



World Food
Programme

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Alimentos

برنامج
الأغذية
العالمي

The Food Aid Organization of the United Nations

12 December 2007

**World Food Programme
Somalia Video News Release
Length: 2'50"
Lower Shabelle, Merka, 100 kilometres South of Mogadishu
Shot 4-5 Dec 2007**

The French navy is escorting shipments of food assistance from the United Nations World Food Programme to Somalia. A French frigate is protecting the WFP food against a plague of piracy this year and keeping a life-saving supply line by sea open to more than a million hungry people. In two separate missions, the French frigate has so far escorted a total of four ships loaded with thousands of metric tons of food from the Kenyan port of Mombasa to the small southern Somali beach port of Merka, where the food is unloaded in small boats. It's piled up on the beach by hundreds of Somali workers and then taken by truck to villages where it is distributed to local families suffering because of the worst cereals harvest in more than a decade and to people forced to flee their homes in the capital Mogadishu because of fierce fighting this year.

No pirates have so far dared even to approach the French-escorted sea convoys but the escort operation is due to end in January. So WFP is appealing to other naval powers to follow the French example and provide ships to escort more WFP food in the coming months to Somalia, which the United Nations says is trapped in the worst humanitarian crisis in Africa and needs a sustained supply of food and other humanitarian assistance to save lives. The fear is that if the escorts fall away, ships loaded with food assistance and commercial cargoes such as food will again fall prey to piracy. Pirates seeking ransom payments for the ships and prisoner crews from the ship-owners have so far this year attacked more than 26 vessels and hijacked 13 in the dangerous waters off Somalia.

In rural areas of Lower Shabelle region, traditionally known as the 'breadbasket of Somalia,' women, men and children queue up for a monthly ration from WFP. Many complain that it is the first time they and their children have ever needed any food assistance in decades of being farmers -- despite the killing and chaos from the civil war since 1991. They say the exodus of families from Mogadishu -- 600,000 people this year -- have added hugely to their burdens because the local villagers have to share their small homes and their food with the relatives who are arriving from the capital in with little but the clothes on their backs.



0:00-00:27 **16 November 2007**

A ship carrying WFP food assistance and accompanied by a French naval vessel navigating towards the Somali port of Merka. The navy vessel was protecting WFP food from pirates who often patrol the coast off Somalia.

GV of French Navy vessel

00:27-00:32 Merka 4-5 Dec 2007

WFP contracted ships

00:32-00:47 Merka 4-5 December 2007

Off loading WFP food bags from the boats

00:47-01:15 SOT Peter Smerdon WFP Spokes person

“So this shows the challenges facing the humanitarian community in getting aid into Somalia. These two ships here came from Mombasa escorted by the French Navy because of piracy and they have come to Merka which is a beach port so therefore you have to take the bags off the ships into smaller boats, which then bring them ashore. Porters then take them into the water and on to shore, where they are taken by truck to displaced people and residents who are suffering from the worst cereals harvest in 30 years”.

01:15-01:47

GV of off loading operations

01:47-01:59 00:47-01:15 SOT Peter Smerdon WFP Spokes person

“ There are many challenges in Somalia especially this year with the fighting in Mogadishu which has forced more than 600,000 people to flee the city, That means that we have to find them and we have to get humanitarian assistance to them as soon as possible”.

01:59-02:15 4-5 December 2007

GV of Merka town



02:15-02:50 4-5 December 2007 Bufow in the Lower Shabelle

1,700 people in the village of Bufow in the Lower Shabelle region of southern Somalia.
(WFP food distribution. both displaced people from Mogadishu and residents suffering from the worst cereals harvest in 13 years -- received a one-month ration of WFP food in a series of distributions from 1 to 6 December 2007).

GV of WFP food distribution

END