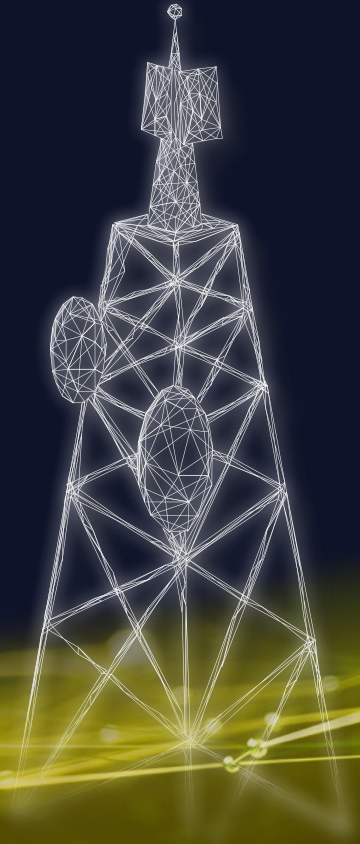




Who's Who in MENA Towers

2023 edition

TowerXchange presents an updated A to Z of MNOs, towercos and investors who are key stakeholders in the MENA tower industry



TowerXchange's who's who in MENA towers – 2023 update



MNOs:

A

Afghan Telecom

A government-owned and operated MNO in Afghanistan. With the takeover of power by the Taliban, information on the Afghanistan telecoms market has been very restricted.

Asiacell

Part of the Ooredoo group, Asiacell is the only MNO in Iraq to provide national coverage on its 4G network. Asiacell has around 8,000 towers which are part of Ooredoo's regional tower sale. The MNO is currently rolling out its own network but this has slowed down as the focus shifts towards upgrading the network and increasing capacity. Asiacell is deploying solar solutions on their rural sites, although energy strategy is set at group-level.

B

Bahrain Telecommunications Company (Batelco)

A public Bahraini local MNO and one of 3 operators in the

country. Bahrain is a leading global ICT hub and first in the Arab world on the ICT Development Index. Batelco is focused on supporting the Kingdom's transition by rolling out smart city solutions and digital infrastructure. The operator also owns Jordanian MNO Umniah.

D

Djezzy

Algerian market-leader Djezzy is owned by the Government through its fund Fonds National d'Investissement after Veon sold its 45.5% stake in the operator in 2021. The MNO has around 6,500 towers and co-locates on a limited number of Ooredoo sites. Djezzy has been investing heavily in 3/4G network expansion as well as testing 5G partnership with Huawei and Nokia for a commercial launch in early 2023.

Du (Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company)

One of two main operators in the UAE alongside Etisalat with a portfolio of around 5,000 towers. Du is 50% owned by the UAE government through Emirates Investment Authority (which is also the parent company of competitor MNO Etisalat), with minority stake holdings from Mamoura Diversified Global Holding and EITC.

Some talks around a potential joint-venture between Etisalat and Du have been floated but have stalled due to management

differences. Du is a focused on supporting the UAE's digital transformation strategy and is a pioneer in smart city, 5G and digital infrastructure.

