

Coast Guard Repatriates 21 Migrants to Cuba



Coast Guard Cutter William Trump crew repatriated 21 Cubans to Cuba after they were interdicted off Key West's coast, Florida, May 24, 2021. A good Samaritan alerted Coast Guard Sector Key West watchstanders to a 16-foot raft with 11 people aboard Tuesday off Marathon. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

MIAMI – The Coast Guard Cutter William Trump crew repatriated 21 Cubans to Cuba May 24 at approximately 10 a.m. after they were interdicted off Key West's coast, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a May 25 release.

A good Samaritan alerted Coast Guard Sector Key West watchstanders to a raft with 11 people aboard at approximately 8 a.m., May 22, off Alligator Reef Light.

Station Islamorada law enforcement officers reported one of the Cubans deceased. The deceased's son reported the raft had capsized at the start of their voyage resulting in loss of their food, water, medication and his father passed away during the voyage.

In the second interdiction, a good Samaritan alerted Coast Guard Sector Key West watchstanders, May 25, to a 16-foot raft with 11 people aboard off Marathon.

The good Samaritan provided life jackets, food, and water to the Cubans and due to 10-12 foot seas and stayed with them until Coast Guard Cutter William Trump arrived on scene.

"The dangers of traveling through the Florida Straits cannot be overstated," said Chief Warrant Officer Matt James, commanding officer, Station Islamorada. "Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family and friends of the man who died as a result of losing critical medicine for a reported pre-

existing condition during the capsizing.”

Since Oct. 1, 2020, Coast Guard crews have interdicted 250 Cubans compared to:

- 5,396 Cuban migrants in Fiscal Year 2016
- 1,468 Cuban migrants in Fiscal Year 2017
- 259 Cuban migrants in Fiscal Year 2018
- 313 Cuban migrants in Fiscal Year 2019
- 49 Cuban migrants in Fiscal Year 2020

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention. Throughout the interdiction, Coast Guard crew members were equipped with personal protective equipment to minimize potential exposure to any possible case of COVID-19.