

The New York Times – February 13, 2011, by RACHEL DONAGIO ^(f)

DG_M5-028
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Italy Seeks to Use Forces to Halt Illegal Immigrants from Tunisia



M1 Would-be immigrants from Tunisia were detained ¹² after arriving by boat on Lampedusa, a small Italian island closer to Tunisia than the Italian mainland.

ROME – Italy's interior ¹ minister said Sunday that the country hoped to send its armed forces to Tunisia to help stem the flow of illegal immigrants, after more than 3,000 Tunisians arrived by boat on an Italian island in recent days. "I will ask Tunisia's foreign minister for authorization for our forces to intervene in Tunisia to block the influx ²," Interior Minister Roberto Maroni said in an Italian television interview on Sunday, a day after the Italian cabinet declared a state of humanitarian emergency and called for help from the European Union.

With thousands of miles of hard-to-patrol coastline, Italy faced waves of immigrants from North Africa throughout the 1990s and into the last decade. Under the government of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, in 2009, Italy signed a renewed bilateral accord ³ with Tunisia, pledging ⁴ financial support in exchange for help in preventing would-be immigrants from leaving the country's shores. But that accord seems to have unraveled in the tur-

moil ⁵ in Tunisia's interim government a month after President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali was forced from power in a popular uprising. Mr. Maroni, who did not specify which Italian forces might intervene in Tunisia, spoke before it emerged ⁶ that Tunisia's foreign minister, Ahmed Ounaies, had stepped down on Sunday. But his comments pointed to growing concerns among Italians that the unrest in Tunisia and elsewhere in North Africa could translate into immigrants arriving on their shores. They also came at a delicate moment in Italian domestic politics. Mr. Maroni is from the Northern League party, which is known for its tough anti-immigrant stance ⁷ and which has been jockeying ⁸ for a greater role in government now that Mr. Berlusconi is fighting for political survival in a sex scandal.

In a separate television interview, Mr. Maroni described the flow of immigrants as being "of biblical proportions," the ANSA news agency reported. In recent

days, more than 3,000 Tunisians have come by boat to Lampedusa, a small Italian island closer to Tunisia than the Italian mainland, the Interior Ministry said. Hundreds have been sleeping outside because of a lack of facilities there. On Sunday, the Interior Ministry reopened an immigrant holding center on Lampedusa that had been closed in the past, and began airlifting some immigrants to identification centers in Sicily and the Italian mainland, Italian news outlets reported Sunday. Speaking from behind a high fence at Lampedusa's sports center, where immigrants waited for the police to record their arrival, one young Tunisian said the situation at home had not changed since mid-January, prompting ⁹ him to leave.

"All we ask is for the chance to work in Europe, not only in Italy, but in Europe somewhere," he said in an interview broadcast on the Italian news channel Sky TG24. "We only want one thing from Italian people: help."

¹ interior minister – *Innenminister*

² influx – *Zustrom*

³ accord – *Abkommen*

⁴ pledge (to) – *versprechen, geloben*

⁵ turmoil – *Unruhe, Aufruhr*

⁶ emerge (to) – *hier: bekannt werden*

⁷ stance – *Einstellung, Haltung*

⁸ jockey (to) – *hier: sich einsetzen für*

BBC.Co.uk - 30 March 2011 – (Excerpt) ^(g)

Berlusconi: Migrants to leave Lampedusa in 48 hours

Italian PM Silvio Berlusconi has promised that the island of Lampedusa will soon be free of migrants.

Thousands of people have arrived on the island south of Sicily since January, travelling from Tunisia and Libya.

Officials say sanitary ¹⁰ conditions have become "desperate" and islanders have staged protests at the town hall. On a visit to the island, Mr Berlusconi announced to a crowd that in "48 to 60 hours Lampedusa will be inhabited only

by Lampedusans". About 20,000 migrants have crossed the Mediterranean since the upheavals in North Africa and the Middle East began in January.

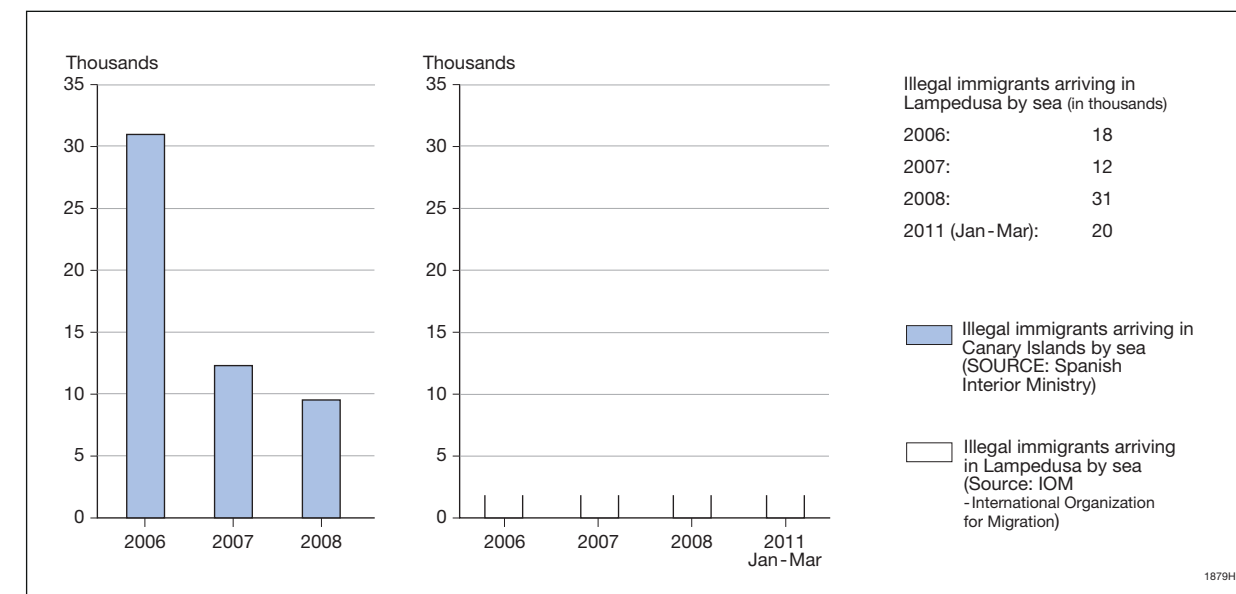
Emergency

Some 6,000 migrants - more than the total population of the island - are now living there in makeshift camps ¹¹.



Migration routes to Europe

M2 Problems for Lampedusa



M3 Illegal immigrants entering European islands

Tasks:

- 1 Complete the bar graph in M3 with the help of the data that show the number of illegal immigrants arriving in Lampedusa by sea.
- 2 Describe the development of illegal immigration as presented by M3.
- 3 Analyzing the material on these two pages, explain why so many Africans leave their countries to go Europe, and what this means for the countries they go to.

⁹ prompt (to) – *auffordern*

¹⁰ sanitary – *sanitär*

¹¹ makeshift camp – *Notlager, Auffanglager*

¹² detained – *festgehalten, interniert*