



2011 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 2011. African Union and Transitional Federal Government military forces engaged in combat with the Al-Shabab militia in Mogadishu. Ethiopian and Kenyan military forces engaged in combat with Al-Shabab in western and southern Somalia, respectively. In 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 (Ahmed, 2011; Gettleman, 2011b; Gettleman and Ibrahim, 2011).

By September 2011, more than 20 separate regional governing authorities had developed across Somalia in addition to Puntland and the self-declared Republic of Somaliland (which maintains a separate regional governing authority). Some of the authorities engaged in armed conflict with each other. Somaliland's declaration of independence in 1991 and Puntland's declaration of autonomy in 1998 were not internationally recognized at yearend (Gettleman, 2011a).

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 (Indian Ocean Newsletter, 2009).

Structure of the Mineral Industry

Private companies produced granite, marble, and sandstone. 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, which included gemstone and salt mining (Intermediate Technology Consultants Eastern Africa, 2006, p. 26).

Commodity Review

Metals

Gold.—Nubian Gold Corp. of Canada held the Arapsyo and the Qabri Bahar exploration permits in Somaliland. In December 2011, Nubian entered into an option agreement with Mindesta Inc. of Canada to explore at Arapsyo and Qabri Bahar (Mindesta Inc., 2011).

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 January 2012 (Range Resources Ltd., 2012, p. 3).

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