

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposal for the government to issue digital identity credentials to its citizens. While I understand the government's desire to streamline services and enhance security, I believe that such a system poses significant risks to individual privacy, civil liberties, and overall societal well-being.

Historical Context - Genocide and ID Cards:

Throughout history, there have been tragic instances where government-issued identification cards played a sinister role in facilitating genocide and persecution. Two notable examples are:

The Holocaust:

During World War II, the Nazi regime in Germany implemented a system of identification cards that not only recorded individuals' personal information but also marked them as Jewish or members of other persecuted groups. These IDs were used to segregate, persecute, and ultimately murder millions of innocent people in concentration and extermination camps.

The Rwandan Genocide:

In the lead-up to the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, the government introduced identity cards that explicitly identified individuals as either Hutu or Tutsi. These cards were used to identify and target Tutsi individuals for mass killings, leading to the brutal genocide that claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

These historical examples serve as stark reminders of the dangers of government-issued identification systems when misused or manipulated for discriminatory purposes. While we hope that such atrocities will never occur again, it is essential to acknowledge the potential risks associated with any system that centralizes personal information and can be exploited by authoritarian regimes.

Privacy Concerns:

Government-issued digital identities often involve collecting vast amounts of personal information. This data can be vulnerable to breaches, misuse, or unauthorized access, jeopardizing citizens' privacy rights. Even with strict safeguards in place, no system can guarantee complete protection against data breaches.

Surveillance and Government Overreach:

A government-issued digital identity could enable excessive surveillance and tracking of citizens' online and offline activities. This level of oversight threatens personal freedoms and opens the door to potential abuse of power by government authorities.

Exclusion and Discrimination:

Not everyone has equal access to digital technology, and forcing citizens to rely on digital identities could exclude marginalized communities, elderly individuals, and those without access to the internet. This exacerbates existing inequalities and creates a digital divide.

Security Risks:

Digital identities are susceptible to hacking and identity theft, potentially leading to significant financial and personal harm. Cybercriminals are constantly evolving, and centralizing identity information makes these systems attractive targets.

Loss of Anonymity:

Digital identities remove the option for citizens to engage in anonymous online activities when necessary, such as whistleblowing or expressing dissenting opinions. Anonymity is a vital safeguard for free speech and individual liberties.

Lack of Consent and Control:

Citizens should have the choice to opt-in or opt-out of any government-issued digital identity system. A mandatory system removes this freedom of choice and forces individuals into a system they may not trust or want to use.

Dependency on a Single Authority:

Relying solely on a government-issued digital identity creates a single point of failure. If the system encounters technical issues or is compromised, it can disrupt access to essential services, causing undue hardship for citizens.

Cost and Implementation Challenges:

Developing, maintaining, and securing a comprehensive digital identity system is costly and complex. It diverts resources from other critical areas, such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

In conclusion, while the government may have legitimate reasons for proposing digital identity systems, these concerns must be addressed and mitigated to protect citizens' rights and well-being. The historical context of misuse of identification systems for persecution serves as a stark reminder of the potential dangers. I urge you to reconsider the implementation of such a system or, at the very least, ensure stringent safeguards, transparency, and public consultation throughout the process.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

