The Mirai botnet responsible for the recent internet outage of almost 1 million Deutsche Telekom customers is going global-- security firm Flashpoint reports the malware variant has spread to at least 10 other countries.

Countries affected by the Mirai variant include the UK, Italy, Ireland, Turkey, Brazil, Iran, Chile, Australia and Argentina and Thailand, as well as Germany. Flashpoint does not know the actual number of infected devices, but some estimates put the number to around 5 million. Either way, as the security company puts it, it makes for a "sizable population."

Mirai first made the news back in October 2016 as the botnet responsible for the DDoS attack big enough to disrupt internet traffic across the US. The malware affects connected devices with weak default passwords, making them easy to infect. A new Mirai strain is responsible for the attack on Deutsche Telekom, specifically through a vulnerability in the SOAP (Simple Object Access Protocol) services embedded in Zyxel router products.

The ultimate aim of Mirai is to grow an army of slave computers (aka botnet) able to launch massive DDoS attacks to shut down websites and services. Flashpoint says it found the latest Mirai strain setting up a "small-scale" DDoS attacks on an IP address in Africa and a cloud hosting provider.

Interestingly, the attack on Deutsche Telekom can be described as a failure-- the German carrier was quick to issue security patches for the affected routers (Speedport W 921V and Speedport W 723V Type B), whereas the original aim of the malware was to quietly grow its botnet. However security experts expect hackers will continue upgrading the Mirai source code

to infect more devices across the world, meaning it will remain a headache for a while longer.

Go New Mirai Variant Leaves 5 Million Devices WW Vulnerable

Go Deutsche Telekom Information on Current Problems

Go TalkTalk and Post Office Routers Hit By Cyber-Attack (BBC)