



PUBLIC ALERT

Online Blackmail/Sextortion Cases on the Rise

1.0 Background

Following the March 2024 alert, in which the Cyber Security Authority (CSA) noted a 254% year-on-year increase in online blackmail cases for the first two months of the year, an additional one hundred and forty-one (141) reports were filed between March and June. The two hundred and twenty-six (**226**) cases recorded so far this year have resulted in a loss of **GH¢ 112,209**.

2.0 Modus Operandi

- Threat actors initiate friendships on social media platforms, typically via Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok, and later move the conversation to WhatsApp.
- With time, the malicious actors move the friendships to intimate relationships, luring targeted individuals into making nude video calls on WhatsApp, that are secretly recorded.
- These actors may initiate unsolicited video calls, capture the target's face, and then use it for fake explicit content or exchange explicit photos (usually not of themselves) with the target and later manipulate them into sharing theirs.
- In some instances, these malicious actors may gain unauthorised access to private photos and videos of their target when the victim's mobile devices are taken for repairs.
- The malicious actors then threaten to release compromising material unless the victim pays a ransom.

3.0 Recommendations

- Be wary of quickly progressing online relationships, especially those leading to requests for intimate content. Do not share such content.
- Avoid accepting online friend requests from unknown individuals.
- Be wary of video calls from unknown people on social media platforms.
- Use strong passwords to protect sensitive data and only use reputable mobile device repair services.
- Avoid capturing or storing nude images or videos of yourself on your devices.
- Be cautious of unsolicited messages or offers, especially those promising money or business opportunities.

The CSA has a 24-hour Cybersecurity/Cybercrime Incident Reporting Points of Contact (PoC) for reporting cybercrimes and for seeking guidance and assistance on online activities. Call or Text - **292**, WhatsApp – **0501603111** or Email – report@csa.gov.gh

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