

IJAW NATIONAL CONGRESS (INC)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
CHAPTER
(INC-USA)

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS



Adopted this ____ day of _____, 2026

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Comprehensive Governance Draft with Zonal Representation, Expanded EXCO Roles, Board of Trustees, Elections, Finance, Meetings, Discipline, Amendments and Dissolution Provisions

Adopted this ____ day of _____, 2026

PREAMBLE

We, the sons and daughters of the Ijaw Nation residing in United States of America, united in our commitment to promote unity, cultural heritage, justice, and socio-economic advancement of the Ijaw people, do hereby adopt this Bylaw for the governance of the Ijaw National Congress - United States of America Chapter (INC-USA) in alignment with the ideals of INC Worldwide.

ARTICLE 1: NAME AND LEGAL STATUS

1. The organization shall be known as Ijaw National Congress - United States of America Chapter (INC-USA).
2. It shall operate as a non-profit, non-political, and non-religious organization.
3. It shall comply with applicable laws in the United States.

ARTICLE 2: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

INC-USA shall:

4. Promote unity among Ijaw people in the United States of America.
5. Preserve Ijaw cultural heritage.
6. Advocate for Niger Delta development.
7. Serve as diaspora liaison to INC Worldwide.
8. Promote youth and women inclusion.
9. Facilitate economic and humanitarian initiatives.

ARTICLE 3: MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Eligibility

- Persons of Ijaw origin resident in the United States of America.
- Spouses, descendants, and supporters who subscribe to the aims and objectives of INC-USA.

3.2 Categories

- Full Members
- Associate Members
- Honorary Members

3.3 Rights

- Full Members shall have the right to vote and be voted for, subject to financial standing and eligibility requirements.
- Members may participate in meetings, programs, committees, and lawful activities of the Chapter.

3.4 Obligations

- Payment of approved dues and levies.
- Compliance with this Constitution, lawful decisions of Congress, and approved policies of INC-USA.
- Promotion of unity, discipline, accountability, and respect among members.

ARTICLE 4: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

10. Congress (General Assembly)
11. Executive Committee (EXCO)
12. Board of Trustees (BoT)
13. Standing Committees

ARTICLE 5: CONGRESS (GENERAL ASSEMBLY)

14. Congress shall be the supreme authority of INC-USA.
15. Congress shall meet at least twice annually.

Powers of Congress

- Elect officers.
- Approve policies, budgets, programs, and major institutional decisions.
- Amend this Constitution in accordance with Article 13.
- Receive reports from EXCO, BoT, ELECO, committees, and the Auditor.

Quorum

- Quorum shall be fifty percent plus one (50% + 1) of financial members, unless otherwise provided in this Constitution.

ARTICLE 6: ZONAL STRUCTURE AND REPRESENTATION

6.1 Zones

- Western Zone
- Central Zone
- Eastern Zone

6.2 Zoning Principles

- Equity
- Balance
- Inclusion
- Protection against domination by any one zone or group

6.3 Zonal Integrity Rule

- Members must contest from their verified zone of origin.
- Opportunistic switching of zones within an election cycle is prohibited.
- Any false declaration or manipulation of zone shall constitute misconduct.

6.4 Rotational Leadership

The office of Chairman shall rotate among the zones in the following order:

- Central Zone -> Eastern Zone -> Western Zone -> repeat

ARTICLE 7: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EXCO)

7.1 Composition and Zonal Allocation

Office	Zone
Chairman	Rotational (Central-Western-Eastern)
Vice Chairman	Rotational (Eastern-Central-Western)
General Secretary	Rotational (Central-Eastern-Western)
Assistant Secretary	Rotational
Treasurer	Rotational
Financial Secretary	Rotational
Publicity Secretary	Rotational
Auditor	Rotational
Legal Adviser	Rotational
Organizing Secretary	Rotational

7.2 Tenure

- Three (3) years, renewable once by general elections.

7.3 Zonal Balance Rules

16. No zone shall hold more than forty percent (40%) of the total executive positions at any time, except where mathematically unavoidable.
17. The Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Treasurer shall come from different zones.

7.4 General Principles of Office

18. Officers shall act in good faith, transparency, and accountability.
19. No officer shall make unilateral decisions on behalf of INC-USA where such decision affects policy, finance, elections, public communication, or institutional direction.
20. All officers owe fiduciary duty to INC-USA and must protect the assets, records, reputation, and unity of the Chapter.

