

# APPENDIX: BURUNDI

## DEMOGRAPHICS AND ELECTION ADMINISTRATION<sup>1</sup>

Burundi is a parliamentary democracy with a population just under 9 million.<sup>2</sup> Nearly 3.2 million people, or 91% of the voting age population, is registered to vote.<sup>3</sup> In the last presidential election, 77% of registered voters turned out to vote.<sup>4</sup>

Burundi's central election authority is the Independent National Commission (*Commission Nationale Indépendante*). The Commission, whose members are appointed by the President and approved by Parliament, oversees the administration of elections and maintains a national voter list.<sup>5</sup>

## VOTER REGISTRATION

Voter registration in Burundi is voluntary and self-initiated. Burundi does not have a permanent voter roll, meaning that eligible individuals must re-register for every election in which they want to vote.<sup>6</sup> Voter information is collected at local town council offices and transmitted to the federal election authority, which compiles the information and produces the voter rolls used on Election Day.

To register to vote in an upcoming election, individuals must visit their local town council office and furnish a national identification card (which contains citizenship, address, and date of birth information) verifying that the registrant is eligible to vote.<sup>7</sup> Registration is only open for a three-month period every election cycle, beginning five months before Election Day and ending two months before Election Day. Exceptions are made occasionally, for example, when a region is plagued by bad weather.<sup>8</sup>

Upon registering, each voter is provided with a voter ID card that must be presented at the polls in order to cast a ballot.

## FILLING GAPS AND CORRECTING INACCURACIES ON THE ROLLS

By law, any interested person or political party may view the voter rolls and challenge an entry or its omission by filing an objection with the federal election agency at least 15 days before Election Day.<sup>9</sup> Agency officials have four days, after receiving an objection, to determine its validity and authorize a necessary revision to the rolls.<sup>10</sup>

## PRIVACY CONSIDERATIONS

The voter rolls are not used for any governmental purpose save the administration of elections. No overarching privacy or security concerns currently guide voter registration practices in Burundi, although this may change when the registration system becomes computerized, a reform that is now in progress.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all information in this appendix was obtained from a telephone interview by Romain Dupeyre, Associate at Dechert LLP, with Désiré Hatungimana, First Secretary of the Embassy of Burundi in Paris (Mar. 16, 2007) [hereinafter Hatungimana Interview].

<sup>2</sup> Estimated for July 2009. U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, The World Factbook—Burundi, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/by.html> (last updated May 14, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Voter Turnout: Country View—Burundi, [http://www.idea.int/vt/country\\_view.cfm?CountryCode=BI](http://www.idea.int/vt/country_view.cfm?CountryCode=BI) (last updated May 19, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Burundian Electoral Code, arts. 12, 23.

<sup>6</sup> Persons convicted of certain statutorily enumerated crimes may have their voting rights suspended for the duration of their sentences. *See id.*, arts. 5-10.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*, art. 15; Hatungimana Interview, *supra* note 1. To obtain an identification card, distributed by the municipality, one needs to prove his birth in Burundi or one of his parents' births in Burundi. If one does not have this document, a new one can be obtained in seven days at the town council.

<sup>8</sup> Burundi citizens living abroad are permitted to register by mail.

<sup>9</sup> Burundian Electoral Code, arts. 20, 21.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*, arts. 22, 23.