

**Koquwa Airlines** is the national airline of Koquwa. The airline was founded in 1975 and travels to over 70 destinations worldwide.

<b>KOQUWA AIRLINES</b>
<b>KOQUWA</b> <i>Colours of Africa</i>
Founded: 2 October 1975
Destinations: 71
Aircraft: 64
CEO: Puloxala Nqobiya Annette

## History

### Before 1975

The need for a national airline for South Cuakaland had been around since at least the late 1940s, with the government attempting to subsidize air transport within the country. There was only one functional airport in the country by 1950, that being Easo Airport (now Houtfontein Airport) in the capital of Easo, which had a thrice weekly flight to London Heathrow via Port Mackoo, Lagos, Timbuktu and Algiers by BOAC using Vickers Viscounts, and a daily flight to Rand Airport in Johannesburg via Gaborone by South African Airways using Douglas DC-4s.

An early attempt at a national airline was British Cuakaland Airways, which would have owned by and operated Comets on behalf of BOAC. Only one testing flight, between Easo and London Heathrow via Lagos, was flown, on 18 June 1957, but no fulltime service came to pass, and BOAC continued operating Comets to Easo under its own name.

The opening of Lameco (Lameko) Airport in 1968 reinvigorated ideas for a national airline, and it was one Trevor Daneshle, whose father Jacob Daneshle was on the board of directors of major shipping company Fortune Shipping, that began studying into the feasibility of a national airline. He had been the first non-white person to get a registered pilot's license in apartheidist South Cuakaland. With two colleagues, Steven van der Rotland and Langley Davids, he set out surveying routes and airports, talking with investors and potential shareholders, and getting

information on aircraft. The result was a 279-page document on recommendations that van der Rotland and Davids presented to the government; Daneshle was purposefully not credited or even mentioned in the document. The government approved the document, setting aside a national inquiry into the creation of an airline.

## **1975-1979**

By early 1975, the project had been announced to the public, inviting any potential investors to look at funding the new airline. Operations had moved from Houfontein to Easo Int'l, opened in December 1974, and so it was decided to wait until after opening to launch the airline. Delays and troubles with funding meant the airline was only able to secure a single Douglas DC-3 TQ-CBA in July 1975. Ticket reservations opened in August.

The first flight of South Cuakaland Air Transport Service (SCATS) took to the skies on 2 October 1975, piloted by Daneshle, first officer Robin Meyering and flight engineer William "Billy" Woodson. The flight routed Easo - Lameco - Francistown - Gaborone - Johannesburg. In its first year, the airline had 300 employees and was making £800 (roughly L4,000 today) in revenue. Two Lockheed L-749 Constellations, both ex-Eastern Airlines, were purchased in 1976, the first example TQ-CBB entering service in May of that year. Routes to Cape Town via Windhoek and Alexander Bay, plus Salisbury (Harare) via Lameco and Maun, were launched.

In late 1976, following the expansion and upgrading of Easo and Lameco Airports, SCATS put an order down for five Boeing 727-200 jet aircraft. The first 727, TQ-CFA, was delivered in 1978, replacing Constellations on regional routes. Additionally, the airline's name was changed to South Cuakaland Airlines (SCA). A new livery, consisting of an orange-and-brown cheatline, a metal underbelly, and the SCA insignia on the tail, was introduced.

The sole DC-3 operated domestic flights to Lameco, while the Constellations flew to Port Mackoo. 727 services were rolled out with direct Johannesburg and Salisbury flights, plus Cape Town via Windhoek. Separate flights to Gaborone and Lusaka were launched with the arrival of more 727s. In 1980, Cape Town services dropped the Windhoek stopover, which became a separate flight.

## **1980-1989**

SCA retired its DC-3 and Constellations by 1982, as they were relatively old compared to the brand new 727s. Codeshare flights to London were started, and SCA began selling British Airways tickets from Easo to London Heathrow.

By 1983, SCA had a fleet of five 727s, and was operating 20 daily flights to twelve destinations. These included direct flights to Lorenzo Marques (now Maputo), Walvis Bay, and Port Mackoo. In 1984, ownership passed from a minority stake by the public directly to government control.

For the summer of 1985, 1986, and 1987, SCA wet-leased a Boeing 737-200 from South African Airways to compliment its schedule. Following political tensions, flights to Luanda, Lorenzo Marques, and Port Mackoo were ceased in 1986 and 1987.

