

# Sierra Leone, Blood Diamonds, and the Aftermath

## What are Blood Diamonds?

Blood diamonds (also called Conflict Diamonds) are diamonds that are implicated in horrific human rights abuses including diamond-fueled violence, child labor, and environmental destruction. Diamond-fueled violence includes diamonds illegally traded to fund conflict in war-torn areas, particularly in central and western Africa. The United Nations (UN) defines conflict diamonds as "...diamonds that originate from areas controlled by forces or factions opposed to legitimate and internationally recognized governments, and are used to fund military action in opposition to those governments, or in contravention of the decisions of the Security Council." This narrow definition does not include state sanctioned violence, local brutality in diamond mining, or any other human rights abuses.

## Background

Blood diamonds captured the world's attention during the extremely brutal conflict in Sierra Leone in the late 1990s, where rebels carried out systematic amputations of limbs during an eight-year brutal campaign. During this time, it is estimated that up to 14% of the world diamond production was being used to fund bloody civil wars. Illicit rough diamonds have also been used by rebels to fund conflicts in Angola, Liberia, Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo (also known as Congo Brazzaville). During this time, Unita, a rebel militia group in Angola, generated close to \$1.5 billion from sales of diamonds mined in areas it controlled, using the proceeds to wage a brutal civil war that killed 500,000 people before ending in 2002.

Restoring Lost Hope Everyday

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Hands for Africa



*Actual Blood Diamond site in  
Kono, Sierra Leone.*

## Our Position

Our goal is to empower amputees with the tools to realize a sustainable and brighter future.

We believe that our supporters want to know the history and background of our amputees to fully understand the circumstances that led to such tragic ends.

It is our duty to not rely on a single source to tell the full and complex story of a country and people as multifaceted and ever changing as Sierra Leone.

We encourage and invite active discussions, commentary and feedback.

*Alton Harding, Founder*



*Single Father Amputee whose arm was  
chopped off by the rebels and his son.*