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[Latin America](#)
[Nicolas Sarkozy](#)
[North Korea](#)
[Oil and Gas](#)
[Same-Sex Marriage](#)
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[Terrorism](#)
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Italians Want Army to Secure Borders November 17, 2007



(Angus Reid Global Monitor) - The majority of people in Italy think police officers have been unable to control the border and avoid the entry of illegal immigrants into the country, according to a poll by Arnaldo Ferrari Nasi. 56.8 per cent of respondents want the Armed Forces to enforce border security as well.

In addition, 63.4 per cent of respondents are under the impression that illegal immigrants who arrive in Italy are usually captured by authorities and then quickly released.

Italy has seen a significant increase in the number of illegal immigrants coming from African war-torn countries such as Eritrea, Somalia and Ethiopia over the past few years. Most newcomers arrive by boat, and many die in their attempt to reach Italian soil.

Italy and Egypt have legal agreements that allow the Italian government to repatriate illegal Egyptian immigrants upon their arrival. In early November, Rania Mohamed—from the Egyptian Foreign Ministry's Department for Consulates and Egyptian Expatriates—declared: "We need to treat the root of the problem. Namely, provide better living conditions for the people so they stop considering emigrating. If they want to emigrate, then they should get the needed training and do it via legal channels."

Italian voters renewed the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate in April 2006. The centre-left Union (Unione), led by Romano Prodi, secured 348 seats in the lower house and 158 seats in the upper house. The victory put an end to a centre-right government headed by Silvio Berlusconi. In May 2006, Prodi was formally appointed as prime minister. The Union leader had previously served as head of government from May 1996 to October 1998.

Polling Data

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Agree	Disagree
Police officers have been unable to control the border, so it would be advisable to use the Armed Forces for this endeavour as well	56.8%	40.3%
The illegal immigrants who arrive to Italy and are captured, end up being freed shortly thereafter	63.4%	28.7%

Source: Arnaldo Ferrari Nasi

Methodology: Telephone interviews with 800 Italian adults, conducted on Nov. 5, 2007. No margin of error was provided.