



Contribution ID: 16

Type: Talk

## South African National Research and Education Network Cyber Threat Landscape: A Current Perspective

The cyber threat landscape continues to evolve in complexity, scale, and sophistication. As the critical backbone of South Africa's research and academic infrastructure, the South African National Research and Education Network (SA NREN) provide connectivity and services to universities, research institutions, and affiliated organisations, making it an attractive target for a wide range of cyber threats. This presentation presents a current perspective on the cyber threat landscape affecting the SA NREN environment, drawing on contemporary threat intelligence, security incident trends, and observations from the higher education and research sector. The focus will be specifically on the most prevalent threat categories, including exposed services, unpatched vulnerabilities, malware families, and malicious activity targeting research infrastructure. Particular attention is given to the unique characteristics of the SA NREN ecosystem, such as its highly collaborative nature and extensive interconnectivity with national and international partners. These characteristics provide significant operational and research benefits while simultaneously introducing distinct cybersecurity challenges. Furthermore, emerging trends affecting the SA NREN, as well as the larger research and education community, are also explored. By providing an up-to-date overview of the threats, risks, and defensive considerations relevant to the SA NREN, this presentation contributes to a broader understanding of the sector's cybersecurity challenges and offers insights to support strategic decision-making, resilience planning, and the protection of critical research and education infrastructure.

**Primary author:** Ms VILAKAZI, Zoya (SANReN)

**Co-author:** Dr MEYER, Heloise (SANReN)

**Presenter:** Ms VILAKAZI, Zoya (SANReN)

**Track Classification:** DIRISA