

Android Cast — On-Demand Remote Access (Reverse Tunnel) Proposals

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Source: 20260602_REVERSE_SSH_proposals_summary.md — section links work in PDF viewers that support internal anchors.

Document history

Rev	Focus	Summary
1	Initial research memo	On-demand reverse tunnel via heartbeat type: ra; compare WG, SSH, tinc, Tailscale, etc.; hybrid WireGuard outbound + SSH/SFTP bastion as first pick.
2	Stakeholder Q&A	Gentoo FE → Alpine BE path, embed WG/SSH in app, licensing, Custom file API clarified; refined pick reverse SSH/SFTP (Proxyable) over WG (Lightweight) for this nginx topology.
3	WG vs SSH + bastion deep-dive	Exact FE/BE commands (DNAT vs stream), port policy, Proxyable scoring explained, bastion scope (files vs full debug).

Both revisions are kept below. Where they differ, §14 **Recommendations** lists both and explains why rev. 2 refined the tunnel choice. §Rev. 3 adds operator-ready command checklists for the final pick.

Context and constraints

- **Need:** occasional remote debug / manual settings on **one field device** (e.g. edit codecs.json in app home, inspect logs) without a **persistent** device↔BE tunnel.
- **Stack:** minimalistic LAMP (nginx + php-fpm + MariaDB) on BE; Android app already posts to /api/heartbeat.php.
- **Traffic path (rev. 2): Mobile app** → **Gentoo FE** (TLS, firewall, nginx reverse proxy) → **Alpine BE** (XEN HVM, project services). Heartbeat already follows this; any data tunnel must be tunable on **both** FE and BE.
- **Security:** no standing inbound connection from BE to device; user opt-in; admin whitelist; full audit trail; minimal secret exposure on wire.
- **Ops:** sessions expire on inactivity; 24h DB cleanup; user can disable instantly from app settings.
- **Convenience (rev. 2):** SCP-/SFTP-like file exchange is **not mandatory** but highly desirable for codecs.json and logs.

Executive summary

Initial proposal (rev. 1)

- **Recommended:** on-demand reverse tunnel orchestrated by BE heartbeat (type: ra) + **WireGuard or SSH over a single ephemeral port** on BE, with **per-session keys** and **PHP admin UI** matching crashes console look-and-feel.
- **Not recommended for v1:** always-on VPN mesh (tinc/Tailscale on every device), public inbound SSH to phones, or BE-initiated connections through carrier NAT.
- **Pattern:** device polls BE at **random 1–7 min** when user enables “Remote access”; BE responds only if device is **whitelisted**; device then **dials out** and attaches tunnel; operator connects to BE **bastion/port**, not to the phone directly.
- **Primary pick (rev. 1):** WireGuard outbound + SSH/SFTP on bastion for operator (combines mobile simplicity with familiar file edit workflow for codecs.json).
- **Fallback (rev. 1):** if UDP blocked on target networks, use **chisel/frp over HTTPS** on same ra vhost with identical control plane.

Refined after infra review (rev. 2)

- **Control plane:** unchanged (heartbeat type: ra, checkbox, whitelist, jittered poll, device dials out).
- **Tunnel choice (refined):** prefer **reverse SSH (+ SFTP)** over WireGuard for v1 **on this stack**.
- **One word — SSH: Proxyable** — TCP (nginx stream) matches Gentoo FE → Alpine BE like existing HTTP proxy; SFTP gives SCP-like files.
- **One word — WireGuard: Lightweight** — excellent embeddable crypto, but **UDP does not ride nginx HTTP reverse-proxy**; FE needs UDP DNAT/firewall rules.
- **Custom file API:** optional third track — HTTPS upload/download via PHP (§10); good Phase-1 or narrow path without sshd.

Stakeholder questions (rev. 2 — added to requirements)

#	Question	Short answer
Q1	Is WireGuard “best”?	Best crypto/simplicity , not best FE→BE proxy fit for your stack.
Q2	Embed WG in app or separate app?	Embed via wireguard-android tunnel library + VpnService; no standalone WireGuard app.
Q3	Embed SSH or separate app?	Embed Dropbear/libssh2/MINA SSHD; no Termux.

Q4	BE integration: WG vs SSH?	SSH easier on Alpine (openssh, authorized_keys, -R port). WG needs wg set + UDP FE→BE.
Q5	Traffic Mobile → Gentoo FE → Alpine BE?	Heartbeat: proxy_pass :80. SSH: nginx stream. WG: UDP DNAT (not nginx location /).
Q6	Licensing / open source?	See §9; Tailscale server is main license caveat.
Q7	What is "Custom file API"?	HTTPS file transfer via PHP — not SCP, not a VPN; see §10.
Q8	SCP-like file exchange?	Native SFTP (SSH) ; similar UX via Custom file API; WG needs SSH/SFTP on top for SCP-like UX.

Problem statement

Aspect	Detail
Trigger	Single device in the field needs interactive access (debug, replace config, pull logs).
Anti-goals	No permanent VPN; no open listening port on mobile; no broad fleet exposure.
User consent	Checkbox in app settings ("allow remote access at my own risk").
Admin gate	Device ID must be on BE remote_access_devices whitelist before any session is offered.
Observability	Every enable/disable/connect/disconnect/timeout logged with reason and actor.
Path (rev. 2)	Signalling via FE→BE :80; tunnel endpoint on FE forwarded to BE.

