

# CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

## Somali Studies in Canada Colloquium: *Somalinimo*, Blackness and Belonging in the West

Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada,

Saturday October 16<sup>th</sup> and Sunday October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Abstract deadline: May 15, 2021

For abstract submission or if you have any question, please contact: Dr. Nimo Bokore, [nimo.bokore@carleton.ca](mailto:nimo.bokore@carleton.ca)

Carleton University is pleased to announce its third biennial **Somali Studies in Canada Colloquium**, taking place on **October 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021**. Somali diaspora communities live in sizeable numbers in Canada and most other Western countries. This year's theme comes in the wake of the Black Lives Matter global protests of summer 2020 which were sparked by the murder of George Floyd in South Minneapolis, a neighbourhood with a large Somali-American community. Somali diaspora communities in Minneapolis, other parts of the U.S., Canada, Europe and elsewhere participated in these popular demands for racial justice not only for African-Americans but also for Somalis and other Black communities. Crucially, the cases of Abdirahman Abdi in Canada and Shukri Abdi in the U.K. were also part of protestors' calls for transparency, accountability and justice for the victims, their families and the community-at-large.

This moment requires deep and continuous reflection on shifting Somali diasporic identities and politics, particularly their ongoing struggles and solidarities for racial and social justice across different geographic and policy contexts in the West.

Thinking through Blackness and its intersections at various sites and systems of power (i.e. educational, policing, courts, prisons, borders, refugee and immigration boards and detention centres, etc.) will be very productive in charting a new path forward for critically engaged Somali diaspora politics and scholarship. This is especially relevant for young and emerging Somali diaspora scholars, organizers and activists who are aware of these challenges and who are thinking about what it means to belong to Canada as Black people, as Muslims, as refugees or immigrants, and as second generation Canadians. Somalis in the United States, the British Isles, Australasia, and continental Europe are also pondering these deeply significant questions which inexorably involve and necessitate a critical re-thinking of *Somalinimo* (being Somali) and what it means for our organizing and knowledge production.

The Somali Studies in Canada Colloquium, in focusing on *Somalinimo* and Blackness, will provide an opportunity for Somali diaspora communities to reflect and compare notes on identity, belonging and community building in a time of growing anti-Black racism, Islamophobia and anti-migrant politics in the West. This colloquium also aims to nurture

critical conversations on the intersectionality of our identities and struggles and strives to be an inclusive and welcoming space.

Given the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's colloquium will be a two-day virtual forum consisting of panel discussions and stand-alone presentations with significant time for discussion. We invite interested academics, researchers, educators, community activists/organizers, artists and health and social work practitioners to submit an abstract (200 words) of their presentation and a short biography (100 words).

Your plan for the presentation may include but is not limited to academic and policy papers, reports on current and past research, and presentations, reflections, or performances of poetic and other artistic work addressing the following topics:

**Identifying the challenges and/or opportunities for change related to:**

- Educational experiences at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels
- Disproportionalities in the criminal justice system, particularly as a result of surveillance, policing, sentencing and their impacts on life chances
- Migration journeys and experiences with refugee and immigration systems
- Trauma, mental ill-health and access to culturally relevant and responsive services and supports
- COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on individual, familial and community well-being
- Tensions and transformations of identity within Somali diaspora communities as a result of ethnicity, clan, gender and other minoritized identities
- Hate crimes as a result of being Black, Muslim, Somali, immigrant or a refugee, and/or other minoritized identities
- Authoritarian and xenophobic politics and its impacts on Somali Diaspora communities

**Documenting, illuminating and imagining (new) ways of resisting oppression and building community through:**

- Diasporic transnationalism and transformational politics
- Intersectional movement building and solidarities
- Diasporic civic or political engagement
- Diasporic feminisms
- Non/counter-hegemonic masculinities
- Inclusive African and Islamic ethical philosophies
- Islamic spiritualities and secular well-being practices
- Ethical and collective responses to the pandemic
- Somali oral traditions, histories, traditional and spoken word poetry
- Painting, filmmaking, photography, other visual arts, drama, dance and other movement-based arts
- Forgotten/'lost' artistic archives and digital humanities
- Counter-publics or third-space cultures and decolonial Somali scholarship
- Intergenerational dialogue, healing, intra-Somali dialogue, reconciliation and peacebuilding,
- Youth mentorship and leadership