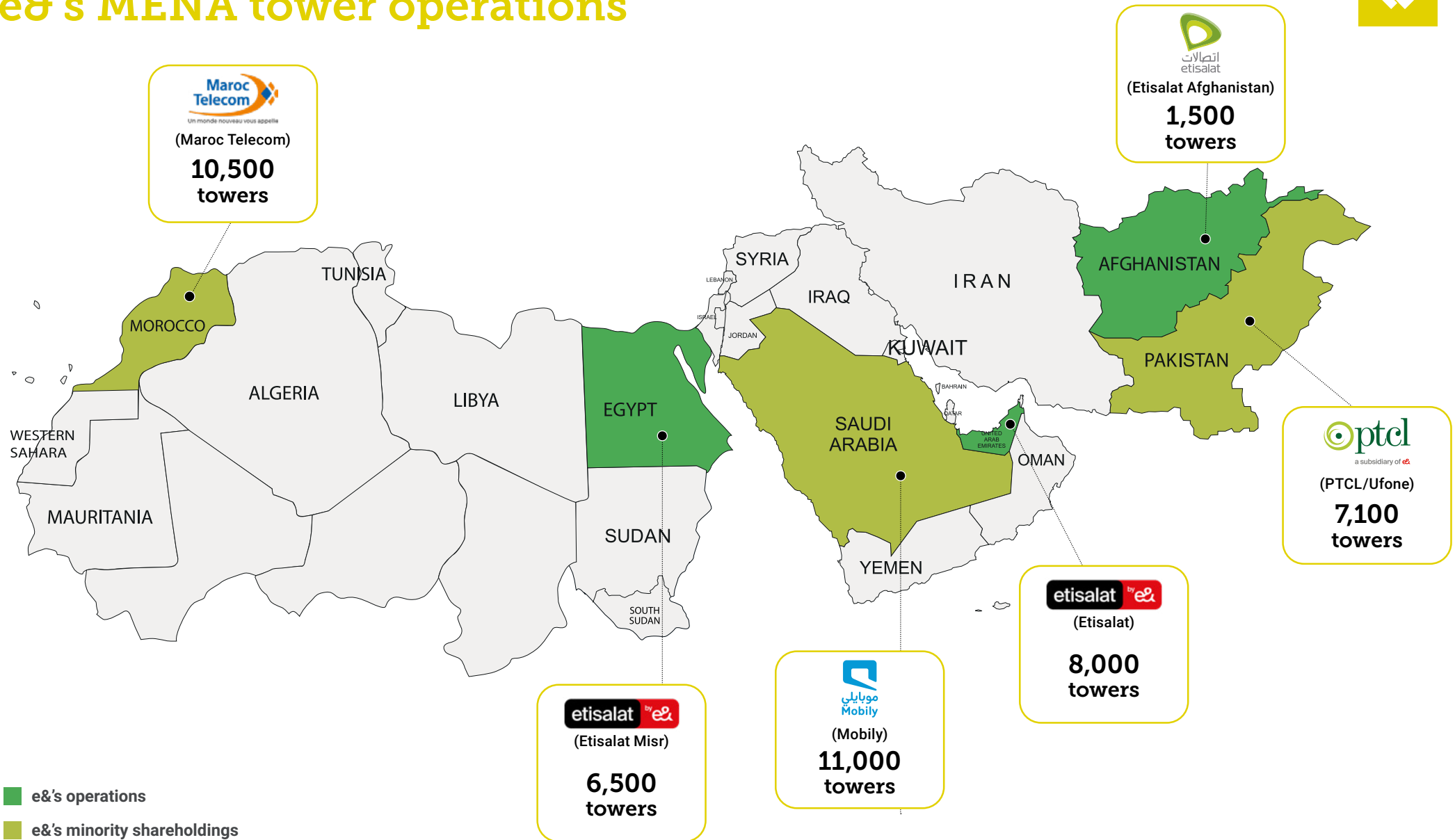
E

e&

UAE-based multinational MNO operating in 16 countries across Asia, the Middle East and Africa, e& is 18th largest MNO in the world by number of subscribers. E& is the holding company for several MENA subsidiaries with majority or total ownership of Etisalat (UAE), Etisalat Afghanistan, Etisalat Misr (Egypt), Mobily (Saudi Arabia), Moov Africa (e&'s African operations), Maroc Telecom (Morocco) and Ufone (Pakistan). Across all its subsidiaries and shareholding MNOs e& operates the largest tower portfolio in MENA with around 37,000 towers.

e& is heavily focused on digital transformation and 5G, especially in its Saudi Arabian and UAE opco's. It has supported several smart city and megaproject developments including the connectivity infrastructure for Dubai Expo in 2020. e& also have a comprehensive sustainability strategy to reduce energy consumption, emissions reduction and increase renewable energy sourcing.

e&'s MENA tower operations



Source: TowerXchange

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F

Fastlink

The largest 4G LTE player in Iraq and operates a small tower portfolio of around 850 sites.

I

Inwi

Formerly known as Wana, Inwi has been steadily increasing its market share, overtaking Orange as the second largest operator in Morocco. Inwi is 69% owned by the state holding company Societe Nationale d'Investissement (Al Mada). As Moroccan MNOs do not share infrastructure, Inwi is rolling out its own tower and fibre networks.

J

Jazz

Pakistan's largest MNO, Jazz was formed by the merger of Mobilink and Warid Pakistan in 2016. Jazz is in the process of

selling its 10,500 tower unit Deodar with the bidders including TAWAL, Engro Enfrashare and TASC Towers. Like other Pakistani MNOs, Jazz is focused on expanding its 4G network and has built around 700 new sites in 2022. Jazz is also exploring digital and mobile money services which it plans to invest in using the capital raised from its tower sale.

K

Korek Telecom

An Iraqi Kurdish MNO based in Kurdistan and 20% owned by Orange. The third largest operator in the market, Korek is focused on expanding its 4G service which it launched last year. To achieve this the MNO is keen to co-locate on other sites and is considering a sale of its 3,700-tower portfolio. Although most sites use diesel generators, Korek is exploring hybrid energy solutions.

M

Maroc Telecom

The market-leading MNO in Morocco with 38.4% market share and ownership of the largest wireline voice and fixed broadband network. However, the operator has seen a slow decline in

market share since 2019 as the regulators aim to curb Maroc Telecom's dominance. The MNO operates around 10,500 towers in Morocco, which is a portfolio twice as large as Inwi and Orange Combined and does not share infrastructure.

In 2021 e& increased its stake in the MNO from 48.4% to 53% but while e& has shown an interest in following a SLB model, the Moroccan government (who owns 22% of the shares) has been disinterested due to its strategic view of tower assets.

Mobilis

Once a subsidiary of Algerian Telecommunications Corporation, the state-owned Algerian MNO, Mobilis became independent in 2003 and operates around 7,500 towers, the largest in the country.

