INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING
Security Command Center
TLP:CLEAR
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CVE-2026-8732: Unauthenticated Admin Creation in WP Maps Pro Under Active Exploitation

CVE VULNERABILITY | CRITICAL | CVSS 9.5

SCC Item ID	SCC-CVE-2026-0244
Type	CVE Vulnerability
CVE ID	CVE-2026-8732
Severity	CRITICAL
CVSS Base Score	9.5
EPSS Score	0.0007 (22th percentile)
Affected Products	WP Maps Pro WordPress plugin versions 6.1.0 and earlier; fixed in version 6.1.1
Published	2026-05-31T10:06:42
Discovery Source	Rss

Executive Summary

A critical unauthenticated vulnerability in the WP Maps Pro WordPress plugin (versions 6.1.0 and earlier) allows any external attacker to create administrator accounts without credentials, granting full control of affected WordPress sites. Active exploitation is confirmed, with Wordfence reporting over 3,600 blocked attack attempts in a single 24-hour period, indicating automated mass scanning is underway. Organizations running this plugin on internet-facing WordPress sites face immediate risk of full site compromise, data theft, and malicious content injection.

Technical Analysis

CVE-2026-8732 is a critical unauthenticated privilege escalation vulnerability (CVSS base 9.5) in WP Maps Pro versions 6.1.0 and earlier. The root cause is a vendor support AJAX endpoint registered without authentication or authorization checks, allowing unauthenticated HTTP requests to trigger arbitrary administrator account creation. Root weaknesses map to CWE-306 (Missing Authentication for Critical Function), CWE-862 (Missing Authorization), and CWE-639 (Authorization Bypass Through User-Controlled Key). MITRE ATT&CK techniques include T1190 (Exploit Public-Facing Application), T1136.001 (Create Account: Local Account), T1078.001 (Valid Accounts: Default Accounts), and T1505.003 (Server Software Component: Web Shell, post-exploitation path). Active exploitation is confirmed via opportunistic automated scanning. Patch is available: upgrade to version 6.1.1. No CISA KEV listing as of configuration date; EPSS score is 0.00074 (22nd percentile), though confirmed active exploitation makes this metric an unreliable signal here.

Action Checklist

1. Step 1: Containment. Immediately identify all WordPress instances running WP Maps Pro 6.1.0 or earlier (reference CIS 1.1: asset inventory). Block unauthenticated POST requests targeting wp-admin/admin-ajax.php with action parameters associated with WP Maps Pro support endpoints at the WAF or perimeter IPS. If a WAF is unavailable, immediately place affected sites in maintenance mode, or take offline entirely until patching is complete.
2. Step 2: Detection. Query WordPress user tables and audit logs for administrator accounts created after the plugin's installation date, particularly accounts with no associated content or login history (NIST AU-6: Audit Record Review). Review web server access logs for high-volume POST requests to wp-admin/admin-ajax.php from single or rotating IP ranges. Look for newly created wp_users entries with admin role (user_level=10 or wp_capabilities containing 'administrator') that do not correspond to known staff. Enable NIST AU-2 event logging on WordPress authentication events if not already active.
3. Step 3: Eradication. Upgrade WP Maps Pro to version 6.1.1 via the WordPress plugin dashboard or manual upload from the vendor. After patching, audit all administrator accounts against a known-good baseline and delete any unauthorized accounts (CIS 5.1: Account Inventory; NIST AC-2: Account Management). Rotate credentials for all legitimate administrator accounts as a precaution (D3-CRO: Credential Rotation). Review for indicators of post-exploitation: unauthorized file modifications, injected scripts, or newly installed plugins.
4. Step 4: Recovery. After patching and account remediation, verify plugin version displays 6.1.1 in the WordPress admin dashboard. Confirm no residual unauthorized administrator accounts remain. Monitor authentication logs for continued exploitation attempts for at least 72 hours post-remediation (NIST SI-4: System Monitoring). Validate file integrity against a clean baseline to rule out web shell implantation (D3-SFA: System File Analysis; D3-FMBV: File Magic Byte Verification). Re-enable public access only after all checks pass.
5. Step 5: Post-Incident. Conduct a control gap review against NIST AC-6 (Least Privilege) and AC-2 (Account Management) to assess whether AJAX endpoint exposure would have been caught in a secure code review process. Evaluate WAF rule coverage for unauthenticated WordPress AJAX abuse patterns (CIS 4.4: Firewall on Servers). Implement CIS 7.1 and 7.2 (Vulnerability and Remediation Management) processes to ensure plugin patch cycles are tracked. Consider D3-MFA (Multi-factor Authentication) enforcement for all WordPress admin accounts to limit impact of future credential-based escalation (NIST AC-17: Remote Access; CIS 6.5: MFA for Administrative Access).

