METEORITICAL SOCIETY ETHICS COMMITTEE
FORMAL COMPLAINT

Nancy Chabot – Chair, 2026
Rhonda Stroud – 2027
Martin Lee – 2028

Submitted by: Nick Gessler nick.gessler@duke.edu

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

As author of the "History" section of the Meteoritical Bulletin entry on the Shiid Birood / Cell Cali / El Ali meteorite, I have been concerned with researching and developing the natural and cultural significance of the meteorite and its impact site for five years, with a large team of colleagues, many of whom are citizens of Somalia. We have determined that the meteorite is the worlds most significantly mined-for-metal iron meteorite, surpassing the Cape York meteorites in size, but following it temporally by 200 years since its discovery in 1818. As with the Cape York Inuits, we have the unique opportunity and obligation, to document its use by the indigenous people in the area of El Ali village, in the state of Hirshabelle, as well as the indication that it had been used for centuries or millennia as the source of a native tool-making industry in prehistory. One might suggest that the meteorite was the beginning of the pre smelted iron age in Africa.

We requested a letter of invitation from the Frankfurt organizing committee. They graciously provided one, which was passive/aggressive. Under the thin veil of polite and supporting invitational message, was embedded another egregious opposing message. In brief, it first said invite these people, and then said do not invite them. The Somali Ambassador to Kenya advised deleting the passive/aggressive message, addressing the invitation directly to the German Ambassador in Kenya, and personally offered to recommend the visits directly to the German Embassy. We requested a rewrite from the Frankfurt organizing committee. They refused, with nonsensical reasoning, becoming even more demeaning and disparaging.

The Frankfurt organizing committee knew that the processing time for Somali citizens applying for a Schengen short stay visa was extended on June 25, 2026, from 15 to 45 calendar days. None of us had any control over that intentionally prejudicial action. The Frankfurt organizing team was well aware of this delay in short term visa processing. That delay was the reason for many of the emails marked **URGENT**.

That delay is now an even **MORE URGENT** reason to revise the letter. But it seems like the Frankfurt organizing committee will fulfill their original wish to prevent the invitees from attending the conference.

SPECIFIC VIOLATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

We have marked specifically relevant terms describing our complaint in bold lettering. The specific violations are any and all of the terms in bold lettering below:

Since Jutta Zipfel is writing on Senckenberg Naure Research Stationary using the jutta.zipfel@senkenberg.de email address, I assume she is speaking as Chair of the Frankfurt Organizing Committee, not as the Secretary of the Meteoritical Society using the metsocsec@meteoritical.org email address. Dominik Hezel is Chair of the Frankfurt Scientific Organizing Committee. I don't know who actually who participated in writing the emails.

The processing time for Somali citizens applying for a Schengen visa was extended on June 25, 2026, from 15 to 45 calendar days. None of us had any control over that intentionally prejudicial action. Jutta was aware of this delay in short term visa processing. That delay was the reason for many of the emails marked **URGENT**.

A **passive/aggressive** communication in one in which politeness and praise hide an opposing hostility. We appreciate and are grateful for the praise and politeness. We find the opposing hostility to the invitees, to other sciences and to anyone **not trained in meteoritics** to be quite egregious:

On June 30th I received a letter of invitation with the objectionable sentence: **"The professions of the El Ali delegation demonstrate that most are not trained scientists in the field of meteoritics and will, thus, not contribute to the scientific topics nor will they add scientific benefit to the meeting."** This has the profound effect of negatively prejudicing the decision of the German Ambassador in Kenya and closing the opportunity for friendly colleagues to take part in Frankfurt.

On July 14th I wrote to Jutta requesting a rewrite of the letter of invitation.

