

Zim: State-owned newspapers in the red despite monopoly

By [Dumisani Ndlela](#)

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Zimbabwe's state-owned newspapers performed dismally last year despite enjoying a virtual monopoly on the daily news market, recording an operational loss of US\$329 000 during the year to 31 December 2009.

The bleak performance could signal a disaster for the newspapers should government go ahead and licence new daily newspapers in the country, which are likely to offer stiff competition and provide readers and advertisers with an alternative.

Paul Chimedza, the chairman of the Zimbabwe Newspapers (Zimpapers) group, which publishes three dailies, *The Herald* and *The Chronicle* and the tabloid *H-Metro* introduced last year, as well as at least five weekly titles, said the newspaper printing division had been weighed down by huge overheads and low revenue.

But he vowed to maintain the group's market share and to "remain the publisher of choice for both the reader and the advertiser".

He said the company had resorted to importing newsprint after the closure of the country's sole newsprint manufacturer, Mutare Board and Paper Mills.

"Newsprint, which was previously the main constraint, is now being imported and the company has adequate stocks," said Chimedza.

ABOUT DUMISANI NDLELA

Dumisani Ndlela is a Zimbabwean journalist specialising in business and financial reporting, with experience reporting on commodities, stock and financial markets, advertising, marketing and the media. He has previously reported from a number of regional countries as well as from the UK and Germany on commodities and regional integration. He can be contacted on dndlela@yahoo.co.uk.

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