



## COI QUERY

<b>Country of Origin</b>	<b>Burundi</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Official Documents issued by the Republic of Burundi</b>
<b>Reference period</b>	January 2021 to March 2023
<b>Topic(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">General information on official documents</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Information on issuing authorities</a> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 <a href="#">Formal procedures</a></li> <li>2.2 <a href="#">Informal procedures</a></li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b>Date of completion</b>	30 March 2023
<b>Query Code</b>	Q8-2023
<b>Contributing EU+ COI units (if applicable)</b>	N/A

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## COI QUERY RESPONSE – Burundi

### Official Documents issued by the Republic of Burundi

#### **1. General information on official documents**

Isoko, the Information Portal on Administrative Procedures of the Ministry of the Public Service, Labour and Employment of Burundi, notes that the government offers its citizens various documents including a national identity card, passport, birth certificate, driver's license, etc.<sup>1</sup>

According to Isoko, the national identity card is a mandatory document issued to all Burundian citizens from the age of 16.<sup>2</sup> The passport is a travel document required for any person of Burundian nationality to travel to a foreign country. The passport is valid for five years.<sup>3</sup>

The birth certificate is a mandatory document which is issued to any Burundian citizen or person born in Burundi<sup>4</sup> and there is a legal obligation to register the birth of a child.<sup>5</sup> According to Isoko, the birth certificate has to be submitted for the application of many administrative procedures. The request for the birth certificate is made at the communal office of the place of birth, where it also has to be registered.<sup>6</sup>

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported that birth registration, marriage registration and death registration are available services for citizens of Burundi. The source added that it is a legal obligation to register both, births and deaths, and within a period of 15 days. Marriage registration is not obligatory and the legal age for marriage is 21 for men and 18 for women.<sup>7</sup>

For specimens of passports and ID cards, see: [EU, PRADO \(Public Register of Authentic travel and identity Documents Online\), Burundi](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Republic of Burundi, Isoko, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>2</sup> Republic of Burundi, Isoko, Fichier National de l'Identification/Carte Nationale d'Identité en [National ID], n.d., [url](#)

<sup>3</sup> Republic of Burundi, Isoko, Passeport Ordinaire en, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>4</sup> Republic of Burundi, Isoko, Birth Certificate, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>5</sup> UNICEF, Burundi, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>6</sup> Republic of Burundi, Isoko, Birth Certificate, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>7</sup> UNICEF, Burundi, n.d., [url](#)

## **2. Information on issuing authorities**

Isoko is the administrative portal which offers information and guidance for citizens on access to governmental services, including passport, birth certificate, and national ID card applications.<sup>8</sup>

According to Isoko, the responsible body for the issuing of passports is the Commissariat Général des Migrations (CGM), the responsible body for the issuing of birth certificates is the Bujumbura communal office or town hall, and local communal offices are responsible for the issuing of national ID cards.<sup>9</sup>

### **2.1 Formal procedures**

The formal requirements and procedure to acquire official documents (e.g., passport, birth certificate, national ID, etc.) from the Burundi government can be found on the government's administrative portal called Isoko.<sup>10</sup>

To obtain a passport, an on-site application is required at the offices of the General Immigration Authority (CGM, Commissariat Général des Migrations). The application requires a deposit fee, a photocopy of a national identity card, an identity certificate, a proof of residence, and a document stating the applicant's occupation. The application process takes three days, and the passport is valid for five years, after which it must be renewed. The mentioned source adds that a passport is required for any person of Burundian nationality travelling to a foreign country.<sup>11</sup> According to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB), the government of Burundi only issues biometric passports, and the application must be done in person.<sup>12</sup>

To obtain a national identity card, an application must be lodged at a local municipality or town hall. A deposit fee and a copy of a birth certificate are required. The application requires the approval of the 'Chef de Colline' (or neighbourhood head) and the processing times are the same or next day.<sup>13</sup>

To obtain a birth certificate, an application must be lodged at the communal office of the place of birth or at the Bujumbura town hall. The application requires a deposit fee, a document of registration, and knowledge of the date, month, and year of birth. For delayed registrations, special formalities are applied. The application is processed immediately.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Republic of Burundi, Isoko, About Page, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>9</sup> Republic of Burundi, Isoko, Birth Certificate, n.d., [url](#); Republic of Burundi, Isoko, Passeport Ordinaire en, n.d., [url](#) ; Republic of Burundi, Isoko, Fichier National de l'Identification/Carte Nationale d'Identité en, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>10</sup> Republic of Burundi, Isoko, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>11</sup> Republic of Burundi, Isoko, Passeport Ordinaire en, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>12</sup> Canada, IRB, Burundi: The requirements and procedures for obtaining a biometric passport, from within Burundi or from abroad; description of biometric passports, 19 March 2014, [url](#)

