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# National Capital Region Tamil Association CONSTITUTION

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**Mission statement:**

The National Capital Region Tamil Association promotes the social and cultural interests of the Ottawa Tamil community, nurtures the cultural ties with Tamil roots, and integrates these with the Canadian way of life and values.

**Article 1: Name of the Association**

This non-profitable association shall be named as the “National Capital Region Tamil Association”, hereinafter referred to as NCRTA.

**Article 2: Objective of NCRTA**

1. Safeguard and uphold the Tamil identity with dignity and self-respect. At the same time, preserve and sustain inter community relations in a cordial and friendly manner by building a bond with diverse cultural communities.
2. Promote the core principles relevant to traditional customs of the Tamil people through an understanding of its heritage, culture, and language by organizing various cultural events and social gatherings.
3. Raise awareness of the plight and predicament of the people in the Tamil homeland and thereby assist them to improve their quality of life.
4. Organize a structure specifically designed to identify and serve the interests and needs of the seniors and encourage them to participate in the social, recreational, and cultural activities of the NCRTA.
5. Recognize the significance of social issues that affect and influence the Tamil Youth Development in the Canadian society, by having panel discussions, interactive seminars and workshops.
6. Assist and facilitate new Tamil migrants by responding to their common concerns and needs by providing guidance and assistance.
7. Exchange ideas and information regarding the individual and personal development among the community members and responding to family and community needs.

**Article 3: Members**

**Section 1: General**

NCRTA shall be constituted as follows:

- (a) Regular Members

(b) Invited Members (Patrons): All those who actively support and encourage the overall mission of NCRTA

1. All Regular Members will duly fill up an application form and sign an allegiance respecting and adhering to the rules of the NCRTA Constitution. The applicants should be at least 18 years of age and reside within the boundaries of the National Capital Region of Ottawa.
2. The board shall establish membership fees on an annual basis accordingly.
3. All applicants who wish to join the NCRTA will have to be approved by the Board before being enlisted as new members and updated after each board meeting.
4. The Board will not approve any new members after issuing the notice for the Annual General Meeting.
5. Members will not receive any financial or other material remuneration for their services.
6. The board is empowered to cancel the membership of any individual if the annual fees are not paid accordingly.

## **Section 2: Temporary Suspension**

Temporary suspension of members will be under the following circumstances:

1. Members, whose actions or conducts have been detrimental to the image of NCRTA.
2. Members who fail to attend two consecutive general meetings. The attendance shall be taken at each meeting and no-shows will be counted and listed.
3. Non-payment of dues or membership fees for 60 days.
4. Temporary suspension on any member requires the approval of two-thirds members of the board.

## **Section 3: Impeachment**

The course of action will be taken in the following circumstances:

1. Impeachment is a final procedure adopted against any Board Member or Regular Member whose actions or conducts have damaged the reputation and image of the NCRTA.
2. Any board member or regular member of the NCRTA who indulges in a manner contrary to the specifics mentioned in the "Articles of this Constitution" so as to tarnish the interests and objectives of the association and/or its members.

3. The impeached individual will have the privileged right to defend his/her actions accordingly.
4. The Board shall determine the suspension term at the board meeting. The criteria to impeach a Board Member or Regular Member shall require the approval of two-thirds of members of the board.

#### **Article 4: Structure of NCRTA**

1. The NCRTA will have its office located in the National Capital Region of Ottawa.
2. The NCRTA Board shall comprise fifteen elected Directors representing the governing body of the NCRTA. This particular Board of Directors will comprise nine Officers, three Chapter Coordinators, and three Executives.
3. The President, Vice-President, Secretary, Assistant-Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant-Treasurer, Cultural Coordinator, Youth Coordinator, and Sports Coordinator shall be the Officers of the NCRTA.
4. There shall be three Local Chapter Coordinators one each for Ottawa Nepean, Ottawa West, and Ottawa East/Centre. Each Chapter Coordinator must reside in their respective region.
5. The term of office for the Board of Directors shall be for a maximum of two years.
6. The Directors in the Board are eligible to contest for re-election at the end of their term but the Directors cannot serve in the same position for the subsequent term.
7. The Board shall appoint sub-committees to formulate and implement the activities and agenda of the NCRTA as and when necessary.
8. Each sub-committee will have one Director from the Board appointed as the Activity Coordinator.
9. The Directors in the Board may be expanded at any time by ballot during the normal general election process. The number of Directors will always be an odd number for practical and legitimate reasons.