Proposed control plane (heartbeat type: ra)

Reuse existing heartbeat endpoint; add branch for remote access.

Device → BE (poll, random interval 1–7 min when enabled)

```
{
  "heartbeat": {
    "type": "ra",
    "status": "enable",
    "device_id": "<stable device uuid>",
    "random": "<client session nonce / reconnect token>",
    "app_version": "0.1.0",
    "capabilities": ["ssh", "sftp", "files_app_home"]
  }
}
```

Also accepted (rev. 2): "capabilities": ["ssh_reverse", "sftp", "files_app_home"].

BE → device (only if whitelisted + operator requested session)

```
{
  "heartbeat": {
    "type": "ra",
    "action": "connect",
    "session_id": "uuid",
    "endpoint": "ra.apps.f0xx.org:443",
    "tunnel": "wireguard|ssh|ssh_reverse",
    "credentials": {
      "mode": "ephemeral_pubkey|otp",
      "username": "ra-<session_id>",
      "host_key_fingerprint": "...",
      "remote_forward": "127.0.0.1:<be_port>:127.0.0.1:8022"
    },
    "expires_at": 1717340000
  }
}
```

WireGuard branch (rev. 1): "tunnel": "wireguard" with peer keys in credentials. SSH branch (rev. 2): "tunnel": "ssh_reverse" as above.

Disable (user unchecks box or admin revokes)

```
{ "heartbeat": { "type": "ra", "status": "disable", "device_id": "...", "random": "..." } }
```

Field reference

Field	Purpose
random	Client nonce for matching pending BE session; rotation on reconnect.
session_id	DB primary key for audit + port/key binding.
status	enable / disable / poll (optional alias for enable).

action	BE command: connect, wait, deny, rotate.
--------	--

State machine (simplified)

[user enables RA] → device polls → BE: wait (not whitelisted / no operator)
 → admin opens session for device_id → next poll → BE: connect + creds
 → device opens outbound tunnel → BE marks active → operator uses bastion
 [user disables] → disable heartbeat → tunnel tear-down → BE inactive + audit row
 [24h idle] → BE cron purges stale rows + closes ports

Network topology — Gentoo FE → Alpine BE (rev. 2)

[Android app]
 ■ HTTPS POST /api/heartbeat.php (type: ra)
 ▼
 [Gentoo FE — apps.f0xx.org]
 ■ nginx: proxy_pass http://artc0.intra.raptor.org:80 (existing)
 ▼
 [Alpine BE — artc0 / XEN HVM]
 ■ php-fpm + MariaDB (control plane)
 ■ sshd / ra-bastion (data plane — SSH track)
 ■ wg0 + UDP listener (data plane — WG track, if used)
 [Operator laptop]
 ■ SSH/SFTP to FE or BE bastion port (never to phone IP)
 ▼
 session forwarded to device's reverse tunnel

FE ↔ BE tuning (by track)

Track	Public entry (FE)	FE config	BE service	Notes
Heartbeat (all)	https://apps.f0xx.org/.../heartbeat.php	proxy_pass http://artc0:80	php-fpm	Already works.
Reverse SSH	ra.apps.f0xx.org:443 TCP or :2222	stream { proxy_pass artc0:22; }	sshd + Match User ra-*	Rev. 2 pick (Proxyable).
WireGuard	ra.apps.f0xx.org:518 20/udp	iptables/nft DNAT → BE	wg-quick / dynamic peers	Rev. 1 pick candidate (Lightweight).
Custom file API	https://apps.f0xx.org/.../api/ra/*	existing HTTP proxy	php-fpm only	No stream/UDP rules.

Security model

Layer	Mechanism
Authorization	RBAC roles (§12) + per-device whitelist + user opt-in on device.
Authentication	Per-session ephemeral key pair or one-time port + password; no long-lived device secrets in APK.
Transport	TLS to BE for heartbeat; tunnel encrypted (WireGuard / SSH).
Exposure	BE listens on dedicated ra vhost/port; no inbound to mobile; optional IP allowlist for operators.
Audit	remote_access_events table: who, device, action, reason, ip, timestamps.
Cleanup	Inactivity timeout (e.g. 30–60 min); daily purge of records > 24h; credential invalidation on disable.
Reconnect	Same session_id + rotated random within grace window; new keys if expired.

Key handling options (rev. 1)

Mode	Description	Risk
Ephemeral WG keypair	BE generates keys per session; device installs peer config once	Low; keys short-lived
SSH host cert + user cert	Step-CA or internal CA signs 1h user cert	Medium ops; mature tooling
Pre-allocated device key	One WG pubkey per device in DB	Higher leak impact; simpler reconnect
OTP + reverse SSH	autossh -R random_port with password from BE	Simple; weaker than pubkey

Key ceremony (rev. 1): ephemeral WireGuard or SSH **user certificate** per session; optional device **identity key** (Ed25519) registered at whitelist time for authenticating poll requests only (not tunnel).

Additional (rev. 2):

- Terminate operator SSH on FE stream or require VPN to Gentoo before bastion.
- Device **outbound-only** to ra.apps.f0xx.org:443 (TCP).
- Per-session ForceCommand internal-sftp if shell not required.

