



**Global
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WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL OF DALLAS/FORT WORTH

JWAC Lesson Plan

Libyan Slave Trade

By: Sophia Mhanna, February 2018

Pre-discussion Activity:

- Ask students if they know where Libya is and what countries border it (you can put up this [blank map](#) and have them point to where the country is)
- Then ask what they know about Libya and what things they have heard recently on the news

Warm-Up Questions: Have you heard about the Libyan slave trade? What factors lead to the situation in Libya today? How wide spread is this issue in the region?

Background on "the backdoor to Europe":

This is a good video showing how the problem started with migration and a general overview of the situation: <http://fortune.com/2017/11/29/libya-slave-trade/>

As of November of 2017 more than 450,000 migrants have crossed into Europe from Libya.

More than 3,000 people have drowned over the past four years trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea.





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<http://www.msnbc.com/specials/migrant-crisis/libya>

The avenue in which this took place was a consequential result of the political unrest within the country of Libya. Since the revolution that took place during the Arab Spring Libya **has not had a central government**, which has led to a very **unsecure border**.

This caused a major issue of illegal immigration from Africa into Europe outraging the EU. But this has been going on for a long time, in 2008 the EU agreed to pay \$500 million in exchange for keeping migrants away. And in 2017 the EU gave about \$54 million to Italy to help protect Libyan borders. **Italy is now paying smugglers** to intercept migrants from sea in order to prevent them from going into Europe, the same people who are selling slaves. Although the UNHR's chief publicly denounced this practice. It is through this strategic planning and scheming that Libya has consequently become a puppet to these Western Countries.

Discussions:

What exactly do people mean when they use the term "slave" in this instance?

The men that are being sold were migrants many times fleeing Sub-Saharan Africa in an attempt to reach Europe in search of better opportunities. They attempt to do so by going through Libya "the backdoor to Europe" but once they are unable to do so they get stuck in Libya with little to no money left. Thus, they are then subject to being sold as day laborers by smugglers so that they pay back their debt. Unfortunately, the smugglers abuse and mistreat these vulnerable migrants. They may also ask for ransom payments from their family before releasing them.

What have Libya's political and economic crises contributed to this recent tragedy?

Previously, migrants planned on going to Europe through Libya but would often times choose to stay in Libya once they got there because of the job opportunities and hospitality of the Libyans. Particularly under Dictator Muammar Ghaddafi, when they were given lots of aid. However, now with the economic downturn and political instability, these African migrants realize there are no opportunities to stay in Libya or cross the Mediterranean to Italy.

The same smugglers who used to help migrants get into Europe are now unable to do so. They are now holding them against their will instead. When migrants run out of money to pay the smugglers, there is a chance they might be sold into slavery.

Footage has been circling around of men in Libya being sold for \$400, often times as farm laborers.

Is this a widespread epidemic within the country?

No, the average Libyan has been left as a helpless bystander in this outbreak. In fact, a very small amount of people are participating in the slave trade. But, the terrible actions of a few can have serious consequences on the lives of real people. These slave traders are people who were already exploiting the migrant issue and are just further using it to their benefit.

The average Libyan is struggling to put food on the table as the economy is in shambles. People stand in long lines at the bank only to be either restricted in the amount they can withdraw or told there are no longer any cash available. Putting monetary reasons to the side even the wealthy have no interest in a slave trade, this problem solely lies in the north-western part of Libya with the smugglers.

Post Discussion Activity:

Challenge yourself and think like a world leader. How would you address this situation? What steps do you think should be put in place in order to appropriately and efficiently address the many issues at hand?

Have students either discuss in groups or raise their hand to share their ideas.

Recap and Reaching Further:

[This video](#) is a great recap that inclusively addresses all sides of the situation.

Call to Action:

- Donate to [International Organization for Migration](#) to address the pressing issue regarding this topic
- Donate to [World Food Programme](#) to address the root causes Of Slavery And Trafficking which is poverty
- Donate to global anti-slavery organizations, such as [Free the Slaves](#) to not only address this current issue but other slave trade crises around the world

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