

Rep. Keith Ellison visits Somalia to address refugee issues

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MOGADISHU—Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN) arrived in Mogadishu, Somalia recently on a humanitarian trip to discuss the status of Somali refugees and U.S. remittances with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and leaders of the new Somali government. Rep. Ellison is the first Member of Congress to visit Somalia since the United States recognized the Somali government earlier this year.

Ellison traveled to Somalia with the American Refugee Committee, an NGO based in his district, after receiving numerous requests from his constituents to visit Somalia.

"We are at a critical juncture for the people of Somalia and their families in Minnesota and throughout the United States," Rep. Ellison said. "The election of Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and a renewed U.S. relationship may be our best opportunity in decades to ensure peace and stability for the Somali people, and combat terrorism in the region. This visit provided an unparalleled opportunity to learn firsthand about issues facing the country, and the role the United States plays in promoting a stable Somalia."

Ellison also met with the country director of the American Refugee Committee, the Mayor of Mogadishu, the Somali Chamber of Commerce, and Somali-Americans from Minneapolis.

Rep. Ellison represents the 5th District of Minnesota, home to one of the largest Somali populations in the United States. More than 32,000 Somali-Americans live in Minnesota, according to 2011 Census figures.