Embedding in the Android app (rev. 2)

Solution	Separate app required?	How to embed	Android notes
WireGuard	No	wireguard-android tunnel AAR / GoBackend	VpnService; VPN icon while active.
SSH reverse	No	Dropbear + JNI, libssh2 , Apache MINA SSHD	Foreground service; no VPN icon.
frp/chisel client	No	Static binary or Go mobile bind	Extra artifact.
Custom file API	No	OkHttp + JSON	Pure Java/Kotlin.

You do **not** need Termux or the standalone WireGuard app if libraries are embedded in **Android Cast**.

Backend integration ease — Alpine BE (rev. 2)

Aspect	Reverse SSH	WireGuard
Package on Alpine	openssh	wireguard-tools + kernel mod
Session open (PHP)	authorized_keys + -R port; optional ForceCommand internal-sftp	wg set wg0 peer ...
Session close	Remove key; kill session; free port	wg set ... remove
FE cooperation	nginx stream (TCP)	UDP DNAT
Operator access	sftp -P 443 ra-...@ra.apps.f0xx.org	wg-quick up or SSH over WG
Jump host f0xx.org:222	Natural extension	Separate UDP path

Licensing and open source (rev. 2)

Component	License	Ship in app / BE	Notes
WireGuard (kernel module)	GPL-2.0	BE kernel	Stock Alpine package.
wireguard-go / Android tunnel	MIT / Apache-2.0	App embed	Userspace embed.
OpenSSH	BSD-style	BE + client	Permissive.
Dropbear	Permissive (MIT-like)	App embed	Small client.
libssh2	BSD-3-Clause	App embed	
Apache MINA SSHD	Apache-2.0	App (Java)	SSH/SFTP in Java.
chisel	MIT	App/BE	
frp	Apache-2.0	App/BE	
tinc	GPL-2.0+	—	Copyright; mesh.
Tailscale client	BSD-3-Clause	—	Client OSS.
Headscale / Tailscale server	BSD / BSL	—	Self-host Headscale if needed.
Custom file API	Project code	BE PHP	No third-party tunnel license.

GPL-2.0 Android app: use permissively licensed clients (MIT/BSD/Apache); review before linking GPL client libs into APK.

What “Custom file API” means (rev. 2 — clarified)

Not a tunnel and **not** the SCP protocol. Application-layer remote file exchange on existing PHP:

- Endpoints: POST /api/ra/upload, GET /api/ra/download, GET /api/ra/list.
- Auth: short-lived token from heartbeat connect (same session as control plane).
- Scope: getFilesDir() / codecs.json unless Storage permission granted (broader scope needs second consent).
- Operator: crashes-themed **web UI** or curl — **SCP-like** push/pull without scp binary.
- **Pros**: no FE stream/UDP; minimal attack surface (no shell); reuses LAMP.
- **Cons**: no shell; implement listing/chunking for large logs.

Use when: Phase-1 before sshd bastion, or permanent narrow path alongside SSH for power users.

Original rev. 1 one-liner: “Custom HTTPS file API — PHP endpoints; no shell; minimal attack surface; more app code for file ops.”

Tooling alternatives — full survey (rev. 1)

Option	Maturity	Mobile fit	BE fit	Pros	Cons / risks
WireGuard (outbound from device)	High	Excellent (userspace WG)	Single UDP listener / per-session peers	Fast, modern crypto, small code	UDP blocked on some carriers; peer lifecycle automation
Reverse SSH (autossh -R)	High	Good (embedded dropbear client)	sshd on bastion	Familiar, SFTP, shell	Key mgmt; battery if misconfigured
SSH via WebSocket (chisel, frp)	Medium	Good	One HTTPS port	Traverses strict firewalls	Extra binary; audit frp history

OpenVPN / IKEv2 (on-demand)	High	Heavy	openvpn-access	Full tunnel	Overkill; battery; not file-focused
tinc	Medium	Poor (daemon, mesh)	mesh coordinator	P2P mesh	Persistent mesh ≠ on-demand; key distribution painful
Tailscale / Headscale	High	App + VPN	control server	Easy UX	Persistent identity; fleet-wide trust
MeshCentral / RustDesk	High	Agent app	relay server	Remote desktop	Different UX; screen control not primary need
ADB over TLS tunnel	Medium	Dev-only	reverse port	Exact Android debug	Dev options; security sensitive
Custom HTTPS file API	Low (build)	Native	PHP endpoints	No shell; minimal attack surface	No arbitrary shell; more app code

Tooling summary — infra-focused (rev. 2)

Option	Embed?	FE→BE fit	SCP-like	License	Verdict
Reverse SSH + SFTP	Yes	Excellent (stream)	Native	BSD	v1 pick (rev. 2)
WireGuard outbound	Yes	Fair (UDP DNAT)	Via SFTP over WG	MIT/GPL	v1 pick (rev. 1) / v2 if UDP path ready
Custom file API	Yes	Excellent (HTTP)	Similar UX	Yours	Phase-1 / narrow
frp/chisel	Yes	Good	Possible	MIT/Apache	Fallback (both revs)
tinc / Tailscale	VPN app	Poor on-demand	Varies	GPL/BSL	Not recommended

Comparison matrix — initial scoring (rev. 1)

Scoring: 1 = low, 5 = high. Lower total was interpreted as stronger general fit in rev. 1 table orientation.

