

# GLOBAL ACTION AGAINST DARK MARKETS ON TOR NETWORK

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[Press Release](#)

On 6 November, law enforcement and judicial agencies around the globe undertook a joint action against dark markets running as hidden services on Tor\* network. 16 European countries,\*\* alongside counterparts from the United States, brought down several marketplaces as part of a unified international action from Europol's operational coordination centre in The Hague.

The action aimed to stop the sale, distribution and promotion of illegal and harmful items, including weapons and drugs, which were being sold on online 'dark' marketplaces. Operation Onymous, coordinated by Europol's European Cybercrime Centre (EC3), the FBI, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and Eurojust, resulted in 17 arrests of vendors and administrators running these online marketplaces and more than 410 hidden services being taken down. In addition, bitcoins worth approximately USD 1 million, EUR 180 000 euro in cash, drugs, gold and silver were seized. The dark market Silk Road 2.0 was taken down by the FBI and the U.S. ICE HSI, and the operator was arrested.

The Joint Cybercrime Action Taskforce (J-CAT), located at Europol's headquarters, supported the operation. The J-CAT was created to serve as a platform for targeted operations against global criminal networks and infrastructure, carried out by EC3 and our colleagues in EU Member States and beyond.

"Today we have demonstrated that, together, we are able to efficiently remove vital criminal infrastructures that are supporting serious organised crime. And we are not 'just' removing these services from the open Internet; this time we have also hit services on the Darknet using Tor where, for a long time, criminals have considered themselves beyond reach. We can now show that they are neither invisible nor untouchable. The criminals can run but they can't hide. And our work continues....", says Troels Oerting, Head of EC3.

"Our efforts have disrupted a website that allows illicit black-market activities to evolve and expand, and provides a safe haven for illegal vices, such as weapons distribution, drug trafficking and murder-for-hire," says Kumar Kibble, regional attaché for HSI in Germany. "HSI will continue to work in partnership with Europol and its law enforcement partners around the world to hold criminals who use anonymous Internet software for illegal activities accountable for their actions."

"Working closely with domestic and international law enforcement, the FBI and our partners have

taken action to disrupt several websites dedicated to the buying and selling of illegal drugs and other unlawful goods. Combating cyber criminals remains a top priority for the FBI, and we continue to aggressively investigate, disrupt, and dismantle illicit networks that pose a threat in cyberspace”, says Robert Anderson, FBI Executive Assistant Director of the of the Criminal, Cyber, Response and Services Branch.

\* Tor, an acronym for The Onion Router, is a free network designed to anonymise your real Internet Protocol (IP) address by routing your traffic through many servers of the Tor network. Tor is used by a variety of people for both illicit and licit purposes, a fact that has also been acknowledged in the complaint against Ross William Ulbricht, accused of being the main administrator of the original Silk Road.

\*\* Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

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