

Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of)
)
Evernex SMC PVT LTD) EB-TCD-23- 00035616
)

ORDER

Adopted: October 16, 2023

Released: October 16, 2023

By the Chief, Enforcement Bureau:

I. INTRODUCTION

1. By this Order, we direct Evernex SMC PVT LTD (Evernex or Company) to demonstrate why the Enforcement Bureau of the Federal Communications Commission (Commission or FCC) should not remove Evernex from the Robocall Mitigation Database. Evernex’s robocall mitigation plan does not satisfy the Commission’s rules requiring voice service providers describe the specific reasonable steps they have taken to avoid originating illegal robocall traffic and is therefore apparently deficient. **Removal from the database would require all intermediate providers and terminating voice service providers to cease accepting the Company’s traffic.¹ If that were to occur, intermediate providers and voice service providers would be required to block all calls from the Company using U.S. North American Numbering Plan (NANP) resources to send voice traffic to residential or business subscribers in the United States.²** Evernex must provide its response to the Enforcement Bureau no later than October 30, 2023.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Robocall Mitigation Database Requirements

2. Protecting Americans from the dangers of unwanted and illegal robocalls is the Commission’s top consumer protection priority.³ As part of the Commission’s multipronged approach to combatting illegal robocalls, the Commission has mandated adoption of the Secure Telephony Identity Revisited/Signature-based Handling of Asserted Information using toKENS (STIR/SHAKEN) caller ID

¹ *Call Authentication Trust Anchor*, WC Docket No. 17-97, Second Report and Order, 36 FCC Rcd 1859, 1903, para. 83 and 1904, para. 86 (2020) (*Second Caller ID Authentication Order*); *Advanced Methods to Target and Eliminate Unlawful Robocalls*; *Call Authentication Trust Anchor*, CG Docket No. 17-59, WC Docket No. 17-97, Sixth Report and Order in CG Docket No. 17-59, Fifth Report and Order in WC Docket No. 17-97, Order on Reconsideration in WC Docket No. 17-97, Seventh Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in CG Docket No. 17-59, and Fifth Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in WC Docket No. 17-97, 37 FCC Rcd 6865, 6882-83, paras. 40, 44 (May 20, 2022) (*Gateway Provider Order*); 47 CFR § 64.6305(g).

² 47 CFR § 64.6305(g)(2) (“[I]ntermediate providers and voice service providers shall accept calls directly from a foreign voice service provider or foreign intermediate provider that uses North American Numbering Plan resources that pertain to the United States in the caller ID field to send voice traffic to residential or business subscribers in the United States, only if that foreign provider’s filing appears in the Robocall Mitigation Database in accordance with paragraph (d) of this section and that filing has not been de-listed pursuant to an enforcement action.”); *see also Gateway Provider Order*, 37 FCC Rcd at 6914-15, para. 122.

³ The Commission receives more complaints about unwanted and illegal calls than any other issue. *See* FCC, *Consumer Complaint Data Center*, <https://www.fcc.gov/consumer-help-center-data> (last visited Aug. 22, 2023).

authentication framework.⁴ The Commission extended the implementation deadline for certain voice service providers⁵ on the basis of undue hardship or material reliance on a non-Internet Protocol (IP) network.⁶ Voice service providers that received an extension were required to implement a robocall mitigation program to prevent unlawful robocalls from originating on their networks.⁷ Furthermore, all voice service providers were required to file certifications with the Commission, stating whether their traffic is authenticated with STIR/SHAKEN or subject to a robocall mitigation program.⁸ Voice service providers whose traffic is subject to a robocall mitigation program must detail in a robocall mitigation plan attached to their certifications the specific reasonable steps they have taken to avoid originating illegal robocall traffic.⁹

3. In 2022, the Commission adopted rules requiring gateway providers to implement STIR/SHAKEN for foreign-originated calls made to U.S. numbers.¹⁰ The Commission also required all gateway providers to implement a robocall mitigation program, regardless of whether they had implemented STIR/SHAKEN on their networks.¹¹ Like voice service providers, all gateway providers must file certifications with the Commission stating whether their traffic is authenticated with STIR/SHAKEN and must detail in their certifications the specific reasonable steps they have taken to avoid carrying or processing illegal robocall traffic as part of their mitigation programs.¹²

⁴ *Call Authentication Trust Anchor, Implementation of TRACED Act Section 6(a)—Knowledge of Customers by Entities with Access to Numbering Resources*, WC Docket Nos. 17-97 and 20-67, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 35 FCC Rcd 3241 (Mar. 31, 2020) (*First Caller ID Authentication Report and Order and Further Notice*); see also *Gateway Provider Order*, 37 FCC Rcd at 6886-87, para. 51 (expanding STIR/SHAKEN requirements to gateway providers); *Call Authentication Trust Anchor*, WC Docket No. 17-97, Sixth Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 23-18, at 8-9, para. 15 (Mar. 17, 2023) (*Sixth Caller ID Authentication Order*) (expanding STIR/SHAKEN authentication requirements to non-gateway intermediate providers that receive an unauthenticated SIP call directly from an originating provider). The STIR/SHAKEN requirements for non-gateway intermediate providers have not yet gone into effect. See *id.* at 15, para. 27.

