

Kimberley Diamonds Suspends Mining Operations at Lerala Mine, Botswana



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"We have become aware of some incorrect media articles in Botswana which have reported that the Lerala Diamond Mine has closed. Such information is factually incorrect," announces [Kimberley Diamonds](#) in a press release. Mining operations at Lerala are conducted by external contractor, Basil Read, have continued at rates exceeding the plant's current ability to process feed, resulting in a large ore stockpile. "As a result, Lerala has asked Basil Read to temporarily suspend their pit mining operations in the K3 kimberlite pipe to allow Lerala to process and reduce these stockpiles to reasonable levels. Basil Read has now temporarily ceased all in-pit operations until further notice, however their operations to provide feed from stockpiles to the ROM and into the plant, continue. The plant remains in production and produces diamonds every day. At this stage, Lerala expects the suspension of in-pit operations to continue for approximately 3-4 months or until stockpiles are reduced and mining is required to re-commence. This is a cost saving measure while Lerala implements the performance improvement plan, and is not anticipated to impact on our expected production levels."

The press release further states: "Lerala has identified some shortcomings in certain pre-existing elements of the plant, which combined with the highly abrasive character of the internal waste within the kimberlite ore, has significantly impacted the plant's ability to operate at maximum capacity on a consistent basis. In response to this, Lerala has developed a performance improvement plan which looks to address the issues at the plant and is in the process of implementing this plan." Successful implementation of the plan depends most importantly on raising of further funds for capital expenditure, spare parts and working capital.

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