

THE CONSTITUTION

of the

KURDISH NATIONAL CONGRESS

The constitution and the bylaws of the Kurdish National Congress of North America, which were adopted during its first General Assembly meeting at Ann Arbor, Michigan, August 1989, are hereby amended and approved by the 22nd General Assembly Meeting held in San Diego, CA June 4-6, 2010.

KURDISH NATIONAL CONGRESS

PREAMBLE

We the Kurdish people believe that justice dictates that all nations are inherently equal and entitled to the same natural rights. That some nations are under the involuntary dominance of others presents an unnatural source of imbalance in the lives of people and nations. Inasmuch as voluntary unions are moral, legitimate and a source of prosperity and harmony, forced unions are immoral, illegitimate and precursors of poverty and political strife. Nations have the fundamental and natural right to determine the course of their own future. We observe that all existing unions of the fragments of our homeland with neighboring states are involuntary, and hence unnatural, immoral, and illegitimate.

Acts of ethnic cleansing, forced relocation, and political suppression against the Kurds have become official policies of governments occupying different parts of Kurdistan. We the Kurdish people in Diaspora, shall spearhead actions aimed at a free, independent, and unified homeland on our ancestral soil and to assert and preserve our equality with other nations of the world.

In this spirit, we, the people of Kurdish origin, shall endeavor to:

1. Undertake initiatives to retain our Kurdish culture and heritage;
2. Create strong bonds among all Kurds;
3. Maintain close contact with the people of Kurdistan;
4. Initiate actions for promoting democracy and human rights in Kurdistan;
5. Create conditions conducive to self-determination in Kurdistan;
6. Strengthen ties between Kurds and other nationalities.

We hereby adopt this constitution and pledge to observe its provisions.

Article I- Name and Nature

The name of this organization shall be the Kurdish National Congress of North America to be known as KNC . It shall be a non- partisan and not-for- profit organization.

Article II- Aim and Purpose

The Kurdish National Congress shall promote unity and common purpose among all Kurds, regardless of their political and religious orientation. To this end, KNC shall:

1. Represent and serve the interests of Kurds in North America;
2. Mobilize resources for establishing Kurdish cultural centers and developing grassroots community programs aimed at the preservation of the Kurdish culture and history;
3. Initiate self-help programs for promoting stronger communal bonds between Kurds and non- Kurds;
4. Develop local KNC chapters with a view to providing training in Kurdish language, literature, history, art, and music;
5. Assist in the articulation of plans and strategies for attaining Kurdish national and democratic aspirations;
6. Provide a podium for resolving ongoing and emerging conflicts in Kurdistan;
7. Train community activists for the protection of human rights in Kurdistan;
8. Create a think-tank for studying and discussing Kurdish topics;
9. Coordinate and maintain close ties with like-minded Kurdish organizations in Kurdistan and abroad, and
10. Mobilize volunteers for action programs aimed at improving living conditions in Kurdistan.
11. Establish headquarters in the Washington, DC National Capital area with a view to serving as an information and documentation resource center for policy makers and scholars on the Kurdish issue;

Article III- Membership

1. Active membership
 1. Any person of Kurdish parents or parent (mother or father) or spouse of a Kurd including the widow/widower of a Kurdish spouse, would be eligible for KNC membership provided that he/she is eighteen years or older and has strong moral and ethical character. He/she must be willing to serve and promote the KNC objectives.
 2. Active members must pay annual membership dues on a timely basis as prescribed by the KNC Board of Directors.
 3. Active members shall have the right to participate in all KNC meetings and cast a single vote.
2. Associate Membership

1. Any person, who is sixteen years or older, from Kurdish parents/ parent, with a good moral and ethical character, shall qualify for an associate membership.
 2. Associate members shall have the rights of active members, except that of voting.
 3. Associate members can be elected to become members of and chair youth program committees.
 4. Associate members shall pay annual dues on a timely basis as prescribed by the Board of Directors.
3. Honorary Membership
1. Honorary members may be of Kurdish or non -Kurdish origin.
 2. The Board of Directors bestows this category of membership on those who have provided exceptional services to the Kurdish people and demonstrated solidarity with their cause.
 3. Honorary members may attend KNC meetings and have the privileges of active members, except the right to vote or hold office.
 4. An active member has the right to submit the name of one or more candidates for honorary membership to KNC.
4. Admission
1. Application for membership shall be signed by an applicant and endorsed by an active KNC member.
 2. The applicant `s signature signifies his/her acceptance of the KNC Articles of incorporation, By- Laws, rules and regulations.
 3. The President of the KNC shall periodically form a committee to review applications submitted for active, associate, and honorary membership. The committee shall submit its recommendations to the President, who in turn refers them to the Board of Directors for review and consideration.
 4. If an application is rejected, all fees submitted by the applicant shall be refunded.
 5. All written statements regarding membership applications shall be kept in the file of the organization.
 6. Based on information provided to the organization, the Board of Directors shall render final judgment on the qualification of individuals seeking membership and the status of those members who are targeted for disciplinary action.