IR / Forensic Enrichment

Triage Priority	IMMEDIATE
Escalation Criteria	Escalate to legal counsel and executive leadership immediately if forensic evidence (session_tokens in wp_usermeta, wp_posts authored by rogue admin, file modification timestamps) confirms a rogue administrator account successfully authenticated and accessed or exfiltrated data, triggering breach notification assessment under applicable regulations (GDPR, CCPA, HIPAA) given that WordPress sites commonly store PII in user tables, form submissions, and e-commerce data.

Recovery Notes	Restore public access to affected WordPress sites only after all three conditions are met: WP Maps Pro version 6.1.1 is confirmed via file-level version check (not dashboard display alone), all rogue administrator accounts are deleted and verified absent via direct database query, and a full PHP file integrity scan of wp-content finds no web shells or injected backdoors. Maintain active monitoring of POST requests to wp-admin/admin-ajax.php and the wp_users table for new administrator account creation for a minimum of 72 hours post-remediation, as automated exploitation infrastructure targeting CVE-2026-8732 will continue scanning at scale regardless of patch status. If any post-recovery rogue account creation is detected, treat as a separate incident — the patch did not prevent initial exploitation if the attacker established persistence mechanisms (scheduled tasks via WP-Cron, rogue admin accounts with changed email preventing detection, or installed backdoor plugins) prior to remediation.
Forensic Artifacts	wp_users and wp_usermeta database tables: rows where wp_capabilities contains 'administrator' and user_registered falls within the exploitation window — the direct output of successful CVE-2026-8732 exploitation, which creates admin accounts without authentication. | Web server access logs (Apache: /var/log/apache2/access.log; Nginx: /var/log/nginx/access.log): POST requests to /wp-admin/admin-ajax.php originating without WordPress authentication cookies, with WP Maps Pro-specific action parameter values — the network-layer signature of exploit delivery. | WordPress /wp-content/uploads/ directory and all plugin subdirectories: PHP files in these locations (which should be absent in a clean install) indicate web shells or backdoors uploaded by an attacker who leveraged the rogue admin account's media upload or plugin install capabilities after initial exploitation. | wp_usermeta session_tokens field for rogue admin user IDs: serialized array of active session data that reveals whether the attacker authenticated with the created account, the source IP of that authentication, and the session timestamp — critical for determining if exploitation was automated account creation only or included interactive post-exploitation activity. | Wordfence database tables (wp_wfblocks7, wp_wfhits) and /wp-content/wflogs/ directory: if Wordfence was installed, these contain timestamped records of blocked and logged CVE-2026-8732 exploitation attempts with source IPs, request payloads, and the specific WP Maps Pro action parameters used — enabling attribution and scope assessment.

Per-Action IR Details

Step 1: Containment — Immediately identify all WordPress instances running WP Maps Pro 6.1.0 or earlier (reference CIS 1.1: asset inventory). Block unauthenticated POST requests targeting wp-admin/admin-ajax.php with action parameters associated with WP Maps Pro support endpoints at the WAF or perimeter IPS. If a WAF is unavailable, take affected sites offline or enable maintenance mode until patching is complete.

NIST Phase: Containment

Reference: NIST 800-61r3 §3.3 — Containment Strategy: prioritizes stopping ongoing damage before eradication; short-term containment isolates affected systems while preserving evidence.