7.5 Duties of Officers

7.5.1 Chairman

The Chairman shall be the chief executive and presiding officer of INC-USA. The Chairman shall provide leadership, preside over Congress and EXCO meetings, represent INC-USA in official engagements, liaise with INC Worldwide, and ensure implementation of approved policies. The Chairman shall not unilaterally commit the Chapter financially, alter approved decisions, issue binding public statements, or convene unauthorized meetings contrary to EXCO or Congress resolutions.

7.5.2 Vice Chairman

The Vice Chairman shall assist the Chairman, act in the absence or incapacity of the Chairman, supervise assigned committees, promote internal harmony, and serve as a stabilizing officer during disputes or transitions. Serves as Liaison with the INC-NEC Diaspora Desk

7.5.3 Secretary

The Secretary shall be the chief administrative officer and custodian of official records. The Secretary shall issue meeting notices, prepare minutes, maintain correspondence, preserve the Bylaw/Constitution and archives, and authenticate official communication only with proper EXCO authorization. Shall preside in meetings in the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman

7.5.4 Assistant Secretary

The Assistant Secretary shall support the Secretary, maintain membership records and archives, assist with notices and minutes, and act in the absence of the Secretary when authorized.

7.5.5 Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be custodian of funds and shall maintain accounts, receive and safeguard funds, issue receipts, keep bank records, present financial position reports, and operate strictly under the approved dual-signatory system.

7.5.6 Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall manage dues, levies, pledges, and revenue records; maintain the membership financial register; prepare income summaries; and work with the Treasurer to support budgeting and financial planning.

7.5.7 Publicity Secretary

The Publicity Secretary shall manage public communication, press releases, media relations, newsletters, digital platforms, and program publicity. Public statements on sensitive or policy matters shall require EXCO approval.

7.5.8 Legal Adviser

The Legal Adviser shall interpret the bylaw, advise on legal compliance, review agreements, support dispute resolution, and guide INC-USA on nonprofit, governance, and regulatory matters in the United States.

7.5.9 Auditor

The Auditor shall independently review financial records, inspect books, verify receipts and expenditures, report irregularities, and present audit findings to Congress. The Auditor shall maintain independence from the Treasurer and Financial Secretary.

7.5.10 Organizing Secretary

The Organizing Secretary shall coordinate events, mobilize members, manage logistics, support conventions and programs, and work with committees to ensure orderly execution of approved activities.

7.5.11 Women Leader

The Women Leader shall promote women participation, coordinate women-focused initiatives, represent women interests, and encourage leadership development among Ijaw women in the United State of America.

7.5.12 Youth Leader

The Youth Leader shall coordinate youth programs, promote youth inclusion, mobilize younger members, support innovation initiatives, and encourage cultural and civic engagement among Ijaw youth.

7.6 Decision-Making

- EXCO decisions shall be made by majority vote of members present and voting, provided quorum is met.
- EXCO quorum shall be two-thirds (2/3) of serving officers.

7.7 Checks and Balances

- Separation of administrative, financial, and oversight functions shall be maintained.
- Mandatory reporting shall be required from all officers.
- Any officer acting outside constitutional authority shall be subject to discipline.

7.8 Vacancy and Removal

- A vacancy may occur by resignation, death, incapacity, removal, or prolonged abandonment of duty.
- Removal of an officer shall require two-thirds (2/3) EXCO recommendation and Congress ratification, subject to fair hearing.

ARTICLE 8: BOARD OF TRUSTEES (BoT)

8.1 Establishment

There shall be a Board of Trustees for INC-USA, serving as the custodian of the long-term vision, institutional memory, and moral authority of the Chapter.

8.2 Composition

The BoT shall consist of Nine (9) or Twelve (12) members, with equal zonal representation:

Zone	9-Member BoT	12-Member BoT
Western Zone	3	4
Central Zone	3	4
Eastern Zone	3	4

8.3 Eligibility

21. A respected person of Ijaw origin resident in United States of America.(US Resident/Citizen)
22. A person of proven integrity, maturity, and community service.
23. A financial member of INC-USA, unless admitted as an honorary leader/elder.
24. Free from unresolved disciplinary sanctions of the INC-USA.

8.4 Functions

25. Provide advisory guidance to Congress and EXCO.
26. Protect the continuity and founding ideals of INC-NA.
27. Mediate serious disputes before escalation.

28. Review major constitutional, financial, and institutional matters.
29. Ensure no zone, officer, or faction dominates the Chapter.
30. Support engagement with INC Worldwide and other diaspora structures.

8.5 Limitations

31. The BoT shall not usurp the executive powers of EXCO.
32. The BoT shall not override Congress except where expressly allowed by this Bylaw.
33. The BoT shall not control daily administration.
34. The BoT shall not endorse factional meetings or unauthorized elections.

