

## THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF

# SIERRA LEONE

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The mineral production of the West African nation of Sierra Leone remained restricted by armed insurrection and political instability. The civil war had resumed in May 1997 after a military coup d'état. In March 1998, the elected Government was returned to power; however, fighting continued in the countryside. Diamond produced by persons collaborating with the ousted military junta and the Revolutionary United Front was reportedly smuggled out of the country, and resulting funds were allegedly used to support the rebels (Yahoo, May 6, 1998, Sierra Leone slaps ban on new mining permits, accessed May 11, 1998, at URL [http://biz.yahoo.com/finance/980506/leone\\_mini\\_1.html](http://biz.yahoo.com/finance/980506/leone_mini_1.html)). In May, the Government banned all mining. Artisanal recovery of diamond and gold was allowed to resume in July 1998 when revisions to the Mines and Minerals Act were announced (Mining Journal, 1998).

Many international mining companies had suspended exploration and production operations because of the war. Companies holding mineral concessions in Sierra Leone included AmCan Minerals Ltd. of Canada; Baomahun Gold Mines Ltd.; Bridge Energy Ltd., a subsidiary of DiamondWorks Ltd. of Canada; Golden Leo Resources Ltd., a subsidiary of Mano River Resources Inc. of Switzerland; Golden Prospect Mining Co. Ltd., a subsidiary of Golden Prospect Mining Co. Plc of the United Kingdom; Precious Stones Sierra Leone Baomahun Inc.; Prospex Mining Inc. of Canada; Resources Securities Ltd., a subsidiary of Golden Prospect Mining Co. Plc

of the United Kingdom; Rex Diamond Mining Corp. of Canada; Sierra Rutile Ltd., a joint venture of Nord Resources Corp. of the United States and Consolidated Rutile Ltd. of Australia; and White Swan Resources Inc. of Canada. Some companies, including Consolidated African Mining Corp. of Canada in 1997 and Pan African Resources Corp. of Canada in early 1998, abandoned mineral concessions in Sierra Leone owing to the war.

After the elected Government was reinstalled in March 1998, the Economic Community of West African States and the United Nations effectively lifted the naval blockade and sanctions imposed in 1997. Leocem, a joint venture of Scancem International AS of Norway and the Government, resumed importing cement clinker to grind in 1998, but renewed fighting forced the plant to close by yearend. The sanctions also had adversely affected the rehabilitation of the petroleum refinery owned by the West African Mining and Refining Co. Ltd.

For more extensive coverage of the mineral industry of Sierra Leone, see the 1996 Minerals Yearbook, Volume III, Mineral Industries of Africa and the Middle East, pages 113-114.

### References Cited

Mining Journal, 1998, Sierra Leone lifts mining ban: Mining Journal [London], v. 331, no. 8490, July 24, p. 58.

TABLE 1  
SIERRA LEONE: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES 1/

(Thousand metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998 e/
Bauxite, gross weight	735	--	--	--	--
Cement 2/	100 e/	100 e/	160	50	100
Diamond	255	214	270	400 r/	250
Gold 3/	125	4	16	20 r/ e/	15
Gypsum e/	4	4 r/	5 r/	2 r/	4
Salt e/	200	--	-- r/	-- r/	--
Titanium:					
Rutile ore and concentrate 96% TiO <sub>2</sub> , gross weight	137	--	--	--	--
Ilmenite ore and concentrate 60% TiO <sub>2</sub> , gross weight	47	--	--	--	--
Zircon	1,300	--	--	--	--

e/ Estimated. r/ Revised.

1/ Table includes data available through August 26, 1999.

2/ Production from imported cement clinker.

3/ Data includes only officially reported production.