MEDIA RELEASE

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9 July 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WINDHOEK, IPC INTERROGATES THE "SMART CITY" GRANT AS PRESIDENT TRADES DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY FOR A N$245 MILLION PITTANCE

1. The Independent Patriots for Change (IPC) notes with deep concern the announcement from Beijing that the People's Republic of China has committed a grant of **N$245 million** (98 million yuan) towards a "Smart City" pilot project in Namibia.

2. While the Presidency frames this as a **"technological milestone",** the IPC views this as a strategic error that risks trading our long-term digital sovereignty for a relatively insignificant sum of money. *(The Brief, NBC, 9 July 2026)*

3. A **N$245 million** grant is a rounding error in a bilateral trade relationship that has surpassed N$40 billion annually. To put this in perspective, this grant represents a mere 0.6% of the annual trade value extracted from Namibian soil.

4. We are essentially accepting **a "gift"** of surveillance and data infrastructure in exchange for the continued, unhindered extraction of our raw uranium, lithium, and rare earth minerals. This is a lopsided trade-off that leaves Namibia vulnerable.

5. The "Smart City" concept, while sounding modern, often serves as a Trojan horse for the implementation of proprietary foreign technology and surveillance systems in our public infrastructure.

6. We must ask where the data of Namibian citizens be stored? Who owns the source code of the systems managing our urban services? By accepting this grant, the Ministry of International Relations and Trade is opening the door for foreign control over our critical digital infrastructure, creating a dependency that will be far more expensive to break in the future than the N$245 million we are receiving today.

7. Furthermore, the IPC challenges the government's celebration of **"zero-tariff"** treatment for Namibian exports. Zero tariffs are a hollow victory for a nation that has no domestic industrial base to produce value-added goods.

8. As long as our exports remain limited to raw minerals, zero tariffs primarily benefit the foreign-owned mining conglomerates that extract our wealth. Without a binding commitment for domestic manufacturing facilities, these trade concessions only serve to accelerate the depletion of our natural inheritance.

9. The IPC calls on the President and the Minister of International Relations and Trade publish the full terms and conditions of the Smart City grant. We seek clarity on data ownership, infrastructure control, and the procurement requirements attached to this funding.

10. Namibians have a right to know if their urban services are being outsourced to foreign tech firms under the guise of **"development assistance".** We cannot allow our digital future to be sold for a pittance in the halls of Beijing.

11. The Independent Patriots for Change will continue to advocate for an economic policy that prioritizes Namibian sovereignty and domestic

production. We challenge the government to stop chasing shiny objects like "Smart City" grants and start focusing on the hard work of building a domestic industrial base.

12. A nation that trades its data and its resources for foreign "gifts" is a nation that has lost its way. We must and can save Namibia's future from this short-sighted diplomacy.

Namibia is all we have

Namibia is not for sale

We must and can save it!

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