On 4 December 1987, a Boeing 727-200 TQ-CFD operating CQ14 from Lusaka made a belly landing at Easo following total hydraulic failure. While there were no injuries, the aircraft was consumed by fire and written off. Initially, SCA wanted to purchase another aircraft to replace the lost 727, but due to rising war tensions between North and South Cuakaland lessening demand, the decision fell through. Due to the apartheidist policies of South Cuakaland, SCA was banned from flying in the United States and Europe, which led to the end of plans to fly Boeing 747s to London Heathrow by 1990.

SCA was boycotted throughout the late 1980s, and as a result, business heavily suffered and the airline reported losses. Services were cut in 1989, and with rumors of an impending war causing mass emigration of refugees from South Cuakaland, SCA sent aircraft to Johannesburg for long-term storage.

## **1990-1999**

The outbreak of the Cuakaland Bush War in the fall of 1990 caused SCA to cease operations almost immediately, stationing a single 727 at Easo to fly refugees out and transport for the war effort. Flights were sporadic at this time. The 727 was eventually sent for storage in Johannesburg.

Scheduled services did not resume until 1996 on a limited schedule, but these were shut down following multiple attempted hijackings and espionage by the North.

SCA officially relaunched operations on the afternoon of 7 January 1997, as the final days of the civil war drew to a close. 727s were flown back and scheduled flights to Johannesburg and Windhoek resumed that day.

On 9 January, the war was officially ended with a ceasefire, and both North and South Cuakaland were merged into the Republic of Koquwa. An SCA 727 flew the new President of Koquwa Weleya Salemo from Easo to Port Mackoo, the first time an SCA aircraft had visited Port Mackoo since 1987.

As part of Salemo's first address to the nation on 10 January, she announced that South Cuakaland Airlines and North Kakwaland Air would be merged into a single entity known as Koquwa Airlines. SCA's last flight was on the evening of January 12, when Boeing 727-200 TQ-CFC operated CQ119 from Port Mackoo, now Port Maqu, to Easo, now Aisuyo. The new

airline gained five Ilyushin IL-18s and a single Boeing 727-200. The Ilyushins were sold and immediately scrapped.

Koquwa Airlines went through a restructuring and a rebrand. The older, dated livery was replaced by a simpler eurowhite livery, with the logo below the door and the Koquwan flag on the tail. The Boeing 727s kept the metal underbelly, however this was replaced by a brown underbelly, engines, and winglets on later aircraft.

The airline joined IATA and ICAO and gaining new codes CQ/KQW. In May, the airline signed a deal to purchase eight second-hand Douglas DC-9-50s, as the 727s were less efficient and did not fit Koquwa Airlines' business model. The first DC-9, TQ-CAA, arrived in October 1997.

Routes that were resumed include Luanda, Harare, Maputo, Gaborone, Lusaka, and Walvis Bay. New CEO Larry Musonga took over in 1999, becoming the first non-white CEO.

## **2000-2009**

The last DC-9 to arrive, TQ-CAH, arrived in 2000, along with the first of eight McDonnell Douglas MD-83s, TQ-CCA. New routes at this time included Port Louis via Durban, and the ex-North city of Nickelsburg, which had been renamed Nirongo. The industry downturn and aviation crisis after 9/11 saw service and job cuts, plus another full restructure, after Koquwa Airlines posted its first loss since 1997. Among the changes were "fleet modernisation", which saw the five 727s retired and converted to cargo carriers. A new CEO, Victor Pembe, was appointed.

Following the deregulation of Koquwan aviation in 2002, the government sold a 49% stake to over 20 private investors in order to finance the airline. Capital was raised for long-haul international routes, especially to London. In 2003, an order for six Airbus A330-200 widebody aircraft was placed, which was joined by the approval of slots at London Heathrow and Paris Charles de Gaulle. A second base at Port Maqu was opened in late 2003, and four aircraft were stationed there, flying to Johannesburg as well as domestic routes. Lameko to Nirongo flights launched shortly afterward.

The final Boeing 727-200 flight, CQ525 between Port Maqu and Aisuyo, took place on 7 September 2004. The aircraft operating the flight, TQ-CFB, was laid up with her sisters for long-term storage at Aisuyo Int'l.

After the final MD-83 TQ-CCH joined the fleet in early 2004, Koquwa Airlines sought the slightly smaller McDonnell Douglas MD-87 to compliment the DC-9-50s on regional routes with little demand. The first MD-87 TQ-CEA joined the fleet in mid-July 2004. New destinations included Lilongwe, Victoria Falls, Kinshasa, and Bulawayo.

