

Rapaport Kicks Off Diamond Trade Mission in Sierra Leone



The Rapaport Group has begun its latest trade mission to Sierra Leone, one of the world's major diamond producers.

Chairman Martin Rapaport is heading a delegation of diamond dealers and jewelers on a tour of the West African nation, with participants hailing from countries including the US, the UK, Italy, India, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Singapore.

The trade mission, which begins Sunday night, will provide an opportunity to meet artisanal diggers and learn about the severe challenges they experience. It will also highlight opportunities for sustainable economic development that can transform millions of lives.

“Our trade mission will focus on sustainability, fair trade, and how selling and wearing diamonds can make the world a better place,” said Rapaport. “It reflects growing interest in these topics among both diamond dealers and consumers.”

Traveling in jeeps and braving rough conditions, delegation members will get a firsthand view of the diamond industry's hidden heart: the mines and the miners.

"There's a reason God gave diamonds to the poorest people in the world and made the richest people want them," said Rapaport. "This trip is going to be a real eye-opener."

The itinerary for Rapaport's five-day Sierra Leone trade mission includes:

- Touring an active diamond mine in Koidu and talking with diggers.
- Koryardu, the Peace Diamond village: Seeing how proceeds from the 2017 sale of the 709-carat Peace Diamond have been used to develop local education, health and welfare infrastructure in one of the world's poorest towns.
- A town hall meeting with local Koryardu officials and residents to evaluate the project's progress and learn how to expand its impact.
- Freetown and surrounds: Visiting De Beers' GemFair artisanal diggers program, the National Museum, the Sierra Leone Business Development Conference, the Empower Africa Business Center, and an abandoned diamond-mining pit that's being reclaimed for agriculture.

To get real-time updates, photos and video clips, [follow the trade mission's live blog](#).

To learn more about joining a future Rapaport Sierra Leone trade mission, [click here](#).

Image: The 2019 Rapaport trade mission to Sierra Leone. (Rapaport News)