Coast Guard Interdicts 26 Cuban Migrants 48 Miles Southeast of Long Key

LONG KEY, Fla. – The U.S. Coast Guard interdicted 26 migrants 48 miles southeast of Long Key attempting to illegally enter the United States, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a March 12 release.

Coast Guard Sector Key West watch-standers received a notification from a good Samaritan boat reporting a 30-foot disabled wooden sail vessel with 26 passengers aboard waving their arms.

A U.S. Navy ship that was conducting maritime operations in the area assisted the vessel in distress. The crew of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS James E. Williams (DDG 95) arrived on scene and safely transferred the 26 Cuban migrants to the Coast Guard Cutter Charles Sexton crew (WPC-1108).

“Illegal migrant ventures on unsafe and ill-equipped vessels are not only against the law but incredibly dangerous,” said Capt. Jason Ryan, chief of enforcement for the Coast Guard’s 7th District in Miami. “It is fortunate that the vessel did not capsize or end in tragedy, as we have seen all to recently in the Florida straits, and we are grateful for the assistance by the good Samaritan and the U.S. Navy in this case.”

One of the migrants was transferred to U.S. Customs and Border Patrol for further investigation and possible prosecution. The remaining 25 migrants were repatriated to Cuba on March 12 by the Coast Guard Cutter Kathleen Moore (WPC-1109).

The Charles Sexton and Kathleen Moore are 154-foot fast

response cutters homeported in Key West, Fla.