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Telecel Zimbabwe

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Telecel Zimbabwe is a telecommunications services provider with most of its services in the mobile cellular network services. The company is owned jointly by the Empowerment Corporation (40%) and Vimpelcom (60%), one of the largest telecoms companies in the world. In Zimbabwe, Telecel is the second largest mobile network after [Econet Wireless Zimbabwe](#). Telecel Zimbabwe is headquartered in the capital [Harare](#) and has more than twenty branches countrywide.

Telecel Zimbabwe



telecel

Telecel Zimbabwe Logo

Trading name

Type

Industry

Founded

Founder

Headquarters

Key people

Parent

Website

Footnotes / references

Contact Tel: (263 4) 748321 – 7, (263 4) 780999 or 781624

Telecel Zimbabwe

Private

Telecoms

1996 in [Harare, Zimbabwe](#)

[Miko Rwayitare](#)

Seke Road, Harare South, [Harare, Zimbabwe](#)

[James Makamba](#), *Chairman*

[Vimpelcom](#)

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Founding

Telecel Zimbabwe, was founded in 1996 as a subsidiary of Telecel International, a company owned by Rwandan-born billionaire [Miko Rwayitare](#). The company was 60% owned by Telecel International and 40% owned by the [Empowerment Corporation](#), a consortium of local empowerment groups.

Telecel bid for and won a telecommunications license in early 1997. The awarding of a telecoms license to Telecel Zimbabwe was announced on 28 February 1997 by then Minister Telecoms, [Joice Mujuru](#). 5 telecoms companies had participated in the tender, one of them [Econet Wireless](#). The license was however withdrawn by a court ruling on 31 December 1997 after Econet Wireless, who had lost in the tender, applied to have the license issue overturned citing irregularities. Following the overturning of the license issue by Justice Sandura, Telecel Zimbabwe made an urgent court application, seeking to set aside the ruling pending their appeal against it, to the Supreme. Justice George Smith on 31 December 1997 however declared that the order given by Justice Sandura, was above appeal, as he was confirming an order already given by the Constitutional Court.

Some accounts have said that the appeal was never pursued and Telecel continued operating. In July 2013 Econet Wireless challenged Telecel's licensing in a statement in which they state that Telecel never got a license after their the issue of their license had been overturned in December 1997.^[1]

One account however says that Telecel was issued with a license a month later and that Telecel withdrew its appeal to the Supreme Court.^[2]

Products and Services

Telecel Zimbabwe offers a number of services in the communication service industry. Below are the major ones;

1. Money Transfer - [Telecash](#) Service
2. Mobile Broadband Services - 2G, 2.5G, EDGE and 3G
3. Mobile Voice services

Philanthropy and Community Service

Telecel offers philanthropic assistance to the following;

1. [Tokwe Murkosi](#) flood victims in [Masvingo](#) Province
2. Jairos Jiri Children's Centre in Waterfalls, [Harare](#)
3. Ruvimbo School in Southerton, [Harare](#)
4. Shungu dzeVana Trust
5. Sibantubanye Special School in [Bulawayo](#)
6. Bumhudzo Old People's Home in Chitungwiza
7. Makoni Old People's Home in Rusape
8. Batanai Old People's Home in Gweru



9. Sibantubanye Old People's Home in [Bulawayo](#)
10. Sakubva Old People's Home in [Mutare](#)

Besides these social services, Telecel has extended a hand in supporting the local arts. During the 2014 edition of the [Harare International Festival of the Arts \(HIFA\)](#) Telecel donated \$57 000 towards the success of the event. The company also bankrolled the Eastern Region Marathon race which was held in Mutare in June 2014.

Accolades and Awards

1. ISO 9001; 2008 Quality Certification
2. MAZ Marketing Excellence Award
3. ICT Africa Chairman's Award.
4. Marketing Association Award- Outstanding Promotional Campaign Award.
5. 2012- ICT Africa Chairman's Award

Controversies

Disconnection By Econet- Expiry of Licence

In 2013, Telecel Zimbabwe failed to renew its licence to conduct operations in Zimbabwe. The [Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe](#) (Potraz) renewed Telecel Zimbabwe's operating licence in August 2013 after the mobile company made an undertaking that it would make an initial payment of the US\$137,5 million-20 year licence before the end of 2013. The company also pledged to have a local majority shareholder by the end of 2013. Telecel received its first operating licence in 1998 which was due for renewal in June 2013. This resulted in Econet disconnecting Telecel from any form of business. The battle between the two telecoms giants was eventually settled by POTRAZ which directed Econet to resume normal business with its competitor whilst the payment of licence fee was being processed.

In 2007, the Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (Potraz) had also cancelled Telecel Zimbabwe's license over a shareholding dispute. According to [The Herald](#), Potraz had given Telecel Zimbabwe a deadline of June 30 this year to change the shareholding structure or risk losing its licence. Businessman [James Makamba](#) and [Jane Mutasa](#) reportedly gained control of the company after paying US\$3,5 million to Telecel International for the disputed 11% shares. Makamba is reported to have said he notified Potraz of this development, but the license was cancelled regardless.^[3]

Court Battle with Jane Mutasa

After it emerged that former employee Jane Mutasa had embezzled company funds by stealing airtime recharge cards worth around US\$1, 7 million. Although the matter was taken to the courts, the company failed to prosecute Mutasa due to the fact that they the high court had declined to grant the firm a certificate to commence private prosecution against Mutasa.^[4] Telecel wanted to seek a clearance from the court to prosecute Mutasa after the Attorney General was said to have declined to prosecute Mutasa arguing that they had failed to establish a case against Mutasa therefore they could not prosecute.^[4]

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Telecel legal representative however claimed that the court had erred because

It would be devoid of logic for a company to be denied that right to conduct prosecution. A company is made up of people and as such the reasons given to individuals to prosecute are the same reasons that should apply to companies. The AG's decision was grossly irregular, he could not have said there was no evidence when he denied bail the same accused persons on the basis that there was overwhelming evidence against them when they appeared at the magistrates' courts.^[4]

Mutangadura who was representing the state was adamant that the move taken by the high court was above board and

was against the law to allow corporates to conduct private prosecutions.^[4]

In 2014, it was reported that the court had eventually ordered prosecutor general to issue the certificate to Telecel Zimbabwe for it to be able to start a private prosecution of Jane Mutasa but the matter seemed to have died a natural death^[5]

Company Faces Closure

In March 2015, the Minister of Information Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services [Supa Mandiwanzira](#) announced that Telecel Zimbabwe was facing imminent closure following the company's breaching of the empowerment regulations as well as payment of its licence. The minister indicated that the government would take into consideration the welfare of the workers as well as its subscribers in executing the new plan.^[6] In April 2015, the [Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe](#) (POTRAZ) reported that Telecel had been given 30 days to shut down business. This was after the regulatory board had revoked Telecel's licence following disagreements over payments of licence as well as conforming to the indigenisation laws.

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