Criterion	WG outbound	Reverse SSH	frp/chisel	tinc	Tailscale	Custom file API
Security	5	4	3	3	4	5
Simplicity (ops)	4	4	3	2	3	4
On-demand fit	5	5	5	1	2	5
File access (app dir)	4	5	4	3	4	5
Shell/debug	4	5	4	3	4	1
Fits LAMP BE	4	5	4	3	3	5
Battery / data	4	3	3	2	2	5
Weighted total	31	30	26	17	22	30

Rev. 1 tie note: WireGuard, reverse SSH, and Custom file API scored highest. Rev. 1 suggested WireGuard + SFTP/SSH bastion if shell needed; Custom file API if only codecs .json + logs.

Comparison matrix — FE proxy focus (rev. 2)

Criterion	Rev SSH	WG outbound	Custom file API	frp/chisel
Proxyable (FE→BE)	5	2	5	4
Security	4	5	5	3
On-demand fit	5	5	5	5
SCP-like files	5	3*	4	3
BE integration ease	5	3	5	3
Embed without 3rd-party app	5	5	5	4
Total	29	23	29	22

*WG files row assumes SSH/SFTP layered on tunnel.

WireGuard vs SSH — decision lens (rev. 2)

Criterion	WireGuard	Reverse SSH + SFTP
One-word headline	Lightweight	Proxyable
Embed in app	Yes (VpnService)	Yes (libssh2/MINA/dropbear)
FE nginx HTTP proxy	No (UDP)	Yes (stream TCP)
Gentoo → Alpine path	Firewall UDP DNAT	Same as HTTP ops model

SCP-like files	Needs SSH/SFTP on top	Built-in (SFTP)
Carrier networks	UDP sometimes blocked	TCP 443 usually works

Recommendations

Initial (rev. 1)

1. **Phase 0** — Design + threat model (1–2 days): consent copy, port allocation, key ceremony.
 2. **Phase 1** — Control plane (1–2 weeks): heartbeat ra, whitelist, admin UI, audit, cron; dry-run wait/connect.
 3. **Phase 2** — Tunnel (1–2 weeks): **WireGuard outbound** from app OR **reverse SSH to bastion**; operator connects via existing VPN/SSH to BE network.
 4. **Phase 3** — Hardening: rate limits, mTLS on heartbeat, device identity signing, reconnect, pen-test.
- Primary pick (rev. 1):** WireGuard outbound + SSH/SFTP on bastion for operator.
Fallback (rev. 1): chisel/frp over HTTPS on same ra vhost.

Refined (rev. 2 — Gentoo FE → Alpine BE)

Primary v1: reverse SSH (+ SFTP) — path is Mobile → Gentoo FE (nginx) → Alpine BE; **Proxyable** TCP; SFTP for codecs.json.
Secondary: WireGuard when dedicated **UDP forwarding** on FE is acceptable — **Lightweight** tunnel.
Optional parallel: Custom file API for whitelist-only file push/pull without internet-facing sshd.
Phases (merged):

1. Phase 0 — FE/BE port map + threat model (1–2 d).
2. Phase 1 — heartbeat ra + admin UI + optional Custom file API (1–2 w).
3. Phase 2 — reverse SSH/SFTP + Gentoo stream → Alpine sshd **or** WG track if chosen (1–2 w).
4. Phase 3 — MFA, reconnect, pen-test.

RBAC roles (BE)

Role	Permissions
remote_access_user	Open/close own sessions for whitelisted devices; view active/inactive list (scoped); SFTP / file API.
admin	Same as user + add/remove whitelist entries + assign remote_access_user role.
root	Full role management + force-disconnect any session + view all audit logs.

Integrate with existing users / Rbac; new permissions: remote_access_view, remote_access_operate, remote_access_admin.

BE admin UI (crashes look-and-feel)

- New nav: **Remote access** under /app/androidcast_project/crashes/?view=remote_access (or /remote/).
 - Reuse layout.php, themes, locale picker, session auth.
 - Screens (rev. 1):
1. **Devices** — whitelist, last seen, RA opt-in status (from last heartbeat).
 2. **Sessions** — active / inactive; device, operator, started, last activity, tunnel type, port, status.
 3. **Audit log** — filter by device, user, action, date.
 4. **Open session** — pick device → pending session → waits for next device poll.
 - Rev. 2 add-on: **file browser** tab when Custom file API enabled (upload/download codecs.json).
 - No new frontend framework; same CSS/JS as tickets/graphs.

MariaDB schema (sketch — rev. 1)

```
-- remote_access_devices (whitelist)
-- remote_access_sessions (session_id, device_id, operator_user_id, status,
--   tunnel, port, keys_ref, expires_at, last_activity)
-- remote_access_events (audit)
-- remote_access_credentials (optional encrypted blob, TTL)
```

Cron: scripts/purge_remote_access.php — inactive > 24h → closed_timeout; revoke keys; free ports.