Mobily

Etisalat's Saudi Arabian subsidiary Mobily, also known as Etihad Etisalat Company, is a local MNO in the Saudi market established in 2004 and breaking stc's monopoly in the telecom industry. Mobily are rapidly expanding its network, supporting the governments ambitious digital transformation strategy, and work with local towerco TAWAL.

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Omantel

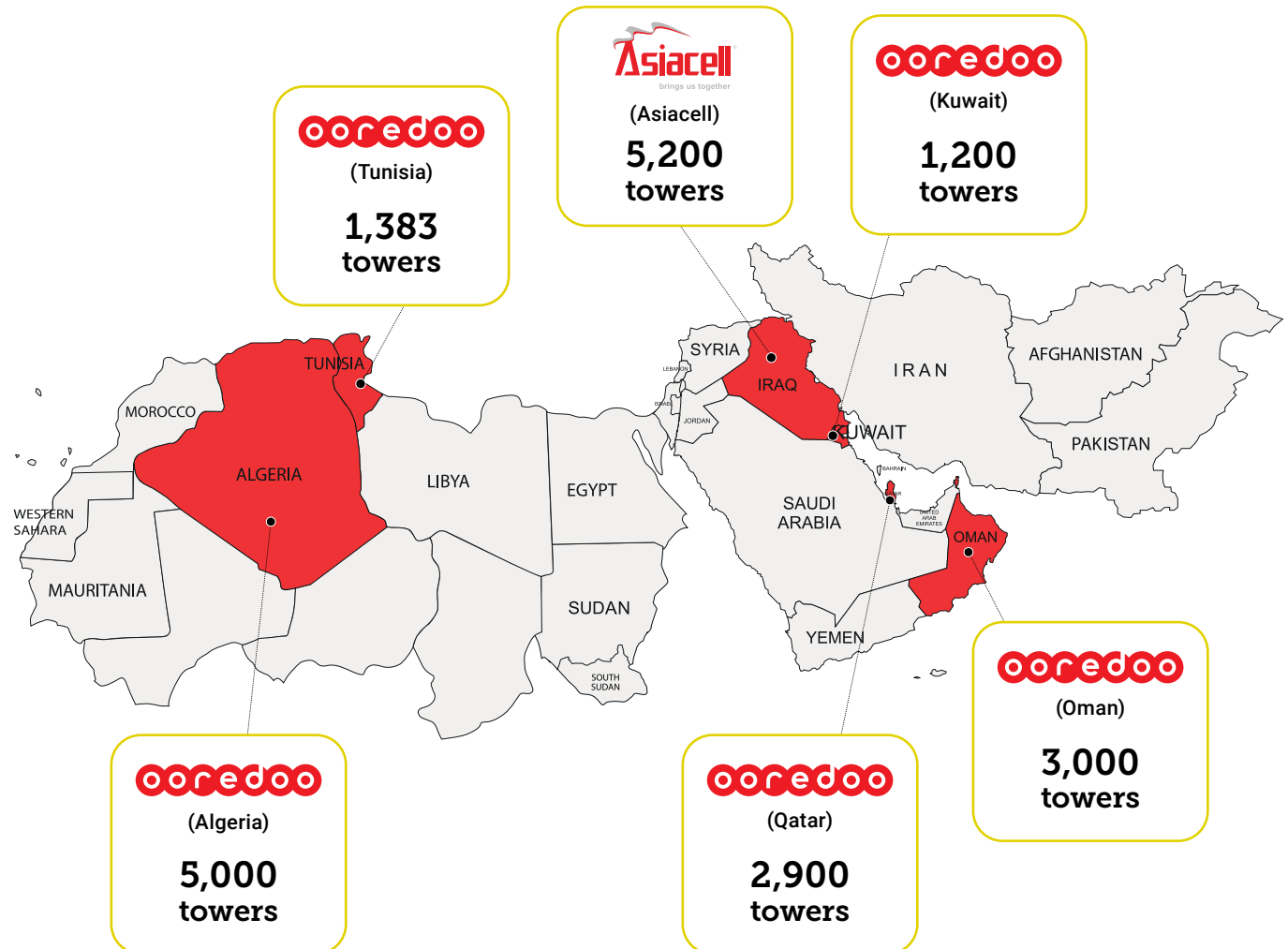
Oman's first MNO and 51% owned by the government. Omantel is the first MNO in Oman to sell towers in a SLB deal with Helios Towers for 2,519 sites, although the operator retains a small portfolio of around 100 sensitive sites. Omantel has launched commercial 5G services in the country alongside Ooredoo Oman.

Ooredoo

A Qatar-based multinational operator, Ooredoo is 68% owned by the Qatari government with a 10% stake from ADIA and is 22% owned by investors. Ooredoo is one of the oldest and most experienced MNOs in the Gulf, having launched in 1987 in Qatar as Qtel before rebranding in 2013. Ooredoo has experienced significant growth over the last few years, transforming from a single market operator to a multinational with operations in seven countries. Ooredoo currently have live RFPs in all six markets it owns towers; Iraq (under its local subsidiary Asiacell), Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Algeria and Tunisia totalling around 20,000 towers.

