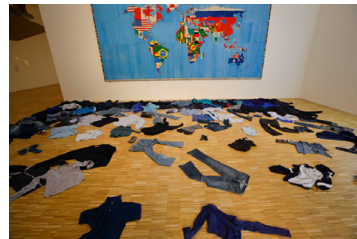


CONTINUED AFRICAN MIGRATION: WHAT WILL EUROPE DO?

By Dr. Ashley N. Bybee

Now in its third year, Europe's migrant crisis is far from over. If experts' predictions are correct, Africa will continue to be a major source of Europe's migrants unless measures are taken to (1) control the flow from Africa and (2) deny illegal entry into Europe. Italy and Germany have been among those European nations most affected by the migrant crisis—Italy due to its location as one of the first points of entry into Europe for migrant vessels crossing the Mediterranean and Germany due to Chancellor Angela Merkel's "Open Door" policy that permitted the entry of [1 million](#) migrants and refugees into Germany in 2015. As a result, these two countries have also been among the most vocal on the issue and have clear intentions to pursue some combination of the aforementioned solutions. [more...](#)



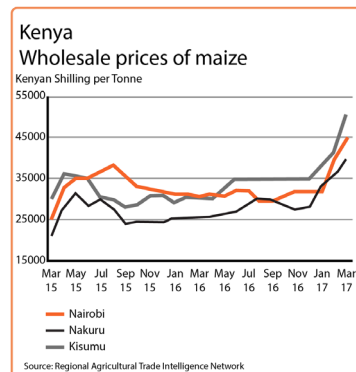
The installation "Mare Nostrum" by Swedish artist Runo Lagomarsino, at the Triennale Palace of Arts, in Milan, Italy, Thursday, April 27, 2017. The exhibit speaks of the epochal transformations that are marking contemporary history, particularly the problem of migration and the crisis of refugees. The exhibition will run until August 20, 2017. (Source: AP Photo/Luca Bruno.)

Dr. Ashley Neese Bybee is a Research Staff Member in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

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By Sarah Graveline

Across Kenya, a persistent shortage of maize flour, a staple food, is generating widespread public anger ahead of the August 2017 national elections. The government announced plans last month to subsidize maize prices and increase imports, but shoppers across the country [report](#) maize flour continues to be overpriced and in scarce supply. Kenyan commentators have accused the government of manipulating the price of maize for political gain; opposition candidates have seized on the shortage as a campaign issue. Kenya's history of maize scandals suggests, however, that little will come of these rumors. Although the shortage demonstrates the government's failure to plan for a predictable crisis, it will likely have only a marginal impact on elections. Without electoral pressure, Kenyan leaders are unlikely to undertake the reforms necessary to develop transparent, long-term policies to address future food insecurity challenges. [more...](#)



Wholesale price of maize in Kenya, March 2015–March 2017. (Source: Global Information and Early Warning System, "Country Briefs: Kenya," Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, April 25, 2017, <http://tinyurl.com/y7qq72j8>.)

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The Institute for Defense Analyses is a non-profit corporation operating in the public interest.

IDA's three federally-funded research and development centers provide objective analyses of national security issues and related national challenges, particularly those requiring scientific and technical expertise.

IDA's Africa team focuses on issues related to political, economic, and social stability and security on the continent.

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An Increase Predicted

The flow of migrants from Africa into Europe shows no signs of abating. In the first six months of 2017, more than [65,000 migrants](#) arrived in Italy, an increase of 18 percent from the same time last year. Over the same period, at least 1,735 people have died trying to reach Europe via the Mediterranean, underscoring the danger associated with this journey. Despite the risk, numerous experts predict an increase in these numbers. Germany's Minister for Development recently forecast that up to [400,000](#) migrants in total would enter Italy this year, while the President of the European Parliament has expressed concern over the possibility that up to [30 million](#) could enter Europe in the coming years. A leaked German intelligence report warned that up to [6.6 million](#) people are waiting in the countries around the Mediterranean to cross into Europe. In addition, analysis by Austrian military intelligence predicts that rising unemployment in Africa could lead to as many as [15 million](#) economic migrants entering Europe from Africa in the next three years.

