

## **Video 2: Facts: What is the rock that was seized by the Somali Government & its value?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgFl90wCbfs>

Welcome to a special program on an issue that was very popular on social media lately which is about a precious rock that was found in an area in Hiiraan region. The issue of the rock led members of parliament whose constituency is the area where the rock was found to exchange barbs and attack each other in the news media. First, let us learn details about the rock and what it is.

In the area of El Ali, which is part of Hiiraan region, there were reports of a very precious rock that was found there which was seized by the forces of the Federal Government of Somalia on the outskirts of Mogadishu, the capital city of Somalia. The rock was very well known in the area where it was for many years. The trend followed the taking away of the rock from the area which was said to have been exchanged for \$260,000. The rock which is said to be expensive was identified following a sample taken of it which was tested which led to competition and armed confrontation in the area which led to death and injury casualties. After all this, some businessmen successfully purchased the rock with the intention to resell it according to sources.

Member of Parliament Dahir Amin Jesow, who is one of the members elected from the area is providing details about what the rock is in an interview he gave to the media.

MP Jesow: The issue that you asked me about, a rock was found in El Ali. The rock which was found was popular in town. It was located outside of the town. And it was there for a period of centuries. Actually, residents used to cut files- pieces of rock used to file knives, axes etc. That is how people used it. Some men, who are Al Shabaab found the rock. Perhaps, the Al Shabaab were given directions according to reports. I was told that a sample was taken from the rock. Testing was done. Following the tests, the result was to sell the rock between businesspeople and Al Shabaab. The residents came out to the issue. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month (February 2020), the worst conflict took place there between locals and Al Shabaab. Shabaab outpowered the locals forcibly. Two men died there, they were taken to Buqdi where they were executed. We also heard that some Al Shabaab members also died there. Anyhow, the rock was taken away. It was excavated using cranes that were sent there from Mogadishu. It was transported by a vehicle. We were keeping track of it all of this time. They brought it to Buqdi. They kept it at Buqdi for a long time while they negotiated price. At the end, I have data stating that businessmen bought it for \$264,000. Those businessmen had the initial plan to get the rock and used Al Shabaab oppress the locals. The money paid to Al Shabaab was \$264,000 according to our sources. The rock was taken away. We were closely tracking wherever it was. Local people did several roadblocks. Even the Hirshabelle administration, the Vice President worked with us on this. We were searching for it on the roads to Mogadishu. Eventually, it was seized by Banadir regional forces. May God reward them. These police forces seized it near the tall cell tower. And now, we were told that it is in the hands of one of the security institutions. Some of the owners who claimed the asset have been detained. We warn Somali businesspeople not to use Al Shabaab against civilians. And for people who God gave resources, to negotiate with the people is the right way, but oppression is not appropriate.

Reporter: Ok, MP Dahir. The rock that was taken away and brought to Mogadishu which is now in the hands of security forces: what is it and why is it different from other rocks in that area? Why

would they not collect other rocks and soil from the area? Why fight over this rock that was brought to Mogadishu?

MP Jesow: Thank you. They tested this rock and it is a precious stone. That is how they know. The facts I have state, and I did my research on this, I was told that a Chinese company in Uganda confirmed the tests according to sources that are privy to this. Anyway, the rock is in the hands of the Federal Government. It is the government that needs to say what it is. The loss to the locals and how to address it is also up to the Federal Government. The locals support the Federal government. And the area where the resource was found is entitled to something. The people who were killed have rights. And it is their government that seized it. We want them and the government to discuss issue which has three sides- the businessmen who bought it, the local population and Al Shabaab which was used against the people and the Federal Government. This issue is now between the Federal Governemnt, those who bought the rock and the local people who were robbed.

Reproter: I hope you have learned about the rock and what it is. Afterwards, members of parliament from the constituency exchanged heated words on media since many MPs are elected from the area.

In general, that is the end of the program. Our intension was to inform you about the rock and what it is. I will share with you further data on the rock and where it is being held once we receive full information. Good bye now until we meet again.