



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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11 June 2009

### BDI103183.FE

Burundi: Information on the procedure to follow and the documents required to obtain a birth certificate and a national identity card; whether a new national identity card can be obtained if a card is in poor condition; whether the birth certificate is stored by the regional passport office; the magnitude of fraud involving identity documents, particularly passports, visas, birth certificates and marriage certificates  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

In 10 June 2009 correspondence sent to the Research Directorate, a representative of the Burundian embassy in Ottawa stated that to obtain a birth certificate, individuals must apply to the community administrator of the commune where they were born.

In a 9 June 2009 telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a representative of Bujumbura's city hall stated that a birth certificate is issued upon presentation of an identity document, such as a national identity card.

According to the Representative of Bujumbura's city hall, Burundians who want to obtain a national identity card must proceed as follows:

- Those born after 1980 must present a birth certificate. Others must send an identification form to the administrative authorities of the town in which they have declared residency to verify that the information provided is true.
- They must present two passport photos.
- They must pay a fee of 1,000 Burundian Francs [1 BIF = CAD \$ 0.00091 (Xe.com 11 June 2009)].
- Those who were not born in or do not live in Bujumbura must go to the town hall or commune office to apply for a national identity card.
- Those who have lost their national identity card or whose card is in poor condition can apply for another upon presentation of a certificate of loss, the number of the old card and a passport photo. A signed and dated copy will be issued to them after the information they provide is verified in the archives.

According to the Representative of Bujumbura's city hall and the Representative of the Burundian embassy in Ottawa, after a passport application has been filed, the birth certificate and other documents that constitute the passport application file are stored in the passport office's archives (Burundi 9 June 2009; *ibid.* 10 June 2009).

Regarding fraud involving identity documents such as passports, visas, birth certificates and marriage certificates, the Representative of the embassy stressed that this kind of fraud is punished severely (Burundi 10 June 2009). The Representative of Bujumbura's city hall stated that, to her knowledge, no cases of fraud have

ever been reported to her office (ibid. 9 June 2009).

However, that Representative stated that [translation] "fraud in general occurs everywhere in the country; to fight it, the national authorities are raising awareness among administrative officials and the police" (ibid.). The national authorities are also asking the population to be more vigilant in order to avoid falling into the traps of criminals who sell fake identity documents at affordable prices (ibid.).

An article published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) cites a study of civil status by the Ministry of the Interior and Communal Development in Burundi that reports that [translation] "Burundian civil status is in a very vulnerable situation" (UN n.d.). According to this study, the context of the crisis that shook the country led to the destruction of numerous communal structures, work tools and civil status documents, as well as to the death or forced exile of competent personnel (ibid.). In addition, according to the chief of staff of the Minister of the Interior and Communal Development, poorly paid public servants are being corrupted because of the poverty caused by the economic crisis: the situation has led to [translation] "the decline in reporting rates for civil status events" (ibid.).

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.

#### References

Burundi. 10 June 2009. Embassy of Burundi in Ottawa. Correspondence sent by a representative.

\_\_\_\_\_. 9 June 2009. Bujumbura City Hall. Telephone interview with a representative.

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#### Additional Sources Consulted

**Internet sites, including:** Agence burundaise de presse (ABP), Ligue burundaise des droits de l'homme (Ligue ITEKA), NetPress.

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