Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's Refworld website. Please note that some RIRs have attachments which are not electronically accessible. To obtain a PDF copy of an RIR attachment, please email the Knowledge and Information Management Unit.

**IND105525.E**

India: Information on the party All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), its structure, including selection of representatives and leaders; appearance, and content of membership cards, and process to obtain one (2012-May 2016)

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**1. Overview of AIADMK Party**

Sources indicate that the AIADMK is a Dravidian party [1] in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu (*The Indian Express* 27 Apr. 2016; Gorringe 30 Dec. 2011, 4). According to the information available on the website of the party, AIADMK was established in 1972 and is mainly active in the states of Tamil Nadu and in Puducherry (AIADMK n.d.a). For further information on the party's history, see Response to Information Request IND41694 of July 2003.

In an entry on the AIADMK published in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, a research fellow with the Institute of South Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore stated that "the AIADMK espouses no particular ideology except the protection of the interests of the Tamil population in India and in Sri Lanka" (10 Oct. 2014). In an article on Tamil politics in India, published in the *South Asian Multidisciplinary Academic Journal*, Hugo Gorringe, a professor of sociology at the University of Edinburgh who specialises in political movements in South India (University of Edinburgh n.d.), writes that the AIADMK offers a "populist manifesto ... and elections continue to be fought on questions of corruption, abuse of power and dynastic succession" (Gorringe 30 Dec. 2011, 4). Rules 2 and 3 of the AIADMK's *Rules and Regulations* state the following:

**Rule: 2: Policy of the Party**

... The Party will strive to create equality among all classes and to establish a democratic socialist society, to promote the language and culture of Dravidians, to strengthen the democratic system and to strive for more autonomous powers for the States in the Indian Sub-continent subject to overall sovereignty of the Centre without jeopardizing the Unity and Integrity of the Nation in accordance with the Constitution of India.

**Rule: 3: Objects**

The objectives of the Party will be to strive to foment and forge a sense of Unity among the people of diversified culture, civilizations, traditions and languages inhabiting this Indian Sub-continent.

To strive for equal opportunities for development of political, economic and social environs among the various States by mutual co-operation, adjustment and adopting a give and take policy.

To strive for bringing necessary amendments to the Constitution to declare the regional language of the linguistic States as the official language of the respective States, with a view to maintaining the solidarity and
unity among the people of the different linguistic regions and to strive for continuance of English, which by its long usage has taken roots in the soil, as medium of communication as between different linguistic States and also between States and Central Government. (AIADMK 5 Feb. 2007, 1, 2)

1.1. Electoral Representation

The website of the AIADMK party states that in 2011 the party won 150 out of 234 seats in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly (AIADMK n.d.a). According to the information available on the website of the Assembly, as of May 2016, the party holds 149 of 235 seats (Tamil Nadu n.d.b). According to sources, the party also won 37 out of 39 seats available for Tamil Nadu in the 2014 elections to Lok Sabha [the House of the People (India May 2014)] (AIADMK 21 May 2014; The Economic Times 17 May 2014). According to the website of the Rajya Sabha, a "second chamber known as the 'Council of States,'" AIADMK currently holds 12 seats in Rajya Sabha (India 6 May 2016).

2. Structure and Selection of Representatives

According to Rule 19 of the constitution of the AIADMK, the General Council of the party is the "supreme authority to frame policies and programmes of the Party" and includes, among others, the Chairman, General Secretary, Deputy General Secretaries, Treasurer, Headquarters Secretaries and members of the Central Executive Committee (AIADMK 5 Feb. 2007, 16). Detailed information on the election of party functionaries at village, town and district levels and in the Puducherry state is available in the Rules and Regulations of AIADMK, which is attached to this Response (Attachment 1).

According to Rule 30 of the AIADMK Rules and Regulations, the elections to party functions and party units are held "once every five years" (ibid., 24). Rule 30 states that

... i) [t]hose who want to contest for the posts of Office bearers in the Party Organisation should have been members of the Party for five years without any break.

... vii) On[e] who is contesting for a post in the Party organization, should be a member of a Branch Unit within the jurisdiction of the particular unit. (ibid.)

Sources similarly report that the AIADMK must hold party elections every five years and that the party announced that it would carry out a "14-phase organisational poll" between 11 December 2014 and 25 April 2015 (The Hindu 28 Nov. 2014; The New Indian Express 9 Mar. 2015). According to a March 2015 article in the New Indian Express, an English-language Indian newspaper, the 14-phase poll would be conducted for party posts "at all levels[,] including wards, panchayat [village council (Merriam-Webster Dictionary n.d)] unions, towns, town panchayats and corporations" (The New Indian Express 9 Mar. 2015).

