

Coast Guard Interdicts 22 Ecuadorians in Possession of Illegal Firearms in Eastern Pacific



Interdicted Ecuadorian nationals are detained on the Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton (WMSL-753) before they are turned over to the Ecuadorian coast guard near the Port of Manta. U.S. Coast Guard District 7

ECUADOR – The

crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton (WMSL-753) interdicted 22 Ecuadorian

nationals last week in possession of illegal firearms in the eastern Pacific

Ocean and delivered them to Ecuadorian authorities, the Coast Guard 7th

District said in a release.

A Hamilton

law-enforcement team boarded the Ecuadorian long-line fishing vessel, Erika

Fernanda, in a known smuggling area during a patrol.

Multiple

violations and two illegal automatic weapons were located onboard. The crew of

the Erika Fernanda and evidence collected was transferred to the Ecuadorian

Coast Guard near the Port of Manta.

“This case

highlights the value and benefits of the close partnerships the U.S. Coast

Guard has with our allies in Central and South America.” said

Capt. Mark

Gordon, commanding officer of the Hamilton.

“The ability

to work with our counterpart foreign agencies is critical to combatting common

challenges such as illegal narcotics trafficking, human smuggling and illegal

and unreported fishing. The success of this case is a result of years of robust

collaboration between the State Department, DHS, Ecuador and the U.S. Coast

Guard.”

Hamilton is deployed

on a counter-narcotics patrol in the eastern Pacific. The cutter is one of two

418-foot national security cutters homeported in Charleston, South Carolina.