

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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## Responses to Information Requests

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 [Basededonnees.DatabaseUnit@irb-cisr.gc.ca](mailto:Basededonnees.DatabaseUnit@irb-cisr.gc.ca).

9 January 2013

### **BDI104233.FE**

Burundi: Procedure for obtaining a medical report from inside Burundi and from outside the country; whether there is a nation-wide standard format for medical reports; whether physicians are required to notify the police of injuries sustained as a result of acts of violence

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

#### **1. Procedure for Obtaining a Medical Report from Inside the Country**

According to three Burundian doctors consulted by the Research Directorate, a person seeking to obtain a medical report must present the request and an identity document to the doctor who treated them (Clinique Prince Louis Rwagasore 29 Oct. 2012; CMCK 26 Oct. 2012; CHUK 29 Oct. 2012) or to the health care facility where they were treated (*ibid.*; CMCK 26 Oct. 2012). In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate on 31 October 2012, the coordinator of the Centre Seruka, an NGO that caters to victims of sexual violence in Burundi by providing them, in particular, with medical care, noted that her organization requires persons seeking to obtain a medical report to present an identity document and explain for what the report will be used. The coordinator indicated that, in some cases, if officials from the Centre Seruka have doubts about the person's motives (e.g., they believe that the person intends to [translation] "falsify a medical report for their own benefit"), they can refuse to issue the medical report (Centre Seruka 31 Oct. 2012). Information about other health care facilities requiring persons seeking medical reports to provide the reasons for their request could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

##### **1.1 Fees**

Two doctors stated that their facilities charge a fee for issuing a medical report. (CHUK 29 Oct. 2012; Clinique Prince Louis Rwagasore 29 Oct. 2012). A doctor who works at the Centre hospitalo-universitaire de Kamenge (CHUK) in Bujumbura explained during a telephone interview with the Research Directorate on 29 October 2012 that the amount of that fee can vary depending on the doctor. A doctor from the Centre médico-chirurgical de Kinindo (CMCK) in Bujumbura stated that, in general, the fee charged by his facility to issue a medical report does not exceed 40,000 Burundian francs [C\$27 (XE 5 Nov. 2012)]. The coordinator of the Centre Seruka stated that his organization issues medical reports for free (31 Oct. 2012).

##### **1.2 Length of Time to Issue Reports**

During a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a doctor working at the Clinique Prince Louis Rwagasore in Bujumbura stated that it takes one day to issue a medical report (29 Oct. 2012). The doctor at the CMCK in Bujumbura stated that it takes approximately 48 hours to process a request (26 Oct. 2012). The doctor from the CHUK indicated that it may take three to four days for a report to be issued (29 Oct. 2012). The coordinator of the Centre Seruka stated that her organization issues medical reports in less than a week (31 Oct. 2012).

#### **2. Procedure for Obtaining a Medical Report from Outside the Country**

In correspondence sent to the Research Directorate on 30 October 2012, a representative of the League for Human Rights in the Great Lakes Region (Ligue des droits de la personne dans la région des Grands Lacs, LDGL) explained that a person abroad seeking to obtain a medical report can appoint someone to act on their behalf by giving them a notarized power of attorney. Moreover, in a telephone interview with the Research Directorate on 29 October 2012, a doctor who is also the director of the Clinique Prince Louis Rwagasore explained that he can issue a medical report to a third person who presents him with a notarized power of attorney. However, he added that this is an [translation] "exceptional" case and that other doctors could refuse to issue a medical report to a proxy (Clinique Prince Louis Rwagasore 29 Oct. 2012).

For their part, the doctor at the CMCK (26 Oct. 2012) and the coordinator from the Centre Seruka (31 Oct. 2012) indicated that their facilities do not issue medical reports to third parties. The doctor from the CHUK also stated that his facility's policy is to issue a medical report only to the person concerned, but that it is nevertheless possible to apply in writing to the director general of the Department of Public Health for authorization for a proxy to be given a medical report (29 Oct. 2012). The doctor from the Clinique Prince Louis Rwagasore also stated that another way persons abroad can obtain a medical report is to apply in writing to the director general of the Department of Public Health (29 Oct. 2012). Both doctors indicated that the applicant must include a copy of an identity document with the letter sent to the director general of the Department of Public Health; neither doctor, however, could provide any details about the fees charged for this process (CHUK 29 Oct. 2012; Clinique Prince Louis Rwagasore 29 Oct. 2012). Both doctors also explained that the director general of the department of public health sets up a commission made up of a few doctors to study the request and make a recommendation to the director general, who decides whether the medical report will be issued or not (*ibid.*; CHUK 29 Oct. 2012). The doctor from the CHUK stated that this process [translation] "is generally longer" than contacting a health care facility [translation] "directly," particularly because of the availability of doctors who must be part of the commission; the doctor did not, however, specify how long the process can take (29 Oct. 2012). The doctor at the Clinique Prince Louis Rwagasore stated that the process can take months (29 Oct. 2012).

