

Text N°10: African Migrants Turn to Deadly Sea Route

This year has seen a spike in African migrants sailing small wooden boats 1000 miles to the Canary Islands as the European Union and African nations cut off land routes to Italy through Libya, Niger and Algeria. Migrants say the deadly passage is one of the only viable options left.

5 Assane Diallo is making final preparations for a journey he knows could cost him his life: one thousand miles across open ocean from Senegal to the Canary Islands in a 50-foot wooden boat held together with rusty nails. The 35-year-old fisherman hopes to push off this week from a beach in the capital Dakar with water, dried food and potentially dozens of passengers. He just needs two motors and enough petrol for the week-long journey and also to patch up a three-foot gash in the hull. He is part of a resurgence in African migrants taking the treacherous sea route  
10 to the Spanish territory this year in search of jobs and prosperity that they cannot find at home.

Many migrants see the chain of islands off the Moroccan coast as the only viable option left as the European Union spends millions of dollars cutting off land routes through North Africa. They consider it a launch pad for asylum in mainland Europe. "Some, if they see a canoe, do not even consider staying here. They will leave at all costs," said Diallo. Over 1,200 migrants  
15 arrived in the Canary Islands between Jan. 1 and Nov. 14, Spanish Interior Ministry data show, the highest in nine years and a four-fold increase over the same period in 2017. It marks the revival of a worrying trend. In 2006, when 30,000 migrants managed to reach the Canary Islands, some 7,000 people died trying to make the crossing, rights groups say. In the decade that followed, Spanish patrols slowed the pace. Land routes through Niger and Libya to Italy  
20 became more popular.

Reuters, <http://www.theafricareport.com>, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018.