<sup>13</sup> Republic of Burundi, Isoko, Fichier National de l'Identification/Carte Nationale d'Identité en, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>14</sup> Republic of Burundi, Isoko, Birth Certificate, n.d., [url](#)



## 2.2 *Informal procedures*

The Burundi Penal Code (as amended in 2017) in Article 357 includes provisions on the criminalization of the creation and use of false documents.<sup>15</sup>

Specifically, Burundi's Penal Code (as amended by the Law No. 1/27 of 29 December 2017), in Article 366, under the Section regarding 'forgery committed in certain administrative documents and certificates' states:

[informal translation] 'whoever forges, falsifies or alters permits, certificates, booklets, cards, forms, receipts, passports, mission orders, travel documents, laissez-passer or other documents issued by public administrations with the objective to establish a right, an identity or a quality, or to grant an authorization, shall be punished by penal servitude for a period of six months to three years and by a fine of fifty thousand to one hundred thousand Burundian francs.'<sup>16</sup>

Burundi's 2017 Penal Code in Article 367 also states that:

[informal translation] 'the penalties provided for in the preceding article shall be applied to:  
1° anyone who, knowingly, makes use of the said forged, falsified or altered documents;  
2° anyone who makes use of one of the documents referred to in the preceding article, knowing that the information contained therein has become incomplete or inaccurate.'<sup>17</sup>

According to the 2022 US Department of State (USDOS) annual report on human rights practices in Burundi, the General Immigration Authority (CGM, Commissariat Général des Migrations), the responsible body for issuing travel documents, 'increased vigilance' before providing travel documents to what was described as target demographic groups, for example young women and unaccompanied children, in response to increased concerns of human trafficking.<sup>18</sup>

According to the 2022 USDOS report on human trafficking, for the period April 2021 to March 2022, 'the government reported taking disciplinary actions against five police officials suspected of providing travel documents to potential trafficking victims in June 2021'. More specifically, the source further noted that, according to 'observers', the five officers were charged with crimes related to human trafficking, were suspended for 15 days and received disciplinary transfers, remaining free on conditional arrest while the investigation was still pending.<sup>19</sup> USDOS reported another case, in February 2021, where Burundi's government collaborated with Kenya's government to investigate and extradite a Burundian diplomatic official who was accused of trafficking 89 Burundians. The source noted that 'observers

<sup>15</sup> Republic of Burundi, Loi N° 1/27 du 29 Décembre 2017 portant révision du code pénal, 29 December 2017, [url](#), p. 68

<sup>16</sup> Republic of Burundi, Loi N° 1/27 du 29 Décembre 2017 portant révision du code pénal, 29 December 2017, available at: [url](#), p. 70

<sup>17</sup> Republic of Burundi, Loi N° 1/27 du 29 Décembre 2017 portant révision du code pénal, 29 December 2017, available at: [url](#), p. 70

<sup>18</sup> USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2022 – Burundi, 20 March 2023, [url](#)

<sup>19</sup> USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report for 2022 - Burundi, 29 July 2022, [url](#)



alleged trafficking networks included officials handling passport and travel documents at the Commissary General of Migration, a division of the Ministry of Interior.<sup>20</sup>

A 2021 United Nations report on Burundi, stated that ‘despite severe poverty, the population has again been forced to make payments – often with no legal basis – in order to finance public infrastructure, contribute to development or support the party in power, on penalty of being denied access to public services and spaces or the issuance of administrative documents.<sup>21</sup>

No further information could be found in the consulted sources within the time limits for drafting this query response for the reference period between January 2021 – March 2023 on informal procedures in attaining documentation in Burundi.

Below follows some information outside the reference period that may be relevant. The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) in a query response covering the period 2010-2014, reported that, according to different sources interviewed in 2014, ‘documents issued by local authorities at the commune level “can often be subject to fraud since they are ... easily falsifiable”. In addition, it noted that there was ‘a “high” prevalence of fraudulent identity documents in Burundi, including the CNI, driving permits, diplomas and passports’. IRB further added that ‘a foreign national could use a fraudulent identity card to obtain a Burundian passport, even when he or she is not Burundian’.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report for 2022 - Burundi, 29 July 2022, [url](#)

<sup>21</sup> UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, A/HRC/48/68, 12 August 2021, [url](#), para. 49

<sup>22</sup> Canada, IRB, Burundi: Prevalence of fraudulent identity documents, including national identity cards [cartes nationales d'identité, CNI] and biometric passports; ability of a person to obtain valid identity documents using false information (2010-2014), 11 December 2014, [url](#)

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## ADDITIONAL SOURCES CONSULTED

ECOI.net; European Union – EUAA COI Portal; Factiva; Freedom House; Human Rights Watch; Refworld;