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Kokoda track threats denied. 21/11/2005. ABC News Online

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Kokoda track threats denied

Papua New Guinea's Kokoda Track Authority has dismissed reports that the Australian High Commission threatened to discourage walkers from hiking the famous track.

Senior High Commission staff were robbed at gunpoint near the start of the trail several days ago.

The High Commission staff and family members were held up by a group of armed men and lost expensive cameras, credit cards and cash.

Papua New Guinea police told locals that the Australian High Commission would withdraw its support for the trail and tell people not to visit, if the culprits were not turned in.

However, Warren Bartlett from the Kokoda Track Authority says no such threat was made by the High Commission.

"The statement by the police to the people was a made-up threat to get the people to take action amongst the community and to locate this third suspect with his homemade gun," he said.

Mr Bartlett says the robbery was an isolated incident in an area which has seen more than 2,000 international visitors pass through this year.

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