On 24 December 2004, a Koquwa Airlines MD-87 TQ-CEB operating CQ560 from Aisuyo became the first aircraft to land at the new Tiger Bay Airport, which had been converted from a military base, similarly to Nirongo Airport. Initial routes were twice daily from Aisuyo and daily from Lameko.

The first Airbus A330-200 TQ-CDA arrived from Toulouse on 1 February 2005. The first widebody for the airline was a source of national pride, with newspapers reportedly running full-spread articles about the new airliner. Initially, crews were trained on the Aisuyo to Port Maqu route, before commercial services to Johannesburg were launched in July 2005, followed by direct services to London in August. Online tickets for the inaugural flight sold out within 30 minutes.

Koquwa Airlines began buyback-leasing aircraft for domestic airline Kibo Air in May 2005, when it handled the purchase and leasing of two Boeing 737-200s. This system was ruled by the Competition Authority to be a conflict-of-interest, and a third-party company, Koquwa Leasing (now Aisuyo Leasing International, or ALI) was founded to handle the leasing of aircraft for airlines. Six of eight MD-83s and all ten (five at the time) MD-87s were owned by Koquwa Leasing.

New Business Class seats were introduced in November 2005, along with a new IFE system that was installed on all A330s. A lounge was opened at Aisuyo in February 2006, and flights to Paris launched in March. By the end of the fiscal year 2005, the airline's operating profit was in the range of L25 million.

In May 2006 the Durban stopover on Port Louis services was replaced with separate direct flights to both Durban and Port Louis. Direct flights to Dar-es-Salaam and Lagos were launched in October 2006 and January 2007 respectively. Tickets for New York via Dakar went on sale in March 2007, but flights were pushed back to August due to lack of available aircraft.

The airline was fined L1,5 million by Koquwan authorities in June 2007 after it was found to have been lowering prices on Aisuyo to Johannesburg and Aisuyo to Cape Town routes to try and force Matebok Airways and Nationwide Airlines out of the market.

In November 2007, a deal for eight ex-USAir Boeing 737-400s was made, with the first, TQ-CLA, arriving that month. Around this time Koquwa Airlines introduced its first double daily schedules on routes to Cape Town, Harare, Lagos, and Nairobi. Johannesburg was upgraded to three daily flights, a thrice weekly flight, and a twice weekly flight.

On April 19, 2008, a Koquwa Airlines MD-83 TQ-CCB operating CQ327 to Harare from Aisuyo came within less than 250ft of colliding with a Lufthansa Boeing 747-400 D-ABVK operating LH593 to Frankfurt. The incident was due to human error on both the air traffic controllers' and Lufthansa pilots' parts. Both aircraft were carrying nearly 400 people in total - a collision would have seen it become one of the worst air disasters on record.

Shortly after Arrow Airways, the first low-cost airline in Koquwa, launched services in April 2008, Koquwa Airlines began scaling back services and cutting costs to try and remain competitive in what was now a rapidly-changing market, with experts predicting that low-cost carriers would take a majority of the market share by 2015. Along with this, Kibo Air began rebranding itself as a low-cost airline. Eventually, in November 2008, Koquwa Airlines announced B!Air, which took to the skies in February 2009.

Flights to Sao Paulo launched in June 2009. In August 2009, Koquwa Airlines placed down an order for ten Boeing 737-800 aircraft, with options for fifteen more, to be delivered from 2011 onwards. They were meant to replace the aging Douglas DC-9s and McDonnell Douglases, most of which were an average of twenty years old, and some of which were pushing thirty years.

## **2010-2019**

In early 2010, Koquwa Airlines partnered with Air Atlanta Icelandic to charter two Boeing 747-400s for the FIFA World Cup, to be held in South Africa in June. Passengers were flown from Aisuyo and Port Maqu to South Africa using these 747s between April and October. Two MD-80s, an MD-87, and an A330 were painted into special World Cup colors. The A330, TQ-CDF, was used to transport the Koquwan national football team to Johannesburg and Cape Town for their games.

The first 737-800, TQ-CTA, arrived in January 2011. At the same time, Koquwa Airlines announced that it and subsidiaries B!Air and Koquwa Cargo would be merging under a new umbrella known as the Koquwa Airlines Group. New CEO Tania Iyo Mfize was appointed, while outgoing CEO Pembe remained on the Board of Directors, eventually chairing the Board of Koquwa Group as a whole.

