Jamhuuriyadda Federaalka Soomaaliya
Dowladda Hirshabeelle
Wasaaradda Warfaafinta, Dhaqanka & Dalxiiska
Xafiiska Wasiirka

جمهورية الصومال الفيدرالية
دولة هير شبيلي
وزارة الاعلام ,الثقافة والسياحة
مكتب الوزير

Federal Republic of Somalia
Hirshabelle State of Somalia
Ministry of Information Culture & Tourism
Office of the Minister

Ref: HSS/MoICT /OM/000050/025 **Date: 04/08/2025**

The National Museum of Somalia Mogadishu, Federal Republic of Somalia

To: UNESCO World Heritage Centre 7, Place de Fontenoy 75352 Paris 07 SP, France

Cc: ICOM (International Council of Museums)

Cc: ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property)

Cc: The International Heritage Centre

Subject: **Recognition of the El Ali Meteorite (Shiid Birood) as Intangible and Tangible Cultural Heritage of the El Ali Indigenous Community of Somalia:**

Dear Sir/Madam,

On behalf of the National Museum of Somalia especially Hirshabelle State, I respectfully write to request the formal recognition of the El Ali Meteorite—locally known as Shiid Birood—as an integral part of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the El Ali Indigenous Community in the El Ali district of Hirshabelle State Somalia.

The El Ali Meteorite, discovered in the central region of Somalia, has long been referenced in the oral poetry, traditional dances, and intergenerational storytelling of the El Ali community. For centuries, Shiid Birood has symbolized a sacred connection between the people and the sky, playing an important role in local cosmologies, rituals, and indigenous environmental knowledge.

This cultural and historical bond extends beyond physical geography into the community's identity, folklore, and social memory. It is therefore not only a remarkable extraterrestrial object of scientific interest but also a sacred cultural artifact rooted in Somali Indigenous heritage.

We fully support and appreciate the scholarly efforts of Nicholas Gessler, Ph.D., Research Associate at Duke University, in raising international awareness of the cultural significance of this meteorite. His interdisciplinary work in ethnography and information science contributes meaningfully to the global understanding of how such natural phenomena are embedded in

Indigenous worldviews. His research has respectfully centered the voices and traditions of the El Ali community, and we commend his ethical engagement and advocacy.

We kindly urge UNESCO and affiliated heritage institutions to:

1. Recognise the El Ali Meteorite as a cultural heritage belonging to the Indigenous people of El Ali, Somalia.
2. Engage in a dialogue with Somali cultural authorities and Indigenous representatives for the preservation, protection, and possible repatriation of this heritage.
3. Include El Ali's oral history and traditions in the documentation of intangible cultural heritage linked to astronomical phenomena.

This recognition would affirm the rights of Indigenous communities to their cultural artifacts and protect such legacies from exploitation, displacement, or misrepresentation. It would also honor Somalia's rich but often overlooked contributions to global cultural and scientific history.

We remain at your disposal for collaboration and further information.

Yours sincerely,

Adan Barre Mohamed Muse
Minister of Information Culture and Tourism HSS

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