

September 23, 2022

Quad Foreign Ministers' Statement on Ransomware

We, the Foreign Ministers of Australia, India, and Japan and the Secretary of State of the United States, met in New York on September 23, 2022. We reaffirm the Quad's commitment to supporting Indo-Pacific countries' advancement of a free and open Indo-Pacific, which is inclusive and rules-based. We are committed to an open, secure, stable, accessible, and peaceful cyberspace and support regional initiatives to enhance the capacity of countries to implement the UN Framework for Responsible State Behavior in Cyberspace. We strongly believe that focused initiatives for enhancing the cyber capabilities of Indo-Pacific countries would ensure the security and resilience of regional cyber infrastructure.

Recalling the last Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting on February 11, 2022, we commit to addressing the global threat of ransomware, which has been an obstacle to Indo-Pacific economic development and security. The transnational nature of ransomware can adversely affect our national security, finance sector and business enterprise, critical infrastructure, and the protection of personal data.¹ We appreciate the progress made by the 36 countries supporting the U.S.-led Counter Ransomware Initiative (CRI) and the regular, practical-oriented consultations against cybercrime in the Indo-Pacific region.

Call for State Action

The Ministers call on states to take reasonable steps to address ransomware operations emanating from within their territory. We exercise responsibility to assist each other in the face of malicious cyber activity, including from ransomware, against critical infrastructure.

Resilience and Capacity Building in the Indo-Pacific

The Ministers signal our collective will to fight ransomware threats to the cyber infrastructure that enables Indo-Pacific economic development and security. We commit to further cooperate on capacity building programs and initiatives that are aimed at enhancing regional cybersecurity and improve resilience against ransomware attacks in the Indo-Pacific. The Ministers highlight that practical cooperation in countering ransomware among Indo-Pacific partners would result in denying safe haven to ransomware actors in the region. We focus on results-oriented efforts to assist partners across the Indo-Pacific to strengthen their resilience, trust, and confidence in cyberspace, and effective incident-response capabilities.

Multistakeholder

The Ministers underscore the importance of the multistakeholder approach to building counter-ransomware capacity building. This includes promoting the role of existing mechanisms such as the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise (GFCE). Ministers recognize the multistakeholder approach to internet governance will uphold our shared values in the design and use of technologies and cyberspace across our region.

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/10/14/joint-statement-of-the-ministers-and-representatives-from-the-counter-ransomware-initiative-meeting-october-2021/>

Mechanisms

We welcome the negotiations of a possible new UN cybercrime convention as a long term means to address cybercrime more broadly which will have utility in countering ransomware. We underscore the need for a new treaty to be drafted in a technologically neutral and flexible manner, which does not describe specific technologies or criminal methodologies.

###