

A fistful of Zim dollars trumps ethics: Avusa in distribution deal with Mugabe Media Inc

 By Mandy de Waal: @mandyldewaal

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With advertising revenues down and profits plunging, it appears Avusa's management is prepared to do just about anything, even if this means striking a deal with Bob Mugabe's propaganda machine. Something the brave journos of *Sunday Times* wouldn't feel great about - if only they knew.

Since early this year, Avusa and Allied Publishing have been in partnership with Mugabe's Zimpapers and are distributing a pro-Mugabe, weekly broadsheet into South Africa. This is part of an effort to get increased market share for the Sunday Times in Zimbabwe, which is now distributed there by Zimpapers. (Allied Publishing is owned in equal parts by Avusa and Independent.)

In return Avusa and Allied Publishers distribute The Sunday Mail, published by Mugabe-aligned Zimpapers, in South Africa. Avusa manages subscription copies while Allied Publishing distributes to street vendors and news kiosks in areas such as Hillbrow and Yeoville, where there is a high density of Zimbabwean nationals.

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Editor, writer and researcher. *Editor of #TheFutureByDesign & The Africa Annual *Published in Africa's Greatest Entrepreneurs *Published in Rolling Stone Magazine, The Guardian (UK), Daily Maverick, Finweek, Mail & Guardian, City Press, Rapport, Moneyweb, Noseweek, Brainstorm Magazine, ITWeb, and MarkLives. *Before becoming a full time writer, de Waal founded brand agency Idea Engineers, and led the Cape Town office of Text 100.

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