8.6 Tenure

BoT members shall serve a term of four (4) years, renewable once, unless Congress approves an extension for institutional continuity.

8.7 BoT Chairman

The BoT shall elect a Chairman from among its members. The BoT Chairman shall not be a sitting EXCO officer.

8.8 BoT Meetings

The BoT shall meet at least thrice yearly, and may meet specially where urgent constitutional or conflict-resolution issues arise.

ARTICLE 9: ELECTIONS

9.1 Electoral Authority

Elections shall be conducted by an independent Electoral Committee, known as ELECO, constituted by Congress.

9.2 Composition of ELECO

ELECO shall consist of five (5) or seven (7) members, with balanced zonal representation and at least one legal/compliance adviser where available.

9.3 Independence

ELECO members shall not contest for any office in the election they supervise.

9.4 Election Cycle

General elections shall be held every three (3) years, not later than thirty (30) days before expiration of the incumbent EXCO tenure.

9.5 Eligibility to Vote

35. Is a registered full member.
36. Is financially up to date.
37. Has been a member for the minimum period prescribed by Congress or ELECO.
38. Is not under INC-USA suspension.

9.6 Eligibility to Contest

39. Be a full financial member.
40. Belong to the zone allocated to the office being contested.
41. Meet any service, dues, or membership-duration requirement.
42. Not be under disciplinary sanction.
43. Submit required nomination forms and declarations.

9.7 Zonal Verification

Before clearance, ELECO shall verify each candidate's zone of origin. False declaration shall be grounds for disqualification and disciplinary action.

9.8 Campaign Rules

Campaigns shall be conducted with dignity. Candidates shall not use defamation, bribery, tribal division, intimidation, forged documents, or misuse of INC-USA platforms.

9.9 Voting Method

Voting may be in-person, electronic, or hybrid. The adopted voting method must protect transparency, secrecy of ballot, auditability, and equal access.

9.10 Election Petitions

Any petition shall be submitted within seven (7) days after results are declared. ELECO shall respond within a reasonable timeframe, subject to Congress review where necessary.

9.11 Transition

Outgoing officers shall hand over all records, funds, passwords, documents, seals, and property within fourteen (14) days after inauguration of the new EXCO.

ARTICLE 10: FINANCE

10.1 Financial Year

The financial year of INC-USA shall run from January 1 to December 31.

10.3 Bank Accounts

INC-USA shall maintain official bank account(s) in its registered name. No officer shall operate a private account for official Chapter funds.

10.4 Signatories

There shall be at least three approved signatories, including the Chairman, Treasurer, and one other officer approved by EXCO. Any withdrawal or payment shall require at least two signatories.

10.5 Budget

EXCO shall prepare an annual budget for Congress approval. No major expenditure outside the approved budget shall be made without EXCO approval and, where material, Congress ratification.

10.2 Sources of Funds

- 44. Membership dues.
- 45. Levies approved by Congress.
- 46. Donations.
- 47. Grants.
- 48. Fundraising events.
- 49. Sponsorships.
- 50. Lawful income-generating activities approved by Congress.

10.6 Financial Records

- 51. Income.
- 52. Expenditures.
- 53. Receipts.
- 54. Bank statements.
- 55. Donor records.
- 56. Outstanding dues.
- 57. Assets and liabilities.

10.7 Reporting

- 58. Monthly to EXCO.
- 59. Quarterly to Congress.
- 60. Annually at the Annual General Meeting.

10.8 Audit

The Auditor shall review the books annually and may conduct special audits where there is reasonable concern of irregularity. Only the auditor can recommend an external support where internal audit processes fails or inconclusive

10.9 Asset Protection

All assets purchased or donated in the name of INC-USA shall belong to the Chapter and must be recorded in an asset register.

10.10 Financial Misconduct

- 61. Unauthorized withdrawals.
- 62. Use of Chapter funds for personal purposes.
- 63. Failure to disclose donations.
- 64. Refusal to submit receipts.
- 65. Concealment or alteration of records.
- 66. Opening unauthorized accounts.
- 67. Misrepresentation to banks, donors, or partners.

ARTICLE 11: MEETINGS

11.1 Types of Meetings

- 68. Congress meetings.
- 69. Annual General Meetings (Global Convention).
- 70. EXCO meetings.
- 71. BoT meetings.
- 72. Emergency meetings.
- 73. Committee meetings.
- 74. Special Congress meetings.

11.2 Congress Meetings

Congress shall meet at four times yearly to review policies, finances, programs, and governance matters.

