11) What is the "precious rock" that was allegedly being sold to Al-Shabaab?

https://www.bbc.com/somali/war-51616858

Some people described this extremely heavy rock as containing traces of gold.

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The Somali Federal Government forces have seized a rock described as a "valuable resource" that was allegedly "extracted illegally" from the El Ali area in the Hiiraan region.

There are conflicting reports about who initially took the rock, which was located in an area under Al-Shabaab's control. The Hirshabelle administration stated that they believe individuals affiliated with Al-Shabaab removed the rock and were in the process of selling it. Sheikh Cismaan Barre, Speaker of the Hirshabelle Parliament, told the BBC that Al-Shabaab became aware that the rock was highly unusual.

"Terrorist groups include both Somalis and foreigners. The foreigners, in particular, recognized that this rock had significant value. According to the information I have, they hired Somali middlemen, instructing them to claim ownership of the rock and to act as traders," the speaker explained.

However, other reports suggest that Somali businessmen purchased the rock from Al-Shabaab for $264,000 and intended to sell it independently. Speaker Barre strongly rejected this claim.

"That claim has been made, but it is entirely false. Common sense dictates that Al-Shabaab would not sell a rock worth millions of dollars for just $260,000 and tell the buyers to go and resell it. According to the information we have, this rock was actually being sold *to* Al-Shabaab," he stated.

Local residents reportedly fought to prevent the rock from being removed from the place where it had been for centuries, according to federal MP Daahir Amiin Jeesow, who represents Hiiraan.

Photo caption: MP Daahir Amiin Jeesow

MP Jeesow stated that violence erupted over the rock, even resulting in bloodshed.

"According to those familiar with the district's history, the rock had been there for thousands of years. But we didn't know what it really was. Then, suddenly, we saw cranes from Mogadishu digging it out, while the local people were fighting to keep it there. That's when the controversy started. Al-Shabaab used the local people, and as a result, two people died while several elders were injured," he said.

He also criticized the way the rock was allegedly bought and sold.

"The illegal nature of this transaction lies in the fact that Al-Shabaab was paid for it. Local residents informed us of this. Those who purchased it claim they bought it from Al-Shabaab, who gave them permission to take it," he explained.

What is the rock?

Photo caption: The exact composition of the rock remains unknown.

As of now, there is no official information on what the rock is made of. However, it is visibly different from ordinary rocks, and no scientific analysis has been conducted to determine its composition.

Locals from Ceel Cali and surrounding areas are familiar with the rock, according to MP Jeesow, who hails from the region.

The Hirshabelle administration has stated that they are waiting for the Somali Federal Government—specifically, the Ministry of Water and Minerals—to conduct an investigation and release official findings.

Another key issue under scrutiny is the true financial value of this massive rock and how any potential revenue from it will be distributed.

While reports indicate that large sums of money have already changed hands over the rock, it remains uncertain whether it will turn out to be **a treasure or a worthless stone** with no real significance.