The MNO has exited the Asian market, selling its business units in Indonesia (retaining a minority 33% stake in Indosat Ooredoo) and Myanmar to focus on its core Middle Eastern operations. Ooredoo is a market leader in digital transformation and 5G solutions, supporting numerous government digital strategies including its home country's Qatar National Vision 2023.

Where are Ooredoo selling its towers?



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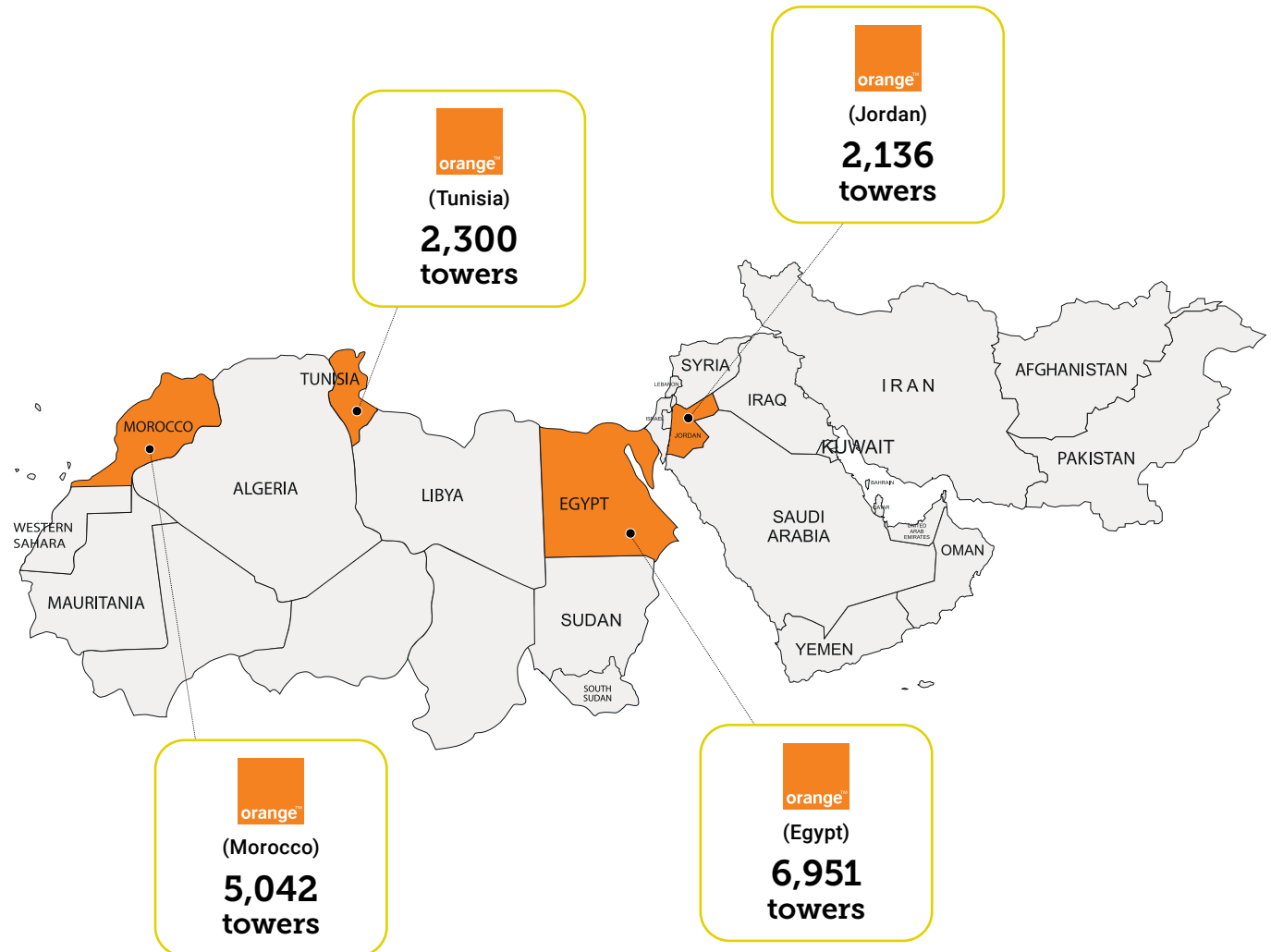


Orange

French multi-national MNO has operations in four MENA countries with a heavy presence in North Africa. Specifically, Orange operates in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia for a total of around 14,000 towers. Orange are a world leader in exploring energy solutions, particularly in Africa, and have been using solar farms in Morocco and Jordan to support the operators ambitious sustainability goals. Orange is also a 5G innovator having recently opened its first Middle Eastern 5G lab in Jordan and is piloting 5G in Algeria.

Orange has an ongoing review of its tower assets across its fourteen MEA countries but have expressed disinterest in selling its towers. If any action is decided to be taken it will likely be to follow its European strategy which formed carve-out towerco TOTEM.

Where do Orange own towers?



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P

Pakistan Telecommunication Company (PTCL)

Pakistan's national MNO 62% owned by the Pakistani government and 26% minority owned by e& (the remaining 12% are public after a privatization program in 2006). PTCL own around 7,100 towers in the country and are the parent company to local operator Ufone.

