

**ELECTORAL COLLEGE***Friday, January 20, 2023*

The College met at 1.30 p.m.

[HON. BRIDGID ANNISSETTE-GEORGE *in the Chair*]

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, you may kindly take your seat. Hon. Members of the Electoral College, a roll call to complete accreditation in accordance with Regulation 8(2) of the Electoral College Regulations, 1976, the Regulations, is necessary. I ask Members to confirm their presence when called. The Clerk will check off the Members present against the letters of accreditation signed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House. Madam Clerk.

*[Verification of Accreditation]*

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, may I ask you to stand for the prayer of the Electoral College.

**PRAYERS***National Anthem***ELECTION OF PRESIDENT**

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members of the Electoral College, in accordance with section 28 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the Constitution, I have convened this meeting of the Electoral College for the purpose of the holding of an election for President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Hon. Members, pursuant to section 26(2) of the Constitution, the date of the election for President was published in the *Trinidad and Tobago Gazette*, Volume 61, No. 225 of Friday, December 23, 2022. Section 30 of the Constitution provides that:

“A person shall not be a candidate for election as President unless he is nominated for election by an election paper which—

- (a) is signed by him and by twelve or more members of the House of Representatives; and
- (b) is delivered to the Speaker at least seven days before the election.”

In addition, Regulation 4 the Electoral College Regulations, 1976, the Regulations, requires each candidate for election to be nominated by a nomination paper which must state the full name and address of the candidate and his

proposers, the occupation of the candidate and the constituencies represented by his proposers.

Hon. Members, I am to advise that at the close of nomination on Tuesday, January 10, 2023, I received valid nomination papers for two candidates in accordance with section 30 of the Constitution and Regulation 4 of the Regulations.

I shall now give you details of the nominations. The first nomination received was in the name of:

KANGALOO, Christine Carla

Address: 10 Mon Repos Heights Cascade

Occupation: President of the Senate

Attorney at Law.

Those Members of the House of Representatives who signed the nomination paper in accordance with Regulation 4 of the Regulations are:

Name	Constituency
Keith Christopher Rowley	Diego Martin West
Camille Robinson Regis	Arouca/Maloney
Stuart Young	Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West
Colm Imbert	Diego Martin North East
Lisa Morris-Julian	D'Abadie/O'Meara
Terrence Deyalsingh	St. Joseph.
Adrian Leonce	Laventille East/Morvant
Kennedy Richards	Point Fortin
Foster Cummings	La Horquetta/Talparo
Pennelope Beckles	Arima
Symon de Nobriga	Diego Martin Central
Keith Scotland	Port of Spain South
Brian Manning	San Fernando East
Marvin Gonzales	Lopinot/Bon Air West

Stephen Mc Clashie	La Brea
Shamfa Cudjoe	Tobago West
Roger Monroe	Toco/Sangre Grande
Fitzgerald Hinds	Laventille West
Nyan Gadsby-Dolly	St. Ann's East
Esmond Forde	Tunapuna
Ayanna Webster-Roy	Tobago East
Faris Al-Rawi	San Fernando West

The declaration of Ms. Christine Carla Kangaloo, according to the nomination paper filed, was as follows:

“I, CHRISTINE CARLA KANGALOO nominated in the foregoing nomination paper hereby consent to such nomination as candidate for election as President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and name as my address for serving of process and papers under the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Electoral College Regulations, 1976 –

Address: 10 Mon Repos Heights, Cascade

Witness my hand this 9th day of January 2023

Signed: Christine Kangaloo”

The second nomination was received in the name of:

RAJA-KHAN, Israel

Address: 4 Chepstow Road, St. Augustine

Occupation: Attorney at Law.

Those Members of the House of Representatives who signed the nomination paper in accordance with Regulation 4 of the Regulations are:

Name	Constituency
Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC	Siparia
David Lee	Pointe-a-Pierre
Barry Padarath	Princes Town
Arnold Ram	Caroni Central

Khadijah Ameen	St. Augustine
Ravi Ratiram	Couva North
Roodal Moonilal	Oropouche East
Davendranath Tancoo	Oropouche West
Saddam Hosein	Barataria/San Juan
Vandana Mohit	Chaguanas East
Rishad Seecheran	Caroni East
Lackram Bodoie	Fyzabad

**1.45 p.m.**

The declaration of Mr. Israel Raja-Khan, according to the nomination paper filed, was as follows:

“I, Israel B. Raja-Khan nominated in the forgoing nomination paper hereby consent to such nomination as candidate for election as President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and name as my address for serving of process and papers under the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Electoral College Regulations, 1976 –

Address: 4 Chepstow Road, St. Augustine

Witness my hand this 9th day of January 2023

Signed: Israel B. Raja-Khan”

Hon. Members, both nominations are in conformity with section 30 of the Constitution, and in accordance with Regulation 5 of the Regulations, the two candidates are hereby deemed to stand nominated. A poll by secret ballot, pursuant to section 29 of the Constitution and Regulation 9(1)(a) of the Regulations is therefore required.

