Coast Guard Repatriates 12 Migrants to Dominican Republic

The Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez interdicted an illegal migrant boat with 14 Dominicans on board on May 30 about 10 nautical miles north of Mona Island, Puerto Rico.
U.S. Coast Guard 7th District

SAN JUAN,
Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard repatriated 12 Dominican migrants to a Dominican
Navy patrol vessel June 2 following the at-sea interdiction of an illegal
migrant voyage May 30 in the Mona Passage, the Coast Guard 7th District said.

Two other
Dominican migrants traveling in the group remain in federal custody facing
possible prosecution by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto
Rico on potential charges of attempted illegal re-entry into a U.S. territory.

The interdictions
are the result of ongoing efforts in support of Operation Unified Resolve,
Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group.

"Migrants
endanger their lives when taking part in an illegal voyage aboard makeshift and
grossly overloaded boats with little or no lifesaving equipment," said Lt.

Cmdr. Rafael Batlle, commanding officer of the cutter Heriberto Hernandez.

“I’m proud of my crew and thankful that we were able to arrive in time and rescue all these persons from a very dangerous situation. Most of them were dehydrated, disoriented, weakened and even sea sick.”

> *“Migrants endanger their lives when taking part in an illegal voyage aboard makeshift and grossly overloaded boats with little or no lifesaving equipment.”*
>
> *Lt. Cmdr. Rafael Batlle, commanding officer, cutter Heriberto Hernandez*

While on a routine patrol on the night of May 30, the crew of a Coast Guard HC-144 maritime patrol aircraft detected a migrant vessel that was transiting without navigational lights. The migrant boat was about 10 nautical miles north Mona Island, Puerto Rico.

Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan diverted the Heriberto Hernandez to interdict the suspect vessel. Shortly thereafter, the cutter’s crew interdicted the 30-foot makeshift boat and embarked all 14 men from their vessel that was taking on water and in danger of sinking.

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

attention.

The Heriberto Hernandez transferred custody of the two migrants facing federal prosecution to Ramey Sector Border Patrol agents in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. The remaining migrants were transferred to the Coast Guard cutter Winslow Griesser (WPC-1116), which transported the migrants to Dominican waters just off Samaná, Dominican Republic, for their repatriation.