A new corporate rebrand was unveiled in February 2011. The logo was changed to be bolded, now spelling "KOQUWA" in billboard titles instead of below the windows. While the underbelly, engines, and winglets were not changed, the Koquwa flag was completely dropped for a brand new design, consisting of multiple differently colored bands streaking up the tail, representing diversity. The airline's slogan - which was previously "Fly Africa With Love", representing the Koquwan lovebird - was changed to "Colors of Africa". The first aircraft in the new livery was Boeing 737-800 TQ-CTB, which was delivered in April 2011.

After Kibo Air was shut down in April 2011, its aircraft returned to Koquwa Airlines. All were sent to Aisuyo for long-term storage. The 727s, which had been sitting abandoned since 2004, were finally sold to startup Vuva Air, and were modernised with hushkits.

Massive overhauls were taken by new management in 2011 and 2012. The Doloka Business Class and IFE was revealed in June 2011, followed by three lounges (Johannesburg, Port Maqu, London) opening in August, November and December 2011 respectively. In January 2012, four new destinations - Hong Kong, Cairo, Accra, and Sydney - were announced.

In April 2012, Koquwa Airlines officially became a full member of the **oneworld** alliance. In commemoration, an Airbus A330-200 TQ-CDH was painted into a special **oneworld** livery. New interline agreements were launched - American Airlines to New York, British Airways to London, Cathay Pacific to Hong Kong (launched June 2012), Qantas to Sydney (launched October 2012), and Royal Air Maroc to Marrakesh (launched January 2013, suspended September 2016).

Koquwa Airlines launched flights to the new eRemecha Airport in July 2012, with double daily from Aisuyo, and daily from Port Maqu and Lameko.

At the 2013 Dubai Air Show, Koquwa Airlines penned down an order with Boeing for eight Boeing 787-8 Dreamliners with options for four more, and decided to take the option of fifteen extra Boeing 737-800s to take the total to twenty-five. Koquwa Airlines also stated that “[the Airbus A350] has not been ruled out”.

Koquwa Airlines purchased a 5% stake in FlyZomiba, which launched operations in February 2014 with the stored ex-Kibo Air aircraft. The stake was sold to Aisuyo Leasing International in January 2015.

Management had been aware of finance and stability issues at low-cost subsidiary B!Air, but had reportedly been ignorant about the issues. Koquwa Airlines shut down B!Air on 2 November 2014, resulting in the airline having to rescue stranded passengers. The DC-9s were sold for scrap, while the MD-80s were stripped of B!Air titles and operated for Koquwa Airlines, still in black and yellow stripes.

The collapse of Vuva Air in September 2014 saw the return of the four Boeing 727s that Koquwa Airlines had been leasing out. Three were sent for scrap, while one had a brief stint as a cargo aircraft with Koquwa Cargo before eventually being scrapped in 2016. The aircraft were the oldest in the fleet, with the oldest at forty-one years at the time of scrapping.

In the middle of 2015, Koquwa Airlines sold some of its slots and aircraft to ALI. This included multiple domestic slots at airports across Koquwa, and 26 aircraft (4 737-400s, 18 737-800s, and 4 A330-200s). This saved it a considerable amount of money. Some of the slots and aircraft were later leased to startup JetGolden the following year. This was the first of a wave of cost-cutting measures that the airline undertook, including staff downsizing and slashing of unprofitable schedules.

On day two of the 2015 Dubai Air Show, Koquwa Airlines finalised a deal with Airbus for ten Airbus A350-900s, with options for twenty more. This was the biggest order for the airline since the 787 order. It was also announced that the first 787 would enter service in mid-2016.

Koquwa Airlines announced the gradual retirement of its aging MD-80 fleet in Decembet 2015. The first MD-80 to be retired was TQ-CCD, in March 2016. Retired MD-80s were sent for full checks and then stored temporarily before their transfer to JetGolden, which launched in June that year.

The first of eight Boeing 787-8 Dreamliners, TQ-CHA, arrived on 22 November 2016 after a non-stop flight between Miami and Aisuyo. This marked the first new widebody for the airline since 2007. The inaugural 787 flight flew between Aisuyo and Johannesburg on November 30, with long-haul 787 flights launching December 5 to London and Paris. Just two weeks later, on 17 December, the final 737-800 TQ-CTY was delivered to the airline.

After over 17 years of operations, the final MD-80 flight for the airline between Port Maqu and Aisuyo flew on 8 March 2017 (8/3, referencing the MD-83). TQ-CCH, like the seven other MD-80s, went into storage, before joining JetGolden's fleet. Similarly, the first MD-87 TQ-CEB was retired around the same time. The MD-87s were earmarked for retirement around mid-2018, to head off for another startup airline, CityEagle Connector.