Android app changes (sketch — rev. 1)

- Settings → Developer → **Allow remote access** (off by default, strong warning).
- RemoteAccessService (foreground while tunnel active): jittered alarm 1–7 min → POST heartbeat.
- On action: connect: start WireGuard/SSH client with supplied creds; expose app files dir only unless Storage permission granted (broader scope needs second consent).
- On disable: stop service, wipe session keys, POST status: disable.
- Persist nothing long-term except optional device identity pubkey for poll authentication.

Estimates (engineering)

Track	Initial delivery	Hardening	Total
Control plane only (heartbeat + DB + admin list)	5–8 d	3–5 d	8–13 d
Control plane + Custom file API	6–9 d	3–5 d	9–14 d
+ WireGuard outbound tunnel (rev. 1 pick)	8–12 d	5–8 d	13–20 d (+ FE UDP)
+ Reverse SSH/SFTP bastion (rev. 2 pick)	7–11 d	4–7 d	11–18 d
+ FE nginx stream + firewall docs	+1–2 d	+1 d	(included in SSH track)

Assumptions: one BE bastion; excludes Play Store policy review.

Open questions (merged)

Rev. 1:

- Maximum concurrent RA sessions per BE?
- Store tunnel configs only in RAM vs encrypted MariaDB blob?
- Require operator MFA (TOTP) before Open session?
- Play Store disclosure for “remote access” foreground service?

Rev. 2:

- Public TCP port: dedicated 2222 vs share 443 with ssl_preread?
- SFTP-only vs full shell for remote_access_user?
- Store device identity Ed25519 pubkey at whitelist time?
- Rate limit heartbeat ra polls?

Rev. 3:

- Confirm public RA port(s) with FE firewall owner before Phase 2?
- SFTP-only (ForceCommand internal-sftp) vs full shell for v1?

Rev. 3 — WG vs SSH Q&A + bastion deep-dive

Added 2026-06-02 — concrete FE/BE commands and decision support.

Constants used below (from INFRA.md):

Symbol	Value
FE	Gentoo HVM, public apps.f0xx.org (TLS 443 terminates here)
BE	Alpine artc0.intra.raptor.org / 10.7.16.128, app vhost listen 80
FE→BE (existing HTTP)	proxy_pass http://artc0.intra.raptor.org:80
Operator jump (existing)	f0xx.org:222 → Alpine :22

Replace 10.7.16.128 with the live BE IP if it changes.

Q1 — Exact FE/BE rules: WireGuard (DNAT) vs SSH (no DNAT required)

Short answer: WireGuard **must** use **UDP DNAT** (or equivalent firewall forward) on Gentoo FE because nginx proxy_pass **is HTTP/TCP-only** and cannot carry WG packets. SSH **does not need DNAT** on FE if you use nginx stream TCP forwarding (same nginx daemon, different block). You *can* use TCP DNAT for SSH as an alternative, but it is redundant when stream works.

WireGuard track — FE (Gentoo): UDP DNAT + forward allow

Public UDP **51820** on FE → BE **51820**. Example with **nftables** (adjust interface eth0, table/chain names to match your FE):

BE_IP=10.7.16.128
WG_PORT=51820

```
nft add rule inet nat prerouting iifname "eth0" udp dport $WG_PORT \
  dnat ip to ${BE_IP}:${WG_PORT}
nft add rule inet filter forward ip daddr ${BE_IP} udp dport ${WG_PORT} accept
```

iptables equivalent:

BE_IP=10.7.16.128
WG_PORT=51820

```
iptables -t nat -A PREROUTING -i eth0 -p udp --dport $WG_PORT \
  -j DNAT --to-destination ${BE_IP}:${WG_PORT}
iptables -A FORWARD -p udp -d ${BE_IP} --dport $WG_PORT -j ACCEPT
```

Persist: save rules (/etc/nftables.conf or iptables-save → Gentoo iptables init). **Open UDP 51820** on FE edge firewall (in addition to 443/tcp).

Verify from outside:

nc -u -v apps.f0xx.org 51820

WireGuard track — BE (Alpine): interface + listen

```
apk add wireguard-tools
modprobe wireguard 2>/dev/null || echo "wireguard module required"
```

```
cat >/etc/wireguard/wg0.conf <<'EOF'
[Interface]
```

```
Address = 10.66.66.1/24
ListenPort = 51820
PrivateKey = <BE_WG_PRIVATE_KEY>
EOF
```

```
wg-quick up wg0
rc-update add wg-quick.wg0 default # if using OpenRC
```

Per RA session (PHP or admin script adds ephemeral peer — example):

```
wg set wg0 peer <DEVICE_EPHEMERAL_PUBKEY> allowed-ips 10.66.66.2/32
wg set wg0 peer <DEVICE_EPHEMERAL_PUBKEY> remove
```

Device connects **outbound UDP** to apps.f0xx.org:51820 (DNAT lands on BE). Operator joins same WG net (second peer) or uses SSH over the tunnel (see Q5).

SSH track — FE (Gentoo): nginx stream (TCP proxy, not DNAT)

Preferred: public TCP **443** on ra.apps.f0xx.org (or dedicated **2222**) → BE **22**. No kernel DNAT if nginx terminates the TCP hop.