### 3. Problems that May Arise When Requesting a Medical Report

Sources stated that it is [translation] "easy" to obtain a medical report in Burundi (CHUK 29 Oct. 2012; Clinique Prince Louis Rwagasore 29 Oct. 2012; LDGL 30 Oct. 2012). However, according to the coordinator at the Centre Seruka, her organization does not [translation] "easily" issue a medical report to someone who does not [translation] explain "clearly" why they are making the request (31 Oct. 2012). The LDGL representative noted that it may sometimes be difficult to obtain a medical report in Burundi because [translation] "there are health care facilities (especially private ones) that do not keep or even use medical files" (30 Oct. 2012). Additional information on this subject could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

### 4. Format of Medical Reports

Several sources consulted by the Research Directorate indicated that, in Burundi, medical reports are not written according to any standard format (CHUK 29 Oct. 2012; Clinique Prince Louis Rwagasore 29 Oct. 2012; CMCK 26 Oct. 2012; LDGL 30 Oct. 2012).

### 5. Whether Physicians Are Required to Notify the Police of Injuries Sustained as a Result of Acts of Violence

According to several sources, in Burundi, there is no law requiring doctors to report assaults or other acts of violence (Centre Seruka 31 Oct. 2012; CHUK 29 Oct. 2012; Clinique Prince Louis Rwagasore 29 Oct. 2012; CMCK 26 Oct. 2012; LDGL 30 Oct. 2012). The responsibility of reporting such incidents to the police rests with the victim and their family (*ibid.*; CMCK 26 Oct. 2012). According to the doctor at the CHUK, doctors can nevertheless encourage victims to file complaints against their attackers (29 Oct. 2012). Also, the coordinator from the Centre Seruka explained that her organization encourages victims of sexual assault to file complaints with the police (31 Oct. 2012). Two sources also indicated that doctors can report incidents of violence to the police if they so wish (CHUK 29 Oct. 2012; Clinique Prince Louis Rwagasore 29 Oct. 2012).

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

- Centre hospitalo-universitaire de Kamenge (CHUK). 29 October 2012. Telephone interview with a doctor.
- Centre médico-chirurgical de Kinindo (CMCK). 26 October 2012. Telephone interview with a doctor.
- Centre Seruka. 31 October 2012. Telephone interview with the coordinator.
- Clinique Prince Louis Rwagasore. 29 October 2012. Telephone interview with a doctor who is also the director.
- Ligue des droits de la personne dans la région des Grands Lacs (LDGL). 30 October 2012. Correspondence sent by a representative to the Research Directorate.
- XE. 5 November 2012. "Currency Converter Widget." <<http://www.xe.com/ucc/convert/?language=fr&Amount=40000&From=BIF&To=CAD>> [Accessed: 5 Nov. 2012]

## Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** Attempts to contact representatives of the following organizations were unsuccessful: Association burundaise pour la défense des droits des malades; Association burundaise pour la protection des droits humains et des personnes détenues; Association de réflexion et d'information sur le Burundi; Association des femmes de Kinama; Association des femmes juristes du Burundi; Association des médecins de village; Association pour la défense des droits

de la femme; Avocats sans frontières; Barreau du Burundi; Burundi – Embassy of Burundi in Ottawa, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Public Health and the Fight against AIDS, National Council for the Fight against AIDS; Care International; Caritas International; Catholic Relief Services; Centre de santé de Kigobe Gihosha; Centre de santé de Kinama; Centre de santé de Mutakura Cibitoke; Centre de santé Ngagara; Centre neuro-psychiatrique de Kamenge Gihosha; Comitato Collaborazione Medica; Conseil national de l'ordre des médecins au Burundi; Femmes pour la paix, l'équité et le développement; Global Rights; HealthNet TPO Burundi; Hôpital Kayanza; Hôpital militaire de Kamenge; Hôpital New Hospital; Hôpital Ngozi; Hôpital Prince Regent Charles; Hôpital Rumonge; Hôpital Rutovu; International Committee of the Red Cross Burundi; Ligue burundaise des droits de l'homme (Ligue ITEKA); Médecins sans frontières; Medi Care; Oxfam-Québec; Polyclinique Cenima; Polyclinique centrale de Bujumbura; Population Services International; Province sanitaire de Bubanza; SOS Children's Villages; United Nations – United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi, United Nations Population Fund, World Health Organisation; World Vision.

**Internet sites, including:** Afrique-Express.com; AllAfrica.com; Association burundaise pour la protection des droits humains et des personnes détenues; Association de réflexion et d'information sur le Burundi; Barreau du Burundi; Belgian Development Agency; Burundi – Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Public Health and the Fight against AIDS, National Council for the Fight against AIDS; Burundi Global Insurance; Burundi Information; Burundi.net; Burundi News; Burundi Réalités; Burundi Transparence; Care International; Doctors of the World; East African Community; Factiva; Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research; Global Fund.org; Grands Lacs.info; Grands Lacs.net; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; Inter Press Service; Juris International; League for Human Rights in the Great Lakes Region; Ligue burundaise des droits de l'homme (Ligue ITEKA); Médecins sans frontières; Mémoire Online; Radio France internationale; Radio Netherlands Worldwide; Solidaritas International; Syfia Grands Lacs; United Nations – United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi, World Health Organisation; United States – Department of State, Embassy of the United States in Bujumbura.

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