

Zimbabwe: Ad agency in dire straits

By [Sam Hungwe](#)

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One of the country's biggest advertising agencies, Imago Young & Rubicam (IY&R), has fallen in trouble after failing to pay for President Robert Mugabe's re-election campaign advertisements.

Advertising industry and media sources said local newspapers were turning down advertisements from IY&R due to its huge debts to the industry.

"The whole industry is owed money from the ZANU PF adverts," an official from one newspaper group said.

The involvement of IY&R in Mugabe's campaign had resulted in global ad agency, Young & Rubicam (Y&R) selling its 25% stake in the Zimbabwean company, demanding IY&R drop Young & Rubicam from its name.

IY&R has not yet officially rebranded to drop the name.

Industry players said IY&R had been deserted by most of its major clients, who were now booking their advertisements through other agencies.

"They have lost key staff as a result of this development, among them Sapi Bachi, the MD, Jacky Ndlovu, the client services director. Their media manager also left in a huff," an insider said.

Efforts to contact CEO, Sharon Mugabe were fruitless as the company's phone numbers went unanswered. The company was reportedly moving from its spacious offices in Harare's northern suburbs.

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