

SIERRA LEONE

**Country Dialling Code (Tel/Fax): ++232**

National Tourist Board of Sierra Leone: PO Box 1435, Freetown, Sierra Leone Tel: (22) 272 520 Tel/Fax: (22) 272 197 E-mail: ntb@sierratel.sl

Capital: Freetown **Time:** GMT

Background: Since 1991, civil war between the government and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) has resulted in tens of thousands of deaths and the displacement of more than 2 million people (well over one-third of the population) many of whom are now refugees in neighboring countries. A peace agreement, signed on 7 July 1999, offers hope that the country will be able to rebuild its devastated economy and infrastructure, but previous peace efforts have failed. As of late 1999, up to 6,000 UN peacekeepers were in the process of deploying to bolster the peace accord.

Location: Western Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean, between Guinea and Liberia

Map References: Africa

Area: total: 71,740 sq km, land: 71,620 sq km, water: 120 sq km

Climate: tropical; hot, humid; summer rainy season (May to December); winter dry season (December to April)

Terrain: coastal belt of mangrove swamps, wooded hill country, upland plateau, mountains in east

Natural Resources: diamonds, titanium ore, bauxite, iron ore, gold, chromite

Population: 5,232,624 (July 2000 est.)

Nationality: noun: Sierra Leonean(s), adjective: Sierra Leonean

Ethnic Groups: 20 native African tribes 90% (Temne 30%, Mende 30%, other 30%), Creole 10% (descendants of freed Jamaican slaves who were settled in the Freetown area in the late-eighteenth century), refugees from Liberia's recent civil war, small numbers of Europeans, Lebanese, Pakistanis, and Indians

Religions: Muslim 60%, indigenous beliefs 30%, Christian 10%

Languages: English (official, regular use limited to literate minority), Mende (principal vernacular in the south), Temne (principal vernacular in the north), Krio (English-based Creole, spoken by the descendants of freed Jamaican slaves who were settled in the Freetown area, a lingua franca and a first language for 10% of the population but understood by 95%)

Economy: Sierra Leone has substantial mineral, agricultural, and fishery resources. However, the economic and social infrastructure is not well developed, and serious social disorders continue to hamper economic development. About two-thirds of the working-age population engages in subsistence agriculture. Manufacturing consists mainly of the processing of raw materials and of light manufacturing for the domestic market. Bauxite and rutile mines have been shut down by civil strife. The major source of hard currency is found in the mining of diamonds, the large majority of which are smuggled out of the country. The resurgence of internal warfare in 1999 brought another substantial drop in GDP. The fate of the economy in 2000 depends on the mid-1999 peace accord holding and the rebels reopening territory under their control.

Industries: mining (diamonds); small-scale manufacturing (beverages, textiles, cigarettes, footwear); petroleum refining

Currency: 1 leone (Le) = 100 cents

Railways: total: 84 km used on a limited basis because the mine at Marampa is closed, narrow gauge: 84 km 1.067-m gauge

Highways: total: 11,300 km, paved: 904 km, unpaved: 10,396 km (1999 est.)

Waterways: 800 km; 600 km navigable year round

Ports and Harbors: Bonthe, Freetown, Pepel

Airports: 10 (1999 est.), Airports - with paved runways: total: 1, over 3,047 m: 1 (1999 est.), Airports - with unpaved runways: total: 9, 914 to 1,523 m: 7, under 914 m: 2 (1999 est.)

Heliports: 1 (1999 est.)

Visa: required by all except the following: nationals of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo for visits up to 90 days.

Duty Free: permitted goods: 200 cigarettes or 225g tobacco; 1.136 litres of wine or spirits.

Health: a yellow fever vaccination is required. Malaria risk exists. All water should be regarded as being potentially contaminated.

HOTELS•MOTELS•INNS

FREETOWN

BINTUMANI HOTEL, Email: bintumani_hotel@hotmail.com ,Tel: 233996, 076748407

CABENDA HOTEL, 14A Signal Hill Road, Congo Cross, Freetown, Tel: 230411/076746996/076601084, Fax: 230611, www.hotelcabenda.com

CAPE SIERRA HOTEL, Cape Road Aberdeen, Freetown, Tel: 230322, 230321, capecater@hotmail.com

COUNTRY LODGE COMPLEX, HS 51 Hillstation, Freetown, Sierra Leone, Telephone 00232 22 235589, Fax 00232 22 235688, <http://www.countrylodgesl.com>

FAMILY KINGDOM RESORT, P.O.Box 94, Aberdeen , Aberdeen Lumley Beach Road, Freetown, Sierra Leone, Phone: +232-22-236133 / 231136, Fax: +232-22-231972 info@familykingdomresort.net, www.familykingdomresort.net

HOTEL BARMOI, 75c Cape Road, Aberdeen, Tel: 234933/236706, Fax 236702, Email: enquiries@hotelbarmoi.com , Website: www.hotelbarmoi.com

HOTEL KIMBIMA, Aberdeen, Freetown, Sierra Leone, Telephone Numbers are: +232-22-236610/232-22-236507/+23250503010, Fax Number is +232-22-236610, info@hotelkimbima.com , <http://www.hotelkimbima.com>

Paramount Hotel

State Avenue

Freetown

Sierra Leone

Tel No. 00232 22 22-45-31

SIERRA LIGHTHOUSE HOTEL, 5 Man of War Bay, Aberdeen, Freetown, Tel: 236-674/236-676/236849, Email: info@sierralighthouse.com

AIRLINES/HELICOPTERS/AIRPORTS

BELLVIEW AIRLINES, 66B Opebi Road, Ikeja, Lagos, P. O. BOX 6571, Lagos, Nigeria, Tel: 234 01 2707930, premiumclub@flybellviewair.com , www.flybellviewair.com

BMI, Donington Hall, Castle Donington, Derby, DE74 2SB, +44 (0)1332 854000, <http://www.flybmi.com>

FREETOWN-LUNGI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, Sierra Leone, 24 Rawden Street, Freetown, Tel: +232 (0)22 228133, +232 (0)22 224239, +232 (0)22 025307, Website: www.lungi-int-airport.com