On July 17th I received a letter from Jutta Zipfel, declining to revise the invitation. In it we find this demeaning sentence: **"it is a shame that the Somali delegation did not submit an abstract or any request for a special session, both of which would have demonstrated their scientific interest and signalized the significance of their participation."** Jutta and Guy knew of our interest from emails to them on May 10 and June 10 and earlier. Were our scientific interests not thoroughly demonstrated in our submissions to MAPS, our sessions at the 86th MetSoc Conference in Los Angeles, and the coverage by SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN and the UK TELEGRAPH? This is a clear instance of gas-lighting. What relevance does "signalizing" have to do with revising the invitation at the request of the Somali Ambassador to Kenya and the invitees? No relevance at all.

The July 17th letter of refusal contained this further prejudicial, derogatory and disparaging sentence: **"It is at the discretion of the organizers to decide whether or not to write an**

invitation letter to potential participants, especially from a different field of science, who do not intend to actively contribute (scientifically) to the meeting with either an oral or poster presentation and who feel it necessary to bring lawyers, reporters and diplomats with them." This is an astoundingly irrelevant incidence of **gas-lighting**. We requested an invitation letter; they provided one. We requested a rewrite; they refused. They basically doubled down on their earlier falsehood, saying "we didn't like you in the first place." Our intentions have been clearly spelled out on our website for five years. They were clearly spelled out in late requests for a presentation slot, a timely request for table, wall or booth space. They refused all four. We were even offering to pay as do companies like Bruker. They refused. And then they go on to disparage the accomplishments of lawyers, reporters and diplomats? The invitees are not **bringing** lawyers, reporters and diplomats. They **are** lawyers, reporters and diplomats, and much more. They are the indigenous community members who have protected El Ali for generations. They are the accomplished and concerned experts in the cultural heritage significance of El Ali, the meteorite and its impact site.

The cause of this complaint was a specific incidence of what has customarily described by ethicists as prejudicial, discriminating, derogatory, demeaning, and disparaging harassment and bullying behavior. In contemporary terms specifically as **gas-lighting** and **passive-aggressive behavior**, appropriately defined by Google AI as **masking hostility or frustration behind a veneer of forced politeness, over-formality, or sugary sweetness. It is demeaning and disparaging, but in this instance, it goes far beyond a personal insult. It has real world consequences that effect the opportunities of several citizens of Somalia seeking short-term travel documents to join the meetings in Frankfurt. To sum it up, it is a letter of invitation that says to the German Embassy in Kenya, "Please invite these folks to come, but we don't want them here."**

A colleague put the incident diplomatically in these terms: **"Stating that the delegation 'will not add scientific benefit to the meeting' is likely to undermine any visa application by signaling to consular officers that the applicants lack a legitimate conference purpose. Instead of declining to issue invitation letters, the organizers chose to issue letters containing language that could prejudice visa determinations, effectively discouraging approval of the applications. This is truly passive aggressive."** Are we really expected to believe that the local organizing committee was not aware of this?

Moreover, as I said in the accompanying attachments, it is an affront to those colleagues who wish to learn and share ideas not only in the scheduled sessions, but in the reception, ice-breaker, dinner and comradery of the meeting. It is an affront to the Somali Ambassador to Kenya who took a personal interest in the invitees and who suggested the rewrite and his personal delivery to the German Ambassador to Kenya. It is an affront to the German Ambassador to Kenya who may be presented with two overtly distinct opposing messages:
#1: Issue a short-stay visa, and
#2: Don't issue a short stay visa.

<u>The Constitution of the Meteoritical Society:</u>

The notion that only "trained scientists in the field of meteoritics" can add scientific benefit to the meeting falsified below:

Article 1: Name, Purpose, and Scope

1. The name of this Society shall be *The Meteoritical Society*.
2. The purpose of this Society shall be to promote research and education in planetary science with emphasis on studies of meteorites and other extraterrestrial materials that further our understanding of the origin and history of the solar system.
3. **This Society, in its membership and activities, shall be an international organization.**

Article 16: Political Limitation

1. No substantial part of the activities of the Society shall consist of carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation.
   (If the Frankfurt committee regards us as agents of propaganda, so be it. We are an insubstantial part of the activities of the Society and we espouse the propaganda of UNESCO.)