Controls: NIST IR-4 (Incident Handling), NIST SC-7 (Boundary Protection), NIST AC-3 (Access Enforcement), CIS 1.1 (Establish and Maintain Detailed Enterprise Asset Inventory), CIS 4.4 (Implement and Manage a Firewall on Servers)

Compensating: Without a commercial WAF, deploy the free Wordfence plugin (confirmed to be blocking CVE-2026-8732 exploitation — over 3,600 blocks reported) to enforce the blocking rule at the WordPress application layer. Alternatively, use an Apache/Nginx rewrite rule to block POST requests to wp-admin/admin-ajax.php where the request body contains WP Maps Pro-specific action parameter values: Apache — `RewriteCond %{REQUEST_METHOD} POST` + `RewriteRule ^/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php - [F,L]` (tighten to specific action= values once identified from plugin source). For asset inventory without a CMDB, run `grep -r 'wpmapspro\|wp-maps-pro' /var/www/*/wp-content/plugins/ --include='*.php' -l` across all web roots to enumerate installations.

Evidence: BEFORE blocking, capture a full snapshot of current wp_users table (`SELECT ID, user_login, user_registered, user_email FROM wp_users ORDER BY user_registered DESC LIMIT 50;`) to establish the pre-containment account baseline. Export raw web server access logs (Apache: /var/log/apache2/access.log; Nginx: /var/log/nginx/access.log) covering the period from plugin installation date to present, filtering on POST requests to wp-admin/admin-ajax.php. Preserve WAF block logs if already active — Wordfence logs are stored in wp_wfblocks7 and wp_wfhits database tables and in /wp-content/wflogs/. Capture current plugin file hashes: `md5sum /var/www/[site]/wp-content/plugins/wp-maps-pro/*.php` before any remediation action.

Step 2: Detection — Query WordPress user tables and audit logs for administrator accounts created after the plugin's installation date, particularly accounts with no associated content or login history (NIST AU-6: Audit Record Review). Review web server access logs for high-volume POST requests to wp-admin/admin-ajax.php from single or rotating IP ranges. Look for newly created wp_users entries with admin role (user_level=10 or wp_capabilities containing 'administrator') that do not correspond to known staff. Enable NIST AU-2 event logging on WordPress authentication events if not already active.

NIST Phase: Detection Analysis

Reference: NIST 800-61r3 §3.2 — Detection and Analysis: correlate indicators across log sources to determine scope of compromise; attacker-created admin accounts are the primary indicator of successful exploitation of CVE-2026-8732.

Controls: NIST AU-2 (Event Logging), NIST AU-6 (Audit Record Review, Analysis, and Reporting), NIST AU-3 (Content of Audit Records), NIST IR-4 (Incident Handling), CIS 8.2 (Collect Audit Logs), CIS 5.1 (Establish and Maintain an Inventory of Accounts)

Compensating: Run the following MySQL query directly against the WordPress database to identify rogue admin accounts created after WP Maps Pro installation: `SELECT u.ID, u.user_login, u.user_registered, u.user_email, m.meta_value FROM wp_users u JOIN wp_usermeta m ON u.ID = m.user_id WHERE m.meta_key = 'wp_capabilities' AND m.meta_value LIKE '%administrator%' AND u.user_registered > '[plugin_install_date]' ORDER BY u.user_registered DESC;`. For log analysis without a SIEM, use `grep -E 'POST.*admin-ajax.php' /var/log/nginx/access.log | awk '{print $1}' | sort | uniq -c | sort -rn | head -20` to surface top attacking IPs by volume. Install the free WP Activity Log plugin (free tier) to retroactively capture authentication and user-creation events if native logging was not enabled. Cross-reference suspicious IPs against Wordfence's threat intelligence feed or AbuseIPDB via CLI: `curl -G https://api.abuseipdb.com/api/v2/check --data-urlencode 'ipAddress=[IP]' -H 'Key: [API_KEY]'`.

Evidence: Primary forensic artifact: wp_users and wp_usermeta tables — specifically rows where wp_capabilities contains 'administrator' and user_registered timestamp falls within the exploitation window. Secondary: web server access logs showing the exploit delivery pattern — unauthenticated POST to /wp-admin/admin-ajax.php with CVE-2026-8732-specific action parameter; requests will typically lack WordPress authentication cookies (no wordpress_logged_in_ cookie header) and may include a JSON or form-encoded payload containing attacker-supplied username/email/password fields. Tertiary: WordPress debug.log (/wp-content/debug.log) if WP_DEBUG_LOG is enabled — may contain PHP notices or errors from the vulnerable WP Maps Pro endpoint during exploitation attempts. Capture wp_options table rows for 'siteurl', 'blogname', and 'admin_email' to detect if attacker modified site configuration post-compromise.

