

Coast Guard, Dominican Republic Navy rescue 61 alien migrants from sinking vessel



SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser and two Dominican Republic Navy vessels rescued 61 alien migrants Monday morning from a grossly overloaded, sinking vessel in Atlantic Ocean waters off Dominican Republic.

All migrants aboard the sinking vessel were successfully rescued and transferred to Dominican Republic Navy rescue assets on-scene, their nationalities are yet to be determined.

“Thanks to the rapid response of the Coast Guard and Dominican Republic Navy rescue crews, 61 lives were saved from an overloaded, sinking vessel,” said Cmdr. Matthew Romano, Sector San Juan chief of response. “However, these dangerous and unlawful voyages are increasing, and our luck will eventually run out. Do not risk your life with ruthless smugglers. Choose safe, lawful migration pathways; if caught, you could face prosecution or immediate repatriation.”

At approximately 5:50 a.m., the crew of the Winslow Griesser detected a suspect, 30-foot makeshift vessel taking on water, approximately 12 nautical miles northwest of Cabo Cabron, Dominican Republic. Cutter Winslow Griesser spotted the makeshift vessel while transiting through Dominican Republic territorial waters under our joint nation bi-lateral agreement to help deter unlawful maritime migration.

Upon arriving alongside, the cutter crew confirmed the makeshift vessel was rapidly taking on water and immediately began embarking the passengers. Coast Guard watchstanders also

deployed an MH-60T Jayhawk helicopter crew from Air Station Borinquen to provide overhead rescue support, while a Dominican Air Force aircraft also responded.

Shortly after, the Dominican Republic Navy patrol boats Capella CG-108 and Algenib LL-169 arrived on scene to assist with the rescue. Together, the crews safely embarked all 61 survivors.

Just last week a similar migrant venture capsized, dumping more than 60 people into the waters of the Mona Pass. A multi-agency response, including the Coast Guard, Customs and Border Patrol Air and Marine Operations, Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action FURA, and Dominican Navy assets, which rescued 49 of the migrants and recovered three deceased. Several remain unaccounted for.

Migrants interdicted at sea or apprehended ashore will not be allowed to stay in the United States or a U.S. territory. Furthermore, individuals who arrive unlawfully may be declared ineligible for legal immigration parole options and face repatriation to their country of origin or return to their country of departure.

The Coast Guard, along with its Operation Vigilant Sentry and Operation Bahamas, Turks and Caicos partners, maintains a continual presence with air, land and sea assets in the Florida Straits, Windward Passage, Mona Passage and Caribbean Sea in support of OVS. This multiagency and multilayered approach is designed to protect the safety of life at sea while preventing unlawful maritime entry to the United States and its territories.

This interdiction is part of the Homeland Security Task Force (HSTF) initiative established by Executive Order 14159, Protecting the American People Against Invasion. The HSTF is a whole-of-government partnership dedicated to eliminating criminal cartels, foreign gangs, transnational criminal

organizations, and human smuggling and trafficking rings operating in the United States and abroad. Through historic interagency collaboration, the HSTF directs the full might of United States law enforcement towards identifying, investigating, and prosecuting the full spectrum of crimes committed by these organizations, which have long fueled violence and instability within our borders. In performing this work, the HSTF places special emphasis on investigating and prosecuting those engaged in child trafficking or other crimes involving children. The HSTF further utilizes all available tools to prosecute and remove the most violent criminal aliens from the United States.

HSTF San Juan comprises agents and officers from the following federal partners: FBI, ICE-HSI, CBP (OFO, AMO and Border Patrol), the U.S. Marshals Service for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, DEA, ATF, IRS, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Coast Guard Investigative Service, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Department of State, and the U.S. Secret Service, the Puerto Rico/U.S. Virgin Islands HIDTA, TSA, FAA, and the U.S. Attorney's Offices for the Districts of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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