10) The El Ali Meteorite and Layla Aded's Interview of SNTV. Abdulkadir Abukar was interviewed:

https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=223876560222178

Leyla: Professor Abdulkadir Abikar Hussein, you specialize in geology and earth science. Recently, a rock was moved from El Ali in 2020 and later confiscated by the government in Mogadishu. Could you briefly inform us about this rock?

Abikar: In the name of God. First of all, we must ask ourselves, what was that rock? It was not an ordinary rock from the Earth as we know it. It originated from outer space and fell at El Ali. It came from the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter, drawn in by Earth's gravity. It descended and landed at El Ali. However, this was not a recent event—the rock is estimated to have fallen between 5,000 and 50,000 years ago. If we consider the lower estimate of 5,000 years, that places its arrival during the lifetime of Prophet Moses, around the time when the first pyramids were being built. It remained in that area for centuries, and the local nomadic people were aware of its existence. It is a metallic rock composed of nickel and iron. The nomads used it to sharpen their knives, recognizing that it was not an ordinary rock but rather a metal of extraterrestrial origin.

Leyla: Professor, the University of Alberta in Canada has verified that the rock from El Ali contains minerals not found on Earth. Given this, how valuable is the rock? Would you say it is extremely expensive?

Abikar: In the name of God. That is correct. The rock is immensely valuable. Its worth can be assessed in monetary terms, but more importantly, it holds great significance as a national heritage. It is a massive 15.5-ton rock, weighing 15,150 kilograms, and is composed of materials different from those found on Earth. When it was removed, it was taken to the Jilaow Detention Center (the intelligence headquarters), where we began our initial studies. We sought to understand what the rock was, and small samples were taken—not at that location, but later, after it was moved. I was part of the team that documented its characteristics, including its description, weight, height, and width. I personally calculated its weight at 15 tons. Subsequently, samples were sent to the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), the University of Arizona, Duke University in the United States, and the University of Alberta in Canada. Each institution examined the rock from different scientific perspectives. One team focused on geochemistry, while another analyzed its mineral composition. The University of Alberta discovered that the rock contained a type of iron oxide that does not exist on Earth. Typically, known iron oxides include magnetite and hematite, both of which are found on Earth. However, this rock contained unique minerals not previously identified on our planet. So, does the rock have value? Yes, its value lies in its status as a national heritage. It is the eighth-largest meteorite ever discovered on Earth, and its origin from a celestial body makes it exceptionally valuable.

Leyla: What can you tell us about the companies involved in the transaction, both the sellers and buyers?

Abikar: A company obtained a license after recognizing the significance of the rock. The Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources issued a license to Kureym Mining and Rocks Company, granting them the right to explore minerals in Somalia, particularly in the Hiiraan region. The company knew precisely what it was looking for, so they retrieved the rock from Hiiraan and transported it to Mogadishu. At the time, I was working for the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources and was consulted on the matter. My recommendation was that, while the company had ownership of the meteorite, the government should purchase it from them and place it in the National Museum of Somalia in Mogadishu. This would allow visitors to see it by purchasing tickets for $5 or $10. Additionally, scientists, planetary researchers, and tourists from around the world could come to study it. If it were to be sold, it would command a high price—ranging from $4 million to $17 million. However, instead of being preserved in Somalia, the rock was taken to China.

Leyla: The rock from El Ali is estimated to be worth $100,000 per gram. Do you agree with this estimate? How much has it been sold for so far?

Abikar: To my knowledge, the rock has not yet been sold. It is currently in China. Somalia has the possibility of reimbursing the company to facilitate its return to the country and place it in the National Museum of Somalia. Kureym Mining and Rocks Company should receive fair compensation, though I would not suggest a figure as high as $15 or $17 million—perhaps around $4 to $5 million would be reasonable. I have heard that the Chinese offered $3.8 million for it. However, as far as I know, the sale has not been finalized. The rock remains in China.

Leyla: You mentioned earlier that this rock fell on Somalia from space. How did it arrive here?

Abikar: There is a region in space called the asteroid belt, located between Mars and Jupiter. A planet that once existed in that region disintegrated, and its fragments continue to orbit in that belt. These large rocks, or asteroids, occasionally fall to Earth. Approximately 65 million years ago, an asteroid collision had a catastrophic impact on Earth, significantly altering life. The meteorite that landed in Somalia was much smaller. While it now weighs 15 tons, it may have been 20 to 30 tons when it first entered Earth's atmosphere. Due to the immense speed at which it traveled and the force of gravity, the rock heated up and partially disintegrated, causing pieces of it to scatter. Some fragments landed in eastern and western Hiiraan and other surrounding areas. That is the nature of this type of celestial rock.

Leyla: Professor Abdulkadir, given your expertise in geology and your experience with the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, do you believe this rock underwent proper testing?

Abikar: The initial examination of the rock was conducted by myself. I was the first to describe it while it was held at the Jilaow Detention Center. I identified it as a meteorite, documented its weight and measurements, and later, additional tests were conducted by the company that owned it. Small samples were extracted and sent to Kenya, where it was determined that the meteorite primarily consists of iron and nickel, along with traces of other elements. There is even a minute amount of gold within it. Further testing was conducted at the universities I previously mentioned, including Duke, UCLA, the University of Arizona, and the University of Alberta.

These institutions analyzed the rock in greater detail. However, additional research could be conducted if more samples were available. Unfortunately, the meteorite is now beyond our control. The company that owned it transported it to China when no buyer was found in Mogadishu. It is currently in China and remains available for sale. At one point, I heard that a sale had been completed, but the last update I received indicated that they were offered $3.8 million. If China purchases it, they will likely cut it into pieces, which would diminish its scientific and historical value. If our government cannot buy it back, the best alternative would be for a major organization to purchase it and preserve it. In the future, when conditions improve, Somalia could formally request its return to the National Museum of Somalia, where it rightfully belongs.

Leyla: Thank you very much for your time, Professor Abdulkadir.

Abikar: Thank you all.