Step 3: Eradication — Upgrade WP Maps Pro to version 6.1.1 via the WordPress plugin dashboard or manual upload from the vendor. After patching, audit all administrator accounts against a known-good baseline and delete any unauthorized accounts (CIS 5.1: Account Inventory; NIST AC-2: Account Management). Rotate credentials for all legitimate administrator accounts as a precaution (D3-CRO: Credential Rotation). Review for indicators of post-exploitation: unauthorized file modifications, injected scripts, or newly installed plugins.

NIST Phase: Eradication

Reference: NIST 800-61r3 §3.4 — Eradication: remove all components of the incident including the vulnerability, attacker-created accounts, and any backdoors installed via the unauthorized admin access granted by CVE-2026-8732.

Controls: NIST SI-2 (Flaw Remediation), NIST AC-2 (Account Management), NIST AC-6 (Least Privilege), NIST CM-6 (Configuration Settings), CIS 5.1 (Establish and Maintain an Inventory of Accounts), CIS 7.4 (Perform Automated Application Patch Management), CIS 5.3 (Disable Dormant Accounts)

Compensating: For manual patch deployment without dashboard access: download WP Maps Pro 6.1.1 directly from the vendor, verify the archive checksum against the vendor-published hash, then deploy via SFTP to /wp-content/plugins/wp-maps-pro/ overwriting all files. To scan for post-exploitation web shells or injected backdoors installed through the rogue admin account, run: `grep -r 'eval(base64_decode\|system(\$_\|passthru(\$_\|shell_exec' /var/www/[site]/wp-content/ --include='*.php' -l`. Use the free plugin WPScan (CLI: `wpscan --url https://[site] --enumerate p,u`) to audit installed plugins against the known-good baseline and flag any installed during the exploitation window. Cross-reference all plugin install timestamps in wp_options (option_name='active_plugins') against the exploitation window identified in Step 2.

Evidence: Before applying the patch, preserve the vulnerable WP Maps Pro 6.1.0 plugin files at /wp-content/plugins/wp-maps-pro/ in a forensic archive (tar -czf wpmapspro_610_evidence.tar.gz) to support root cause confirmation and potential vendor disclosure. Document every wp_users row being deleted with full field values and timestamp. Capture the wp_usermeta rows for deleted accounts (especially wp_capabilities and session_tokens meta keys) — session_tokens will reveal whether the attacker authenticated and established active sessions. Check wp_posts and wp_options for content or configuration changes made under the rogue admin user ID (`SELECT * FROM wp_posts WHERE post_author = [rogue_user_id];`). Scan /wp-content/uploads/ for PHP files, which should never exist in that directory and would indicate a web shell dropped via the rogue admin's media upload capability.

Step 4: Recovery — After patching and account remediation, verify plugin version displays 6.1.1 in the WordPress admin dashboard. Confirm no residual unauthorized administrator accounts remain. Monitor authentication logs for continued exploitation attempts for at least 72 hours post-remediation (NIST SI-4: System Monitoring). Validate file integrity against a clean baseline to rule out web shell implantation (D3-SFA: System File Analysis; D3-FMBV: File Magic Byte Verification). Re-enable public access only after all checks pass.

NIST Phase: Recovery

Reference: NIST 800-61r3 §3.5 — Recovery: restore systems to normal operation only after confirming eradication is complete; verify integrity before re-enabling public access given CVE-2026-8732's confirmed active mass exploitation and high probability of web shell implantation via rogue admin accounts.

Controls: NIST SI-4 (System Monitoring), NIST SI-7 (Software, Firmware, and Information Integrity), NIST CM-3 (Configuration Change Control), NIST AU-6 (Audit Record Review, Analysis, and Reporting), CIS 7.1 (Establish and Maintain a Vulnerability Management Process), CIS 4.4 (Implement and Manage a Firewall on Servers)

Compensating: Verify plugin version programmatically rather than trusting the dashboard display (an attacker with prior admin access could have modified displayed metadata): `grep -r 'Version' /var/www/[site]/wp-content/plugins/wp-maps-pro/wp-maps-pro.php | head -1` and confirm output reads '6.1.1'. For file integrity validation without a commercial FIM tool, generate a fresh SHA-256 manifest of the WordPress core and all plugin files post-remediation: `find /var/www/[site]/ -name '*.php' -exec sha256sum {} \; > post_remediation_manifest.txt` and diff against a clean install baseline. For 72-hour monitoring without a SIEM, set up a cron job running every 15 minutes that pipes `grep 'POST.*admin-ajax.php' /var/log/nginx/access.log | tail -100` to a monitoring file and alerts on new entries. Re-run the rogue admin detection MySQL query from Step 2 every 24 hours during the monitoring window.

