Coast Guard, Border Patrol, Dominican Navy Interdict 52 Migrants



The Dominican Republic navy coastal patrol boat Bellatrix embarks a group of 52 illegal migrants from a makeshift vessel on Nov. 13 in the Mona Passage. U.S. Coast Guard

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Dominican Republic navy air and surface units interdicted 52 migrants aboard a makeshift vessel during an illegal voyage on Nov. 13 in the Mona Passage, according to the Coast Guard 7th District.

The group of migrants included 51 Dominican and one Cuban national, 39 men and 13 women, who were safely returned to the Dominican Republic. The interdiction was the result of ongoing efforts in support of Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG).

"The close collaboration and effective communication between the Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection and Dominican Republic Navy responding assets led to the interdiction and safe recovery of all 52 migrants," said Cmdr. Beau Power, Sector San Juan chief of response. "People should not take to the sea as part of an illegal migrant voyage; they are extremely dangerous."

The interdiction took place on the morning of Nov. 14, after a CBP Air and Marine Operations DHC-8 patrol aircraft crew sighted a migrant vessel, about 15 nautical miles northwest of Mona Island. Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan diverted the cutter Donald Horsley to carry out the interdiction and alerted Dominican navy authorities, whom also diverted the Dominican coastal patrol boat Bellatrix to the scene.

The Bellatrix arrived on scene and stopped the migrant vessel. Shortly thereafter, the Donald Horsley arrived on scene and assisted with the transfer and safe removal of the migrants to the Bellatrix for return to the Dominican Republic.