Saudi Telecommunications Company (stc):

Saudi Arabian MNO stc group is the largest operator in the market and 68% government owned through PIF. It has subsidiaries in Bahrain and Kuwait but does not own towers in these countries. stc is the parent company of MENA's largest towerco TAWAL which it carved-out in 2019 and therefore does not own any towers directly.

Saudi Arabia is a global leader in 5G rollout, smart cities and megaprojects and stc is focused on supporting the country's ambitious digital transformation strategy. stc has been suggested as a potential buyer for Telenor's Pakistani business unit, a market it has been interested in for some time.

T

Telecom Egypt

Egypt's state-owned local MNO, Telecom Egypt also owns 45% of the market's largest operator Vodafone Egypt. Telecom Egypt secured a US\$160mn loan from the European Investment Bank to expand its 4G network by deploying around 2,000 new sites. It is expanding FTTH with Vodafone Egypt to lay the groundwork for 5G rollout.

Tunisie Telecom

Tunisian-based incumbent MNO, Tunisie Telecom is 65% owned by the state and minority owned by Dubai Holding. The MNO also acquired a 60% share purchase of the Maltese operator GO in 2016. Tunisie Telecom operates 2,850 towers, 70% of which are rooftop sites, but is in the process of carving out its portfolio into a separate towerco entity. Tower sharing is limited but due to coverage commitments in MNO 4G licenses there is some co-location through site share swaps.

U

Ufone: see PTCL

Umniah

A Jordanian operator and subsidiary of Bahrain-based MNO Batelco, Umniah is the third and most recent MNO in Jordan. Umniah is supporting the country's 5G rollout with an agreement to increase investment in infrastructure rollout and has been issued a 5G license.

V

Vodacom

Vodafone's pan-African subsidiary, Vodacom has services in South Africa, Tanzania, the RDC, Mozambique, Lesotho and Kenya. While not in MENA, Vodafone recently transferred its controlling 55% stake in Vodafone Egypt to Vodacom. The MNO is also in the early stages of carving out its South African tower portfolio into a separate towerco.

Vodafone Oman

The newest MNO to launch in the Omani market, Vodafone Oman is a strategic partnership between Vodafone Group and Oman Future Telecommunications which launched commercial services in 2019. Vodafone Oman is expanding its 4G and 5G network with Oman Tower Company building around 1,000 new sites.

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Vodafone

British multinational MNO Vodafone is one of the world's largest MNOs with services in 22 countries and partners in a further 48 countries. It is part of the FTSE 100. Vodafone had operations in two MENA countries but has since exited both of them; selling its stake in Vodafone Qatar in 2018 and recently transferring a majority of Vodafone Egypt's shares to its African subsidiary Vodacom (but remains Vodafone Egypt). Vodafone also have a strategic partnership with Oman Future Telecommunications under Vodafone Oman.

Zong

Also known as CMPak Limited, Zong is a Pakistan-based MNO and a 100%-owned subsidiary of China Mobile. While Zong have a portfolio of around 7,100 sites it is interested in retaining its tower portfolio, partly due to valuing its towers as strategic assets and also due to its secure source of funding from its parent company. Like other Pakistani MNOs Zong are focused on expanding its 4G network and exploring energy solutions to manage off-grid and load shedding issues.