In accordance with Regulation 8(6) of the Regulations:

“...no debate on the merits of a candidate shall be held.”

However, in accordance with Regulation 8(4) of the Regulations, a proposal of each candidate may address the Electoral College on the merits of their candidate for a maximum of 15 minutes. The text of the speech of each proposer has been submitted to and approved by the Speaker of the House.

I now call on a proposer from among those who nominated both candidates to

address the Electoral College, if they so desire. It is my understanding that Dr. Keith Rowley will speak on behalf of Ms. Christine Carla Kangaloo and Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC would speak on behalf of Mr. Israel Raja-Khan. I now call upon the Prime Minister, the hon. Dr. Keith Rowley.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley):** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Madam Chairman, I rise to present as candidate for the esteemed position of President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Ms. Christine Carla Kangaloo. Ms. Kangaloo's life has been filled with service to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

A graduate of the University of the West Indies and the Hugh Wooding Law School, by way of St Joseph's Convent San Fernando, Ms. Kangaloo qualified in 1983 with honours in Law from the University of the West Indies and obtained her Legal Education Certificate from the Hugh Wooding Law School in 1985.

From 1985 to 1992, she worked with her father, the late Carlyle Kangaloo, former Mayor of the City of San Fernando, in the law firm of CM Kangaloo and Company. No doubt inspired by her father's devotion to national service, Ms. Kangaloo entered the service of the Judiciary in 1992, as an Assistant Registrar of the Supreme Court of Trinidad and Tobago. She served until 1996 in that capacity. As an Assistant Registrar, she exercised quasi-judicial functions in addition to having to discharge her many administrative responsibilities, which included the oversight of the construction of the Supreme Court building in San Fernando.

In his address on the occasion of the ceremonial opening of the 1993/1994 Law Term, the first and only Ceremonial Opening of the Supreme Court of Trinidad and Tobago ever to take place in San Fernando, the then Chief Justice, the hon. Mr. Clinton Bernard, identified Ms. Kangaloo as being among those who contributed in such a way to have resulted in the construction of what he described as, and I quote: "...a Supreme Court building, befitting the Majesty of the Law and the people of the South...to improve and ensure the business and proper functioning of the administration of justice in this part of the land."

Ms. Kangaloo's service in the southland also included her being Secretary and then, Vice President of the Assembly of Southern Lawyers. Following her father's untimely death in 1996, Ms. Kangaloo returned to the law firm of CM Kangaloo and Company to close off her father's practice.

In 1998, Ms. Kangaloo joined the law firm of Hobsons. Whilst there, she too answered the call to do national service and she accepted an appointment as an Opposition Senator in 2001, during the life of the Sixth Parliament. From that point on, Ms. Kangaloo's career was solely about national service to which she committed herself unreservedly with dedication, humility and the utmost integrity.

In the Eighth Parliament, between 2002 and 2007, she was appointed a Government Senator and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, with responsibility for Social Services Delivery. She also served as Minister of Legal Affairs. Under her stewardship in the Ministry of Legal Affairs, the Ministry's free birth certificate programme captured the Prime Minister's Award for Innovation 2005. She oversaw the "Mail In, Mail Out" service of the Legal Aid and Advisory's "Here to Help" campaign.

In November 2007, following the general elections when she was elected to the House of Representatives as the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, Ms. Kangaloo was appointed Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education.

After the 2010 elections, Ms. Kangaloo took a hiatus from public life. Indeed, from 2012 to 2013, she devoted herself to the care and support of her brother Wendell, a senior Judge of the Court of Appeal of Trinidad and Tobago, who unfortunately sustained severe and debilitating injuries as a result of a vehicular accident in May 2012 and tragically died a year later in July 2013.

