

MTN pays \$98m part of Nigerian fine

LAGOS, Nigeria: South African telecoms giant MTN has paid nearly \$100m of a \$1.7bn fine for failing to disconnect unregistered SIM cards in Nigeria.



"MTN has paid 30 billion naira (\$98m, €92m) as part of the fine," Tony Ojobo, spokesman for Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC) said. "The payment is in furtherance of the agreed timetable for payment of the total fine."

He said MTN had already paid 80 billion naira of the total fine of 330 billion naira and that the company was expected to pay the next tranche of the fine "based on the payment schedule agreed by the two parties."

An MTN source in Nigeria confirmed the payment.

"Yes, we have made another payment. It's in fulfilment of our financial obligations to the NCC regarding the fine," he said, without giving details.

5.1 million unregistered SIM cards

MTN was initially [hit with a \\$5.2bn fine in October 2015](#) for failing to cut off 5.1 million unregistered SIM cards as requested by the Nigerian government.

Security was cited as being behind the move, over fears that Boko Haram Islamists were using unregistered SIMs to plan and execute attacks in the remote northeast.

Violence by the jihadist group has left at least 20,000 dead and forced more than 2.6 million people from their homes since 2009.

In December 2015, the [fine was reduced to \\$3.4bn](#), then cut further in June last year to \$1.7 billion, which at the time was equivalent to 330 billion naira.

The payment is staggered over three years.

The Johannesburg-based firm, which is the largest mobile provider in Nigeria, threatened to pull out of the country during the SIM card row, before the fine was reduced.

Source: BDpro

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