Add to FE nginx (often /etc/nginx/nginx.conf, **outside** http {}):

```
stream {
    upstream be_sshd {
        server 10.7.16.128:22;
    }
    server {
        listen 443;
        proxy_pass be_sshd;
        proxy_connect_timeout 30s;
    }
}
```

If **443** is already used for HTTPS on the same IP, either:

- use listen 2222 for RA SSH, or
- use ssl_preread on 443 to split HTTPS vs SSH by ClientHello (more complex).

Reload FE nginx:

```
nginx -t && nginx -s reload
```

Verify:

```
ssh -p 443 -o StrictHostKeyChecking=accept-new ra-test@ra.apps.f0xx.org
```

SSH track — optional FE DNAT (parallel to WG, for comparison only)

If you refused nginx stream, SSH could mirror WG with **TCP DNAT**:

```
iptables -t nat -A PREROUTING -i eth0 -p tcp --dport 2222 \
-j DNAT --to-destination 10.7.16.128:22
iptables -A FORWARD -p tcp -d 10.7.16.128 --dport 22 -j ACCEPT
```

This works but **duplicates** what stream already does and bypasses nginx logging/timeouts. **Recommendation:** use stream, not DNAT, for SSH.

SSH track — BE (Alpine): sshd + reverse-forward slot

```
apk add openssh
rc-update add sshd default
rc-service sshd start
```

```
cat >/etc/ssh/sshd_config.d/ra.conf <<'EOF'
Match User ra-*
    AllowTcpForwarding yes
    GatewayPorts no
    X11Forwarding no
    PermitTTY yes
    # v1 file-only: ForceCommand internal-sftp
EOF
rc-service sshd restart
```

Per session — device outbound reverse forward (embedded client runs equivalent):

```
ssh -N -R 127.0.0.1:18022:127.0.0.1:8022 ra-<session_id>@ra.apps.f0xx.org -p 443
```

BE — operator reaches device file area via forwarded port:

```
sftp -P 18022 ra-<session_id>@127.0.0.1
```

Side-by-side: what runs where

Step	WireGuard	Reverse SSH
FE edge open	UDP 51820	TCP 443 or 2222
FE mechanism	nft/iptables DNAT	nginx stream (or optional TCP DNAT)
BE daemon	wg0 / wg set	sshd + ephemeral Match User ra-*
Device direction	Outbound UDP to FE public IP	Outbound TCP to FE → proxied to BE sshd
Operator path	WG peer IP or SSH over WG	SFTP/SSH to BE forwarded port (see Q5)

Q2 — Can we use ports other than :80? (heartbeats and everything else)

Two different “ports” — do not conflate them.

Leg	Port today	Can change?	Notes
Phone → FE	443 (HTTPS)	Yes, but 443 is correct for TLS + carrier-friendly egress	App already targets https://apps.f0xx.org/...; users never hit :80 directly.
FE → BE (heartbeat, crashes, graphs)	80 (HTTP)	Yes	Requires new FE proxy_pass upstream and BE listen block. Not forbidden — just unused today .

RA data plane (WG)	51820/udp (proposed)	Must be non-80	UDP tunnel; unrelated to HTTP vhost.
RA data plane (SSH)	443/tcp or 2222/tcp	Must be non-80	Raw TCP/stream; not HTTP location /.

Why heartbeats stay on the existing :80 FE→BE path (recommended for v1):

1. **Already deployed** — nginx.fe-apps.f0xx.org.snippet and BE listen 80 fragment are the repo source of truth; zero new FE/BE holes for control plane.
2. **Same security zone** as crash upload and graphs — one ops playbook.
3. **No benefit** to moving heartbeat to BE :443 internally — the phone still speaks HTTPS to FE; internal hop is your choice.
4. **Port 8089** on BE is **Janus/other** — do **not** reuse for androidcast (INFRA.md §2).

If you intentionally want heartbeat on BE :443 internally:

That is a **separate migration**; not required for RA.

Summary: Public **443** for all HTTPS (including heartbeat). Internal FE→BE **80** for LAMP today — **can** change, **should not** for v1 unless you have another reason. RA tunnels **must** use **dedicated non-80** ports (UDP 51820 or TCP 443/2222 stream).

Q3 — Why is “Proxyable (FE→BE)” low for WG (2) and high for SSH (5)?

The rev. 2 score measures one thing: “Can we forward this service from Gentoo FE to Alpine BE the same way we already forward crashes/hub HTTP?”

	Reverse SSH	WireGuard
Protocol	TCP	UDP
Existing FE tool	nginx stream → 10.7.16.128:22	Not nginx location / proxy_pass
FE change type	Add stream {} block; reload nginx	Firewall DNAT + forward rules; separate from nginx HTTP config in repo
Ops familiarity	Same team that edits nginx.conf	Often different (iptables/nft, UDP, kernel module)
Debugging	nginx -t, error log, curl/nc TCP	nft list ruleset, UDP blocked on some carriers, wg show on BE
Matches INFRA docs	Extends nginx pattern	New parallel path not in current snippets

Score meaning:

- **5 (SSH):** “Drop in a stream upstream to BE — same deployment rhythm as today’s reverse proxy.”
- **2 (WG):** “Works, but **not** proxyable via HTTP nginx; needs **DNAT** (or a UDP proxy like udp2raw, which is extra complexity). Partial credit — not zero — because FE→BE forwarding is still one hop.”

