed activity, the following actions should be prioritized:

- Strengthen identity and privileged access controls. Monitor compromised credentials, session tokens, privileged accounts and unusual authentication activity, particularly for accounts connected to financial and production systems.
- Expand third-party risk monitoring. Include cloud providers, software vendors, MSPs, payment partners, developers and other technology dependencies in continuous security monitoring.
- Monitor underground access activity. Track the sale or exposure of VPN, RDP, cloud, CI/CD, banking and internal network access as potential early indicators of compromise.
- Protect critical financial and transaction systems separately. Apply stricter access controls and continuous monitoring to payment systems, transaction approval mechanisms, digital asset infrastructure and other high-value environments.
- Improve exposure monitoring across development environments. Regularly assess public repositories, container images and other exposed development assets for credentials, API keys, private keys and configuration data.
- Use threat intelligence alongside conventional security monitoring. Underground activity, leaked credentials, ransomware claims and third-party exposures can provide early warning before an incident becomes visible through internal security controls.

The overall priority should be clear: reduce the amount of trust placed in any single identity, supplier or connected system, and limit what can happen when that trust is abused. This will be critical for reducing both the likelihood and potential impact of future financial-sector attacks.

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