Coast Guard Repatriates 30 Interdicted Migrants to the Dominican Republic



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Robert Yered (WPC-1104) cutter boat is on scene with an illegal migrant voyage interdicted Sept. 7, 2020 with 12 people onboard near Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. U.S. Coast Guard

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser (WPC-1116) repatriated 30 of 31 migrants to a Dominican Republic Navy vessel Sept. 11, following the interdiction of two illegal migrant voyages Monday and Thursday in the Mona Passage west of Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7th District said in release.

The two migrant groups claimed to be Dominican Republic nationals. One of the migrants interdicted Monday remains in U.S. custody facing criminal immigration charges in Puerto Rico.

The interdictions are the result of ongoing multiagency efforts in support of Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group CBIG.

“The crew of the Robert Yered performed exceptionally well during the interdiction of two illegal migrant ventures totaling 31 people,” said Lt. Harrison Carter, cutter Robert Yered commanding officer. “These dangerously overloaded and unseaworthy vessels with no lifesaving equipment onboard were only found and interdicted through the hard work and effective collaboration between the Coast Guard and partner agency crews involved in these cases.”

The first interdiction occurred during a routine patrol Monday morning, when the crew of a Coast Guard Clearwater HC-130

aircraft detected an illegal migrant voyage, approximately five nautical miles west of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico.

The migrant group was traveling aboard a 20-foot makeshift boat that was transporting 10 men and two women. The crew of cutter Robert Yered safely embarked the migrants for safety of life at sea concerns.

The crew of a Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action marine unit interdicted a second illegal voyage Wednesday night, approximately seven nautical miles offshore from Isabela, Puerto Rico. The migrant group was traveling aboard a 28-foot makeshift boat with 19 men aboard.

After embarking the migrants in each case, the crew conducted biometrics processing, which revealed the criminal history for the migrant who is facing federal prosecution.

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants received food, water, shelter and basic medical attention. Throughout the interdiction, Coast Guard crewmembers were equipped with personal protective equipment to minimize potential exposure to any possible case of COVID-19. There were no migrants in these cases reported to have any COVID-19 related symptoms.

Cutter Robert Yered rendezvoused with and transferred the migrants to the cutter Winslow Griesser for their transport to Dominican Republic territorial waters off Punta Cana, Dominican Republic for their repatriation.

Cutters Robert Yered and Winslow Griesser are 154-foot fast response cutters homeported in Miami and San Juan, Puerto Rico, respectively.