⁵ For the purposes of the Commission's call authentication rules, "voice service provider" means a service that is interconnected with the public switched telephone network and that furnishes voice communications to an end user using resources from the North American Numbering Plan. In other words, a voice service provider is an originating or terminating provider. See 47 CFR § 64.6300(n); *Sixth Caller ID Authentication Order*, FCC 23-18 at 3, para. 4 n.11.

⁶ *Second Caller ID Authentication Order*, *supra* note 1, at 1892-93, para. 66; Pallone-Thune Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED Act), Pub. L. No. 116-105, 133 Stat. 3274, § 4(b)(5)(A)(i) (TRACED Act). On December 9, 2021, the Commission shortened the deadline to implement STIR/SHAKEN for non-facilities-based small voice services providers and small voice service providers of any kind suspected of originating illegal robocalls. *Call Authentication Trust Anchor*, WC Docket No. 17-97, Fourth Report and Order, 36 FCC Rcd 17840, 17844, para. 9 (2021) (*Fourth Caller Authentication Order*); see also TRACED Act § 4(b)(5).

⁷ TRACED Act § 4(b)(5)(C)(i); 47 CFR § 64.6305(a); *Second Caller ID Authentication Order*, *supra* note 1, at 1897-98, para. 75.

⁸ 47 CFR § 64.6305(d); *Second Caller ID Authentication Order*, *supra* note 1, at 1902, para. 82.

⁹ 47 CFR § 64.6305(d)(2)(ii); *Second Caller ID Authentication Order*, *supra* note 1, at 1902, para. 82 (quotations omitted).

¹⁰ *Gateway Provider Order*, *supra* note 1, at 6886-87, para. 51. A "gateway provider" is "a U.S.-based intermediate provider that receives a call directly from a foreign originating provider or foreign intermediate provider at its U.S.-based facilities before transmitting the call downstream to another U.S.-based provider." 47 CFR § 64.6300(d).

¹¹ *Gateway Provider Order*, *supra* note 1, at 6880, paras. 34-35; 47 CFR § 64.6305(b).

¹² 47 CFR § 64.6305(e)(1), (e)(2)(ii); *Gateway Provider Order*, *supra* note 1, at 6880-82, paras. 35-38. Gateway providers' mitigation programs must also include a description of their compliance with the know-your-upstream-provider requirements in section 64.1200(n)(4) of the rules. See 47 CFR § 64.6305(e)(2)(ii).

4. In March 2023, the Commission adopted rules extending to all providers—whether they are voice service providers, gateway providers, or non-gateway intermediate providers—the requirement to implement a robocall mitigation program, regardless of whether their traffic is authenticated with STIR/SHAKEN.¹³ The Commission also expanded to all providers the requirement to file certifications in the Robocall Mitigation Database reporting: (1) the extent to which they have implemented STIR/SHAKEN authentication on their networks, and (2) the details of their robocall mitigation programs, including the specific reasonable steps they have taken to avoid originating, carrying, or processing illegal robocall traffic.¹⁴ The expanded certification requirements are not yet in effect.¹⁵

5. Currently, voice service providers that have not fully implemented STIR/SHAKEN authentication on their networks pursuant to an extension granted by the Commission, and gateway providers must submit certifications to the Robocall Mitigation Database that include adequate robocall mitigation plans.¹⁶ Although Commission rules do not require foreign voice service providers to submit a certification in the Robocall Mitigation Database, foreign voice service providers that use U.S. telephone numbers to send voice traffic to U.S. subscribers must follow the same certification requirements as domestic voice service providers in order to be listed in the database.¹⁷ Provider certifications and robocall mitigation plans are publicly available in the Robocall Mitigation Database.¹⁸

6. Commission rules prohibit any intermediate provider or terminating voice service provider from accepting voice traffic directly from any voice service provider or gateway provider, including any foreign voice service provider using North American Numbering Plan (NANP) resources, that does not appear in the Robocall Mitigation Database.¹⁹ The Enforcement Bureau may take enforcement action, including removal of a certification from the Robocall Mitigation Database, against voice service providers or gateway providers, including foreign voice service providers, that have deficient certifications.²⁰ A deficient certification includes one that fails to describe specific robocall

¹³ See 47 CFR § 64.6305(a)-(c); *Sixth Caller ID Authentication Order*, *supra* note 4, at 16-20, paras. 29-34. This requirement went into effect on August 21, 2023. See Call Authentication Trust Anchor, 88 Fed. Reg. 40096 (June 21, 2023).

