

France weighs cybersecurity moves after spyware reports

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From left to right, France's Interior minister Gerald Darmanin, Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, Prime Minister Jean Castex, President Emmanuel Macron and Defense Minister Florence Parly meet during an emergency security meeting at the Elysee Palace, Thursday, July 22, 2021. French President Emmanuel Macron convened an emergency security meeting Thursday to discuss the government's response to reports that the cell phones of Macron and top French officials may have been targeted by spyware. Credit: Ludovic Marin/Pool Photo via AP

French President Emmanuel Macron held an emergency cybersecurity meeting Thursday to weigh possible government action after reports that his cellphone and those of government ministers may have been targeted by spyware.

Macron changes his phones regularly and is "taking the matter very seriously," government spokesman Gabriel Attal said Thursday on France-Inter radio.

A global media [consortium](#) reported this week that Pegasus spyware made by Israeli company NSO Group may have been used to target politicians, activists and journalists in several countries. French newspaper Le Monde, a member of the consortium, reported that a Moroccan security agency had the cellphones of Macron and 15 then-members of the French government on a list of potential targets of the spyware in 2019.

Morocco's [government](#) denied wrongdoing.

Investigations are under way to determine whether the [spyware](#) was actually installed on the phones or whether data was retrieved, Attal said. He stressed the importance of broader cybersecurity efforts to protect public facilities, such as hospitals, that have been targeted by malicious software in the past.

An official with NSO, Haim Gelfand, told Israel-based i24News on Wednesday that Macron was not a target. He said the company would review some cases that were revealed by the consortium, and press clients about how they are using the system. He said the company follows a careful process before deciding who to sell systems to.



French President Emmanuel Macron, center, leads a emergency security meeting at the Elysee Palace, Thursday, July 22, 2021. French President Emmanuel Macron convened an emergency security meeting Thursday to discuss the government's response to reports that the cell phones of Macron and top French officials may have been targeted by spyware. Credit: Ludovic Marin/Pool Photo via AP

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