Evidence: Post-recovery file integrity comparison between the post-remediation SHA-256 manifest and a verified clean WP Maps Pro 6.1.1 install — any diff identifies attacker-modified files. Final state of wp_users and wp_usermeta tables confirming only known-good administrator accounts remain (retain this export as the new baseline). Continued web server access logs during the 72-hour monitoring window — exploitation attempts against /wp-admin/admin-ajax.php will continue from automated scanners even after patching; these logs document the ongoing threat landscape and justify WAF rule retention. Screenshot or programmatic export of the WordPress plugin dashboard showing version 6.1.1 as the installed version for change management records.

Step 5: Post-Incident — Conduct a control gap review against NIST AC-6 (Least Privilege) and AC-2 (Account Management) to assess whether AJAX endpoint exposure would have been caught in a secure code review

process. Evaluate WAF rule coverage for unauthenticated WordPress AJAX abuse patterns (CIS 4.4: Firewall on Servers). Implement CIS 7.1 and 7.2 (Vulnerability and Remediation Management) processes to ensure plugin patch cycles are tracked. Consider D3-MFA (Multi-factor Authentication) enforcement for all WordPress admin accounts to limit impact of future credential-based escalation (NIST AC-17: Remote Access; CIS 6.5: MFA for Administrative Access).

NIST Phase: Post Incident

Reference: NIST 800-61r3 §4 — Post-Incident Activity: lessons learned review should directly address why the unauthenticated AJAX endpoint in WP Maps Pro 6.1.0 was not detected by existing controls before active exploitation reached 3,600+ attempts.

Controls: NIST AC-2 (Account Management), NIST AC-6 (Least Privilege), NIST AC-17 (Remote Access), NIST SI-2 (Flaw Remediation), NIST RA-5 (Vulnerability Monitoring and Scanning), CIS 4.4 (Implement and Manage a Firewall on Servers), CIS 6.5 (Require MFA for Administrative Access), CIS 7.1 (Establish and Maintain a Vulnerability Management Process), CIS 7.2 (Establish and Maintain a Remediation Process)

Compensating: To enforce MFA on WordPress admin accounts without a commercial IAM tool, deploy the free 'Two Factor' plugin (WordPress.org, maintained by WordPress contributors) which supports TOTP and email OTP at no cost. For WAF rule creation specific to this vulnerability class without a commercial WAF, write a ModSecurity rule targeting unauthenticated POST to admin-ajax.php lacking a valid WordPress nonce: `SecRule REQUEST_URI '@contains admin-ajax.php' 'id:10001,phase:2,deny,msg:"WP AJAX unauth admin creation attempt",chain' SecRule REQUEST_METHOD '@streq POST' 'chain' SecRule &REQUEST_COOKIES:/wordpress_logged_in_/ '@eq 0'`. For plugin vulnerability tracking, subscribe to the free WPScan Vulnerability Database API (500 requests/day free tier) and implement a weekly cron job: `wpscan --url https://[site] --api-token [TOKEN] --format json` piped to a log file reviewed during change management meetings.

Evidence: Lessons learned document should include: timeline from CVE-2026-8732 disclosure to organizational detection (measures the vulnerability management gap); count of exploitation attempts against the organization's sites during the exposure window (from web server logs); determination of whether any rogue admin accounts successfully authenticated post-creation (from wp_usermeta session_tokens data captured in Step 3); and assessment of whether existing WAF rules would have blocked this attack class prior to the incident. Retain the full incident log package (access logs, database exports, file integrity manifests, Wordfence logs) for a minimum of 90 days per NIST AU-11 (Audit Record Retention) to support any regulatory notification requirements if PII was accessible to the rogue admin accounts.

