

# Coast Guard Interdiction Leads to the Apprehension of 3 Wanted U.S. Citizens



SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser interdicted an unlawful migration voyage in the Mona Passage, Friday.

Following the interdiction, Dominican Republic Navy authorities detained three U.S. citizens, who reportedly are affiliated with a criminal gang and wanted in connection with a July 2020 shooting at a residential community in Puerto Rico

in which four people were killed.

The suspects are currently under the custody of the Dominican Republic 'Dirección Nacional de Control de Drogas (DNCD) (United States Marshals Service Dominican Republic Foreign Field Office Fugitive Investigative Unit). United States Marshals Service Puerto Rico Fugitive Task Force for the District of Puerto Rico are coordinating the deportation of the three suspects.

Coast Guard watchstanders at Sector San Juan received notification Friday morning from the aircrew of a U.S. Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations multi-role enforcement aircraft, reporting the sighting of a suspected migrant vessel, approximately 55 nautical miles northwest of Puerto Rico. Watchstanders diverted the Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser to interdict the suspect vessel. Once on scene, cutter Winslow Griesser's crew deployed their over-the-horizon small boat and stopped the 20-foot go-fast vessel that was carrying eight people and multiple cockfighting roosters. The migrants claimed to have departed from Dominican Republic on a voyage to Puerto Rico, however, they experienced engine malfunctions which forced them to return to Dominican Republic before being interdicted.

Working in coordination with the Dominican Republic Navy, cutter Winslow Griesser's crew took the migrant vessel in tow and rendezvoused with a Dominican Republic Navy vessel, who embarked and received custody of the migrants.

Further investigation efforts by Dominican Republic Navy and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) revealed three of the alleged migrants were U.S. citizens with active U.S. warrants.

"Our strong partnerships and daily collaboration between all federal partner agencies involved in this case as well as Dominican Republic Navy and Dominican law enforcement

authorities resulted in the safe repatriation of five migrants and the apprehension of three wanted U.S. citizens,” said Lt. Vincente Garcia, Coast Guard liaison to the Dominican Republic. “These efforts are instrumental to achieving regional stability and safeguarding our nation’s southernmost maritime border from dangers and threats associated with unlawful migration and other prevalent illicit maritime activity.”

Migrants who are interdicted at sea or apprehended ashore will not be allowed to stay in the United States or a U.S. territory. Furthermore, anyone who arrives unlawfully may be declared ineligible for legal immigration parole options and be repatriated to their country of origin or returned to the country from where the voyage departed from.

The Coast Guard, along with its [Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast](#) partners, maintains a continual presence with air, land, and sea assets in the Florida Straits, the Windward Passage, the Mona Passage, and the Caribbean Sea. The HSTF-SE combined, multi-layered approach is designed to protect the safety of life at sea while preventing unlawful maritime entry to the United States and its territories.

Since Oct. 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024, the Coast Guard has carried out 28 unlawful irregular migration voyage interdictions in the Mona Passage and waters near Puerto Rico. Interdicted during this period, are 932 non-U.S. citizens including 890 Dominicans, and 41 Haitians and one Venezuelan.