



# 2013 Minerals Yearbook

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## CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

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# THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

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In 2013, the Central African Republic was suspended from the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and from the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and was not trading in rough diamond. These suspensions were the result of the continuation of civil unrest in the country. In December 2012, a coalition of rebel groups, known as Séléka, launched an attack against the Government, seizing several towns, including the strategic diamond mining town of Bria. Séléka overtook the capital city of Bangui on March 24, 2013, and overthrew the Government. On December 5, 2013, the United Nations Security Council raised concerns regarding the continuing deterioration of the security situation in the country and reported that it would consider imposing targeted measures against the Central African Republic, including measures against the illegal exploitation of diamond by armed groups. By yearend, the crisis was estimated to have caused the internal displacement of nearly 400,000 people (BBC News, 2013; Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, 2013; Jackson, 2013; Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, 2013; United Nations Security Council, 2013; Kimberley Process Rough Diamond Statistics, 2014).

Diamond and gold were the only minerals for which production data had been reported in the Central African Republic before the onset of the crisis. All diamond and gold production in the country was mined by artisanal miners from alluvial deposits. For many years, information on clay, quartz, and sand and gravel, which were also produced in the country, has been inadequate to make reliable estimates of domestic output (table 1).

Prospects for growth in the Central African Republic's mineral sector had hinged on the development of the country's gold and uranium deposits, but the security situation in 2012–13, paired with a decrease in the price of uranium, hindered the progress of mining projects under development. AXMIN Inc. of Canada, which was in the process of securing financing for the development of the Passendro gold project, had to suspend operations in December 2012, after an armed group occupied the company's mining camp at Ndassima and seized food, medical supplies, and company vehicles. Following the incident, the company decided to temporarily suspend operations at the mining camp, although some staff were reported to have remained onsite. Since then, artisanal miners had been illegally mining for gold within the premises of the Ndassima camp, digging tunnels and pits throughout the concession area. AXMIN reported that the activities of these artisanal miners had created unstable surface areas throughout the concession. In late June 2013, more than 30 artisanal miners died at the camp after heavy rainfall triggered the collapse of one of these mining pits (AXMIN Inc., 2012, 2013a; Lewis, 2013).

In addition to the Passendro gold project, AXMIN also held interest in the Bambari 1 and 2 exploration concession areas.

In late 2013, the Government granted the company a 1-year extension of the Bambari 1 and Bambari 2 exploration licenses and a 1-year extension of the Passendro gold project mining license. AXMIN would have until August 6, 2014, to meet all fiscal commitments for the Bambari 1 and Bambari 2 exploration concessions in order to continue its exploration operations and until January 10, 2015, to progress the Passendro project to the preproduction stage. The Bambari and Passendro projects are located about 400 kilometers east of Bangui (AXMIN Inc., 2013b). The successful development of these mining projects and the prospects for future foreign direct investment in mining will likely depend on the country's ability to restore political stability.

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TABLE 1  
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES<sup>1</sup>

Commodity <sup>2</sup>	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013 <sup>e</sup>
Diamond <sup>3</sup>	311,779 <sup>4</sup>	301,557 <sup>4</sup>	323,575 <sup>4</sup>	365,917 <sup>4</sup>	-- <sup>5</sup>
carats					
Gold, mine output, Au content <sup>6</sup>	61	59	53	55 <sup>e</sup>	60
kilograms					

<sup>e</sup>Estimated; estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits. -- Zero.

<sup>1</sup>Table includes data available through December 30, 2014.

<sup>2</sup>In addition to the commodities listed, Central African Republic produced clay, quartz crystal, and sand and gravel, but information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output.

<sup>3</sup>Production is approximately 70% to 80% gem-quality diamond.

<sup>4</sup>Reported by the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

<sup>5</sup>The Central African Republic was under a temporary suspension from the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and was not trading in rough diamond in 2013.

<sup>6</sup>Production from artisanal mining.