3. Leaders

Sources indicate that Selvi J. Jayalalitha, popularly referred to as "Amma" [meaning "mother" (The New York Times Magazine 1 July 2015)] is the leader of the AIADMK and the party's general secretary (The New York Times Magazine 1 July 2015; AIADMK n.d.a). An article in the New York Times Magazine reports that in September 2014 Jayalalitha was sentenced to four years in prison for possession of "disproportionate assets" and had to resign from the post of chief minister of Tamil Nadu (The New York Times Magazine 1 July 2015). Sources indicate that she was eventually acquitted of all charges (ibid.; The Hindu 11 May 2015). According to sources, Jayalalitha began serving her fifth term as chief minister of Tamil Nadu on 23 May 2015 (AIADMK n.d.b; Tamil Nadu n.d.a).

Sources indicate that in November 2015 Jayalalitha announced the names of 41 members either newly nominated or retaining their position for offices within the party, including the following:

E. Madhusudhanan, presidium chairman
O. Panneersevalm, party treasurer
C. Ponnaiyan, organising secretary
Panruti Ramachandran, organising secretary
J. Jeyasingh Thiagaraj Nattarjee, organising secretary
S. Raju, organising secretary
MLA A. Papasundaram, organising secretary
Nagappatinam MP K. Gopal, organising secretary
Valarmathi, organising secretary
Natham R. Viswanthan, disciplinary committee member
R. Vaithilingam, disciplinary committee member
Edapadi K. Palanisamy, disciplinary committee member
Udumalai K. Radhakrishnan, election wing secretary. (The Hindu 23 Nov. 2015; The New Indian Express 23 Nov. 2015)

Sources also report that M. Thambidurai was named as the party's propaganda secretary (ibid.; The Hindu 22 Nov. 2015). Further information on the results of the organisational elections in 2014/2015 and on previous elections could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

4. Membership Cards

Rule 5 of the party's Rules and Regulations states that any male or female 18 years of age and older who accepts "the aims and objectives, the rules and regulations of the Party" can become a member (AIADMK 5 Feb. 2007, 2). According to the same source, the following directives apply for membership:

iii) a) Only those who hold their Membership Cards, issued by the Headquarters of the Party will alone be recognized as Members. Only from the date of issue of the Membership Card, a Member will become eligible to vote.

b) [the applicants] should send their applications in the prescribed form to the Headquarters Office through the Secretary of the Party Unit concerned and they must obtain their Membership cards in token of their admission. They can also enroll themselves as Members in the presence of the General Secretary who alone is empowered to admit a person to Membership (ibid., 3).

Furthermore, Rule 30 states that "[b]efore conducting every [party] election[,] the renewal of Membership and enrolment of new members should be done within the target date set by the General Secretary" (ibid., 24). According to a May 2014 announcement published on the AIADMK website, in June 2013 the party began to "work to renew the membership of the existing members … and to enroll new members" before the party's organisational elections (ibid. 25 May 2014). The announcement states that membership cards would be issued at the party headquarters upon presentation of receipts given during the submission of applications to those who applied for them before 30 July 2013 and that "only those who have the new party membership card can contest or vote in the party elections" (ibid.). Similarly, according to a June 2013 article by the New Indian Express, an English-language Indian newspaper, forms for the renewal of membership and for new enrollment, together with the "necessary fee" should be submitted to party headquarters by July 7, 2013 (The New Indian Express 14 June 2013).

The website of the AIADMK has a section titled "Join AIADMK - Online Membership" that includes a form with personal data to be filled out, which can be submitted online (AIADMK n.d.c). The form is attached to this Response (Attachment 2). A sample of the AIADMK membership card, available on the party's website, is attached to this Response (Attachment 3).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

Note

[1] According to an article in the Indian Express, an English-language Indian newspaper, the Dravidian movement "emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as the response of non-Brahmin communities to Brahmin [the "highest ranking of the four varnas, or social classes, in Hindu India" (Encyclopaedia Britannica 4 Dec. 2014)] dominance in public life, especially government...[Its leader] was anti-caste and anti-religion" (The Indian Express 27 Apr. 2016). According to the article, the movement, of which the AIADMK is an offshoot, "played a seminal role in shaping the history of Tamil Nadu" (ibid.).

References

All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK). 21 May 2014. [AIADMK - 47 MPs from Tamil Nadu and the third largest party in the Parliament] [Accessed 3 May 2016]


Tamil Nadu. N.d.a. Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly. "Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu Since 1920." [Accessed 5 May 2016]


Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam; Member of Legislative Assembly of Tamil Nadu; Professor, School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies, University of Bristol; Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Madras.
Internet sites, including: All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam - Elect AIADMK, Support AIADMK; ecoli.net; Elections.in; Factiva; India – Lok Sabha; Tamil Nadu — Chief Electoral Office; Government Portal; Tamil Tribune; United Nations – Refworld.

Attachments


Tips on how to use this search engine.