

# 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).

11 March 2014

### **BDI104778.FE**

Burundi: The requirements and procedures to obtain a national identity card; description of the national identity card  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

#### **1. Requirements and Procedures to Obtain a National Identity Card**

##### **1.1 Where Applicants Must Go to Apply**

During a telephone interview on 26 February 2014, a chancery assistant [visa, passport and laissez-passer service] of the Embassy of Burundi in Belgium stated that, to obtain the national identity card (carte nationale d'identité, CNI), the applicant must go to the civil registry office of their commune of birth. The Chancery Assistant pointed out that an applicant born in Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi, must go to Bujumbura city hall (Burundi, 26 Feb. 2014).

Similarly, according to information provided by a representative of the Embassy of Burundi in Canada in correspondence sent to the Research Directorate on 28 February 2014, for the communes of Bujumbura, an applicant must apply at the city hall for the communes of Bujumbura (ibid. 28 Feb. 2014). During a telephone interview on 5 March 2014, the Second Counsellor at the Embassy of Burundi in Canada stated that, for the communes located outside of Bujumbura, an applicant must contact the communal administrator after having fulfilled the requirements (ibid. 5 Mar. 2014).

##### **1.2 Where Applications Are Processed**

According to information provided by the Embassy of Burundi in Canada, the process for issuing the CNI takes place in Bujumbura, but it will be decentralized shortly (28 Feb. 2014).

##### **1.3 CNI Issuing Authority**

According to information provided by the Embassy of Burundi in Canada, the CNI is issued by the communal office, which is under the Ministry of the Interior [and Public Safety] (ministère de l'Intérieur et de la Sécurité publique) (28 Feb. 2014).

##### **1.4 Minimum Age for Application**

According to information provided by the Embassy of Burundi in Canada, to obtain a CNI, an applicant must be 16 years old, the age of majority (28 Feb. 2014). In addition, that same source pointed out that a minor may not obtain a CNI (ibid.).

During the telephone interview of 26 February 2014, the Chancery Assistant at the Embassy of Burundi in Belgium stated that, to obtain a CNI, an applicant must be Burundian and at least 18 years old. She explained, however, that if an applicant is between 16 and 18 years old and has a driver's licence, they may obtain a CNI (Burundi 27 Feb. 2014). If an applicant who is at least 16 years old does not have a driver's licence, they may nevertheless obtain a CNI upon receiving an exemption from the governor of the province (ibid.). The governor may grant this exemption, for example, to a boy who is 16 years old but appears older than his age, so that he is not [translation] "bothered" when asked to produce his CNI (ibid.).

##### **1.5 Documents Required for the Application**

The Chancery Assistant at the Embassy of Burundi in Belgium stated that an applicant must present their birth certificate (ibid. 26 Feb. 2014).

However, according to information provided by the Embassy of Burundi in Canada, an applicant must present their birth certificate and proof of residence signed by the *chef de colline* (or neighbourhood head) and the administrator (ibid. 28 Feb. 2014). The same source points out that, if the applicant does not fulfil the requirements, they may not obtain a CNI (ibid.).

To obtain a CNI, a minor must present their birth certificate and their father's legal authorization stating that the minor applicant has his permission to apply for a CNI (ibid. 27 Feb. 2014). The Chancery Assistant pointed out that, if a minor lives with their mother, they must present their birth certificate and their mother's legal authorization, as well as a [translation] "household composition" (official document that proves that the mother is the head of the family) or a divorce certificate to establish that the mother is the head of the family (ibid.).

### 1.6 Obtaining a CNI by Proxy

According to information from the Embassy of Burundi in Canada, it is possible to obtain a CNI by proxy upon presentation of the required documents (28 Feb. 2014).

The Chancery Assistant, however, stated that the procedure absolutely must be carried out in person in Burundi (26 Feb. 2014).

### 1.7 CNI Processing Fees

According to information from the Embassy of Burundi in Canada, the fee for a CNI is 2,500 Burundian francs (BIF) [C\$1.80 (XE 28 Feb. 2014)] (Burundi 28 Feb. 2014).

The Chancery Assistant said that she believed the CNI fee to be [translation] "about" 5,000 BIF [C\$3.65 (XE 27 Feb. 2014)] (Burundi 26 Feb. 2014).

### 1.8 Processing Time

According to information from the Embassy of Burundi in Canada, processing takes a maximum of two weeks (28 Feb. 2014).

The Chancery Assistant at the Embassy of Burundi in Belgium stated that the processing time is one or two days (26 Feb. 2014).

## 2. Features of the National Identity Card

The information from the Embassy of Burundi in Canada refers to a single type of CNI, the [translation] "current CNI," which is a document of one third of a page [A4 format] in size, double-sided, that is blue and written in Kirundi (28 Feb. 2014).