11.4 EXCO Meetings

EXCO shall meet at least monthly. Notices shall be issued by the Secretary with the approval of the Chairman or by majority EXCO instruction.

11.6 Notice

Ordinary meetings require at least seven (7) days' notice. Emergency meetings require at least twenty-four (24) hours' notice, unless waived by majority of participants.

11.7 Agenda

No major item shall be decided unless included in the agenda, except where two-thirds of members present approve its consideration.

11.9 Virtual Meetings

Meetings may be held physically, virtually, or hybrid. Decisions reached virtually shall have full constitutional effect if quorum and notice requirements are met.

11.10 Minutes

Minutes shall be recorded, circulated, corrected, and adopted at the next meeting. Adopted minutes shall serve as official evidence of decisions.

11.3 Annual General Meeting

- 75. Chairman's report.
- 76. Secretary's report.
- 77. Treasurer's financial report.
- 78. Auditor's report.
- 79. Committee reports.
- 80. Proposed budget and programs.

11.5 Emergency Meetings

- 81. Chairman.

- 82. Two-thirds of EXCO.
- 83. BoT Chairman in a serious constitutional crisis.
- 84. One-third of financial members through written petition.

11.8 Quorum

- 85. Congress: 50% + 1 of financial members, or as may be adjusted by Congress.
- 86. EXCO: two-thirds of serving officers.
- 87. BoT: simple majority.
- 88. Committees: simple majority.

ARTICLE 12: DISCIPLINE

12.1 Purpose

Discipline shall protect the integrity, unity, assets, and reputation of INC-USA.

12.3 Disciplinary Committee

Where misconduct is alleged, EXCO or Congress may constitute a Disciplinary Committee of three (3) to five (5) impartial members.

12.6 Appeals

A disciplined member may appeal to Congress within fourteen (14) days of receiving the decision.

12.7 Emergency Suspension

Where a member's conduct threatens funds, safety, or institutional stability, EXCO may impose temporary suspension pending full hearing.

12.2 Offenses

- 89. Financial impropriety.
- 90. False zoning declaration.
- 91. Forgery or misrepresentation.
- 92. Unauthorized public statements.
- 93. Defamation of the Chapter or officers.
- 94. Disruption of meetings.
- 95. Violence, threats, or intimidation.
- 96. Refusal to hand over Chapter property.
- 97. Breach of confidentiality.
- 98. Acting against valid Congress or EXCO decisions.

12.4 Fair Hearing

- 99. Written notice of allegations.
- 100. Reasonable time to respond.
- 101. Opportunity to be heard.
- 102. Written decision stating findings.

12.5 Sanctions

103. Verbal or written warning.
104. Apology or retraction.
105. Restitution.
106. Suspension.
107. Removal from committee.
108. Disqualification from election.
109. Expulsion, subject to Congress approval.

ARTICLE 13: AMENDMENTS

13.1 Authority

This Bylaw may be amended only by Congress.

13.2 Proposal

110. Two-thirds of EXCO.
111. BoT recommendation.
112. One-third of financial members.
113. Constitutional Review Committee.

13.3 Notice

Proposed amendments must be circulated at least thirty (30) days before the meeting where they will be considered.

13.4 Voting Threshold

Amendments require a two-thirds majority of financial members present and voting, provided quorum is met.

13.5 Protected Clauses

Clauses on zoning, financial accountability, election independence, and internal dispute resolution shall not be amended for personal or factional advantage.

13.6 Effective Date

Amendments become effective immediately upon adoption unless Congress states otherwise.

ARTICLE 14: DISSOLUTION

14.1 Dissolution Authority

INC-USA may be dissolved only by Congress through a special resolution.

14.2 Notice

A dissolution proposal must be circulated at least sixty (60) days before the meeting.

14.3 Voting Threshold

Dissolution shall require at least three-fourths majority of financial members present and voting, provided quorum is met.

14.4 Settlement of Liabilities

Before assets are transferred, all lawful debts, taxes, contractual obligations, and liabilities shall be settled.

14.6 Records

Final financial records, bank statements, asset register, minutes, and dissolution resolution shall be preserved for institutional and legal purposes.

14.5 Distribution of Assets

Upon dissolution, remaining assets shall be transferred to:

114. INC Worldwide; or

115. A recognized nonprofit organization with similar cultural, educational, humanitarian, or development objectives.

No asset shall be distributed to any officer, member, trustee, donor, or private individual.

CERTIFICATION

Adopted this ____ day of _____, 2026 by the Congress of Ijaw National Congress - United States of America Chapter (INC-USA).

Chairman: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

General Secretary: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

BoT Chairman: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____