¹⁴ See 47 CFR § 64.6305(d)-(f); *Sixth Caller ID Authentication Order*, *supra* note 4, at 20-21, paras. 36-37. The Commission also adopted rules requiring all providers to submit additional information regarding their robocall mitigation plans. *Id.* at 24-27, paras. 43-48.

¹⁵ See *Sixth Caller ID Authentication Order*, *supra* note 4, at 27, para. 49. This includes requirements for voice service providers that have implemented STIR/SHAKEN to certify that their traffic is subject to an appropriate robocall mitigation plan, to be codified at 47 CFR § 64.6305(d), and for non-gateway intermediate providers to submit their initial Robocall Mitigation Database certifications, to be codified at 47 CFR § 64.6305(f).

¹⁶ See 47 CFR § 64.6305(d) (voice service provider certifications); 47 CFR § 64.6305(e) (gateway provider certifications); see also *Sixth Caller ID Authentication Order*, *supra* note 4, at 27, para. 49 (effective date for new filers and those with expanded filing obligations).

¹⁷ *Second Caller ID Authentication Order*, *supra* note 1, at 1905-1906, paras. 90, 93.

¹⁸ FCC, *Robocall Mitigation Database*, https://fccprod.servicenowservices.com/rmd?id=rmd_welcome (last visited Aug. 22, 2023).

¹⁹ 47 CFR § 64.6305(g); *Second Caller ID Authentication Order*, at 1904, para. 86; *Gateway Provider Order*, *supra* note 1, at 6883-84, para. 44. The Commission has emphasized that these rules do not constitute the exercise of jurisdiction over foreign voice service providers. *Second Caller ID Authentication Report and Order*, *supra* note 1, para. 99 n.370; *Gateway Provider Order*, *supra* note 1, at 6913-94, para. 120 and n.354 (finding that these provisions did not have an impermissible, direct effect on foreign voice service providers).

²⁰ *Second Caller ID Authentication Order*, *supra* note 1, at 1901-1902, 1906, paras. 81 and n.322, 83, 93; *Gateway Provider Order*, *supra* note 1, at 6882, para. 40.

mitigation steps as required by section 64.6305(d)-(e) of the Commission's rules.²¹ Prior to removing a certification from the Robocall Mitigation Database, the Enforcement Bureau must provide notice to the originating voice service provider and allow an opportunity to cure.²²

B. Evernex's Deficient Certification

7. Evernex filed a Robocall Mitigation Database certification on September 29, 2021, and indicated that it is a foreign voice service provider.²³ Evernex certified that it has partially implemented the STIR/SHAKEN authentication framework on a portion of its network, and some of the calls that originate on its network are subject to a robocall mitigation program.²⁴ The robocall mitigation plan attached to its certification was a .PNG file that depicted the filer's "Taxpayer Profile" on a Pakistani government website.²⁵ The FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau (Wireline Bureau) contacted the Company on February 18, 2022, to inform it that its robocall mitigation program attachment contained with its certification may have been uploaded in error because it did not satisfy the Commission's rules requiring it to describe its robocall mitigation efforts.²⁶ The Wireline Bureau's notice asked Evernex to upload a revised attachment that complied with the Commission's rules. The Wireline Bureau did not receive a response from Evernex acknowledging or addressing this notice, and the Company did not correct the identified deficiencies in its certification.

III. DISCUSSION

8. Our review of the evidence finds that Evernex apparently has filed a deficient Robocall Mitigation Database certification. The Company certified that it is subject to a robocall mitigation program,²⁷ but it failed to describe specific reasonable steps that the Company is taking to prevent the origination of illegal robocall traffic.²⁸ The Company's public mitigation plan does not offer any specific mitigation steps. Rather, it is a .PNG file depicting the filer's "Taxpayer Profile" on a Pakistani government website. Because the mitigation plan does not provide the specific reasonable steps the voice service provider has taken to avoid originating illegal robocall traffic as part of its robocall mitigation program, it is insufficient under section 64.6305(d)(2)(ii) of the Commission's rules.²⁹ Moreover,

²¹ 47 CFR § 64.6305(d)(2)(ii); 47 CFR § 64.6305(e)(2)(ii); *see also Second Caller ID Authentication Order, supra* note 1, at 1900-02, paras. 77-82; *Gateway Provider Order, supra* note 1, at 6882, para. 40.