Article 18: Membership Committee and Service Award

4. Service Award:
   1. The purpose of the award shall be to honor members who have advanced the goals of the Society to promote research and education in meteoritics and planetary science in ways other than by conducting scientific research. **Examples of activities that could be honored by the award include, but are not limited to, education and public outreach, service to the Society and the broader scientific community, and acquisition, classification and curation of new samples for research.**

Article 23: Outreach Committee

1. **The duties of the Outreach Committee are to communicate the public activities of the Meteoritical Society to both members and the general public using appropriate media venues and to advise Council on matters that relate to public-facing activities of the society.**

<u>1) Statement of Intent and Inclusiveness</u>

The Meteoritical Society welcomes as members all who are interested in the study of extraterrestrial materials, **no matter what their background.** As a professional society, **the Meteoritical Society is committed to providing an open, diverse, and supportive environment and expects the highest standards of ethical conduct among its members and participants at its activities to encourage the free expression and exchange of scientific ideas.**
The Meteoritical Society is committed to the philosophy of **equality of opportunity and treatment.** This extends to members and participants of Meteoritical Society activities, regardless of age, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, race, color, ethnicity, country of origin, religious belief, political identity, marital status, **employment status,** and personal characteristics including, but not limited to, disability, pregnancy status, and physical appearance. **The Meteoritical Society considers the rich diversity of the Society's membership and of the wider community a resource that should be drawn upon** when

selecting organizing committees, invited speakers, and nominees for office and for special prizes. In pursuit of these goals, the Meteoritical Society is committed to these principles:

- International **cooperation and collaboration**;
- Personal and professional **integrity**;
- Equal **opportunity**;
- Mutual **trust and respect**;
- Freedom of inquiry;
- Freedom of expression; and
- **Freedom from intimidation, harassment**, and abuse.

Members and participants at Meteoritical Society activities have the responsibility to act with **integrity** in all aspects of professional conduct, ensuring honesty in their scientific research and its dissemination. **Members have the responsibility to treat others with courtesy, equity, respect and fairness in all professional, educational, and informal settings.** Members have the responsibility to be aware of and adhere to laws and regulations related to: the professional ethics in the conduct of research; publications, peer review, scientific integrity; and to the laws and **policies related to discrimination, harassment, bullying** and abuse.

2) **Harassment, Discrimination, and Bullying**

The Meteoritical Society opposes and prohibits harassment, discrimination, and bullying of any kind, to include abuse **by any means that causes harm to, interferes with, or sabotages members and non-members in situations directly connected to publications, presentations, and meetings operated under the direction of the Society**. Harassment is defined as behavior that is not welcome, is personally offensive, debilitates morale, and therefore interferes with work effectiveness, **and can be exhibited through both an isolated act** or a continuing pattern of behavior, that includes but is not limited to micro-aggressions, abuse of power structures, intimidation or coercion through interpersonal relationships. Harassment can occur in a variety of ways including, but not limited to: verbal communication (in person or remotely); **written communication**; physical behavior (e.g., physical contact, body language, intimidating physical attitudes); and the creation, communication, or display of images or recordings. Consequently, members are expected to use discretion to ensure that their words and actions communicate respect for others. **This is particularly true for an international society like the Meteoritical Society, which is composed of members having different education, cultures and habits. The Meteoritical Society highlights these expectations for those members in positions of authority in the Meteoritical Society due to the enormous influence they can potentially wield over both members and non-members.**

Harassment and Bullying

Harassment on the basis of any characteristic outlined above is strictly prohibited. **Bullying is the use of a real or perceived power imbalance to aggressively dominate or intimidate others.** Harassment and bullying conduct include, but are not limited to: humiliation, coercion, threats, **intimidation,** hostile acts, epithets, slurs, **negative stereotyping,** physical force, denigrating jokes and display or circulation of **written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group.** Excessive and extreme acts of harassment can be considered abuse.

