Subject: **Advisory for Prevention Against WhatsApp "Crash Codes" (Advisory No. 16)**

1. **Context.** A new series of **text bombs** or **'crash codes'** have been discovered that cause WhatsApp to continuously crash on both iPhone and Android handsets. Resultantly, victim is required to uninstall and reinstall WhatsApp, **potentially losing chat history**.

2. **Technical Details.** Crash codes or text bombs may execute in 2 ways: -

   a. Specially coded messages contain a **random string of strange characters** that cause WhatsApp to crash such as:-

   b. Undecipherable messages such as vCards **(virtual contact cards)** can also be used for this purpose. If a WhatsApp user opens the vcard, there might be 100 associated contacts and every contact has a **long weird name that contains a crash code**.

   c. Once the specially coded message or vcard is opened, the WhatsApp app will crash.

   d. Closing and restarting the app will not fix the issue, fresh WhatsApp installation would be required by the victim.

   e. Information about crash codes and vcards are available on online forums like **@WABetaInfo (Twitter)**.

2. **Recommendations**

   a. In case such messages are received, WhatsApp users are advised **not to send them to friends, family or other contacts**.

   b. It is a good to **limit who can add you to a group** as this will help to **reduce the risk of being exposed to strangers** who might share a crash code or vCard.

   c. Open up your **WhatsApp settings**, go to 'Privacy' section and change the 'Groups' setting so that **only your contacts can add you to a group**.

   d. Anyone who receives a crash code message to **"log into his account in the web-based version of WhatsApp" must block the sender** and delete the message.

   e. WhatsApp users must keep their **WhatsApp app** and **mobile operating system up to date**.