

UN says 400 Eritrean & Ethiopian migrants feared drowned in Mediterranean

French police have been rounding up 40 Tunisians a day and returning them across the border into Italy, drawing criticism from the EU as well as the Italian government, which has claimed that once in [Europe](#), the Tunisians are free to circulate. Italy has hinted the migrants could be given temporary documents to help them get past the French border and off Italian soil.

Berlusconi and the French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, discussed joint solutions on Sunday, although plans for mass deportations have run aground due to the refusal of the Tunisian government to take back the migrants.

Berlusconi, under pressure from his all-powerful ally, the Northern League, to expel the migrants, will visit Tunisia on Monday. He is likely to be offering an aid package as an incentive, after a similar mission by two Italian ministers failed to produce results.

But he suggested that Italy could absorb many of the migrants, telling a political rally on Sunday that if Italy's 9,000 local councils each found a job for one Tunisian the problem of the mass landings would be half solved.

"We must remember we were once a country of migrants," Berlusconi said. "We must show understanding and hospitality, because this is a civilised and Catholic country."

- This article was amended on 7 April 2011. Owing to an editing error the original referred to the evacuation from Lampedusa of the 3,000 Tunisians who have reached the island since January.

This has been eritrean-human-rights@googlegroups.com Visit http://eritreanhumanrights.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogsection&id=9&Itemid=36