

Access denied for user root by PAM account configuration

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fatal : Access denied for user root by PAM account configuration [preauth]

This error indicates issues with the PAM (Pluggable authentication module) configuration on your SSH server.

In the error log based on the distribution(O.S.) you are using; this would be the following error that you would receive.

```
root@gateway:~# tail -f /var/log/auth.log
Jan 6 05:21:56 gateway sshd[15778]: PAM adding faulty module: pam_pwdb.so
Jan 6 05:21:58 gateway sshd[15778]: Failed password for root from 192.168.0.108 port 56750 ssh2
Jan 6 05:21:58 gateway sshd[15778]: fatal: Access denied for user root by PAM account configuration [preauth]
Jan 6 05:22:06 gateway sshd[15781]: PAM unable to resolve symbol: pam_sm_acct_mgmt
Jan 6 05:22:06 gateway sshd[15781]: PAM unable to dlopen(pam_cracklib.so): /lib/security/pam_cracklib.so: cannot open shared object file: Not a directory
Jan 6 05:22:06 gateway sshd[15781]: PAM adding faulty module: pam_cracklib.so
Jan 6 05:22:06 gateway sshd[15781]: PAM unable to dlopen(pam_pwdb.so): /lib/security/pam_pwdb.so: cannot open shared object file: Not a directory
Jan 6 05:22:06 gateway sshd[15781]: PAM adding faulty module: pam_pwdb.so
Jan 6 05:22:08 gateway sshd[15781]: Failed password for root from 192.168.0.108 port 56756 ssh2
Jan 6 05:22:08 gateway sshd[15781]: fatal: Access denied for user root by PAM account configuration [preauth]
```

You will not be able to log in to the remote server that has PAM misconfigurations. Following would be the error that would be received when you try to log in to the remote server that has existing PAM misconfigurations.



The screenshot shows a terminal window titled 'Ez: Ubuntu 22'. The prompt is 'Enter a reason for accessing (4 to 100 characters): user_login'. Below this, the terminal shows the 'Ubuntu 22' banner, followed by 'Authentication by SSH key failed.' and 'Authentication by password failed'. The server information is 'Server: 0ubuntu 22, port: 22'. The prompt 'Press any key to continue...' is shown with a green cursor.

This issue could be solved with the following steps where you would set UsePam to no in sshd conf file which means that the SSH server will not use the PAM for user authentication.

Run the following command and restart the sshd service:

```
root@gateway:~# sudo sed -i 's/^UsePAM .*/UsePAM no/' /etc/ssh/sshd_config
root@gateway:~# systemctl restart sshd
```

And try to re-login to the remote server.

NOTE:

Even if we've resolved the immediate issue by setting UsePAM to "no," consider revisiting the PAM configuration, verifying the paths and permissions of the modules mentioned in the error messages, and making the necessary corrections. This ensures that your system is configured securely while allowing for proper authentication.

For Reference: <https://arlimus.github.io/articles/usepam/>

Online URL:

<https://www.ezeelogin.com/kb/article/access-denied-for-user-root-by-pam-account-configuration-666.html>