3) Professional Ethics (Integrity in Research and Publication)

Scientific integrity

Scientific integrity is one of the most important aspects of any research project, and it is the responsibility of all researchers to ensure that their work is carried out to the utmost of standards of professional ethics. In all aspects of research, members will not engage in fraud, dishonest misrepresentation, **coercive manipulation**, censorship, or other misconduct that alters the meaning, content, veracity, validity, or attribution of research findings. The Meteoritical Society expects its membership, in addition to the guidelines set out here, to follow the principles of similar guidelines laid down by fellow professional societies and national funding agencies for ethical behavior in research and publication.

Position Statement:
Collection, Trade, and Curation of Extraterrestrial Materials
The Constitution of the Meteoritical Society states that "The purpose of this Society shall be to promote research and education in planetary science with emphasis on studies of meteorites and other extraterrestrial materials...". These goals are best served when meteorites are collected, curated and studied in an ethical manner. The Meteoritical Society has therefore adopted the following Guidelines:
Members who recover, collect, trade, display or do research on meteorites should comply with all applicable national, state and local laws and regulations, international conventions and agreements, institutional and professional rules and codes, and rules of best scientific practice.

(We proudly contend that we work to support multinational, national, state and local laws conventions and agreements to combat the illegal trade of sites and items of world natural and cultural heritage significance.)

Utah State University - Code of Conduct Pledge
https://artsci.usu.edu/biology/about/code-of-conduct

The Department of Biology fosters a welcoming, safe, and healthy environment for students and employees. It is expected all associates of Biology will adhere to the following pledge ensuring an optimal, safe, healthy, and inclusive learning and work environment:

- I join Biology in fostering an environment of mutual respect and safety in the workplace as well as in classes, labs, and social events.
- I understand productive learning and work is most effective when all have a voice, when all count, when all are respected, valued and heard.
- I will be actively engaged with my colleagues toward being understanding and fully respectful of our similarities and differences in disability, age, national origin, gender identity/expression, religion, education, race, color, appearance, sexual orientation, genetic information, beliefs, or any status protected by University policy, local, state, or federal law.
- I will demonstrate integrity and respect in regards to other individual's person, space, property, and work.

- I will be cognizant of my interactions and be mindful of potential unwarranted communications (i.e., disrespectful comments/humor, hurtful sarcasm, **passive aggressive language**, offensive language, references, or innuendos, etc.).
- I will ensure all colleagues feel safe and are not asked to work in an unsafe or unwelcome environment.
- I will report any instance of harassment, discrimination, dangerous or potentially abusive environment, or unsafe activities to my immediate supervisor and/or departmental administrator. I will report any sexual misconduct or harassment to the Office of Equity immediately.
- I will conduct myself in action and word in an ethical, inclusive, and respectful manner at all times.

Toronto Metropolitan University

https://www.torontomu.ca/content/dam/solar/edia/Codes_of_Conducts.pdf

Page 9:

5. Any form of harassment is not tolerated. This includes: ● Unwanted physical, sexual, verbal, psychological (**ex. gaslighting, passive aggressive behaviour, etc.**), or repeated unwanted social contact. ● Consent is not implied, and if you are unsure whether your behaviour towards another person is welcome, ask them. If you are asked to stop, do so. ● Do not take photographs of others without their permission.

One Million Genomes

B1MG has been received funding from European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme under grant agreement No. 951724.
https://framework.onemilliongenomes.eu/code-of-conduct?

2.2 Unacceptable behaviour

Examples of unacceptable behaviour by the 1+MG Framework community members at any project event or platform include:

- written or verbal comments which have the effect of excluding people on the basis of membership of any specific group
- causing someone to fear for their safety, such as through stalking, following, or intimidation
- violent threats or language directed against another person
- the display of sexual or violent images
- unwelcome sexual attention
- nonconsensual or unwelcome physical contact
- sustained disruption of talks, events or communications
- insults or put downs

- sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, or exclusionary jokes
- excessive swearing
- incitement to violence, suicide, or self-harm
- continuing to initiate interaction (including photography or recording) with someone after being asked to stop
- publication of private communication without consent
- tactics that make a victim question their reality such as **passive-aggressive** and gaslighting behaviours

