

## **POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE ROTARY INTERNATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

In September 2023, the Zone 5 Nominating Committee selected PDG M. Muruganandam as its candidate for 2025-27 RI director. Two candidates challenged his selection. In accordance with the RI Bylaws, the general secretary conducted a ballot of the clubs in Zone 5 between PDG Muruganandam and the two challenging candidates. At end of the balloting period, PDG Muruganandam had received the most votes, and RI President Gordon McInally declared him the Zone 5 director-nominee.

The Rotary Clubs of Sivagiri and Erode Central filed election complaints alleging PDG Muruganandam and others engaged in campaigning activities during the election period. They requested the Board to overturn the election results and declare the runner-up, a member of the Erode Central club, the director-nominee.

The clubs alleged that there was a coordinated effort by senior Rotarians in the district and zone to elect PDG Muruganandam. They also argued that PDG Muruganandam promoted himself as a candidate by attending Rotary events.

RI's Election Review Committee reviewed the documents submitted by the complaining clubs and PDG Muruganandam's written response and determined that the clubs failed to submit sufficient evidence to support their allegations.

The Committee found that the evidence submitted to support the allegations consisted of disputed and/or uncorroborated WhatsApp messages, unsubstantiated allegations of phantom clubs in other districts, and unsupported personal allegations against PDG Muruganandam.

It also noted that his activities while serving as a Rotary Public Image Coordinator were not a violation of RI's campaigning rules, and the clubs did not submit any evidence that he used his role to solicit support.

The Election Review Committee therefore recommended the complaints be dismissed. Based on the Committee's review and recommendation, the Board dismissed the complaints.

The Board does not believe there is any merit to this appeal and urges representatives to sustain the Board's decision.

## **POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE ROTARY CLUB OF SIVAGIRI**

The Zone 5 RI Director Election (2023-24) raises serious concerns about ethical and procedural violations, compromising Rotary's values of transparency, fairness, and integrity.

Despite substantial evidence—including 14 affidavits and documented proof—the Election Review Committee dismissed our complaint without providing reasons, leaving many Rotarians disillusioned.

Historically, Rotary has rigorously upheld election integrity. Yet, this election was tainted by a cash-for-vote scam, with club presidents coerced into voting within the first five days without consulting members. District Officers violated club autonomy by collecting voting screenshots. Affidavits from respected Past District Governors and senior Rotarians, critical testimonies from high-ranking Rotary members, were disregarded, severely undermining trust in the review process.

Unethical campaigning, misuse of Rotary platforms like Rotary News Magazine and WhatsApp, and widespread canvassing violated RI Bylaws 13.010 and Code of Policies 26.060.4.

Board's rushed dismissal suggests a predetermined outcome, raising deep concerns among Rotarians.

The two complainant clubs each paid \$5,000 USD to lodge their complaints, yet Rotary refused to provide key details. Our requests for voting software review, Point-by-Point analysis, a personal appearance (26.070.6), a copy of the General Secretary's analysis (26.070.4), and redressal by an arbitration committee were ignored, leaving concerns unresolved and standing in stark opposition to natural justice.

The Board dismissed allegations of campaigning, voting by phantom clubs, and irregularities in voting process as without merit, despite significant evidence. Notably, most phantom clubs identified in our complaint were subsequently terminated by Rotary International for failure to function, validating our concerns. Rotary failed to provide transparent reasoning or engage with substantial evidence provided. This gap raises serious questions about fairness.

To protect election integrity, we urge the Council on Legislation to reject the Board's decision.

Voting "No" is crucial to prevent institutionalizing these violations within Rotary.

We respectfully urge a thorough review of this statement.

# RULES OF PROCEDURE

## APPEAL OF RI BOARD DECISION 160(1), MAY 2024

- Under RI Bylaws Section 5.030., decisions of the Rotary International Board of Directors may only be appealed to the representatives of the Council on Legislation, under rules set by the RI Board.
- The RI Board and the Appellant Club, the Rotary Club of Sivagiri, TN, India will each be provided the opportunity to submit a Position Statement of up to 300 words to be sent to the Council representatives. The Position Statement must be received by the RI General Secretary by 1 November 2024.
- Thereafter, the Council Representatives will vote on the question:

**Shall the Decision of the Board, Decision 160, point 1, Sections a. and b., May 2024, be sustained?**

- The decision of the RI Board will be sustained if a majority of votes cast are in favor of this question.
- The general secretary will send the ballot and position statement(s) to the Council Representatives electronically by 2 December 2024, with a copy sent to the District Governors.
- Each Council Representative shall be entitled to one vote.
- The ballots must be submitted by 16 December 2024.
- A balloting committee, appointed by the President, shall certify the result to the general secretary after the end of the voting period.
- The general secretary will promptly communicate the decision of the Council Representatives to the RI Board, the Appellant Club, and the representatives.
- Any issue not covered by these rules shall be decided by the President.

## **Minutes of the May 2024 RI Board of Directors Meeting**

### **160. Election Review Committee Report**

DECISION: The Board

1. receives the complaints of the Rotary Clubs of Erode Central, TN, India, and Sivagiri, TN, India, concerning the election of the 2025-27 director of Zone 5 and based on the report of the Election Review Committee:

a. finds that the complainant clubs' allegations regarding campaigning by or with the knowledge of the winning candidate, voting by phantom clubs, and irregularities in the voting process are without merit;

b. dismisses the complaints and confirms the selection of Rotarian M. Muruganandam of the Rotary Club of Bhel City Tiruchirapalli, TN, India as the 2025-27 director of Zone 5;