

Coast Guard Repatriates 13 of 14 Migrants to Dominican Republic



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser repatriates 13 of 14 migrants to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic May 11, 2021. A Puerto Rico Police marine unit interdicted the migrant group aboard a makeshift vessel May 9, 2021, just off the coast of Rincon, Puerto Rico. The interdiction is the result of ongoing efforts by Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG) partner agencies to combat illegal migrant smuggling. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser crew repatriated 13 of 14 migrants to the Dominican Republic, following the interdiction of a migrant vessel just off the coast of Rincon, Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a May 12 release.

The migrant group consisting of 13 males, including a 16-year-old minor, and a pregnant woman, claimed being Dominican Republic nationals.

One of the interdicted migrants remains in Puerto Rico to face possible federal prosecution on charges of attempted illegal re-entry into the United States.

The interdiction is the result of ongoing efforts by Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG) partner agencies to combat illegal migrant smuggling.

Coast Guard watchstanders at Sector San Juan received a call from a U.S. Border Patrol agent at 3:39 a.m. May 9 reporting a Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action marine unit had intercepted a migrant vessel, approximately three nautical miles off the island's west coast. During the interdiction, two of the migrants jumped into the water and attempted to

swim to shore.

A Coast Guard MH-65 Dolphin helicopter from Air Station Borinquen launched to search for the two migrants in the water. Once on scene, the Coast Guard aircrew spotted the two men struggling to stay afloat and vectored in the Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser's cutter boat to their position. The Coast Guard boat crew safely recovered the two men, who were embarked, along with the other migrants, aboard the cutter Winslow Griesser.

Prior to embarking, the Winslow Griesser crew provided the migrants with lifejackets. Once aboard the cutter, they received food, water and basic medical attention.

"I commend the responding units in this case," said Cmdr. Beau Powers, Sector San Juan chief of response. "Their efforts helped save two lives from drowning and ensured the safe return of 13 of the migrants to the Dominican Republic. We call out to anyone considering taking part in an illegal voyage across the Mona Passage that you not take to the sea. The perils are quite real, and your life and the lives of everyone else in the voyage will be in great danger."

The crew of the cutter Winslow Griesser transferred 12 adult migrants to a Dominican Republic Navy vessel May 10 and repatriated the minor to Dominican Republic authorities in Santo Domingo Tuesday morning.

Cutter Winslow Griesser is a 154-foot fast response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.