Ms. Christine Kangaloo served this country as President of the Senate of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago from September 23, 2015 to the dissolution of the Eleventh Parliament in 2020. Again, on August 28, 2020, she was elected President of the Senate in the Twelfth Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, and served until January 2023, when she resigned following her nomination for election as the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, under the provisions of Chapter III, section 24, of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. As President of the Senate, Ms. Kangaloo has acted as President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on no fewer than 33 occasions.

Madam Chairman, it is with a sense of great pride that as Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West and along with all other Members who signed or otherwise endorse her nomination that, as Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, that I present Ms. Christine Carla Kangaloo as a most worthy candidate for the consideration of this esteemed Electoral College to be elected to the position of President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Chairman, I thank you and my colleagues.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Madam Chairman:** I now call the Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC (Siparia):** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Esteemed colleagues of this Electoral College, today we must fulfill a very critical and essential component of our democratic Constitution. It is my pleasure, on behalf of the Members on our side of the House, to propose a nominee for this illustrious position of President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The position of President of our Republic is not merely a ceremonial role. It serves as a critical guardrail in the defence of our constitutional rights and freedoms.

Some of the many duties of a President include: The appointment of nine Independent Senators; the appointment of the Chief Justice; the appointment of members of the Elections and Boundaries Commission; the appointment of members to the Judicial and Legal Service Commission, and that commission appoints judges and magistrates; and, of course, the President also appoints members of several service commissions, chief among those, the Police Service Commission. And so, the citizens of our nation expect and require that the President would perform his or her duties in the interest of all citizens regardless of race, colour, religion, sex or political affiliation.

The Members on this side of the House believe that our nominee, Mr. Israel B. Raja-Khan SC, publicly known as Israel Khan, embodies the requirements and qualities which are necessary for this very distinguished office. He is fair and fearless, fiercely independent and strong-willed. He possesses the qualities of merit, ability and integrity, which are needed to effectively perform the numerous and onerous duties of the President of our beloved country and, definitely, he is not the “yes, Mr. Prime Minister” or a “yes, Ms. Prime Minister” person.

I would like to present to this House then, this Electoral College, Mr. Raja-Khan’s personal and professional background, too numerous to mention in the time allotted, so I will give some of his background. Mr. Khan SC, is head of chambers located just a few steps away from this House, and he established those chambers in 1979. Mr. Khan was born in Port of Spain in 1945. He attended the University of Toronto where, in 1974, he obtained a First Class Honours Degree, majoring in Political Science. He then attended the University of the West Indies

at Cave Hill and, thereafter, the Hugh Wooding Law School and was called to the Bar in 1979.

In December 2000, Mr. Khan was awarded the distinguished title of Senior Counsel. He taught at the Cipriani Labour College and he has been teaching at the Hugh Wooding Law School for the past 36 years to the present day. He is a devoted family man. He is married to Patricia Khan, who was a teacher at St. Joseph's Convent, St. Joseph, for 31 years. He has four children: James, Daniel, Brian and Shalimar. For 43 years, Mr. Khan SC has devoted his law practice to defending the rights and freedoms of all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

With his unprecedented success in his practice as a trial lawyer, he has distinguished himself as one of the most decorated advocates to the Criminal Bar of Trinidad and Tobago. He is well known as a fiercely independent person, not only amongst his peers in the legal profession, but throughout our entire country. In addition to his unprecedented success as a trial lawyer, he has authored a book, *Scales of Justice* (1993) and he has published numerous legal articles, one of which is entitled, "Party and Government: the Prime Minister, his role, political leadership and Cabinet collective responsibility".

### **2.00 p.m.**

In his devotion to public service, Mr. Khan served as Commissioner of the Law Reform Commission from 1998 to 2015; from 1988 to 1991, he was a legal adviser to the National Crime Commission; from 2000 to 2003 and 2013 to 2015, he was Director/Chairman of the Legal Aid and Advisory Authority; from 2011 to 2015, he served as Chairman of the police Protective Services Compensation Committee; from 2012 to 2015, he was the Chairman of the Firearms Appeal Board. During that time, he was also the Senior Legal Adviser to the National Land Tenants and Rate Payers Association. Currently, Mr. Khan is the President of the Criminal Bar Association.

In his service to the cultural development of T&T, Mr. Khan fought to have the wearing of a formal Nehru suit allowed in court. In 2005, Mr. Khan had been excluded from addressing the court and representing his client because he was wearing a formal Nehru suit which was deemed by the then presiding magistrate to be undignified and unacceptable. Mr. Khan challenged this decision up to the Court of Appeal which then gave judgment in his favour, thus ensuring that the Nehru suit, a symbol of part of our cultural heritage, would be considered equal to the traditional Western suit. This struggle and ultimate success was recognized in him being awarded the very prestigious GOPIO Award.