American Geophysical Union

AGU SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY AND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS
https://www.agu.org/-/media/files/learn-about-agu/agu_scientific_integrity_and_professional_ethics_policy_document.pdf

E. Definitions: Discrimination means unequal or unfair treatment in professional opportunities, education, benefits, evaluation, and employment (such as hiring, termination, promotion, compensation) as well as retaliation and various types of harassment. Discriminatory practices can be explicit or implicit, intentional, or unconscious. **Harassment is a type of discrimination that consists of a single intense and severe act, or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts, which are unwanted, unwelcome, demeaning, abusive, or offensive. Offensive conduct constitutes harassment when 1) it becomes a condition of an opportunity, education, benefit, evaluation,** or employment or 2) the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work or educational environment that most people would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive. These acts may include epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping based on gender, race, sexual identity, or other categories, as protected by U.S. federal law. Also included are threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; deni6Extracted from the Pennsylvania State University College of Science's Guidance for Advisor-Graduate Student Interactions. See also a code of ethics for undergraduate research. 7 See also the AGU Meetings Code of Conduct in Appendix B. 8For the purposes of this Policy, the definitions of harassment and discrimination apply in addition to any legal definitions as provided in US Code of Law, and are modified from the American Sociological Association definition of harassment and the EEOC definition of harassment. 6 AGU Scientific Integrity and Professional Ethics grating jokes and displays; or circulation of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or a group. Sexual harassment includes any unwanted and/or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature. Bullying is the use of force, threat, or coercion to abuse, intimidate, or aggressively dominate others in the professional environment that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. These actions can include abusive criticism, humiliation, the spreading of rumors, physical and verbal attacks, isolation, undermining, and professional exclusion of individuals through any means.

APPENDIX OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS

SENCKENBERG
NATURE RESEARCH

Dr. Jutta Zipfel
Senckenberg Forschungsinstitut und Naturmuseum
Senckenberganlage 25
60325 Frankfurt am Main/Germany

To

Coalition of Somali HRDs CSHRDS
Unknown address and name
somaliacshrds3@gmail.com

30. June 2026

Letter of invitation to attend the 88th Annual Meeting of The Meteoritical Society in Frankfurt, Germany from 9th August - 14th August 2026

To whom it may concern,

Eight representatives of the El Ali community are cordially invited to attend **the 88th Annual Meeting of The Meteoritical Society.**

The meeting will take place from *9th to 14th August 2026* at the Goethe University Campus Westend in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. The meeting is hosted by the *Goethe University* and the *Senckenberg – Leibniz Institution for Biodiversity and Earth System Research*, with support by the *Physikalischer Verein.*

The Meteoritical Society is an international organisation dedicated to the promotion of research and education in planetary science with emphasis on the studies of meteorites and other extraterrestrial materials that further our understanding of the origin of the Solar System. Established in 1933, the Meteoritical Society has more than 1000 members from over 50 nations, including scientists, amateur scientists and enthusiasts spanning the entire range of planetary science.

The goal of this annual meeting is to bring together the international scientific community to present their scientific research via talks or posters to the wider scientific community. A further goal is to stimulate the exchange of scientific results and ideas, and to enable networking. Special activities for promoting networking among students and early career scientists include an early career

scientist lunch on Sunday 9th August 2026 as well as a mentor/mentee program. Public outreach is ensured by the public Barringer lecture celebrating the 50th anniversary of The US Antarctic Meteorite Program (ANSMET).

Further information about this year's annual meeting of the Meteoritical Society can be found here: https://www.metsoc2026-frankfurt.com.

The purpose of this invitation is to provide the El Ali delegation (see list below) with the opportunity to meet and speak and network with participants of the annual meeting of the Meteoritical Society. Beyond this objective, the organisers wish to emphasise that, due to the late request, they have declined to support any further activities and are therefore unable to provide either a dedicated space or any other resources. The professions of the El Ali delegation demonstrate that most are not trained scientists in the the field of meteoritics and will, thus, not contribute to the scientific topics nor will they add scientific benefit to the meeting.

