

Zimpapers speaks on political adverts

By [Peter Matambanadzo](#)

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The Zimbabwe Newspapers Group board of directors has resolved that all political advertising will be published in its newspapers in the last two weeks before polling day in accordance with electoral laws.

The two week delay, however, does not affect the group's radio station, Star FM. Zimpapers publishes The Herald, The Sunday Mail, H-Metro, Kwayedza, Zimtravel magazine, Chronicle, Sunday News, B-Metro, UMthunywa, Manica Post and Southern Times a regional newspaper.

The board said Zimpapers, which is neither a state-owned parastatal nor state-controlled enterprise, would continue giving fair coverage on all political activities in the country and provide balanced and well sourced news articles on all political parties but had an obligation to ensure its corporate partners are not crowded out by political party adverts.

The announcement was made by board chairman Dr Paul Chimedza in the wake of a special board resolution on 26 June 2013.

"The board has taken this decision to safeguard the company's business interests as political advertising tends to crowd out all commercial advertising during the election season," the board said.

"In taking this decision, the board is cognisant of the laws and regulations relating to the conduct of both the print and electronic media during the official election period, which starts after the promulgation of the election date President Mugabe."

The board said under the electoral laws, all media houses during this period are not obliged to publish any advertisement by or on behalf of a political party or candidate contesting an election.

"However, if any one party is allowed to advertise, the same opportunity should be extended to all the other parties. Therefore, if no political party has been given advertising space, the company is under no obligation to afford advertising space to any other political party," the board said.

The statement said that the board was aware that there were over 28 political parties intending to contest in the forthcoming harmonised elections set for 31 July and it was difficult to accommodate all their advertising requirements without crowding commercial advertisements, which is the mainstay of Zimpapers business.

The board reiterated the group's editorial independence, which is guided by integrity, fairness and balance in its coverage

of news as well as robust analysis and commentary.

The board said in exercising their judgment, editors shall take into account - national interest, public benefit, that Zimpapers publications are family newspapers and that Zimbabwean societies have their own mores and values, which have to be recognised.

The board also said it believes that the two-week window period was sufficient for political parties to sell their policies and programmes to the electorate.

Zimpapers is a public-listed company with over 600 shareholders and gets its revenue from copy sales and advertisers.

Source: [allAfrica](#)

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