Push and Pull Factors

This increase has occurred for [several reasons](#), among them Africa's massive youth bulge seeking employment in Europe, the continued threat posed by conflict and violent extremism, and the growing ability of more Africans to afford the cost of the trip. Some [observers](#) also note that "pull factors" in Europe and "push factors" in Africa encourage migration. For example, a growing number of humanitarian NGOs in the Mediterranean are conducting search and rescue (SAR) operations coordinated by the Italian Navy. This practice, while necessary to save the lives of thousands of migrants, has come under criticism by some European stakeholders, most notably the EU's border management agency, Frontex. It has [reported](#) that NGO vessels inadvertently support smugglers by providing a reliable way to transport migrants ashore and increasing their chance of success—a message which is then relayed to friends and family, encouraging them to make the dangerous journey. The reliable presence of NGO vessels, referred to by some as a "ferry service" for migrants, is even factored into smuggler's business models. A senior Libyan coast guard official went so far as to accuse NGOs of [colluding](#) with traffickers by paying them in exchange for the migrants, and in doing so, fueling their criminal enterprise.

The implied solution is to cease these proactive SAR operations, although doing so would undoubtedly result in a humanitarian [catastrophe](#)—at least in the short term.

EU Actions

The EU has pursued numerous initiatives to stem the flow of migrants from Africa, most of which have focused on enhancing the capacity of the Libyan government to manage the migratory flow through popular coastal embarkation

points such as Sabha and Kufra. In February 2017, for example, the EU agreed to provide Libya's UN-backed government with [\\$215 million](#) to do the following:

- Increase training and equipment for the Libyan coast guard.
- Step up efforts to block smuggling routes.
- Improve conditions for migrants at Libyan reception centers.
- Increase EU involvement with countries near Libya to slow the influx.
- Support local communities on migration routes and in coastal areas to improve their socioeconomic situation.

Italy's Vision

Although the May G7 Summit in Sicily was overshadowed by a terrorist attack in Manchester, UK, and speculation about the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord, Italy had intended to use the occasion and location to draw attention to the migrant crisis. In an unusual move, the leaders of Tunisia, Niger, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Kenya were invited to join the leaders of the world's seven most economically-advanced countries to underscore Italy's concern over the migration issue. The Italian delegation's African [agenda](#) included a proposal that recognized the inevitability of migration and rather than seeking to fully eliminate it, argued that it could be controlled by "reducing the dire political, economic and environmental factors that 'push' migrants out of their countries." The [plan](#) included a large food security component, measures to ensure the safe passage of migrants and refugees, compacts or partnerships that would create jobs and education opportunities in the hardest hit African countries, and ways to confer legal status on migrants. Unfortunately for Africa, none of these initiatives were agreed upon or even included in the [final communique](#). They do, however, shed some light on the Italian government's desired way forward on the migrant issue.

The "Merkel Plan"

Since Merkel announced her "[Open Door](#)" policy to migrants and refugees in 2015, Germany has been consumed with the chaotic, and at times violent, aftermath. In dealing with this situation, Merkel's policy emphasis has been on economic development in Africa as a means to generate jobs and provide opportunities for those who would otherwise seek employment in Europe. As part of this policy, earlier this month the German Federal Ministry of Finance hosted several African leaders in Berlin in a [conference](#) titled "G-20 Africa Partnership—Investing in a Common Future" to discuss Germany's evolving engagement with Africa. Merkel also plans to take advantage of Germany's hosting of the G20 summit in Hamburg in July 2017 to highlight the German approach to Africa, dubbed the "[Merkel Plan](#)." This plan focuses on economic development by investing up to [\\$335 million](#) to help African nations expand their use of renewable energy, improve energy efficiency, and develop their financial and banking sectors. Germany has already negotiated agreements with Tunisia, Ivory Coast, and Ghana, who "stand out by virtue of their reform-oriented policies." Another facet of the Merkel Plan is increased military aid to help African countries fight violent extremism. Merkel also recently [pledged](#) her support for a UN-mandated West African security force to fight terrorism in the Sahel.

Conclusion

Poverty and violence in Africa, combined with perceived economic opportunity in, and likely safe passage to, Europe will continue to draw African migrants there. Germany's commitment to economic development in Africa and Italy's willingness to embrace some migration while cultivating partnerships that create jobs and education opportunities in the hardest hit African countries are potential ways to stem the tide of migration..

