

New pro-Mugabe radio station in Zimbabwe

A new Zimbabwe radio station aligned to long-ruling president Robert Mugabe ZANU-PF party began broadcasting on Monday, 25 June 2012.

Star FM, which is owned by the Zimbabwe Newspaper Group (Zimpapers), launched with a rendition of the national anthem at midday, seven months after being awarded a licence by the broadcasting authority.

Star FM brings to five the number of state-owned radio stations that are broadcasting in the country. Others are Spot FM, Radio Zimbabwe, Power FM and National FM. Zimpapers also publishes eight newspapers, including *The Herald*, which is regarded as a ZANU-PF mouthpiece.

The awarding of the licence to Star FM was criticised by the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), a coalition partner in an uneasy unity government, which has described it and the other radio stations as "ZANU-PF apologists".

Media reform remains one of the key disagreements between Mugabe and prime minister Morgan Tsvangirai of the MDC, who accuses the 88-year-old of riding roughshod over reforms agreed to in their unity pact.