



In the Past Few Years, Illegal emigration from Sub-Saharan Africa to the Canary Islands has soared. The constant and sometimes mass departure of pateras (small boats) and Cayucos (larger boats) is an iceberg, only the tip of which arrives at the Canary Islands and makes the news headlines. The migratory flow and the organized criminals groups that profit from it add criminal conduct to the humanitarian risk they are already fomenting.

The business of seafaring migration includes the more than € 100,000 each Cayucos generates and the € 75m a year moved by illegal- trafficking rings, as well as the added costs for the state in terms of diplomatic and police measures aimed at preventing or mitigating this kind of illegal immigration.

Spain is the port of entry into the “European dream” most North and Sub-Saharan African emigrants share. The insufficiency of the regular routes has generated alternative routes, which channel migrants towards the coasts that separate them from their dreams. Most of those who opt for these illegal routes make long and difficult journeys over land departure points on the coast of Guinea, Mauritania, Senegal, The Gambia or the Western Sahara, to board pateras and Cayucos to the Canary Islands, the southern frontier of Europe.

The large number of potential emigrants from sub-Saharan Africa generated a black market. At a humanitarian level, it is significant because of the human drama for thousands of emigrants from more than 60 countries worldwide, most notably Senegal, The Gambia and Morocco, and also including Mali, Guinea-Bissau and the Republic of Guinea. Migrants risk their lives trying to navigate the Atlantic Ocean to the Canary Islands in traditional fishing boats in inhumane conditions.