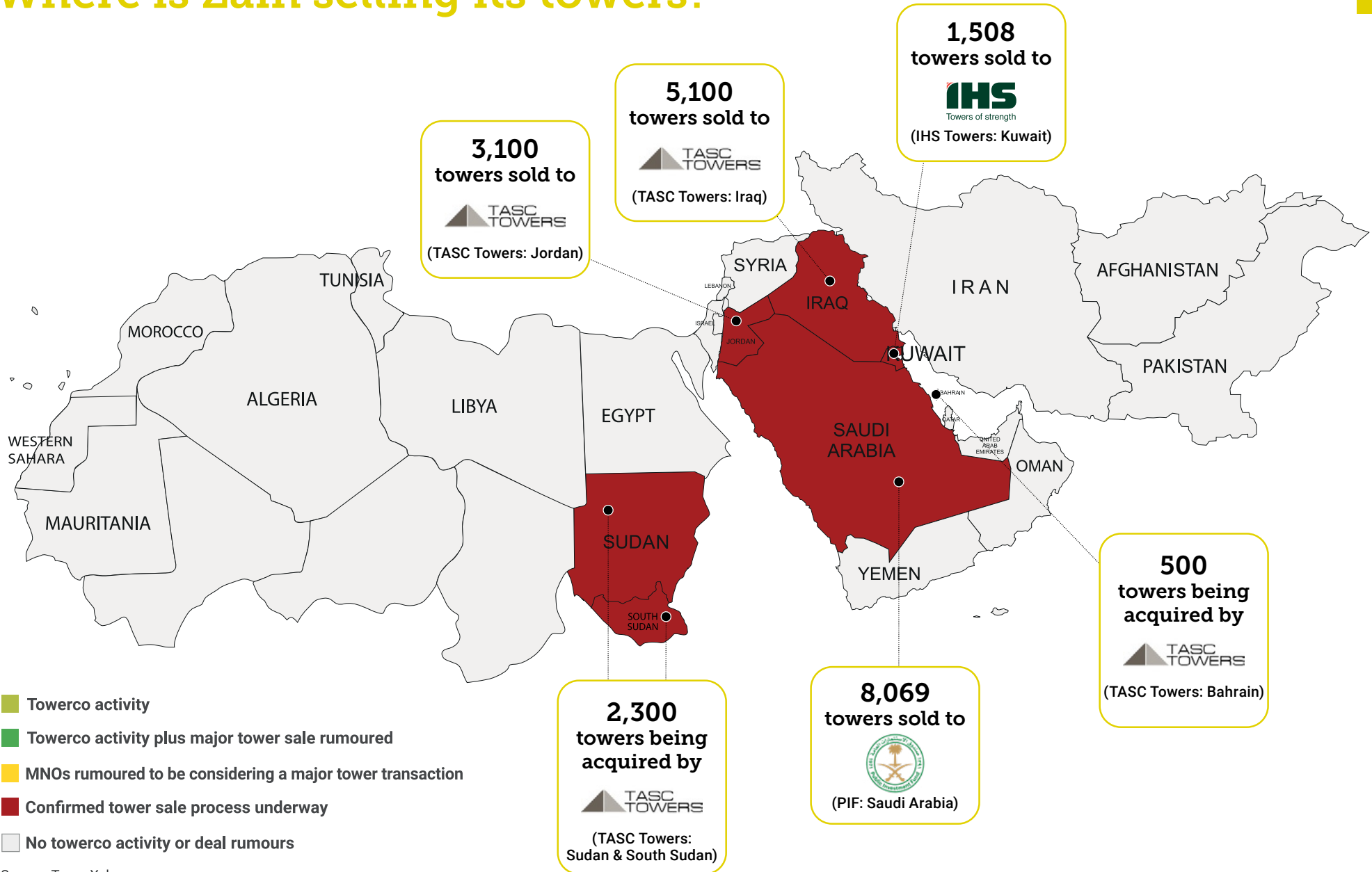
Z

Zain

Kuwait-based multinational MNO Zain is one of the oldest in the region launching operations in 1983. Zain provide service in 8 MENA countries; Bahrain Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and South Sudan. It also owns a a minority stake in Moroccan MNO Inwi. Zain are in the process of selling its passive infrastructure to TASC Towers, in whom it owns a minority 20% stake as part of the SLB deal.

Zain sold its portfolio in Kuwait to IHS Towers back in 2019 and have closed with PIF in Saudi Arabia and TASC in Iraq and Jordan, with Bahrain, Sudan and South Sudan to follow. This makes Zain the first MENA multinational MNO to offload all of its passive infrastructure assets.

Where is Zain selling its towers?



Source: TowerXchange

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Towercos:

A

American Tower

The world's largest independent towerco with a global tower count over 220,000 sites. Although the towerco doesn't have any towers in MENA it does have a Dubai office for procurement and sourcing. American Tower has reportedly shown interest in the Ooredoo sale but is less keen on buying small portfolios in smaller markets.

Associated Technologies pty

A Pakistani infrastructure development company active for over 30 years and now acting as a towerco with a portfolio of 500 sites.

E

edotco

Pan-Asian towerco which is a subsidiary of Axiata Group, owning and managing 52,772 towers across Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and

the Philippines. The company has a heavy focus on digitisation, energy optimisation and operational excellence while also exploring areas including fibre, antenna-as-a-service, in-building solutions, site-as-a-service and network-as-a-service.

Edotco operate 2,209 towers in Pakistan and is the second largest towerco in the market behind Engro Enfrashare with 2,900 towers. edotco, like other Pakistani towercos, are focused on fast build-to-suit deployments and energy management which is becoming increasingly challenging

Engro Enfrashare

The largest towerco in Pakistan with 2,900 towers. Enfrashare was founded in 2018 and is a subsidiary of national conglomerate Engro Corporation. Like other Pakistani towercos, Engro Enfrashare is focused on fast build-to-suit deployments having built around 2 -2,200 new sites in 2022 as well as managing power which is becoming increasingly challenging given market conditions. Enfrashare is one of 3 bidders in the sale of market-leading MNO Jazz's 10,500 tower unit Deodar.

H

Helios Towers

Helios Towers the third largest towerco in Africa with 13,391 towers across Congo Brazzaville, the DRC, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Senegal, South Africa, and Tanzania as well as 2,519 towers in Oman. Helios announced its acquisition of Oman

Telecom's portfolio back in May 2021 and has taken over a year to finalise, marking the towerco's first expansion outside of Africa.

Like other African towercos, Helios Towers has extensive experience managing power-as-a-service, rural rollout and rapid build-to-suit deployment, as well as running some network-as-a-service models in Nigeria. Helios Towers' arrival in Oman will support local MNOs rollout 4G networks as well as offering colocation and densification for commercial 5G

HOI MEA

A managed service provider offering turnkey management services, power and rapid deployment solutions. HOI operates a small portfolio of 38 towers in Egypt.