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Failed Rains, Pests Impact Maize Supply

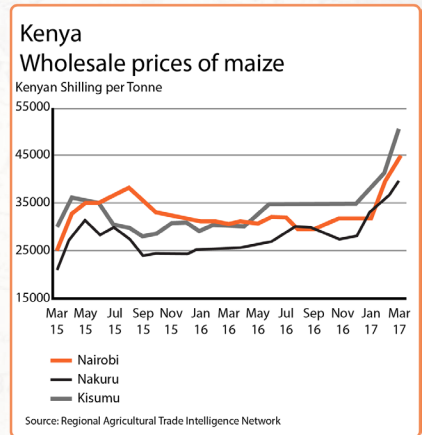
The current maize shortage is largely due to poor domestic production caused, in part, by lower than expected rainfall and pest infestations. The United Nations (UN) Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) [reported](#) that rainfall in maize-producing areas was 25 to 50 percent below average this season and that crops were affected by pest infestation in the fall. As a result, the FAO found that Kenyan maize production "was 70 percent below the average of the past five years, with a near-total failure reported in coastal areas." The FAO reported that domestic crop failure would require imports to increase "25 percent more than the previous year and 37 percent higher than the last five-year average."

The impact of domestic crop failure on food insecurity was predicted in advance of the crisis. In [January 2017](#), the Kenya Food Security Steering Group, comprising Kenyan government agencies and international organizations, assessed that a regional drought meant that large parts of the country faced "atypical high food assistance needs," while urban areas across the country were experiencing a 10 percent increase in food prices.

Critics and Opposition Question Government Intervention

On [February 10](#), the Kenyan government declared the drought a national emergency and pledged \$105 million toward relief. The government also announced that it would allow maize imports "in a very transparent manner," a reversal from earlier [statements](#) that maize would not be imported. As maize prices continued to rise, the Kenyan government announced on [May 16](#) that it would intervene by subsidizing maize prices by up to \$58 million and importing 450,000 metric tons of maize.

Following the May 16 announcement, [Kenyan commentators](#) accused the government of manipulating the maize market for political gain. Critics, who pointed out that Mexican-produced maize had become available within days of the government's statement, [argued](#) that the impossibly fast delivery was proof the government had hoarded grain for political benefit. Government officials responded that the maize was imported by private millers, rather than the government, and came from [South Africa](#).



Wholesale price of maize in Kenya, March 2015–March 2017. (Source: Global Information and Early Warning System, "Country Briefs: Kenya," Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, April 25, 2017, <http://tinyurl.com/y7qq72j8>.)

Despite the clarification, opposition candidates continue to levy allegations of price fixing on the campaign trail. On [June 15](#), presidential candidate Raila Odinga referenced the rumors and accused the government of purposefully raising and then lowering maize prices as a campaign technique. Two days later [Odinga](#) posed for photos in front of empty shelves in a grocery store before delivering a speech blaming Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta for failing to address food shortages.

Few Repercussions for Past Maize Scandals

Allegations of maize price fixing make for good campaign material, given Kenya's history of failing to fully investigate or punish officials accused of similar improprieties in the past. Kenya's first large graft scandal revolved around maize. In 1965 [Paul Ngei](#), the Minister for Cooperatives and Marketing, was found guilty of manipulating the Maize Marketing Board to earn a profit on smuggled maize exports, at a time when Kenya was forced to pay for maize imports to supplement the country's food supply. While Ngei was initially suspended, he was quickly [reinstated](#) and went on to have a long political career, serving as a cabinet minister under both Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi and as a member of Parliament until 1990.

More recently, in 2009, [William Ruto](#), the current deputy president, was accused of illegally selling maize when he was agriculture minister. A parliamentary investigation ultimately sputtered when the deputy speaker of Parliament ruled that documents supporting a related case against First Lady Lucy Kibaki were forged, although the documents presented to justify the allegations against Ruto were found to be genuine. While Ruto was investigated over a [separate](#) corruption case, the allegations over maize sales were never fully examined.

The current rumors over price manipulation are based on far less evidence than either of these cases. The failure to resolve past graft scandals, however, informs Kenyans' perceptions of the likely veracity of current rumors. One [critic](#) commented on the recurring nature of the problem: "Is it just by coincidence that the Deputy President is caught up in the subsidized maize scandal yet again?"

Conclusion

While the current maize flour shortage has generated public anger and rumors of government malfeasance, it is unclear whether this will translate into votes for the opposition in August. Kenyatta has stated the race should be a [referendum](#) on his government's record, but rising food prices may make some Kenyans more likely to [vote along ethnic lines](#) to elect candidates deemed most likely to distribute financial benefits to their communities.

With polls continuing to show Kenyatta maintaining a slight [advantage](#), and the government working to put maize on shelves, anger over the shortage may not be a salient issue by August. This suggests that political elites will likely find there is little electoral pressure to investigate allegations of graft or to develop long-term plans to address chronic food insecurity.

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