

# 14 ARRESTS IN TAKEDOWN OF MASSIVE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PLATFORM

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[Press Release](#)



In the past five weeks, the German Federal Prosecutor's Office (*Generalstaatsanwaltschaft Frankfurt am Main - Zentralstelle zur Bekämpfung der Internetkriminalität*) and Federal Criminal Police Office (*Bundeskriminalamt*) have arrested a number of individuals suspected of the serious sexual abuse of children and the distribution of large amounts of child abuse material online. The German authorities have also taken down the child abuse platform Elysium.

The Elysium platform, built as a forum, has existed since the end of 2016 and was only accessible via the Darknet. With over 87 000 members worldwide, the platform was used to exchange child abuse material as well as to make appointments for the sexual abuse of children. Elysium also encompassed chat groups in German, French, Spanish and Italian.

The main suspect, a 39-year-old German national, was identified and arrested after several months of painstaking investigation. He is suspected of operating the platform, providing the technical infrastructure for it to operate.

Another arrestee, a 61-year-old individual from Bavaria, is suspected of the production and dissemination of child abuse material. In addition, he is suspected of the sexual abuse of two children aged 5 and 7 years. The victims are the children of an Austrian forum member.

An additional arrestee, a 56-year-old individual from Baden-Württemberg, was arrested under the suspicion of being the moderator of the forums of the platform and the chat groups.

In Austria, a 28 year-old individual was arrested. He is suspected of having participated in the dissemination of child abuse material, of having severely sexually abused his two children for years and facilitated the sexual abuse of his children by the above suspects.

All the suspects met and communicated via the child abuse platform Elysium, which was immediately shut down by German law enforcement after the server was seized.

Given the pan-European dimension on this operation, the European Agency for law enforcement cooperation Europol supported the investigation through analysis, co-ordination and by facilitating the exchange of operational data. Law enforcement agencies and partners included New Zealand Police, the Italian State Police - Postal and Communication Police Service and Australia's Task Force Argos from Queensland.

Steven Wilson, Head of the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) at Europol, said: "The action of the German authorities assisted by Europol has resulted in the arrest of individuals involved not only in the physical abuse of children but the takedown of a platform, Elysium, used to distribute large amounts of child abuse material. This is a highly significant action in safeguarding children from abuse."

Further arrests are to be expected shortly in Germany, as well as in other European and non-European countries. To date, a total of 14 suspects have been arrested, among which 12 are suspected of having actively taken part in the abuse of children.

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