

Aid group switches route after Rwandan trucks looted

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NAIROBI, Feb 20 (AFP) - A UN aid agency said Monday it had changed the route of its truck convoys destined for Goma, Zaire, after the weekend looting of around 20 trucks at the Rwandan border town of Gisenyi.

The World Food Programme (WFP) trucks were on Saturday "partially or totally looted at the Gisenyi border by former Rwandan refugees", a statement from the UN agency said.

The refugees were part of a group of 11,000 returnees who had been brought back to Rwanda from the Masisi area of Zaire where they had been living since 1959, the statement said.

"They were later joined in the looting by the local population 13 trucks were looted, of which 8 were WFP trucks containing high-protein biscuits and corn-soya blend." The other trucks belonged to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the

International Committee of the Red Cross.

"Two returnees were reportedly shot," the WFP said.

UN troops then came on the scene, arriving in armoured personnel carriers, and the WFP trucks gradually managed to move to another part of Gisenyi where they remained overnight under UN guard.

But on Sunday, one of the WFP lead trucks stalled on a hill "at which point a group of people who were standing by started to loot that truck and those behind it," the agency's said.

Some ten trucks were looted, while the UN troops had gone on ahead to the next check-point to ensure clearance, it added.

The WFP said that it was "taking up this serious matter with authorities at all levels.

"In the meantime we intend to maximize two other alternative

routes to Goma,” – one through Bunagana, Uganda, and the other across Lake Kivu. to the Goma camps, thus temporarily suspending food deliveries through the Gisenyi border post,” the agency

Until the situation on the Gisenyi border is clarified, ”we will use these two routes exclusively to deliver foods added.
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