²² *Second Call Authentication Trust Anchor Order, supra* note 1, at 1904-1905, para. 88; *Gateway Provider Order, supra* note 1, at 6882, para. 40; *see also Sixth Caller ID Authentication Order, supra* note 4, at 32, para. 60. We may take other enforcement actions such as requiring the voice service provider to submit more specific robocall mitigation measures or imposing a forfeiture. *Second Call Authentication Trust Anchor Order, supra* note 1, at 1903, para. 83; *Gateway Provider Order, supra* note 1, at 6882, para. 40; *see also Sixth Caller ID Authentication Order, supra* note 4, at 32-39, paras. 59-73 (establishing an expedited process for provider removal for facially deficient certifications and adopting rules that would impose consequences on repeat offenders of the Commission's robocall mitigation rules).

²³ Evernex SMC PVT LTD, Robocall Mitigation Database, FCC (Sept. 29, 2021), https://fccprod.servicenowservices.com/rmd?id=rmd_form&table=x_g_fmc_rmd_robocall_mitigation_database&view=sp&sys_id=5c37cc931bbe7810aa3cea41f54bcb6a (Robocall Mitigation Database Filing).

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ Email from Wireline Competition Bureau to Evernex (Feb. 18, 2022) (Warning Notice). *See also* Exhibit A.

²⁷ *See* Robocall Mitigation Database Filing (attesting that the Company has partial STIR/SHAKEN implementation and is performing robocall mitigation).

²⁸ *See* 47 CFR § 64.6305(d)(2)(ii); *Second Caller ID Authentication Order, supra* note 1, at 1902, para. 82.

²⁹ 47 CFR § 64.6305(d)(2)(ii); *Second Caller ID Authentication Order, supra* note 1, at 1903, para. 83.

Evernex did not respond or take any corrective action after the Wireline Bureau informed the Company of errors or the apparent deficiencies in its certification.³⁰

9. Accordingly, we direct Evernex to explain why the Enforcement Bureau should not remove the Company's certification from the Robocall Mitigation Database.³¹ This Order affords Evernex notice and an opportunity to cure any deficiencies in its robocall mitigation program description or explain why its certification is not deficient.

10. Evernex shall file its response with the Enforcement Bureau within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date of this Order.³² Failure to respond and correct the deficiency, or provide a sufficient explanation for why Evernex should retain its certification in the Robocall Mitigation Database will result in removal of the certification and accompanying filing.³³ **Removal of Evernex's certification from the Robocall Mitigation Database will require any intermediate providers and terminating voice service providers to cease accepting calls from Evernex sent to residential or business subscribers in the United States using U.S. NANP numbers.**³⁴ If Evernex is removed from the Robocall Mitigation Database, Evernex shall not be permitted to refile until the Wireline Bureau and the Enforcement Bureau determine that the Company has addressed and resolved any deficiencies in its Robocall Mitigation Database certification.

IV. ORDERING CLAUSES

11. Accordingly, **IT IS ORDERED** that, pursuant to sections 4(i), 4(j), 227(b), 251(e), and 403 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. §§ 154(i), 154(j), 227(b), 251(e), 403; sections 0.111, 0.311, 1.1, 1.102(b)(1), 64.1200, and 64.6305 of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR §§ 0.111, 0.311, 1.1, 1.102(b)(1), 64.1200, 64.6305; and the *Second Caller ID Authentication Order*,³⁵ Evernex **SHALL FILE** a written response to this Order **within fourteen (14) calendar days** from the release date of this Order.

12. The written response must either inform the Enforcement Bureau that Evernex has corrected the deficiencies in its Robocall Mitigation Database certification or explain why its certification should not be removed from the Robocall Mitigation Database.

13. The response must be mailed to the Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 45 L Street NE, Washington, DC 20554, ATTN: Enforcement Bureau – Telecommunications Consumers Division. The response must also be e-mailed to Kristi Thompson, Division Chief, Telecommunications Consumers Division, at kristi.thompson@fcc.gov, and Alexander Hobbs, Attorney Advisor, Telecommunications Consumers Division, at alexander.hobbs@fcc.gov.

³⁰ See Warning Notice.

³¹ See *Second Caller ID Authentication Order*, *supra* note 1, at 1903, para. 83 (“Enforcement Actions may include, among others, removing a defective certification from the database after providing notice to the voice service provider and an opportunity to cure the filing . . .”).

³² See *Sixth Caller ID Authentication Order*, *supra* note 4, at 32, para. 60.

³³ See *id.*

³⁴ 47 CFR § 64.6305(g); *Second Caller ID Authentication Order*, *supra* note 1, at 1904, para. 86.

³⁵ *Second Caller ID Authentication Order*, *supra* note 1, at 1902, 1903, paras. 81 and n.322, 83.

14. **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that copies of this Order shall be sent by email and registered mail, return receipt requested, to: Plot No. 395-396, I-9/3 Industrial Area Near 7up Chowk, Islamabad Capital Territory 44000, 2, Islamabad 54000, Punjab.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Loyaan A. Egal
Chief
Enforcement Bureau

EXHIBIT A