



EFF STATEMENT ON THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT'S SELECTION OF IDEMIA FOR THE PRINTING OF DRIVING LICENCE CARDS

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The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) strongly condemns the Department of Transport's reckless decision to award a tender to French technology company IDEMIA, a company that has a tainted history of corruption and tender irregularities, most notably with the Airports Company South Africa (ACSA).

Just recently, ACSA terminated its contract with IDEMIA due to serious concerns surrounding the tender process and the involvement of their suspended Chief Information Officer. Despite this, the Department of Transport has inexplicably chosen to trust this scandal-ridden company with the sensitive task of printing South Africa's new driving licence smart cards.

IDEMIA also has a history with the Department of Home Affairs after they failed to deliver on its contract, for which it was fined, demonstrating that this company cannot be trusted with projects of national importance. The EFF is therefore appalled that of all the technology firms available globally, the Department of Transport has chosen a company that has been embroiled in scandal and controversy.

In fact IDEMIA's involvement in corruption goes beyond South Africa, even leading to a debarment by the World Bank in 2017, after working on identification systems in Bangladesh. This should have been enough to disqualify them from any further dealings with the South African government.

Instead, we see the DA-ANC coalition once again cozying up to companies with dubious reputations, exposing the state to further corruption and failure.

This tender process is reminiscent of the ANC-led government's consistent disregard for transparency and accountability, choosing instead to entrench cronyism and protect corrupt entities. It mirrors the same negligence we have seen in other tender allocations, where the state repeatedly ignores red flags and rewards corruption.

Even more worrying is the Department of Transport's long-standing failure to resolve the issue of drivers licence card machines, which have been malfunctioning for years. This problem dates back to when Fikile Mbalula was Minister of Transport, yet despite the ongoing crisis, the Department has failed to develop the capacity to locally create the necessary machines to produce these cards. Instead of finding solutions within the country, the Department continues to rely on foreign companies, perpetuating our dependency on external entities for critical national services.

The EFF has always been fundamentally opposed to the tender system, which has become a breeding ground for corruption, maladministration, and theft of public resources. Instead, we advocate for the building of state capacity to ensure that critical projects like the printing of driving licence cards are done internally, by the government, with transparency and accountability. Relying on external companies—especially those with a long history of controversy—puts the safety and security of South African citizens at risk.

The EFF notes the Minister of Transport Barabara Creecy's decision to investigate this tender, but it begs the question: why was there no such due diligence during the selection process in the first place? Therefore, the tender needs to be immediately cancelled and the Minister of Transport should face us

in Parliament and explain how they reached such a reckless decision, particularly in light of IDEMIA's recent misconduct at ACSA.


Finally, the EFF recommends that the Department of Transport develop and implement a strategy to develop in-house state capacity for the production of driving licence cards. We will continue to advocate for an end to the tender system, which is the lifeblood of corruption, and fight to ensure that no company with a history of criminality is allowed to work within government.

ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

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