



## PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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13TH NOVEMBER, 2025

### PRESS RELEASE



#### MINES COMMITTEE ENGAGES SIERRA RUTILE AND COMMUNITY RESIDENTS

The Parliamentary Committee on Mines and Mineral Resources, chaired by Hon. Saa Emerson Lamina has, on Thursday 13/11/2025, engaged some host community residents of Moriba Town and management of the Sierra Rutile Company to resolve an ongoing conflict between the mining company and the community.

In his opening remarks, the Committee Chairman, Hon. Saa Emerson Lamina, who also doubles as the Deputy Majority Leader of Government Business 2, welcomed the witnesses. He stated that the Committee is mandated to perform oversight functions on the activities of MDAs and to also settle disputes when the need arises. Hon. Lamina reiterated the government's commitment to transforming the mining sector across the country. "The Government of His Excellency, President Julius Maada Bio, is committed to transforming the mining sector, as demonstrated by the enactment of the Mines and Minerals Development Act," Hon. Lamina said. "These reforms are designed to foster growth for the nation. For instance, the president has increased surface rent by 70% for the benefit of the people of Sierra Leone."

He further explained the purpose of surface rent and emphasized that the meeting was convened to address a specific complaint between the company and the community.

Hon. Fatmata Bockarie, representing Bonthe District, highlighted the persistent issue of crop compensation between Sierra Rutile and the community residents and urged the committee to address the matter fairly.

One of the complainants, who is the Regent Chief of the Imperri Chiefdom, Leslie Turker Thomas, stated that the dispute with the company has lasted for over a year. He alleged that Sierra Rutile had only paid 2.5 billion Leones of an agreed 4 billion Leones, refusing to pay the remaining 1.5 billion. The Chief also claimed the company has not paid surface rents for a specific area where it operates, used police to intimidate community members, and dismissed workers without their benefits.

In response, the Chief Operating Officer of Sierra Rutile, Kenelm Walta Hughes, stated that their payment obligations ended in December 2024. He asserted that the company has been fully compliant with crop compensation and surface rent payments, but due to some reasons, remaining payments have not been made.

"When documents for the payment reach my desk, I refuse to sign until a proper investigation is conducted," the representative stated. He added that some of the issues raised would be addressed through documentation, clarifying that the total amount in question was 4.168 million Leones, with a balance of 1.784 million Leones owed.

After a series of deliberations, the Committee issued the following rulings:

1. A detailed investigation will be conducted by a five-member sub-committee of the Parliamentary Committee on Mines and Mineral Resources into the controversy regarding the grassland and the actual concession area.
2. Sierra Rutile is to submit coordinate data and a drone survey report to the Committee by Wednesday, November 19, 2025.
3. The committee must engage with the mining regulator; hereafter, NMA before its final rulings on the next adjourned date;
4. A crop assessor's report must be produced at the next adjourned meeting.
5. All parties are required to maintain peace until the next hearing on Wednesday.

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department

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