# Coast Guard Interdicts Migrants, Suspected Smuggler off Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard interdicted 29 migrants, and one suspected smuggler Jan. 22 following two separate at-sea interdictions, the 7th Coast Guard District said in a release.

Two of the interdicted migrants are facing potential federal criminal immigration charges in Puerto Rico for attempted illegal re-entry into the United States, one will be further investigated as a possible smuggler and the other 27 migrants were repatriated to the Dominican Republic, Jan. 23.

The interdiction resulted from ongoing efforts in support of Operation Unified Resolve, Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG).

“An outstanding coordination between the Coast Guard, CBP [Customs and Border Protection], FURA [Puerto Rico Joint Forces of Rapid Reaction] and our other partner agencies was a critical component for our joint crews to safely complete both these interdictions,” said Cmdr. Luis Rodriguez, 7th District deputy chief of enforcement. “These partnerships are not only vital to our maritime border security but are instrumental in stopping these perilous voyages before they end in tragedy.”

On Jan. 22, a CBP Air and Marine Branch aircrew located a migrant vessel approximately 18 miles northeast of Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. The Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Tezanos interdicted the vessel with 10 migrants.

A FURA Cobra unit interdicted 19 migrants, and one suspected smuggler Jan. 22, 4 miles west of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser embarked the 20 migrants.

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention.

Joseph Tezanos and Winslow Griesser are 154-foot fast response cutters homeported in San Juan.