According to the Chancery Assistant, there are two types of CNI in circulation (Burundi 26 Feb. 2014). The most recent, which has been in circulation since at least the late 1990s, is a [translation] "card folded in three" (ibid.). According to the Chancery Assistant, the older type of CNI, very few of which are still in use, is a [translation] "regular card" (ibid.). Both types of CNI have a black and white photograph of the bearer (ibid.).

Sources state that the following information about the bearer is included on the CNI:

- surname
- given name
- names of parents
- civil status
- occupation (ibid; ibid. 28 Feb. 2014).

The Chancery Assistant pointed out that the given names of the parents are also included on the CNI and that the possibilities for civil status are the following: married, widowed, single or divorced (ibid. 26 Feb. 2014).

According to information provided by the Embassy of Burundi in Canada, the information listed above is on the front of the card, in addition to the photograph, the signature and the list of places of residence (province, commune, *colline* and date) of the bearer, as well as the stamp (ibid. 28 Feb. 2014). The Second Counsellor at the Embassy of Burundi in Canada pointed out that on the back of the card is "Republic of Burundi," the CNI number, the place and date of issuance of the CNI and the name of the issuing authority (ibid. 5 Mar. 2014).

## 3. Coming into Force of the Biometric CNI

Sources state that the biometric CNI will be used in the 2015 elections (Burundi 28 Feb. 2014; IWACU 17 Aug. 2013). According to an article published 28 August 2013 by Xinhua News Agency, the biometric CNI should be distributed to everyone in Burundi who is at least 16 years old, before the 2015 elections are held.

According to the director general of land administration (administration du territoire) cited in a 7 January 2014 article, the first biometric CNIs are scheduled to be distributed in March 2014 (burundimega-info 7 Jan. 2014). The article points out also that, at the end of December 2013, more than 37,000 residents of Bujumbura were registered to obtain the biometric CNI (ibid.). According to information provided by the Embassy of Burundi in Canada on 28 February 2014,

all communes in Burundi are currently gathering data for the biometric CNIs. That same source added that the date on which the non-biometric CNI will cease to be valid has not yet been set (Burundi 28 Feb. 2014).

#### 4. Features of the Biometric CNI

According to information provided by the Embassy of Burundi in Canada, the biometric CNI will not look the same as the non-biometric card (28 Feb. 2014). That same source stated that the biometric CNI absolutely must be obtained in person (Burundi 28 Feb. 2014).

In a 14 August 2013 article in the *Publication de presse burundaise*, the director general of land administration stated that the biometric CNI will enable to bearer to travel freely in the countries of the East African Community and will contain 34 pieces of information about the bearer, including the following: surname and given name, gender, date of birth, place of birth (province, commune and colline), place of current residence, surname and given names of father and mother, surname and given names of children, medical assistance card number, civil service insurance card number, national institute of social security (Institut national de la sécurité sociale) number, public servant identification number, police and military service number, proof of land ownership, proof of ownership of real property, bank account number, elector's card number, geographic code of place of birth, photograph of bearer, fingerprints, criminal record or sentences received, last place of residence, occupation, passport number, driver's licence number, civil status and blood type.

Furthermore, an article dated 17 August 2013 in *IWACU*, a trilingual newspaper that describes itself as [translation] "the first independent news group in Burundi" (*IWACU* n.d.), states that the biometric CNI will contain 37 pieces of information about the bearer, including blood type and driver's licence number (*ibid.* 17 Aug. 2013). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

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.

### Reference

Burundi. 5 March 2014. Telephone interview with the Second Counsellor at the Embassy of Burundi in Canada.

\_\_\_\_\_. 28 February 2014. Correspondence sent to the Research Directorate by a representative of the Embassy of Burundi in Canada.

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### Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** Attempts to contact representatives of the following organizations were unsuccessful: Burundi – embassies in France, Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Government of Burundi, Ministère de l'Intérieur et de la Sécurité publique.

**Internet sites, including:** Abarundi; Africa; Africa Intelligence; Africa Time; Afrik; Agence de Presse africaine; All Africa; Amnesty International; ARIB; Burundi – burundi.gov.org, Commission électorale nationale indépendante; Burundi Information; Burundi News; Burundi Post; Burundi Réalités; Burundi Sites; ecoi.net; EIN News; Factiva; Fédération

internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme; Freedom House; Human Rights Watch; Index Mundi; Info Burundi; Institute for War and Peace Reporting; International Crisis Group; International Foundation for Electoral System; ITEKA; *Jeune Afrique*; Net Press; News Now; Observatoire de l'Afrique central; Radio France Internationale; *Panapress*; *Political Handbook of the World*; Topix; Umuco; United Kingdom – Home Office; United Nations – High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Development Program, Integrated Regional Information Networks, Refworld; United States – Overseas Security Advisory Council.

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