I

IHS Towers

The largest towerco in Africa, global towerco IHS Towers manages 39,397 towers across six African markets and three South American markets. In MENA, IHS acquired 1,620 of Zains Kuwaiti towers for US\$130mn in 2020 marking the first major tower transaction in the region between an operator and a pureplay independent. IHS also have a towerco license in Egypt with a contract to build 5,800 sites but are not able to own any themselves.

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IHS has become a pioneer of infrastructure sharing and is focused on densifying telecoms networks to support local MNOs Zain, Ooredoo and stc in 5G rollout. This includes testing small cell solutions as macro-layer 5G reaches national coverage. IHS Towers has also been exploring other opportunities for expansion in the region, particularly through the Ooredoo sale which it is known to be interested in.

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O

Oman Tower Company

Established in 2018 by Oman 70 Holding Company, AktivCo and the Omani Government, Oman Tower Company own and manage 1,487 towers in the country. The towerco has delivered over 1,000 build-to-suit towers for local MNOs, particularly Vodafone Oman where it leads the operators' network rollout. Oman Towers also manages hundreds of government-owned sites and has a sharing agreement with local petroleum group PDO.

P

Paradigm Infrastructure

Paradigm signed its first acquisition in a joint venture with SBA Communications for Airtel's 1,400 towers in Tanzania, now operating under the name Minara Towers. Paradigm has been exploring other expansion opportunities including Kenya as well as North Africa, where its experience managing off-grid sites in challenging markets may make it a strong candidate for some North African countries.

T

TASC Towers

TASC Towers was founded in 2017 by executives from former tower operating MNOs and engineering companies. TASC signed the first pan national SLB agreement in MENA to acquire Zain's tower portfolios in Jordan, Iraq and Bahrain. The towerco started operations in Jordan in early 2022 and now has a portfolio of 3,100 towers supporting local network rollout in preparation for Jordan's commercial 5G launch. In December 2022, TASC also finalised its deal in Iraq for 5,100 towers. In total the towerco has expanded rapidly with a portfolio of 8,200 towers by the end of 2022.

TASC hope to close its acquisition of Zain's 500 sites in Bahrain which is expected to finish in early 2023. TASC is also known to be involved in Ooredoo's ongoing 20,000 tower sale across 6 MENA markets (Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait, Algeria, Tunisia and Oman) and Deodar sale in Pakistan. Despite having only recently acquired most of its towers, TASC has set an ambitious strategy exploring organic growth opportunities in existing and new markets, particularly around digital infrastructure beyond towers.

TAWAL

A Saudi Arabian towerco carve-out of local MNO stc and 49% owned by sovereign wealth fund PIF launched in 2019. TAWAL is the only towerco in the kingdom with a portfolio of 15,970 sites and one of the leading towercos in the Middle East. TAWAL

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also acquired local Pakistani towerco AWAL Telecom with 100 sites and is set to launch operations imminently. Thanks to the Kingdom's widespread adoption of 5G and home to several smart city megaprojects, TAWAL has become a leader in digital infrastructure with a license to deploy in-building solutions and is a member of the Small Cell Forum.

With PIF finalising its deal to acquire Zain's 8,069 towers and recently submitting an offer to buy stc's 51% stake in TAWAL, the towerco is positioned to consolidate the Kingdoms tower industry. This puts TAWAL in a strong position to explore further expansion opportunities in new markets.

TowerCo of Africa

A carve-out of Axian Telecom, TowerCo of Africa has two subsidiaries, TowerCo of Madagascar which has a portfolio of 1,563 towers and TowerCo of Uganda (Ubuntu Towers) with 170 in Uganda. Axian Group plans to grow its subsidiary's portfolio including 1,000 sites in Togo and 400 in Tanzania bringing the towerco's total count to 3,133 and becoming the 5th largest in Africa. As a French-speaking organisation used to operating in more challenging markets TowerCo of Africa sees compatibility in North African countries.

Investors:

A

Abu Dhabi Investment Authority

Sovereign wealth fund owned by the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. ADIA is an investor in EdgePoint Infrastructure and was an investor in Axicom, prior to its acquisition by Australia Tower Network.

actis

A global investor in sustainable infrastructure with US\$24bn in investment capital. Is involved in the first round of the Ooredoo sale bidding process.

Acwa Group

Saudi conglomerate with an interest in towers. Joined forces with TASC Towers in its bid to acquire Zain's Saudi Arabian sites, although the deal fell through.

Al Rahji Group

Saudi based investor which was linked with a 2016 Mobily tower sale process (which was subsequently cancelled).

Al Zamil Group

Middle Eastern investor linked with tower sales in Saudi Arabia.

B

BlackRock

The world's largest asset manager, with US\$10tn in assets under management as of 2022. Digital infrastructure is a key asset class in BlackRock's investment portfolio. Recently signed an agreement with Saudi Arabia's PIF to explore infrastructure projects in the Middle East with a focus on the Kingdom.