#### **Article 5: Local Chapters**

The number of local chapters may be increased or decreased accordingly relevant with the population distribution or demographic factor in the National Capital Region of Ottawa during a general meeting.

#### **Article 6: Finances**

1. The NCRTA will impose a membership fee every ensuing year that will be strictly enforced by the Board and subject to change if necessary.

2. NCRTA shall be permitted to accept generous voluntary donations from any of its members and other legitimate sources for the purposes of a worthy humanitarian cause.
3. All funds raised through social and cultural events organized by the NCRTA shall be the sole property of the Association, and these funds shall be utilized in the best interest of promoting and supporting its agenda and other related activities. However, contributions can be used specifically for other important humanitarian purposes, subject to the approval by at least two third of the Board of Directors.
4. All financial records of NCTRA shall be transparent to all its members.

#### **Article 7: Use of Language**

1. All official meetings, programs and events shall be conducted in the Tamil (or/and English) language, and literatures relevant to the above will be translated and submitted in English.
2. Language is an indispensable link to communication, and no one person or group shall be alienated or discriminated upon by the use of language. Whenever it is deemed necessary the interpretation in Tamil or English shall be provided.

#### **Article 8: e-Forum**

1. The medium of communication of the NCRTA will be by E-Forum, which shall be used extensively to develop a congenial relationship among its members.
2. The Board shall update its schedules and agenda promptly from time to time and inform its members through the e-Forum.
3. Regulations, postings, membership profiles and all other relevant issues in the E-Forum shall be governed by specific by-laws, which will be drafted soon.

#### **Article 9: Duties of the Officers and Chapter Coordinators**

1. The President of the NCRTA shall be delegated to uphold the specifics governing the “Constitution” with a sense of responsibility and endeavor at all times to develop and promote the interests of the Association to the best of his/her ability.
2. Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President discharging all his powers in the absence of the President subject to restrictions as stipulated in the Constitution.
3. The Secretary shall be responsible to maintain the minutes of all meetings, procedures specified clearly in the by-laws, official correspondences, other forms and submissions, and shall have the authority to sign and authenticate documents. The Secretary shall be in charge of all official stamps or seals of the NCRTA, and at the end of the tenure, shall transfer all relevant documents to the incoming

Secretary. The Secretary shall be responsible as part of his/her duties for updating, restructuring, regulating and maintaining the e-Forum and other electronic media of the NCRTA.

4. The Treasurer shall be responsible to maintain and update financial accounts, records, receipts and documents related with banking, and other financial transactions. The Treasurer shall be one of the signatories assigned for any financial transaction that is approved by the Board. At the end of tenure, the Treasurer shall transfer all relevant documents to the incoming Treasurer.
5. The Assistant Secretary shall be responsible to interact and share the functions of the secretary.
6. The Assistant Treasurer shall be responsible to interact and share the functions of the Treasurer.
7. The Cultural Coordinator shall be responsible for assisting the President in all arrangements put on by the NCRTA.
8. The Youth Coordinator shall be responsible for assisting the President in all arrangements of youth events organized by the NCRTA.
9. The Sports Coordinator shall be responsible for all sporting activities and events scheduled by the NCRTA.
10. The Chapter Coordinator shall be responsible for the local social, recreational, and cultural activities of the NCRTA.

#### **Article 10: Meetings - General Considerations**

1. All meetings shall be chaired by the President or by a Director from the Board appointed by the President.
2. All meetings shall begin with a specific announcement by the Chairperson followed by a minute of silence as a tribute in memory of the people who lost their lives for their right to live peacefully and with dignity in their Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka.
3. The Chairperson shall maintain a cordial atmosphere and order during all meetings. Meeting attendees shall comply with meeting-order by-laws.
4. The Secretary or a Director from the Board appointed by the Secretary shall record all minutes of the meeting. At the end of the meeting the Chair shall verify and cosign the minutes.
5. Quorum:
  - (a) General Meetings: Participation of eight Directors from the Board plus the one fourth of Regular Members.
  - (b) Board Meetings: A minimum of eight Directors from the Board including two Officers.

