

Coast Guard, Dominican Navy Interdict Migrants, Arrest Smugglers



Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle's cutter boat on scene with a 25-foot illegal migrant vessel interdicted on April 20 south of Isla Saona, Dominican Republic. U.S. Coast Guard

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle and a Dominican Republic navy vessel combined efforts on April 20 during the interdiction of an illegal migrant voyage transporting 15 migrants in waters south of Isla Saona, according to a Coast Guard 7th District release.

The interdiction, which was part of a joint effort between the Coast Guard, the Dominican navy and U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement-Homeland Security Investigations, led to Dominican authorities arresting Edgar Batista Matos and Manauris Andujar Manon, who reportedly are associated with

human smuggling activities and the organization of illegal migrant voyages.

During a patrol in the Caribbean on April 20, the crew of a Coast Guard HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft detected a suspect migrant vessel south of Isla Saona. While patrolling nearby waters, the cutter Joseph Doyle responded to the sighting and interdicted the 25-foot make-shift vessel that was carrying 15 migrants, 13 men and two women of Dominican nationality. Shortly thereafter, a responding Dominican Republic Navy vessel arrived on scene and the crew took custody of the migrants and towed the interdicted vessel back to the Dominican Republic.

Following the interdiction, Dominican naval authorities informed the Coast Guard that the known smugglers were found to be among the interdicted migrants.

"This successful interdiction and arrest of two smugglers was the result of the strong partnership and collaboration that exists between the Coast Guard and Dominican Republic navy," said Capt. Eric King, commander of Coast Guard Sector San Juan.

"The results achieved today, despite the challenging operational environment presented by the global COVID-19 pandemic, reflect the commitment and daily efforts carried out by both countries to protect our borders from existing maritime threats and safeguard the lives of migrants who face the danger of an uncertain and potentially perilous voyage."

The Joseph Doyle is a 154-foot fast-response cutter homeported in San Juan.