Esteemed colleagues, it is evident Mr. Khan SC is a true patriot of our republic and servant of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Given his dedication to this country's development, his track record of always answering the calls of national duty and his lifelong commitment to making T&T a better nation, it is our respectful view that he will offer credibility, integrity and loyal service to the people of our Republic through the Office of the President.

Given the significant issues facing our nation and given the need to move forward as a united nation, Mr. Israel Raja-Khan SC is, in our view, the best person at this time to serve as the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. I call on Members of this esteemed Electoral College to place country before party, to place people before politics and to place the Constitution before personal agendas as we aim to preserve the sacred independence of the Office of President.

My dear colleagues, I urge you to make the decision and cast your vote in favour of Israel B. Raja-Khan SC. History will not absolve you if you do otherwise. Madam Chairperson, I so move the nomination of Mr. Israel Raja-Khan. I thank you very much.

**Hon. Members:** [*Continuous desk thumping*]

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, the poll will be conducted in the following manner. The Clerk of the House will call your names in alphabetical order to cast your ballot. In your presence, the Clerk would initial the ballot paper which you will be given, thereby validating it. The Clerk will demonstrate to you how to fold your ballot paper in such a manner that only her initials would be visible. The voting booth is located to the back of the Speaker's chair. You will enter the voting booth by way of the entrance to my right. In the booth you will find an "X" stamp which you will use to place an X in the space provided on the right-hand side of the name of the candidate of your choice on your ballot paper.

Please note that Regulation 12(3) of the Regulations requires an X to be made. Once you are finished voting, please fold your ballot paper so that the initials of the Clerk can be seen without opening the ballot. You shall exit the booth to my left. You will then return to the Table of the House and show the initials of the Clerk to her without opening the ballot paper, before depositing it into the ballot box. Should you spoil your ballot paper in any manner, please return it to the Clerk who will issue another.

Regulation 17(2) of the Regulations provides that:

“In counting the votes the Clerk shall reject all ballots—

- (a) that are on ballot papers that have not been supplied by...”—her;
- “(b) that have not been marked for any candidate or have not been marked in the manner prescribed by these Regulations;
- (c) on which votes have been given for more than one candidate;
- (d) where it cannot be established for whom the member has voted;
- (e) upon which there is any writing or mark by which the member can be identified.”

Hon. Members, I now formally declare voting open and hand over the proceedings to the Clerk of the House and, in so doing, hand over to her a book of 100 ballots with the names of both candidates and the key to the ballot box.

*[Document and keys handed to Clerk of the House]*

**Madam Clerk:** Members, I am satisfied that there is no material in the box. However, should any Member wish to examine the box before it is locked, please feel free to come forward and do so now. I will now lock the box and it shall remain so locked until the end of balloting. Voting will now begin.

*[Voting process begins]*

**3.26 p.m.**

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, before I formally announce the closing of the poll, I request any Member present who is properly accredited and who is desirous of voting and has not had the opportunity to vote, to so indicate. There being no such indication, I now formally announce the close of the poll in accordance with Regulation 16 of the Regulations.

Pursuant to Regulation 17(1)(e) of the Regulations, one proposer of each of the candidates is now invited to sit with the Clerk as a scrutineer to count the votes. I understand that Mrs. Lisa Morris-Julian, MP, is willing to do so with respect to Ms. Christine Carla Kangaloo, and Mr. Davendranath Tancoo, MP, is willing to do so with respect to Mr. Israel Raja-Khan. Please come forward.

**3.30 p.m.**

*Ballots counted.*

*Statement of Poll handed to Madam Chairman.*

Result:

No. of ballot papers received from the Clerk	73
No. of ballots cast for Israel B. Raja-Khan	22
No. of ballots cast for Christine Carla Kangaloo	48
No. of rejected ballots	3

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, section 31(1) of the Constitution provides that a candidate who is unopposed or who has obtained the greatest number of the votes cast, shall be declared elected. Accordingly, I hereby declare that Ms. Christine Carla Kangaloo has obtained the greater number of votes cast—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Madam Chairman:**—and as such is elected as the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Madam Chairman:** This shall be for a five-year term, as set out in section 33(1) of the Constitution.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, an instrument duly signed and sealed by me, as Speaker, certifying the election of Ms. Christine Carla Kangaloo as President, in consequence of the ballot, shall be issued to Ms. Christine Carla Kangaloo, President-elect—

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Madam Chairman:**—pursuant to section 32(1)(b) of the Constitution.