Important nuance: Low **Proxyable** does **not** mean WG is insecure or bad on the phone — it means **your FE→BE operational model** favours TCP/nginx. That is why rev. 2 refined the v1 pick to SSH despite WG being **Lightweight** on-device.

Custom file API also scores 5 because it reuses existing proxy_pass http://artc0:80 with new PHP locations — no stream, no DNAT.

Rev. 3 — Bastion Q&A

Q4 — How easy to implement? Command checklist (FE + BE)

Rough effort (after control plane PHP/DB exists):

Track	FE ops	BE ops	App embed	Typical first-time
Reverse SSH + SFTP	1 nginx stream block + reload	openssh, sshd_config.d/ra.conf, session keys	libssh2/MINA client, -R forward	~0.5–1 day infra
WireGuard outbound	UDP DNAT + firewall + persist	wireguard-tools, wg0, dynamic peers	wireguard-android + VpnService	~1–2 days infra
Custom file API only	none (HTTP already proxied)	PHP endpoints only	OkHttp upload/download	~0 FE days

SSH bastion — minimal ordered checklist

FE (Gentoo):

```
nginx -t && nginx -s reload
```

```
iptables -A INPUT -p tcp --dport 2222 -j ACCEPT
```

BE (Alpine):

```
apk add openssh
mkdir -p /etc/ssh/sshd_config.d
rc-service sshd restart
```

App (Android): foreground service → heartbeat poll → on connect, run embedded SSH client with -R 127.0.0.1:<be_port>:127.0.0.1:8022 → local SFTP server or internal-sftp on device side (design choice).

Operator:

```
ssh -J f0xx.org:222 sftp -P 18022 ra-<session_id>@127.0.0.1
```

WireGuard — minimal ordered checklist

FE (Gentoo):

```
BE_IP=10.7.16.128
WG_PORT=51820
```

BE (Alpine):

```
apk add wireguard-tools
```

App (Android): VpnService + userspace WG → outbound to apps.f0xx.org:51820.

Operator (files still need a channel):

```
wg-quick up operator-ra-<session_id>
sftp user@10.66.66.2
```

WG alone does not give SFTP; you almost always add **SSH on top** or fall back to **Custom file API** — extra moving parts vs SSH-only track.

Q5 — Bastion: file transfers only, or other operations too?

Capability	Custom file API	SSH/SFTP bastion	WireGuard alone	WG + SSH on tunnel
Edit codecs.json	Yes (scoped paths)	Yes (SFTP)	No	Yes
Pull log files	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Interactive shell (logcat, run-as, debug cmds)	No	Yes (if not ForceCommand internal-sftp)	No	Yes
Port forwarding (ADB-like / local tools)	No	Yes (-L/-R)	Yes (L3)	Yes
Packet capture / low-level network	No	Limited	Yes (L3 VPN)	Yes

What “bastion” means in this project:

- 1. **Narrow bastion (file-only v1):** ForceCommand internal-sftp, chroot or path jail to app home — enough for **codecs.json + logs** with smallest attack surface. Matches your stated primary need.
- 2. **Full debug bastion:** interactive shell + reverse forwards — for **logcat**, running one-off commands, inspecting /data/data/... (where policy allows), or forwarding a port to a laptop tool. Same SSH track, one config flag difference.
- 3. **WireGuard “bastion”:** really a **VPN endpoint**, not a file bastion — gives IP reachability; you still mount **SFTP/SSH or file API** for codecs.json unless you build a custom agent.

Practical recommendation for your decision:

Your priority	Best fit
Only replace codecs.json + download logs	Custom file API or SFTP-only SSH — bastion = file transfer only
Occasional shell debug on one field device	Reverse SSH bastion with shell allowed (not SFTP-only)
Lowest FE friction + familiar ops	Reverse SSH (stream to BE) — scores Proxyable 5
Minimum bytes on wire / best battery on tunnel	WireGuard — but budget +SSH or file API for files

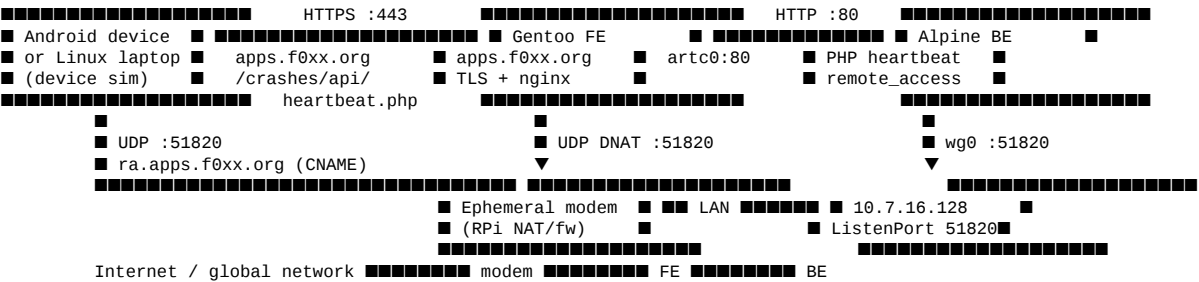
Rev. 3 decision hint: If bastion = **files only**, Custom file API + existing :80 heartbeat is the shortest path (no FE stream, no UDP DNAT). If bastion = **files + shell debug**, **reverse SSH** wins on infra fit. Pure **WG** only wins if you explicitly want L3 VPN and accept FE UDP DNAT + a second protocol for files.

