INTRODUCTION
The British set up a trading post near present-day Freetown in the 17th century. The colony gradually expanded inland during the course of the 19th century. Independence was attained in 1961. Recovering from a long civil war, the government’s stated priorities include free primary and secondary education, economic growth, accountable governance, health, and infrastructure.

GOVERNMENT
Chief of State
President Julius Maada BIO
Head of Government
President Julius Maada BIO
Government Type
presidential republic
Capital
Freetown
Legislature
unicameral Parliament (146 seats)

GEOGRAPHY
Area
Total: 71,740 sq km
Land: 71,620 sq km
Water: 120 sq km
Climate
tropical; hot, humid; summer rainy season (May to December); winter dry season (December to April)
Natural Resources
diamonds, titanium ore, bauxite, iron ore, gold, chromite

ECONOMY
Economic Overview
low-income West African economy; primarily subsistent agriculture; key iron and diamond mining activities suspended; slow recovery from 1990s civil war; systemic corruption; high-risk debt; high youth unemployment; natural resource rich
GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) $13.15 billion (2020 est.)
GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) $1,6000 (2020 est.)
Industries - diamond mining, iron ore, rutile and bauxite mining, small-scale manufacturing (beverages, textiles, footwear)
Agricultural products - cassava, rice, vegetables, oil palm fruit, sweet potatoes, milk, citrus fruit, groundnuts, fruit, pulses nes
Exports $1.085 billion (2018 est.)
titanium, lumber, diamonds, aluminum, cocoa beans (2019)
partners: Belgium 26%, China 25%, Romania 9%, UAE 6%, Germany 5%, Netherlands 5% (2019)
Imports $2.619 billion (2020 est.)
rice, plastics, packaged medicines, sauces/seasonings, cars (2019)
partners: China 27%, India 11%, US 6%, Ghana 5%, Turkey 5% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY
Population
6.8 million (July 2021 est.)
Population Growth
2.44% (2021 est.)
Ethnicity
Temne 35.4%, Mende 30.8%, Limba 8.8%, Kono 4.3%, Korankoh 4%, Fullah 3.8%, Mandingo 2.8%, Loko 2%, Sherbro 1.9%, Creole 1.2%, other 5% (2019 est.)
Language
English (official, regular use limited to literate minority), Krio (English-based Creole, understood by 95%), Mende, Temne
Religion
Muslim 77.1%, Christian 22.9% (2019 est.)
Urbanization
urban population: 43.4% of total population (2021)
rate of urbanization: 3.02% annual rate of change (2020-25 est.)