**Article 11: Meetings - General meeting**

1. The President shall summon the General Meeting and specify the objectives of the meeting.
2. A General Meeting shall be summoned as follows:
  - (a) President shall call an Annual General Meeting on a date specified in the months of October or November each year to discuss the general activities of the NCRTA. The President shall make sure that all the members are notified about the general meeting. The new board shall be elected every two years at the Annual General Meeting.
  - (b) At the formal request by at least two third of the Directors from the Board.
  - (c) At the request by members subject to a two-thirds majority from the member-list who have been members of the NCRTA for at least six months or more.
3. At the Annual General Meeting the Secretary shall present a report incorporating the financial statement and progress of all activities by NCRTA and other related issues during its agenda during the year. The President, Secretary and one Director from the Board will sign the report.
4. The short- and long-term objectives of NCRTA in the ensuing session other than electing a new board shall be addressed subsequent to the Secretary's report.
5. The President shall conduct the election of the new board before the conclusion of the meeting.

**Article 12: Meetings - Board meeting**

1. The Board Meeting shall be summoned as follows:
  - (a) At least eight Directors from the Board will have to request for such a meeting.
  - (b) It must be held within three months from the date of the last Board meeting.

**Article 13: Election for the Board of Directors:**

1. A notice to hold the Annual General Meeting should be issued four weeks prior to the Election Day and posted on the e-forum.
2. General meeting notices should specify the date, location, duration and time accordingly.
3. The Board shall nominate an election officer from the general membership at the general meeting to assist with the elections.
4. All the fifteen positions of the Board shall become vacant on the Election Day.

5. The candidate for the Board must have been a member in the NCRTA for at least a minimum of one year.
6. The Board of Directors shall be elected by a simple majority of votes cast by NCRTA members.
7. A candidate for the Board shall be nominated by one person and seconded by another person, both of whom shall satisfy the criteria specified in Article 3. The nominated candidate should agree to stand for the board. The nomination and the consent shall be given verbally at the time of the election.
8. When more than two candidates are nominated, the voting shall be held according to Article 14.
9. The candidate contesting for the post of President should have the following abilities: 1) good interpersonal and people skills; 2) excellent leadership qualities; 3) clear and positive vision; 5) fluent in both Tamil and English and have reasonable skills in public speaking; and 6) good conflict resolution abilities.
10. Protocols relating to the submission of nomination and the conducting and announcing of results will be specified in election by-laws.

#### **Article 14: Voting**

1. General Meeting: Only those who have been members of the NCRTA for six months or more and satisfy the criteria specified in Article 3 on the date of the election are eligible to vote.
2. Board meetings: Only Board Members are eligible to vote.
3. Each eligible voter has only one vote.
4. Proxy voting shall not be allowed at any meetings.
5. The voting process during an election shall be conducted in the following order: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Assistant-Secretary, Treasurer, Cultural Coordinator, Youth Coordinator, Sports Coordinator, Chapter Coordinators, and Executives.
6. Election is done by a secret ballot if there is a contest.
7. If there are more than two candidates contesting for the same position, there will be a runoff election between the top two candidates.
8. In the event that there is a tie between two candidates on a ballot with more than two candidates, there will be a runoff election between those who tied.
9. If there is a tie between two candidates on a ballot with only two candidates, selection of respective director is decided by the luck of the draw.
10. In other related voting issues, other than the election of the Board, voting shall be carried out by a show of hands if there is no single objection,

### **Article 15: Vacancies**

1. A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualifications, or otherwise shall be filled by the Board for the remaining portion of that particular term.
  - a) In the event that an office member is unable to complete his/her term, the Board shall appoint an alternate member by a majority vote from the pool of Executives who serve on that board.
  - b) In the event that an Executive member is unable to complete his/her term, the Board shall take necessary steps to fill this particular vacancy by receiving applications from those interested in the member list and such a vacancy will be notified to the regular members specified in Article 3. The newly appointed member shall be selected by a majority vote of the Board, and will serve until the next elections are scheduled accordingly.

### **Article 16: By-laws**

1. By-laws shall not contradict or diminish the Constitution of NCRTA.
2. In addition to by-laws specified in the Articles of this Constitution, by-laws shall also regulate the following:
  - (a) Procedures for new by-laws and amendments to existing by-laws.
  - (b) Membership forms, fees and other dues from members.
  - (c) Membership cards and certificates.
  - (d) The conduct of all other relevant business of the NCRTA.
3. A by-law shall be considered accepted with a minimum of ten votes in a Board meeting duly called for that particular purpose. All accepted by-laws should be conformed by a majority of votes at the subsequent Annual General Meeting or a Special Meeting that is summoned only for drafting emergency amendments to the rules.