Article IV- KNC Structure

KNC shall consist of the following bodies:

1. General Assembly
 2. President
 3. Board of Directors
 4. Executive Committee
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1. General Assembly

1. The Annual Conference of the KNC is its General Assembly.
 2. In consultation with the Board of Directors, the President decides the time and venue of the Annual Conference, which will be announced at least sixteen weeks in advance. The venue of the annual Conference shall be rotated between different locations in order to ensure maximum participation.
 3. At the discretion of the President or upon a request from 20 percent of the active members, special meetings shall be convened within ten working days to discuss emerging priority issues.
 4. Quorum. The presence in person of ten percent (10%) but not less than fifteen voting members shall constitute a quorum for transaction of businesses. Members present at a duly called or held meeting at which a quorum is present may continue conducting business, notwithstanding the withdrawal of a sufficient number of members, making the quorum to be less than what is legally permissible. If there is no quorum, a second meeting will be called within four weeks through proper notification. Any number of members present during the second meeting shall constitute a quorum.
2. President
 1. The President shall be active as a KNC member in good standing for at least one year and elected directly by members of the Congress.
 2. The term of office for KNC President shall be two years with a maximum of two terms served.
 3. Any active KNC member can nominate himself/herself or other active members for election to the President.
3. Board of Directors
 1. The members of the Board of Directors shall be active KNC members in good standing for at least one year and elected directly by members of the Congress.
 2. The terms of office of each member shall be two years with no limit on the number of terms served.
 3. Any active KNC member can nominate himself/herself or other active members for election to the Board of Directors.
 4. The Board of Directors shall consist of eight members who will be directly elected by KNC members.
 5. The Board of Directors and the President shall elect Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer from among its members to manage daily activities of the Kurdish National Congress.
 6. All KNC program of work shall be approved by the General Assembly.
 7. A Board member's absence from three consecutive regular meetings without satisfactory justifications, shall signify voluntary resignation from his/her post.
 8. In the event of vacancies, the Board of Directors shall fill the post by a simple majority vote.
 9. A simple majority of the elected members of the Board of Directors and President shall constitute a quorum. Board members present at a duly

called or held Board meeting, at which a quorum is present, may continue to do business until adjournment notwithstanding the withdrawal of enough members to render the quorum to be less than what is legally permissible.

4. Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee shall consist of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
2. The President of the Executive Committee shall be President of the Board of Directors and KNC.
3. The Vice President shall be the Vice President of the Board of Directors.
4. The Secretary of the Executive Committee shall be Secretary of the Board of Directors and KNC.
5. The Treasurer of the Executive Committee shall be the Treasurer of the of the Board of Directors and KNC.
6. The terms of office of the Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be two years, with no limit on the number of terms.
7. The performance of members of the Executive Committee who are heads of various committees, and chairs of other KNC committees and/or subcommittees are subject to annual review by the Board of Directors. The renewal of their position shall be based on their good performance. This shall take place after the annual conference.

Article V- Duties of the Principal Officers

1. President

1. The President or his/her designee shall represent KNC in meetings and conferences pertaining the Kurdish issue.
2. The President or his/her Vice President shall preside over all regular meetings of the Congress or perform other duties as dictated by the organization`s bylaws.
3. The President shall chair and hold executive meetings pertaining to social, economic, political and educational programs or any other subject brought to the attention of the Congress.
4. The President shall, at the annual conference, report to the General Assembly the State of the Organization (KNC). The report shall include the internal and external difficulties and/or successes that the KNC had experienced during the year.

2. Vice President

1. The Vice President shall assist the President in his daily responsibilities and replace him/her when his post becomes vacant.
2. In the absence of the President, the Vice President assumes his/her daily duties.

3. Secretary

1. The Secretary shall maintain membership files and other related information.

2. The Secretary shall not release information related to any KNC member under any circumstance to anyone including the KNC membership without the explicit written permission from the respective member.
 3. The Secretary shall keep minutes of meetings and be in charge of incoming and outgoing correspondence.
 4. The Secretary shall inform the KNC members of general meetings at least sixteen weeks in advance.
 5. The secretary shall form a Conference committee to oversee the KNC Annual Conference. The committee shall oversee the conference agenda. At the conclusion of the conference the Secretary shall, after consultation with the Board of Directors, release a "Conference statement." The statement shall be based on the ideas/discussions presented at the conference and shall include the conclusions and recommendations that emerged from the conference.
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4. Treasurer
1. The Treasurer shall be the custodian of the KNC funds and keep records of all financial transactions.
 2. He or she shall be responsible for collecting dues, donations, and funds due the Congress and provide appropriate receipts in exchange.
 3. Subject to the approval of the Board of Directors, the Treasurer shall disburse funds for the implementation of activities approved by the General Assembly.
 4. The Treasurer shall be responsible for office equipment and supplies.
 5. The Treasurer shall prepare yearly financial reports, spelling out the present financial status of KNC, sources of revenues and different categories of expenditures.
 6. The Treasurer shall present his/her reports to Board meetings as well as to General Assembly meetings.
 7. **The Treasurer shall annually renew the KNC license with the state and file taxes with the IRS.**
 8. Since the Treasurer maintains the membership database he/she shall not release information related to any KNC member under any circumstance to anyone including the KNC membership without the explicit written permission from the respective member.

