

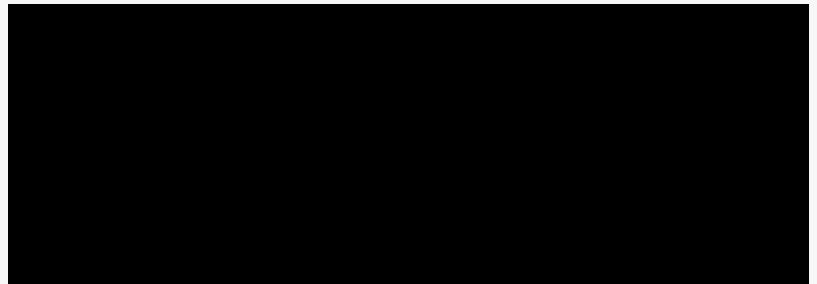
Black Hat MEA Becomes World's Largest Cyber Security Gathering, Increasing in Size by 55%

RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA, December 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Black Hat MEA opened today with a surge of energy as global CISOs, founders, policymakers and researchers gathered in Riyadh to decode the next wave of cyber risk. Day one delivered high-pressure intelligence, frontline lessons and live research across the Executive Summit, Briefings, Deep Dive and Campus stages.

This year's Black Hat MEA marks a 55% increase in size from last year, reinforcing Saudi Arabia's position as a hub for cybersecurity innovation and commercial growth.

Black Hat MEA began with the Opening Ceremony, followed by opening remarks from Eng. Muteb Alqany, CEO, Saudi Federation for Cybersecurity, Programming and Drones.

He commented: "With attendees from more than 163 countries, 500 global brands, and 300 speakers, Riyadh has become the meeting point for the global cybersecurity industry. Our shared goal is clear: to make the digital world safer, smarter, and stronger. Behind the scale is real impact – from turning regional startups into global competitors to delivering world-class



training with a 92% approval rating. Together, we are shaping the future of cyberspace.” From the first moments of Black Hat MEA, one thing was clear: Riyadh has become the cyber world’s preferred control room. Day one moved fast, with conversations that felt less like panels and more like intelligence exchanges between people who defend real targets under increasing pressure.

Faisal Al-Khamisi, Chairman of SAFCSP and Co-Chairman of Tahaluf, said “Black Hat MEA reflects the Kingdom’s commitment to developing an advanced cybersecurity ecosystem built on specialised knowledge and national expertise. Through our partnerships with local and international entities, we work to empower national solutions to compete according to global standards.”

Steve Durning, Portfolio Director of Black Hat MEA at Tahaluf, commented “What happened across the stages today is exactly why the world comes to Riyadh. We saw CISOs, founders, policymakers and researchers challenging each other and breaking down the hard problems. This is how resilience is built. Day one set the tone for a week where ideas become action and collaboration becomes capability.”

Across the venue, Briefings and Deep Dive sessions revealed new vulnerabilities, research breakthroughs and exploit logic from global experts. Black Hat Campus drew rising talent with a keynote from 17-year-old cybersecurity specialist Bandana Kaur, while the Activity Zone’s SAR 1 million prize fund, alongside Arsenal Labs, the Terminal and the Root Lounge, kept attendees hands-on with real systems under real pressure.

Annabelle Mander, Executive Vice President at Tahaluf Said “The energy across day one showed how far the Kingdom has come in building a world class cybersecurity industry. Riyadh is now one of the places where the future of government and enterprise security is being written.”

One of the early standout moments came from Devon Bryan, global chief security officer at Booking Holdings, who broke down what it now takes to truly know a network and expose its weak points before adversaries do.

Later, Ricardo Lafosse, Gary Hayslip, Dr Chenxi Wang, Lance James and Jaya Baloo took the stage to chart the cyber shift from 2020 to 2025. Their discussion cut through theory and focused on the operational reality of today’s threat landscape, where speed, AI tooling and attacker creativity are rewriting defensive playbooks in real time.

The day’s tempo escalated with Jennifer Ewbank and Rich Baich, who walked the audience through the CIA’s digital transformation and the lessons learned from defending a target that adversaries probe around the clock. Their fireside session was one of the most anticipated of the day, offering rare insight into resilience at an intelligence-agency level.

In the afternoon, the discussion widened with a sharp exchange led by Bjorn Watne of INTERPOL

and Abdullah AlQahtani of the Ministry of Investment, who unpacked the economics of threat and where nations should focus resources next. The conversation made clear that national strategies must evolve as fast as attacker capabilities.

Day two will push deeper into AI-powered defence, financial-sector risk, live research and technical briefings from global experts.

For registration and the full agenda, visit blackhatmea.com

Passwords expire. Connections here do not. #BlackHatMEA.

About Tahaluf:

Headquartered in Riyadh, Tahaluf brings together strategically important commercial communities from Saudi Arabia, the wider Gulf, and the global stage through a portfolio of world-class exhibitions and digital platforms.

Tahaluf is a joint venture between Informa PLC, the world's largest trade show organizer; the Saudi Federation for Cybersecurity, Programming and Drones (SAFCSP); and the Events Investment Fund (EIF). Sela, the Saudi-owned event production company known for creating world-class experiences, is also set to join the venture.

Tahaluf is behind leading events including LEAP, DeepFest, Money20/20 Middle East, Black Hat MEA, Cityscape Global, Global Health Exhibition, and CPHI Saudi Arabia.

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