FRAUD MANAGEMENT

# Investigation Report: Impersonation and Advance Payment Scam at Vodacom LNDC Store

May 27, 2025

## Introduction

On May 22, 2025, Vodacom Lesotho received a tip-off indicating that individuals impersonating Vodacom staff members were targeting customers in and around the Vodacom LNDC Store. These individuals were allegedly involved in a scam where customers were lured into making upfront payments for non-existent goods and services, under the belief they were dealing with legitimate Vodacom representatives.

## Purpose of the Investigation

The purpose of this investigation is to assess the reported scam activities occurring near the Vodacom LNDC Store, verify the identities of the perpetrators, document their modus operandi, and provide recommendations to mitigate future occurrences and enhance customer protection.

## Scope of the Investigation

This investigation covers:

* Verification of the reported scam
* Identification of suspects involved
* Review of the scammers' techniques and operations
* Evaluation of Vodacom Lesotho’s current customer protection initiatives
* Collaboration with law enforcement authorities for intervention

## Methodology

The investigation employed the following methods:

* **Information Gathering:** Based on a tip-off from the public and social media monitoring.
* **Physical Surveillance:** Vodacom Lesotho’s internal law enforcement unit conducted on-ground observation at the LNDC Store premises.
* **Coordination with Police:** Support was requested from Maseru Central Police for enforcement actions.
* **Suspect Identification Strategy:** A call was placed to the scammer’s contact number while inside the store to observe who in the vicinity would respond, thereby identifying potential perpetrators.

## Summary of Findings

* **Scam Modus Operandi:** Scammers posed as Vodacom staff on Facebook, offering discounted sales. Victims were asked to deposit money in advance before collecting items at the LNDC Store.
* **Location and Tactics:** Scammers positioned themselves opposite the LNDC main entrance, visually tracking customer movement. This enabled them to describe their attire to create the illusion of insider knowledge.
* **Arrest and Ongoing Threat:** One scammer was successfully identified and arrested using the phone call identification tactic. However, at least two other individuals believed to be part of the operation remain at large.
* **Customer Awareness Efforts:** Prior to this incident, Vodacom Lesotho had proactively warned customers about fraudulent activities through a public article ("VCL WARNS AGAINST SCAMMERS" - The Reporter, May 2, 2025) and through ongoing social media campaigns.

## Conclusion

This investigation confirms the existence of a targeted impersonation scam at the Vodacom LNDC Store involving multiple individuals. Although one arrest has been made, the possibility of more scammers operating with similar tactics remains high. The incident highlights the evolving methods scammers are employing to exploit unsuspecting customers and underscores the necessity of continued vigilance and customer education.

## Recommendation

Vodacom Lesotho has been proactive in mitigating fraud risks through ongoing customer awareness campaigns and close collaboration with law enforcement. In light of this incident, the following strengthened measures are recommended:

1. **Expand Public Awareness Campaigns**
* While Vodacom Lesotho has already taken commendable steps, such as publishing fraud alerts in The Reporter and posting on all official social media platforms, there is a need to intensify these efforts.
1. **Pursue Full Legal Action Against Apprehended Suspects**

To deter future impersonation and scam attempts, Vodacom Lesotho must:

* Ensure the arrested individual is prosecuted to the full extent of the law.
* Publicly communicate the outcome of the legal process (where permissible) to send a clear message to would-be fraudsters.
* Work with legal counsel to explore civil remedies and restitution claims where applicable.