The proposed agenda of the El Ali delegation is to inform about the traditional metal-working, historic cultural practices, and prehistoric mined-for-metal significance of this ancient "rock of iron." Shiid Birood / El Ali / Ceel Cali iron meteorite is a massive (15-ton) iron meteorite having been mined for metal prehistorically, proto-historically and traditionally used as a blacksmith's anvil for several generations.

Some years ago, the meteorite was removed from its original place of find. It is a major interest of the El Ali delegation to claim cultural heritage for this meteorite. For further information and links see:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_Ali_meteorite

Below is a list of the information we have regarding the eight representatives of the El Ali delegation whom we are inviting:

[redacted]

[redacted]

SENCKENBERG
NATURE RESEARCH

[redacted]

The organisers **will not cover** costs for accommodation, travel, health insurance, nor the conference registration fee, nor costs for a Wednesday afternoon trip or a post-conference excursion.

We would like to request that you carefully consider granting an appropriate visum for those representatives of the El Ali community who are citizens of Somalia to be able to attend the conference for the dates mentioned above.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Jutta Zipfel

Chair of the Organisation Committee of the 88th Annual Meeting of The Meteoritical Society

Sektionsleiterin
Senckenberg Forschungsinstitut und Naturmuseum Frankfurt
jutta.zipfel@senckenberg.de
Tel: +49 (0) 69 7542 1609

Senckenberg Gesellschaft für Naturforschung
Senckenberganlage 25
60325 Frankfurt

Rechtsfähiger Verein gemäß § 22 BGB
Mitglied der Leibniz-Gemeinschaft
Direktorium / Impressum
Besuchen Sie das Museum digital: museumfrankfurt.senckenberg.de

Outlook

URGENT: Letter of Invitation / the Somali Ambassador to Kenya will help

From Nicholas Gessler, Ph.D. <nick.gessler@duke.edu>
Date Tue 7/14/2026 3:21 PM
To Jutta Zipfel <jutta.zipfel@senckenberg.de>
Cc MetSoc President <metsocpres@meteoritical.org>
Bcc Coalition of Somali HRDs CSHRDS <somaliacshrds3@gmail.com>

Dear Jutta,

Yes, another "urgent' request...

Thank you. Your letter has attracted additional attention and support from the Somali Ambassador to Kenya. He has offered to communicate his own endorsement to the German Ambassador to Kenya, Nairobi. The Somali Ambassador advises that a new, simpler and more direct letter be drafted, and now for only three invitees. Consequently, as per his advice, we respectfully request a new modified invitation letter as follows:

Page 1: Delete the "To:" address and replace it with:
To:
The Visa Section
Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany
Nairobi, Republic of Kenya

Page 2: After the sentence beginning with "The purpose of..." Insert the following:
The participation of the El Ali indigenous community is important in fostering dialogue between the international scientific community and the indigenous custodians of this globally significant meteorite and its impact site. They will contribute by sharing its cultural, historical, and archaeological significance, sharing traditional iron-working practices, and networking with scientists, museums, and other institutions, on the protection of Indigenous cultural heritage,

Page 2: Paragraph beginning "The purpose of..."
To be a bit less negative, please replace the sentence beginning with, "Beyond," with **"Beyond this objective, the organizers emphasize that, due to the late request, they are unable to provide any further activities, a dedicated space or other resources."**

Page 2: **Please delete the sentence; "The professions of the El Ali delegation demonstrate that most are not trained scientists in the field of meteoritics and will, thus, not contribute to the scientific topics nor will they add scientific benefit to the meeting." It makes me feel that even I am not welcome.**
The social sciences have always been a benefit, beginning with Ursula Marvin. At the MetSoc 86th Conference in Los Angeles in 2023, an entire session was devoted to "Meteorite Falls and Societal Significance." Two papers on the social science of Shiid Birood have been already been published in MAPS, and a grant was received to translate Somali Media news videos on the social scientific background of the meteorite into English. MetSoc's "Community Grants" have focused on meteorites as human cultural heritage. I note that, "Membership in the Society is open to any person interested in

meteoritics and related sciences..." and that the Meteoritical Society's "Code of Ethics," states that it, "welcomes as members all who are interested in the study of extraterrestrial materials, no matter what their background."

