Coast Guard Interdicts Suspected Migrant Smuggling Boat off Florida Coast

MIAMI – The Coast Guard Cutter Bernard C. Webber crew interdicted a boat with six people, including four who did not have current U.S visas, attempting to illegally enter the United States, near Sunny Isles, Jan. 19, the 7th Coast Guard District said in a release.

At approximately 2:40 p.m., the crew of the cutter Bernard C. Webber crew sighted the 20-foot boat heading west approximately 30 miles east of Sunny Isles. Aboard the boat were two U.S. citizens, two Jamaicans, one Dominican and one Bahamian, all adult males.

“While the Coast Guard continues to deal with the lapse in appropriations and identify methods to alleviate the impacts to our workforce, this illegal activity in the Florida straits that threatens our maritime border security, remains a top priority for our service,” said Rear Adm. Peter J. Brown, commander of the 7th Coast Guard District. “I continue to be humbled and inspired by our dedicated Coast Guard women and men who stand the watch and remain dedicated to serve the public during this time of personal financial uncertainty.”

One of the migrants had previous convictions for kidnapping, aggravated assault and narcotics trafficking. A second had previous convictions for the sale of narcotics.

In coordination with the Department of Justice’s Southern District of Florida, the crew of the Bernard C. Webber transferred all persons to Homeland Security Investigations and U.S. Customs and Border Protection for further investigation and possible prosecution.