### **Article 17: Founding Members**

This particular Article specifically stresses the role to be played by those individuals who shaped and created the NCRTA (see Article 23). Hereinafter they will be referred to as "Founding Members" in this Constitution.

1. The Founding Members shall serve as advisors to the NCRTA Board as and when it is deemed only necessary so as to promote and enhance the continuous growth and improvement of the NCRTA. They will make constructive suggestions, comments and proposals, provide historical perspective and inspiration that shall contribute and assist the NCRTA positively in fulfilling its overall objectives.
2. If the Founding Members are not in the current Board, the Founding Members shall have the privilege to be apprised about the current status and minutes of all

Board meetings through the E-forum of the Board, but shall not have the privilege to participate at the regular Board meetings.

#### **Article 18: Documentation, Minutes, Accounts and Banking**

1. All proceedings, correspondence, financial transactions should be documented accordingly to standard specifications and by-laws accordingly. The appropriate officer or person responsible for the formulation and preparation of these documents will authenticate them.
2. Transfer of money from the bank account shall be done only by cheque, and authorized by a minimum of ten Board Members. The Treasurer and the President or Secretary shall countersign all cheques.
3. All relevant documents shall be promptly transferred to the Secretary without any undue delay and should be made available for viewing in the E-Forum to all its members.
4. With the exception of documents held with the current Board, the Treasurer can authenticate copies of the original documents.
5. The Treasurer will only release documents to the Board when both the President and Secretary request it jointly.

#### **Article 19: Association**

1. NCRTA may collaborate with other Canadian or Non-Canadian organizations to carryout its operations within the framework or parameters of the Constitution.
2. A memorandum for collaboration will be submitted accordingly to the Board and will be deliberated at the Board meeting summoned for that purpose only. A minimum of eight votes in favor for such collaboration is necessary for its establishment.
3. Submission of the Memorandum and the modalities of Association and dissociation will be specified in the by-law.

#### **Article 20: Dissolution**

1. The Board will consider the dissolution of NCRTA only with the consent of three-fourth of its members who attend the e-forum. The total attendance shall be more than two thirds of the members list.
2. The dissolution will be confirmed with the consent of a three-fourth majority at a general meeting duly summoned for that purpose. Thereafter a protocol for dissolution will be formulated.
3. The assets of the NCRTA will be transferred into liquid cash, and all financial liabilities will be settled accordingly. Any remaining amount of money will be

given as charity among the members to be utilized for a worthy humanitarian cause.

4. All official records etc. in the e-Forum will be deleted and the forum discontinued.

#### **Article 21: Amendments to the Constitution**

1. Amendments to any “Article of the Constitution” is of paramount importance and should be deliberated before it is approved accordingly by at least two third of the Board of Directors.
2. Any petition stipulated in Article 3 should be submitted to the Board, which will deliberate the petition in a forum attended by all the Board Members. If a minimum of two third members vote in favor, the President will submit the proposed amendment in the next Annual General Meeting.
3. Amendments will be adopted with the consent of three-fourth votes at the general meeting.
4. Any proposals for amendments to the Constitution shall be notified to the members and the exact wording of the amendment shall be available to the members at least two weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting.

#### **Article 22: Submission for an Amendment to the Constitution**

1. The Submission for an Amendment to the Constitution will have the following format:
  - (a) Heading: “Proposed amendment to”, and state the relevant “Article” and “Section of the Constitution”.
  - (b) Proposed amendment: State the proposal and the reason to justify the same.
  - (c) Submitted by: The specific date and the names and signatures of at least two third Board members are necessary to pass this amendment.

**Article 23: Ratification**

This Constitution of the NCRTA was drafted, deliberated, ratified, and endorsed accordingly by the undersigned members given in alphabetical order who founded this Association at a meeting specially convened for this particular purpose:

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Signature:</u>
Mr. Mahadevan Aravindan	.....
Dr. Kanagaratnam Jeevakumar	.....
Mr. Kandiah Jeyapalasingham	.....
Mr. Ravi Ponnampalam	.....
Mr. Prakash Rajasundram	.....
Mr. Sellappa Ragavan	.....
Mr. Sabanadesan Ravishankar	.....
Mr. Sothivannan Retnasabapathy	.....
Mr. Kapilan Sellathurai	.....
Dr. Sivas Premjeyanth	.....
Mr. Anand Sothinathan	.....
Mr. Dominic Thambipillai	.....
Dr. Thayananthan Thayaparan	.....
Mr. Umakanth Thirugnanam	.....
Mr. Sathish Vallipuram	.....