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## **Illegal Mining and use of Child Labour in Kamakwie**

**Freetown, 29th April 2015.** The Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources (MMMR) notes with grave concern several reports on illegal mining activities and the use of child labour in Sanda Loko and Sella Limba Chiefdoms in Bombali District.

Mounting tensions are reported in these chiefdoms due to confrontations between several individuals and groups over the identity of the rightful management team of AMR Gold Company.

The general public is advised of the following facts:

1. AMR Gold has three exploration licences covering sections of Sanda Loko and Sella Limba chiefdoms in Bombali District and has been exploring since 2011. These licences entitle the company to carryout exploration for minerals.
2. By letter dated 15th December 2014, the Board of Directors of AMR Gold informed the Government of Sierra Leone that Mr. Shrags Isreal is no longer a Director of AMR Gold. The letter further states that "Messrs Shrags Isreal and Raphael Isreal no longer represent AMR Gold in any capacity ..." The letter went on to inform Government that the new management team of AMR Gold comprises Dr. Jan Ketelaar (Country Manager), Mr. Salim Sillah (Chief Geologist) and Mr. Mohamed Daffae (Chief Finance Officer).
3. The above decision was upheld by the High Court of Sierra Leone.
4. Consequent upon the above, the NMA wishes it to be known that Dr. Jan Ketelaar (Country Manager), Mr. Salim Sillah (Chief Geologist) and Mr. Mohamed Daffae (Chief Finance Officer) are the recognized officials of AMR Gold.
5. On the issue of illegal mining and the use of child labour, some local residents in these chiefdoms are engaged in illegal mining of columbite and tantalite (coltan). In addition to their illegal mining activities, these local residents have also been using child labour in their mining operations. These activities contravene the Mines and Minerals Act of 2009, and they also pose serious health and environmental concerns.

In view of the above, the NMA is working with stakeholders, including the Environment Protection Agency (EPA), the Sierra Leone Police and the chiefdom authorities to stop these illegal activities and restore peace to the affected chiefdoms. Anyone caught engaged in illegal mining activity and/or making use of child labour in any of these areas will face the full force of the law.

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