

Certbox & NGINX on AWS

Did you know you can use CertBot and NGINX to have a wildcard certificate? Here's how to do it with an AWS Ubuntu sever.

Prerequisites:

- AWS Route 53 DNS hosted zone
 - Web server using NGINX
 - Website already configured using SSL
 - SSH access with sudo (root) privileges
 - Knowledge and comfort navigating linux using the bash shell
 - Knowledge and comfort on how to view and edit files in linux (ie. vi, vim, nano...)
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Overview:

The high level process to achieve our objective is as follows:

- Installing CertBot
- Installing DNS Plugin
- Create IAM Policy
- Create IAM Role
- Associate IAM Role with EC2 Instance
- Run CertBot and get new Certs
- Update NGINX to use new SSL Certs
- Test and restart NGINX
- Validate SSL Cert
- Test and review CertBot auto renewal

Disclaimer: *As with any change, please make sure that you have created a Jira ticket, received proper approval, notified business partners, scheduled the action and taken the necessary actions to backup and recover should anything go wrong.*

Installing CertBot:

SSH to the web server and run the following commands:

```
sudo apt-get update
sudo apt-get install software-properties-common
sudo add-apt-repository universe
```

```
sudo add-apt-repository ppa:certbot/certbot
sudo apt-get update
sudo apt-get install certbot python-certbot-nginx
```

Install DNS Plugin:

SSH to the web server and run the following command:

```
sudo apt-get install python3-certbot-dns-route53
```

Create IAM Policy:

See also: <https://certbot-dns-route53.readthedocs.io/en/stable/>

Create new IAM policy using the AWS Route53 ZoneID of the hosted zone that you want to get an SSL Cert for.

```
{
  "Version": "2012-10-17",
  "Id": "certbot-dns-route53 sample policy",
  "Statement": [
    {
      "Effect": "Allow",
      "Action": [
        "route53:ListHostedZones",
        "route53:GetChange"
      ],
      "Resource": [
        "*"
      ]
    },
    {
      "Effect" : "Allow",
      "Action" : [
        "route53:ChangeResourceRecordSets"
      ],
      "Resource" : [
        "arn:aws:route53:::hostedzone/YOURHOSTEDZONEID"
      ]
    }
  ]
}
```

```
    ]
  }
]
}
```

Create a new IAM Role:

- Click [Create Role] > [AWS Service] > [EC2] > [Next: Permissions]
- Search for and select your newly created Policy (one created from above)
- Click [Next: Tags] > (Enter a TAG if you wish) > [Next: Review]
- Give your new role a meaningful name and description
- Click [Create Role]

Associate Role with EC2 Instance:

- Click to select your EC2 Instance
- Click [Actions] > Instance settings > [Attach / Replace IAM Role]
- In the “IAM Role” dropdown list, click and select the IAM Role that you created (from above)
- Click [Apply] > [Close]

Run CertBot and get new Certs:

It's important to get both the example.com and *.example.com as WILDCARD certs need to include the naked domain as well as any sub domains.

Note: *Be sure to review/update example.com, *.example.com before running the below command.*

```
sudo certbot certonly --dns-route53 -d example.com -d *.example.com --dns-route53-propagation-seconds 30 -m domains@mysite.com --agree-tos
```

If the above command runs successfully, it will populate the necessary certificate key files into the /etc/letsencrypt/live/example.com/ directory.

Update NGINX to use new SSL Certs:

The next step requires that you update the existing SSL configuration of the NGINX server to use the new LetsEncrypt certs. There are a few common locations to check:

- /etc/nginx/nginx.conf
- /etc/nginx/sites-available/<site name>
- /etc/nginx/snippets/
- Update the following folders with new “fullchain.pem and privkey.pem”
- beta_ssl.conf , fastcgi-php.conf , rc_ssl.conf , snakeoil.conf

Between these locations, you should be able to locate the SSL configuration/settings. What you are looking for are the following two keys:

- ssl_certificate
- ssl_certificate_key

Below is a description of the newly downloaded LetsEncrypt keys

- `privkey.pem` : the private key for your certificate.
- `fullchain.pem` : the certificate file used in most server software.
- `chain.pem` : used for OCSP stapling in Nginx $\geq 1.3.7$.
- `cert.pem` : will break many server configurations, and should not be used without reading further documentation

You need to update the following SSL entries to point to the new LetsEncrypt keys

- ssl_certificate /etc/letsencrypt/live/`example.com`/fullchain.pem;
- ssl_certificate_key /etc/letsencrypt/live/`example.com`/privkey.pem;

Test and restart NGINX:

Test that there are no errors in any of your NGINX files by running the following command

```
sudo nginx -t
```

If all of the tests come back as successful, you can go ahead and restart the nginx service

```
sudo service nginx restart
```

Validate SSL Cert:

Once restarted, open a browser window and visit your site. You want to validate that the website is using the new LetsEncrypt SSL cert and that the expiration is set 90 days out.

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