Appendix 1 — WG test configuration (Linux laptop)

References: REMOTE_ACCESS_IMPL.md, REMOTE_ACCESS_VALIDATION.md.

DNS (prod): ra.apps.f0xx.org is a **CNAME** of apps.f0xx.org / f0xx.org — same public edge IP for HTTPS heartbeats and UDP WireGuard.

Network topology (v1 WireGuard)



Control plane = HTTP only (no new nginx location for RA). **Data plane** = UDP to ra.apps.f0xx.org:51820 → FE DNAT → BE wg0.

Prerequisites (laptop)

```
sudo emerge -av net-vpn/wireguard-tools # or: apt install wireguard-tools jq curl
```

A. HTTP E2E (no tunnel yet)

```
cd examples/crash_reporter/backend
export CRASHES_BASE=https://apps.f0xx.org/app/androidcast_project/crashes
export ADMIN_USER=admin ADMIN_PASS='...'

./scripts/ra_e2e_cli.sh
```

B. UDP / WireGuard from laptop (after open session)

Option 1 — device sim with tunnel bring-up:

```
export CRASHES_BASE=https://apps.f0xx.org/app/androidcast_project/crashes
export RA_DEVICE_ID=ra-laptop-$(hostname -s)

./scripts/ra_device_sim.sh poll --until connect --apply-wg
```

Option 2 — manual:

```
source scripts/ra_lib.sh
RESP="$(ra_ra_post enable "$RA_DEVICE_ID" "$(cat /tmp/androidcast-ra-{$RA_DEVICE_ID}.random)" cli-sim)"
ra_wg_quick_from_connect "$RESP" | sudo tee /tmp/ra-laptop.conf
sudo wg-quick up /tmp/ra-laptop.conf
sudo wg show
ping -c3 10.66.66.1 # BE wg0 — OK if routed
sudo wg-quick down /tmp/ra-laptop.conf
```

C. Quick checks before blaming WG

Check	Command	Expect
CNAME	dig +short ra.apps.f0xx.org	same A/AAAA as apps.f0xx.org
UDP port	nc -vzu ra.apps.f0xx.org 51820	open / reachable (not TCP)
HTTP	curl -sS -o /dev/null -w '%{http_code}\n' https://apps.f0xx.org/app/androidcast_project/crashes/	200 or 302
BE wg	on BE: wg show wg0	interface up, peers after connect

If HTTP E2E passes but wg-quick up fails → FE DNAT or firewall on modem/FE, not PHP.

Appendix 2 — WG production configuration

References: REMOTE_ACCESS_IMPL.md § Production deploy, REMOTE_ACCESS_VALIDATION.md.

BE config.php (remote_access)

```
'remote_access' => [
  'wg_endpoint' => 'ra.apps.f0xx.org:51820',
  'wg_server_public_key' => '<output of wg show wg0 public-key on BE>',
  'wg_interface' => 'wg0',
  'provision_peers' => true,
  'require_wg_tools' => true,
  'session_ttl_s' => 3600,
  'min_poll_interval_s' => 45,
],
```

BE (Alpine) — WireGuard interface

```
apk add wireguard-tools wireguard-tools-wg
sudo wg-quick up wg0
sudo wg show wg0 public-key # → paste into config.php
PHP-FPM user (nginx on Alpine) must run wg set when provision_peers=true:
sudo -u nginx wg show wg0
Cron (hourly purge): php81 scripts/purge_remote_access.php --hours=24
```

FE (Gentoo) — UDP DNAT (not nginx)

HTTP stays as today: https://apps.f0xx.org → http://artc0.intra.raptor.org:80.
WireGuard uses **UDP DNAT** on the FE edge (and/or modem) — **not** an nginx location:
BE_IP=10.7.16.128 # Alpine BE on LAN
WG_PORT=51820
Ensure **UDP \$WG_PORT** is allowed on FE (and modem) toward the BE. ra.apps.f0xx.org CNAME ensures devices and laptops target the same edge as apps.f0xx.org.

MariaDB / migrations

Migration **007** (remote_access_* tables). See sql/migrations/007_remote_access.sql.

Production verify (on BE or laptop)

```
cd examples/crash_reporter/backend
BASE=https://apps.f0xx.org/app/androidcast_project/crashes ./scripts/verify_remote_access_prod.sh
RA_E2E=1 BASE="$BASE" ./scripts/verify_remote_access_prod.sh
Verified 2026-06-04: HTTP ra_e2e_cli.sh on prod returned connect with live peer_public_key and endpoint ra.apps.f0xx.org:51820.
UDP handshake is validated separately (Appendix 1 § B).
```

Android (field device)

Developer settings → Remote access → **WireGuard**; polls .../api/heartbeat.php (type: ra). See REMOTE_ACCESS_IMPL.md § App.

Source linkage

- Editable source: docs/20260602_REVERSE_SSH_proposals_summary.md
- PDF: docs/20260602_REVERSE_SSH_proposals_summary.pdf
- Regenerate: bash scripts/build-reverse-ssh-proposals-pdf.sh
- All docs/*.md PDFs: bash scripts/build-all-docs-pdf.sh