The Constitution further provides in section 37(1) that:

“A President shall, before entering upon the duties of his office, take and subscribe the oath of office set out in the First Schedule, such oath being administered by the Chief Justice or such other Judge as may be designated by the Chief Justice.”

On behalf of the Members of this Electoral College, I take the opportunity to extend congratulations to Ms. Christine Carla Kangaloo on her election to the esteemed Office of President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. We wish her a successful term.

To the outgoing President, Her Excellency Paula Mae Weekes, ORTT, I thank her for her service to Trinidad and Tobago, and convey very best wishes to Her Excellency. May Her Excellency enjoy good health, long life and God's richest blessing.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Madam Chairman:** I now invite the Coordinator of the Independents to make remarks on the occasion of the election of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Sen. Paul Richards:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon colleagues. It is my distinct honour to bring congratulations on behalf of the Members of the Independent Bench to President-elect Christine Carla Kangaloo on being elected by this Electoral College to the post of President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

President-elect Christine Carla Kangaloo's display of dignity, respect, temperance, patience and compassion during her tenure as President of the Senate—these attributes will no doubt be brought to bear in her service to Trinidad and Tobago as Head of State.

We, again, congratulate President-elect Christine Kangaloo, and wish her all the best for a successful tenure as President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

I also would like to convey our deepest appreciation, gratitude and thanks to Her Excellency Paula Mae Weekes, ORTT, President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, for her service and sacrifice to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. We wish Her Excellency and her family all the best for peace, safety, prosperity and happiness in the future.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Madam Chairman:** I shall now invite the Leader of the Opposition to make remarks on the occasion of the election of Ms. Christine Carla Kangaloo as President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** [*Inaudible*]

**Madam Chairman:** Once it is not more than five minutes, you can make it there.

**Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC (Siparia):** Thank you very much. I join with my colleagues in taking note of this electoral process, and I serve notice that the Opposition will hold that office to scrutiny in the best interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Madam Chairman:** I now invite the Prime Minister to make remarks on the occasion of the election of Ms. Christine Carla Kangaloo as President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley):** Madam Chairman, it is with pleasure that I stand to acknowledge, on behalf of my constituents, my colleagues all in this Electoral College, that we in Trinidad and Tobago can say, without fear of contradiction, that our well-written Constitution has functioned—[*Inaudible*]

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Dr. K. Rowley:** Madam Chairman, we were called to duty under the provisions of the relevant sections of our Constitution to elect a Head of State and today we did so smoothly, dutifully and—[*Inaudible*]

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Dr. K. Rowley:** Madam Chairman, public service is honourable, and it is in that vein that I today would like to congratulate the citizens, both who put their names forward, to be considered for this post of President of Trinidad and Tobago.

It was an electoral process and, Madam Chairman, we can stay and be proud, not knowing of a better way to do it. And out of that process, Madam Chairman, this Chamber, by clear majority, has chosen a distinguished daughter of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Dr. K. Rowley:** I would like to ask all citizens to acknowledge this plus in the score card for Trinidad and Tobago, because there are many others who are bigger than us, taller than us, wider than us, who have great difficulty in being able to carry on such a process so smoothly and so successfully.

So, on behalf of all of us, people of Trinidad and Tobago, who have just elected a President as our Head of State, let us go forward thinking positively,

whatever religion, race, colour, creed, class or geographical location, accept what has been bequeathed to us, the provisions and protections of our Constitution going outward and upward, with boundless faith in our destiny.

I would like to congratulate Ms. Christine Carla Kangaloo and to thank her family for presenting her to the nation to provide this service as she will provide.

Madam Chairman, I am not one of those politicians and parliamentarians who believe that because the adjective, “politics”, “politician” the noun, can be ascribed to you, that it is demeaning. I think it is honourable, Madam Chairman, and today this House has conducted itself honourably. And may the President serve all of us without fear or favour, without malice or ill will for the benefit of all the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Chairman, I thank you.

**Hon. Members:** [*Desk thumping*]

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Arouca/Maloney.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis):** Thank you very kindly, Madam Speaker. I beg to move that the Electoral College be now adjourned *sine die*.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Electoral College adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 4.11 p.m.*