# Angela Rayner faces scrutiny over Ethiopia trip amid safari claims



Angela Rayner, the Deputy Prime Minister and Local Government Secretary, recently faced scrutiny over a trip to Ethiopia that occurred last month, during which she reportedly sought to incorporate a personal safari excursion into her official itinerary. The visit intended to foster diplomatic relations and facilitate an investment agreement has been overshadowed by claims regarding the use of taxpayer funds for personal enjoyment.

Upon her arrival in Ethiopia, Rayner participated in meetings with regional leaders and was involved in signing an investment deal aimed at strengthening ties and promoting economic collaboration between the UK and Ethiopia. However, sources from within the government revealed that Rayner expressed interest in taking a private safari tour, raising questions about the appropriateness of such a request during an official visit. Officials reportedly advised against this, emphasising that “such an excursion for personal enjoyment is not how these things worked.”

Despite the controversy, Rayner's team has not denied the allegations regarding the safari. In a statement to The Times, they highlighted that her trip was focused on “diplomatic business and humanitarian engagements to demonstrate the UK’s commitment to the region and promote ambitions for partnerships and mutual economic growth.”

The financial implications of the trip have also been a point of contention. The total cost for the government’s mission to Ethiopia reportedly exceeded £20,000, with Ms Rayner and several officials flying in business class. This expenditure has particularly drawn the ire of critics, especially given previous criticisms directed at the Conservative government regarding perceived waste of taxpayer money on official travel.

Kevin Hollinrake, a Conservative MP and Ms Rayner’s counterpart in the local government department, commented on the situation, suggesting that Rayner should prioritise her responsibilities at home over international excursions. He stated, “You’d think she’d have enough on her plate dealing with the realities of setting a totally unrealistic target of building 1.5 million homes, abolishing every district and county council in England, and trying to save the high street from the disastrous impact of massive tax hikes and new employment red tape.” Hollinrake added, “Clearly she has more important things to do swanning around the world.”

In response to the backlash, a spokesperson for Labour leader Keir Starmer defended Rayner's trip, asserting that it aligned with the government’s broader international objectives. The trip has sparked discussions about the use of public resources for government officials' travel arrangements and the balance between diplomatic duties and personal desires.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)