

IDR  
Internet-Draft  
Intended status: Experimental  
Expires: 3 September 2026

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2 March 2026

BGP over TLS/TCP  
draft-wirtgen-bgp-tls-04

## Abstract

This document specifies the use of TLS over TCP to support BGP.

## About This Document

This note is to be removed before publishing as an RFC.

Status information for this document may be found at  
<https://datatracker.ietf.org/doc/draft-wirtgen-bgp-tls/>.

Discussion of this document takes place on the IDR Working Group mailing list (<mailto:idr@ietf.org>), which is archived at <https://mailarchive.ietf.org/arch/browse/idr/>. Subscribe at <https://www.ietf.org/mailman/listinfo/idr/>.

Source for this draft and an issue tracker can be found at  
<https://github.com/obonaventure/draft-bgp-tls>.

## Status of This Memo

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## 1. Introduction

The Border Gateway Protocol (BGP) [RFC4271] relies on the TCP protocol to establish BGP sessions between routers. A recent draft [I-D.draft-retana-idr-bgp-quic] has proposed to replace TCP with the QUIC protocol [RFC9000]. QUIC brings many features compared to TCP including security, support for multiple streams and datagrams.

From a security viewpoint, an important benefit of QUIC compared to TCP is that QUIC by design prevents injection attacks that are possible when TCP is used by BGP [RFC4272]. Several techniques can be used by BGP routers to counter these attacks [RFC5082] [RFC5925]. TCP-AO [RFC5925] authenticates the packets exchanged over a BGP session, providing similar features as QUIC. However, it is notoriously difficult to configure the keys used to protect BGP sessions.

The widespread deployment of TLS [RFC8446] combined with the possibility of deriving TCP-AO keys from the TLS handshake [draft-piriaux-tcp-ao-tls] creates an interest in using TLS to secure BGP sessions. This document describes how BGP can operate over TCP/TLS.

## 2. Conventions and Definitions

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "NOT RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in BCP 14 [RFC2119] [RFC8174] when, and only when, they appear in all capitals, as shown here.

This document uses network byte order (that is, big endian) values. Fields are placed starting from the high-order bits of each byte.

## 3. Summary of operation

A BGP over TLS/TCP session is established in two phases:

- \* establish a transport layer connection using TCP
- \* establish a TLS session over the TCP connection

The TCP connection SHOULD be established on port TBD1.

During the establishment of the TLS session, the router that initiates the connection MUST use the "botls" token in the Application Layer Protocol Negotiation (ALPN) extension [RFC7301]. Other ALPN tokens MUST NOT be included in the TLS handshake.

Once the TLS handshake is complete, the BGP session is initiated as defined in [RFC4271] and the protocol operates in the same way as a classic BGP over TCP session. The difference is that the BGP session is now encrypted and authenticated using the TLS layer. As in [I-D.draft-retana-idr-bgp-quick], the TLS authentication parameters used for this connection are out of the scope of this draft.

## 4. Security Considerations

This document improves the security of BGP sessions since the information exchanged over the session is now protected by using TLS.

If TLS encounters a payload injection attack, it will generate an alert that immediately closes the TLS session. The BGP router SHOULD then attempt to reestablish the session. However, this will cause traffic to be interrupted during the connection re-establishment.

If both BGP peers support TCP-AO, the TLS stack is protected against payload injection and this attack can be avoided. When enabled, TCP-AO counters the TCP injection attacks listed in [RFC5082].

Furthermore, if the BGP router supports TCP-AO, it is RECOMMENDED to use an opportunistic TCP-AO approach as suggested in [draft-piraux-tcp-ao-tls]. The router will attempt to connect using TCP-AO with a default key. When the TLS handshake is finished, the routers will derive a new TCP-AO key using the TLS key.

## 5. IANA Considerations

IANA is requested to assign a TCP port (TBD1) from the "Service Name and Transport Protocol Port Number Registry" as follows:

- \* Service Name: botls
- \* Port Number: TBD1
- \* Transport Protocol: TCP
- \* Description: BGP over TLS/TCP
- \* Assignee: IETF
- \* Contact: IDR WG
- \* Registration Data: TBD
- \* Reference: this document
- \* Unauthorized Use Reported: idr@ietf.org

It is suggested to use the same port as the one selected for BGP over QUIC [I-D.draft-retana-idr-bgp-quic].

## Acknowledgments

The authors thank Dimitri Safonov for the TCP-AO implementation in Linux.

## Change log

## References

## Normative References

`[draft-piraux-tcp-ao-tls]`

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