Detection Guidance

Primary detection target: unauthorized WordPress administrator account creation via unauthenticated AJAX requests. Query the WordPress database directly: SELECT * FROM wp_users JOIN wp_usermeta ON wp_users.ID = wp_usermeta.user_id WHERE wp_usermeta.meta_key = 'wp_capabilities' AND wp_usermeta.meta_value LIKE '%administrator%', cross-reference results against your known administrator roster. In web server access logs (Apache/Nginx), search for POST requests to /wp-admin/admin-ajax.php where the action parameter corresponds to WP Maps Pro support functions; high request volumes from a single IP or ASN block are a strong indicator of automated scanning. In WordPress debug logs or activity log plugins (e.g., WP Activity Log), look for user_register events originating without an authenticated session context. Behavioral indicator: newly created admin accounts with no post history, no profile data, and creation timestamps clustering in a short window. If a SIEM is in place, create a detection rule correlating wp_users INSERT events with unauthenticated HTTP sessions. WAF vendors (Wordfence, Cloudflare, Sucuri) have published signatures; verify your ruleset is current. NIST AU-6 and CIS 8.2 baseline logging must be active for these queries to return reliable results.

Indicators of Compromise

Type	Value	Context	Confidence
URL	`/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php (POST, unauthenticated, WP Maps Pro action parameter)`	Endpoint targeted by exploit attempts to trigger unauthorized admin account creation; high POST volume from external IPs is a strong behavioral indicator	HIGH

Framework Mappings

MITRE-ATTACK

- **T1136.001** — Local Account
- **T1190** — Exploit Public-Facing Application
- **T1078.001** — Default Accounts
- **T1505.003** — Web Shell

NIST-800-53R5

- **CA-8** — Penetration Testing
- **RA-5** — Vulnerability Monitoring and Scanning
- **SC-7** — Boundary Protection
- **SI-2** — Flaw Remediation
- **SI-7** — Software, Firmware, and Information Integrity
- **CM-2** — Baseline Configuration
- **CM-7** — Least Functionality
- **SI-3** — Malicious Code Protection
- **SI-4** — System Monitoring
- **AC-3** — Access Enforcement
- **IA-2** — Identification and Authentication (Organizational Users)
- **IR-5** — Incident Monitoring
- **AC-6** — Least Privilege

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- **A01:2021** — Broken Access Control
- **A07:2021** — Identification and Authentication Failures

CIS-V8

- **6.1** — Establish an Access Granting Process
- **6.3** — Require MFA for Externally-Exposed Applications
- **7.3** — Perform Automated Operating System Patch Management
- **7.4** — Perform Automated Application Patch Management

- **5.4** — Restrict Administrator Privileges to Dedicated Administrator Accounts

HIPAA-SECURITY

- **164.312(d)** — Person or Entity Authentication

SOC2-TSC

- **CC6.1** — Logical access security software, infrastructure, and architectures
- **CC9.2** — Manages risks associated with vendors and business partners
- **CC6.3** — Authorizes, modifies, or removes access

ISO-27001-2022

- **A.8.8** — Management of technical vulnerabilities
- **A.5.21** — Managing information security in the ICT supply chain

NIST-CSF-2

- **DE.AE-08** — Incidents are declared when adverse events meet the defined incident criteria

MITRE ATT&CK Mapping

Technique ID	Technique Name	Tactic
T1136.001	Local Account	Persistence
T1190	Exploit Public-Facing Application	Initial-Access
T1078.001	Default Accounts	Defense-Evasion
T1505.003	Web Shell	Persistence

Sources

Source	URL	Tier
Security News	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/wp-maps-pro-bug-expl...	T3
CVE-2026-8732 Detail - NVD	https://nvd.nist.gov/vuln/detail/CVE-2026-8732	T1
CVE-2026-8732: WP Maps Pro plugin Privilege escalation	https://www.sherlockforensics.com/blog.pre-502-data-sticky/2026-05-...	T3
CVE-2026-8732 - Exploits & Severity - Feedly	https://feedly.com/cve/CVE-2026-8732	T3

Source	URL	Tier
WP Maps Pro Plugin Vulnerability (CVE-2026-8732) - FreshySites	https://freshysites.com/security-bulletins/wp-maps-pro-plugin-vulne...	T3

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