
125 Carats Octahedral Diamond Found in Kono

Freetown, 23rd January 2013. The National Minerals Agency (NMA) has confirmed that a high quality 125 carats octahedral diamond valued at US\$ 818,000 (eight hundred and eighteen thousand US dollars) was found in Masabendu village, Nimiyama chiefdom in Kono district in November 2013 and has already been exported. This was the largest single diamond recorded in Sierra Leone in 2013, and is one of the finest and most valuable diamonds reported in the country in recent times. What makes this diamond exceptional is the fact that it is very rare for a diamond above 100 carats to maintain its original shape, and to be without any crack or inclusions/impurities, as was the case with this rare gem.

Speaking to the press, on condition of anonymity, the elated miner recounted that he had gone to his mining plot on that fateful day hoping that if he was lucky he would find the usual small pieces of diamonds, which he will sell to compensate for his investment, and that half way through the day he was stunned to uncover what has now proved to be a life changer. The NMA revealed that since an export tariff of 15 percent was imposed on special stones (diamonds with a value of US\$500,000 or above) in 2009, this was the largest diamond to be exported through official channel. This miner is to be commended for his patriotism and honesty, and other miners are encouraged to follow his example.

The NMA ensured that all legal procedures were followed in the buying and exporting of the diamond, and that the miner received a fair price for his find. Total royalty paid to government was US\$122,713. The diamond has already been exported. In a similar development, a 23.56 carat diamond was found in Gbense chiefdom, Kono district, and another 13 carat diamond was found in Konta, Tonkolili district in December 2013. Both diamonds are in safe custody awaiting valuation and export. The above and the numerous other diamonds of varying qualities and value that are found in different parts of the country everyday continue to maintain Sierra Leone's reputation as a rich source of high quality gem diamonds, making the commodity a major source of revenue for government.

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