Coast Guard Repatriates 27 Migrants to the Dominican Republic

SAN JUAN,
Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard repatriated 27 migrants Sept. 5 to the Samaná,
Dominican Republic, following the interdiction of two illegal migrant voyages
in Mona Passage waters off Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

Four men
and a woman, among the interdicted migrants, remain in Puerto Rico, where they
face possible federal prosecution for attempted illegal re-entry into the
United States.

The
interdictions were a result of ongoing efforts in support of Operation Unified
Resolve, Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group
(CBIG).

“The
collaboration between the Coast Guard, CBP and the Dominican Republic navy
helped save 32 lives and ensure the quick return of the repatriated migrants,”
said Capt. Eric King, commander of Sector San Juan.

“The
migrants are very fortunate, they risked losing their lives by capsizing or

drowning since both vessels were grossly overloaded, unseaworthy and had little
or no lifesaving equipment onboard.”

On the
morning of Sept. 5, the crew of a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Air and
Marine Operations DHC-8 marine patrol aircraft detected a migrant vessel near
Mona Island.

Coast
Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan diverted a Coast Guard cutter on patrol,
while a CBP marine unit also responded to interdict the suspect vessel.

The crew
of the CBP marine unit interdicted the 16-foot makeshift boat with 17 migrants
aboard, 16 men and a woman, who claimed to be from the Dominican Republic. The cutter
arrived on scene shortly thereafter and safely embarked the migrants. The U.S. Coast
Guard transported five migrants from this group to Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, where
Ramey Sector Border Patrol agents received them.

The crew
of a CBP Air and Marine Operations DHC-8 marine patrol aircraft sighted a
second illegal migrant voyage Wednesday night in the Mona Passage.

A Coast
Guard cutter diverted to the scene and interdicted a 20-foot boat with 15
migrants aboard. The cutter crew safely embarked 11 men and

four women from the
makeshift vessel, who claimed Dominican nationality.

The Coast Guard cutter
rendezvoused with a Dominican Republic Navy vessel Thursday night just off
Samaná, Dominican Republic, where the repatriation of the migrants was
completed.