Article VI- Elections

1. Election Committee
 1. The President shall form an Election Committee to organize, conduct, and supervise KNC elections.
 2. The Election Committee shall distribute ballots to KNC members at least sixteen weeks in advance of the annual Conference, urging them to nominate themselves or other members for the Board of Directors or President. Each nominee should provide the Secretary with a statement spelling out his/her qualifications.

3. A candidate may run for the office of the President or the Board of Directors, but cannot run for both positions.
 4. A list of candidates seeking the office of President and of candidates seeking position on the Board of Directors, along with their qualifications, shall be mailed to the KNC members not less than eight weeks prior to the annual Conference.
 5. The list of the candidates President and Board of Directors shall also be distributed to the members during the annual Conference. Other nominations can also be made from the floor during the annual Conference.
 6. Every candidate once elected must adhere to the spirit of teamwork and collegiality in order to promote the KNC's agenda.
 7. KNC members who are unable to attend the annual Conference can cast their votes by mailing their ballots to the Conference. All such ballots shall be received by the Election Committee by not less than three working days prior to the date of convening the Conference.
2. Election Procedures
 1. All those who did not mail their ballots can cast their votes during the Conference.
 2. All the voting ballots received by mail shall remain sealed until the Election Committee starts counting votes prior to the conclusion of the annual Conference.
 3. The Election Committee shall count the votes won by each candidate and announce the final results prior to the conclusion of the annual Conference.

Article VII- Finance

The activities of the KNC shall be financed from the following sources:

1. Membership dues
 2. Donations
 3. Gifts
 4. Endowments
 5. Grants
 6. Other legitimate resources
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1. Annual Membership Dues
 1. All full and associate members shall pay annual membership dues in an amount specified by the Board of Directors.
 2. Honorary members may not pay dues.
 3. Annual dues shall be paid at least eight weeks prior to the General Assembly, but not later than the starting date of the Conference.

4. Any member whose dues and assessments are in arrears for a period of one year shall have his/her membership suspended. He/she may reapply for membership provided that all unpaid dues and assessments are fully paid.
2. Disbursement of Funds by the Board of Directors
 1. The annual KNC budget shall be approved by the Board of Directors.
 2. Disbursement of funds shall be in line with the objectives set in the Preamble and Bylaws of the KNC.
 3. All expenditures exceeding five hundred dollars shall be approved by the Executive Committee.
 4. The Congress shall maintain detailed records of financial transactions, including invoices and receipts, for the purpose of preparing year-end financial reports.

Article VI11- Amendments

1. Submitting Amendments
 1. Amendments to the Constitution shall be submitted to the President in writing by a full member not less than sixty days prior to the General Assembly meeting. An amendment so submitted must be endorsed by one or more Active members.
 2. Preliminary Discussion. The Executive Committee shall discuss proposed amendments at a joint meeting with the Board of Directors. The author(s) of the amendment may be invited to explain his/her proposal to the Board of Directors. The amendment must pass by two- thirds majority vote. If approved, the President shall in turn refer the amendment back to the General Assembly for vote during the next meeting.
 3. Urgent Amendments. When the number of the KNC members in good standing who endorse the amendment in writing exceed the number of the Executive Committee members, submission to the General assembly shall not require preliminary discussions specified in Section 2 of this Article.

Article IX- Dissolution

In the event of the KNC dissolution, The Board of Directors shall, after settling or making provisions to settle all KNC liabilities, donate all KNC assets to existing similar Kurdish organizations.

Article X- LOCAL KNC CHAPTERS

1. Local KNC chapters may be established where five or more Active members reside.
2. Members of a chapter shall form a Coordinating Committee, consisting of a Coordinator, Treasurer, and Secretary.
3. Local chapters shall organize community level activities, issue newsletters, and collect and disperse membership dues.

4. Local chapters may contribute 30 percent of their annual revenues to the KNC Headquarters` activities.
5. The KNC Headquarters shall assist local chapters in organizational and related matters.
6. The coordinators of the local chapters may be invited to KNC Board meetings to report on their activities and priority needs.

The last update to the bylaws occurred on June 6, 2010.