

UN warns cybercrime on rise during pandemic

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United Nations: The U.N. disarmament chief says the COVID-19 pandemic is moving the world toward increased technological innovation and online collaboration, but "cybercrime is also on the rise, with a 600% increase in malicious emails during the current crisis."

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She said growing digital dependency has increased the vulnerability to cyberattacks, and "it is estimated that one such attack takes place every 39 seconds."

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The high representative for disarmament affairs said the threat from misusing information and communications technology "is urgent." But she said there is also good news, pointing to some global progress at the United Nations to address the threats as a result of the development of norms for the use of such technology.

Estonia's Prime Minister Juri Ratas, whose country holds the Security Council presidency and organized Friday's meeting on cyber stability and advancing responsible government behavior in cyberspace, said "the COVID-19 crisis has put extra pressure on our critical services in terms of cybersecurity."

He said the need for "a secure and functioning cyberspace" is therefore more pressing than ever and he condemned cyberattacks targeting hospitals, medical research facilities and other infrastructure, especially during the pandemic.

"Those attacks are unacceptable," Ratas said. "It will be important to hold the offenders responsible for their behavior."

- AP