

## Somali Bantu refugees in Utica and Maine:

Somali Bantu Community Association of Maine (<http://www.sbcmala.org/our-history.html>)



# SOMALI BANTU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OF MAINE

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### Somali Bantu Refugees

<http://web.colby.edu/somali-bantu/>

Safespace radio [December 14<sup>th</sup> interviews Colby College anthropology professor Catherine Besteman](#). She has spent her career studying Somali society, both in Somalia and here in Maine, where many Somalian refugees have begun new lives after escaping civil war at home. Catherine explains the causes of that war and the violence it created, particularly for minority ethnic groups. Her explanation of why Somalis had to flee helps us appreciate that every refugee is dealing with trauma. (Portland Maine).

<https://www.colby.edu/directory/profile/catherine.besteman/>



## The Somali Bantu Experience: From East Africa to Maine

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The Somali Bantu are ethnic minorities forced to flee the civil war in Somalia. Some have resettled in Lewiston, Maine. Despite challenges, these refugees are finding ways to preserve their culture while adapting to life in America. Through photographs and audio interviews from both Somalia and Lewiston, come explore the stories of this extraordinary community.

<http://web.colby.edu/somali-bantu/resources-and-information/learn-more-about-the-somali-bantu/>

[View a CBS News Story on Somalis in Lewiston](#)

[Watch a news story about the Somali Bantu](#)

With Jennifer Rooks of MPBN's "Maine Watch" you'll meet members of the Somali Bantu community living in Maine and follow their lives in the United States. Also, an extended interview with Colby College professor Catherine Besteman, who lived with the Somali Bantu before the war.

[Links for researchers and scholars](#)

More scholarly research about the Bantu is provided by the National Somali Bantu Project from Portland State University.

[Somali Bantu Community Association of Vermont](#)

Information about the Somali Bantu community of Burlington Vermont, and music from Somali Bantu musicians in Vermont.

[Listen to a news story about the Somali Bantu in the US](#)

After a brief history of the Bantu refugees, this NPR news story highlights the lives of two Somali Bantus living in the U.S.

[Watch a film about the Somali Bantu's journey](#)

Rain in a Dry Land from Anne Makepeace and Bullfrog Films (2006) follows two Somali Bantu families as they travel from Kenyan refugee camps to cities in the U.S. How will Muslim farmers who speak no English manage to survive in American cities?

[The National Somali Bantu Project](#)

This project works to increase service providers' understanding of the Somali Bantu as well as promote community building among the Bantu.

[The Cultural Orientation Resource \(COR\) Center: Somali Bantu](#)

An easily accessible guide for service providers interested in learning more about the Somali Bantu community.

[Maay Maay Dictionary](#)

This English- Maay Maay dictionary, provided by the Somali Bantu Community Development Council of Denver Colorado, includes a list of common conversational words as well as a special list of medical terms for health providers.

Listen to a [radio program](#) about a new Maay Maay dictionary.

[The Somali Bantu Mutual Assistance Association of Lewiston \(SBCMAA\)](#)

With links to sites for education, health, and employment, this is a great resource for the Somali Bantu Community in Lewiston.

[The Lewiston Star Soccer Team](#)

The website for the all-Somali Bantu boys soccer team in Lewiston.

[Digital Storytelling Project](#)

Videos made by Somali Bantus through the Digital Storytelling Project in Baltimore, Maryland. In these short videos, Somali Bantus in Maryland narrate stories about their lives, their history, and their experiences living in Baltimore.

<http://www.sbcmala.org/farm-program-photo-gallery.html>



**"The Somali Bantu Experience: From East Africa to Maine."** (A comprehensive website sponsored by Colby College.)

**"Safe Space Radio Interview with Dr. Catherine Bateson: The Roots of Crisis"**

The Somali Bantus are the minority ethnic group found in the river banks of Somalia, a country mostly inhabited by Somalis. The Somali Bantus lived in Southern Somalia near the major rivers recognized as Shebelle and Jubba. The Somali Bantus are the descendants of many Bantu ethnic groups found in East part of Africa like Tanzania, Mozambique and Malawi.

They were brought to Somalia in the 19th century as slaves by Arabs. Most Somali Bantus who were brought as slaves in 19th centuries were from the tribe of Majindo, Makua, Manyasa, Yao, Zalama, and Zigua. More importantly, the Somali Bantus are culturally, physically, and ethnically different from the Somalis.

The Somali Bantus have darker skin, shorter and more muscular with broader features and hard hair than the Somalis. They speak two languages known as Maay-Maay, the official language of the Somali Bantus and Zigua spoken by a group of the Somali Bantus. The Maay-Maay language can be spoken, and well understood by every Somali Bantu member. The other language is known as Zigua, spoken by only one group of the Somali Bantus and nor can all the Somali Bantus speak and understand this language.



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