Page 2: After the sentence beginning with "Below," add only three names:

Page 3: Delete any remaining names.

Page 4: Delete remaining name at top.

Page 4: Delete the sentence "The organizers..." and add:
In a separate letter, The Coalition of Somali Human Rights Defenders (CSHRD), have agreed to fully pay for travel, accommodation, local transportation, subsistence, conference-related expenses, and all other financial costs associated with the participation of the El Ali Indigenous Community delegation.

Page 4: Conclusion: Delete "We would like..." and replace it with:
We respectfully request the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Nairobi to kindly facilitate the issuance of Schengen visas for the above-mentioned delegates to enable their participation in the 88th Annual Meeting of The Meteoritical Society. Their attendance will contribute to meaningful dialogue between the international scientific community and the Indigenous custodians of the El Ali Meteorite, whose cultural heritage is directly connected to this internationally significant discovery.

With best regards,

Nick

Nicholas Gessler, Ph.D.
nick.gessler@duke.edu
https://people.duke.edu/gessler

Research Associate, RETIRED
INFORMATION SCIENCE & INFORMATION STUDIES

Duke University, Durham, North Carolina

EL ALI Research Archive (8th largest meteorite in the world)
"Probably no other meteorite has een so intimately connected with the life and fate of so many people..."
https://people.duke.edu/~ng46/El-Ali/

* COMPLEX SYSTEMS: ARTIFICIAL LIFE, CULTURE & EVOLUTIONARY COMPUTATION, Multiagent Modeling & Simulation: ISIS-170, CompSci-107, VisualMediaStudies-172
* ESPIONAGE, CRYPTOLOGY & PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS, Networks of Trust, Secrecy & Deception: ISIS-235, CulturalAnthropology-226, VisualMediaStudies-245.
* METEORITICS: METEORITES & SOLAR SYSTEM HISTORY, Science, culture and history of Meteorites: ISIS-230, EarthOceanSciences-230

Outlook

Re: URGENT: Letter of Invitation / the Somali Ambassador to Kenya will help

From Jutta Zipfel <jutta.zipfel@senckenberg.de>
Date Thu 7/16/2026 12:50 AM
To Nicholas Gessler, Ph.D. <nick.gessler@duke.edu>
Cc MetSoc President <metsocpres@meteoritical.org>

Dear Nick,

Thank you for information and the suggestions for modifying the invitation letter.

The letter has been carefully drafted and presents all the information that we have at hand. Further, it is very simple and reflects our understanding and sight of matters as organizers and inviting party.

In order to clarify our position, the Annual Meeting of the Meteoritical Society is a scientific meeting with clear deadlines for any requests for sessions (January 2026) and abstract submissions (7th April to 5th May), both of which expired several months ago. It is a shame that the Somali delegation did not submit an abstract or any request for a special session, both of which would have demonstrated their scientific interest and signalised the significance for their participation, to which they now refer.

It is at the discretion of the organizers to decide whether or not to write an invitation letter to potential participants, especially from a different field of science, who do not intend to actively contribute (scientifically) to the meeting with either an oral or poster presentation and who feel it necessary to bring lawyers, reporters and diplomats with them.

After carefull consideration it was decided that an invitation letter would indeed be written for the Somali delegation, in good faith and with intentional wording that conveys the situation as it is, to the best of our knowledge. Thus, we regret, we must decline this request to edit and re issue the invitation letter.

