



2010 Minerals Yearbook

SOMALIA [ADVANCE RELEASE]

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF SOMALIA

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Somalia, which is an East African country located on the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, produced small quantities of gemstones, granite, marble, niobium (columbium), salt, sandstone, and tantalum in recent years. The mineral industry made a small contribution to Somalia's exports and economy in general. The country also had deposits of feldspar, iron ore, kaolin, limestone, natural gas, quartz, silica sand, tin, and uranium.

Civil war continued in Somalia in 2010. African Union and Transitional Federal Government (TFG) military forces engaged in combat with the Al-Shabab militia in Mogadishu in August and early September. Al-Shabab, which was affiliated with Al-Qaeda, also engaged in combat with military forces of the semiautonomous region of Puntland in northern Somalia. In early December, Al-Shabab engaged in combat with the Hizbul Islam militia; the groups merged in late December. At yearend, Al-Shabab controlled most of southern and central Somalia (Gettleman, 2010; Gettleman and Ibrahim, 2010; Ibrahim, 2010a, b; Sheikh and Macharia, 2010).

Military forces from Ethiopia and the self-declared Republic of Somaliland (which maintains a separate regional governing authority) engaged in armed conflict with the Northern Somali Unionist Movement in July 2010. Somaliland's declaration of independence in 1991 and Puntland's declaration of autonomy in 1998 had not been internationally recognized.

Production

Mineral production data continued to be unavailable because of the lack of a functioning central Government since 1991 and the conflict that pervaded most of the country. In 2006, a dimension stone operation that produced granite, marble, and sandstone started production in Somaliland. In 2008, niobium and tantalum mining operations started; it is unclear if production continued after a labor dispute in April 2009. The war forced the closure of Somalia's oil refinery and cement plant in 1991 and 1996, respectively.

Structure of the Mineral Industry

Private companies produced granite, marble, and sandstone. Gemstone and salt mining operations appear to have been

artisanal and small scale in nature. In 2006 (the latest year for which data were available), more than 1,600 workers were estimated to be employed in artisanal mining operations in Somaliland (Intermediate Technology Consultants Eastern Africa, 2006, p. 26). The country's cement plant and oil refinery were operated by parastatal companies before they were closed. The collapse of the central Government led to ambiguity over mineral rights.

Commodity Review

Mineral Fuels

Natural Gas and Petroleum.—Africa Oil Ltd. of Canada and Range Resources Ltd. of Australia explored for crude petroleum at the Dharoor Valley and the Nugaal Valley onshore blocks in Puntland. The companies planned to drill exploration wells at Dharoor Valley and Nugaal Valley in 2011 (Range Resources Ltd., 2011, p. 5).

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