Brookfield

Major infrastructure investor whose investments in towers include the Wireless Infrastructure Group (UK & Ireland), Telia Towers (Norway, Finland and Sweden), TDF (France), GD Towers (Germany & Austria) and Summit Digital (India). While not presently owning any sites in the Middle East, Brookfield have been linked to the ongoing Ooredoo tower sale.

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D

Dawood Hercules Corporation (DH Corp)

Listed Pakistani investment conglomerate with a US\$600mn market cap. Took a 45% stake in edotco Pakistan prior to the (now cancelled) deal to acquire 10,500 towers from Jazz. Dawood Hercules now owns Pakistani towerco, Engro Enfrashare.

DigitalBridge

DigitalBridge is a leading global digital infrastructure REIT with investments spanning the digital ecosystem including towers, data centres, fibre, small cells, and edge infrastructure. DigitalBridge's investments in the tower space span across North and Latin America, Europe, and East Asia. DigitalBridge does not yet have any infrastructure assets in MENA but has invested US\$1bn in data centres across Africa and is looking at opportunities to acquire infrastructure assets in the region.

E

Emirates Investment Authority

The sovereign wealth fund of the UAE, EIA owns 50% of local operator Du and 60% of Etisalat as well as a 9.8% stake in Vodafone, becoming the operator's largest shareholder.

G

GIC (Gulf Investment Corporation)

A supranational financial institution owned equally by the 6 Gulf Cooperation Council States and is a mix of sovereign wealth fund, private equity house and investment bank. The GIC encourages economic integration and development in the GCC and invest in industrial projects including the telecommunications space.

Goldman Sachs

Global investment firm whose investments in telecom towers include IHS Towers, Golden Comunicaciones (a BTS firm focused on the Colombian and Costa Rican markets in which it coinvests with Innova Capital Partners) and Continental (in which it is a minority investor). Goldman Sachs also invested in CSS alongside Gávea Investimentos, prior to the towerco's acquisition by IHS and was also an investor in US towerco, Vertical Bridge.

H

Helios Investment Partners

Investment firm making private equity investments in Africa, with a primary focus on the sub-Saharan region. Helios' portfolio companies operate in thirty five African countries across a range

of industry sectors, with telecom infrastructure and services playing an important part. Founder investors in Helios Towers (having since exited its investment following Helios' IPO) and previous investors in HTN Towers (prior to the towerco's sale to IHS).

K

Kumpulan Wang Persaraan (KWAP)

Malaysia's largest public service pension fund which is an investor in pan-Asian towerco, edotco.

Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA)

The world's first sovereign wealth fund, KIA manages US\$738bn of assets including minority stakes in Omantel and Inwi.

M

Macquarie

Macquarie has an extensive tower portfolio around the world including PhilTower Consortium, (Philippines), Mexico Tower Partners (Mexico), Towercom (Slovakia), Tower Bersama (Indonesia) and UK broadcast towerco, Arqiva (whose telecoms division has been sold to Cellnex). Former towerco

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investments include Viom Networks and ATC India (India), Ceské Radiokomunikace (Czech Republic), Russian Towers (Russia) and Axicom (Australia). Macquarie has been linked to the ongoing Ooredoo tower sale.

Mubadala

Abu Dhabi's leading investment company which is active in 13 sectors and more than 30 countries around the world. Known interest in the digital infrastructure asset class, having recently invested in an Asian data centre company.

N

New Silk Route

Private equity firm that invests in private companies in India, Asia, and the Middle East. Its investments in the telecommunications infrastructure industry include Ascend Telecom in India.

O

Oman 70 Holding

Shareholder in Oman Towers Company.

P

Public Investment Fund (PIF)

PIF is one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds and a key investment vehicle the House of Saud is using to diversify the country away from oil & gas, as well as launch ambitious new development projects. Formed in 1971 the fund largely invests in non-oil & gas projects. Under a five-year strategy announced in January last year the fund aims to more than double the value of its assets under management to over US\$1tn and commit US\$40bn a year to develop the domestic economy until 2025. PIF is the 70% shareholder of stc, one of Saudi Arabia's three MNOs, which in turn is the whole owner of TAWAL.

Q

Qatar Investment Authority

Qatar's sovereign wealth fund, is in talks with Vodafone Egypt to acquire a 20% stake in the company.

S

Sanabil

Saudi Arabian investor, which although wholly owned by the government's Public Investment Fund, operates as an independent investment institution. Understood to have an interest in towers.


Societe Nationale d'Investissement

Morocco's state holding company and 69% majority owner of local MNO Inwi.

Sultan Holding Company

An Emirati business based in Abu Dhabi with a diverse investment portfolio spanning real estate, IT, engineering and oil & gas. Joined hands with PIF to acquire Zain KSA's towers for \$807mn and now owns a 20% stake in Golden Lattices Investment Holdings. Prince Saud bin Fahad is a member of the House of Saud.

Notice anyone missing you think should be on our list? Please contact us and let us know at contact@towerxchange.com

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