Yours sincerely,
Jutta zipfel

> Nicholas Gessler, Ph.D. <nick.gessler@duke.edu> hat am 15.07.2026 00:21 CEST geschrieben:
>
> **Dear Jutta,**
>
> **Yes, another "urgent' request...**

Thank you. Your letter has attracted additional attention and support from the Somali Ambassador to Kenya. He has offered to communicate his own endorsement to the German Ambassador to Kenya, Nairobi. The Somali Ambassador advises that a new, simpler and more direct letter be drafted, and now for only three invitees. Consequently, as per his advice, we respectfully request a new modified invitation letter as follows:

Page 1: Delete the "To:" address and replace it with:
To:
The Visa Section
Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany
Nairobi, Republic of Kenya

Page 2: After the sentence beginning with "The purpose of..." Insert the following:
The participation of the El Ali indigenous community is important in fostering dialogue between the international scientific community and the indigenous custodians of this globally significant meteorite and its impact site. They will contribute by sharing its cultural, historical, and archaeological significance, sharing traditional iron-working practices, and networking with scientists, museums, and other institutions, on the protection of Indigenous cultural heritage,

Page 2: Paragraph beginning "The purpose of..."
To be a bit less negative, please replace the sentence beginning with, "Beyond," with "Beyond this objective, the organizers emphasize that, due to the late request, they are unable to provide any further activities, a dedicated space or other resources."

Page 2: Please delete the sentence; "The professions of the El Ali delegation demonstrate that most are not trained scientists in the field of meteoritics and will, thus, not contribute to the scientific topics nor will they add scientific benefit to the meeting." It makes me feel that even I am not welcome.
The social sciences have always been a benefit, beginning with Ursula Marvin. At the MetSoc 86th Conference in Los Angeles in 2023, an entire session was devoted to "Meteorite Falls and Societal Significance." Two papers on the social science of Shiid Birood have been already been published in MAPS, and a grant was received to translate Somali Media news videos on the social scientific background of the meteorite into English. MetSoc's "Community Grants" have focused on meteorites as human cultural heritage. I note that, "Membership in the Society is open to any person interested in meteoritics and related sciences..." and that the Meteoritical Society's "Code of Ethics," states that it, "welcomes as members all who are interested in the study of extraterrestrial materials, no matter what their background."

Page 2: After the sentence beginning with "Below," add only three names:

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Page 3: Delete any remaining names.

Page 4: Delete remaining name at top.

Page 4: Delete the sentence "The organizers..." and add:
In a separate letter, The Coalition of Somali Human Rights Defenders (CSHRD), have agreed to fully pay for travel, accommodation, local transportation, subsistence, conference-related expenses, and all other financial costs associated with the participation of the El Ali Indigenous Community delegation.

Page 4: Conclusion: Delete "We would like..." and replace it with:
We respectfully request the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Nairobi to kindly facilitate the issuance of Schengen visas for the above-mentioned delegates to enable their participation in the 88th Annual Meeting of The Meteoritical Society. Their attendance will contribute to meaningful dialogue between the international scientific community and the Indigenous custodians of the El Ali Meteorite, whose cultural heritage is directly connected to this internationally significant discovery.

With best regards,

Nick

Nicholas Gessler, Ph.D.
nick.gessler@duke.edu
https://people.duke.edu/gessler

Research Associate, RETIRED
INFORMATION SCIENCE & INFORMATION STUDIES
Duke University, Durham, North Carolina

EL ALI Research Archive (8th largest meteorite in the world)
"Probably no other meteorite has een so intimately connected with the life and fate of so many people..."
https://people.duke.edu/~ng46/El-Ali/

* COMPLEX SYSTEMS: ARTIFICIAL LIFE, CULTURE & EVOLUTIONARY COMPUTATION, Multiagent Modeling & Simulation: ISIS-170, CompSci-107, VisualMediaStudies-172
* ESPIONAGE, CRYPTOLOGY & PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS, Networks of Trust, Secrecy & Deception: ISIS-235, CulturalAnthropology-226, VisualMediaStudies-245.
* METEORITICS: METEORITES & SOLAR SYSTEM HISTORY, Science, culture and history of Meteorites: ISIS-230, EarthOceanSciences-230