Coast Guard Repatriates 45 of 48 Migrants to the Dominican Republic



The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser (WPC-1116) interdicts an illegal migrant voyage with 38 migrants Oct. 9, 2020, approximately 17 nautical miles northwest of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. This was the first of three separate migrant interdictions within 72 hours in the Mona Passage by Coast Guard and Puerto Rico Police totaling 48 migrants, whom all claimed Dominican Republic nationality. U.S. Coast Guard

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser (WPC-1116) repatriated 45 of 48 migrants to the Dominican Republic Oct. 11, following the interdiction of three illegal voyages in the Mona Passage near Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7th District said in an Oct. 13 release.

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

One other female migrant is receiving medical care at a local hospital 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 close collaboration, coordination and capabilities of the Coast Guard units and of our local and federal law enforcement partners who responded to these cases helped save the lives of all 48 migrants and safeguard the nation’s southernmost maritime border,” said Lt. Joel Wyman, cutter Winslow Griesser commanding officer. “These illegal voyages greatly endanger the lives of the migrants, since for the most part, these

makeshift vessels are grossly overloaded, unseaworthy and are continuously are taking on water, which could cause them to sink or capsize with little or no warning.”

The first interdiction occurred Oct. 9, after the crew of a U.S. Customs and Border Protection maritime patrol aircraft detected an illegal voyage approximately 17 nautical miles northwest of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. Coast Guard watchstanders diverted the cutter Winslow Griesser to interdict, while a Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action (F.U.R.A.) marine unit also responded.

Once on scene, the Coast Guard and Puerto Rico Police marine units interdicted the 25-foot makeshift boat. The crew of the cutter Winslow Griesser safely embarked the 38 migrants, 31 men and seven women, all of whom claimed Dominican Republic nationality.

The second interdiction also occurred on Oct. 9, after the crew of a U.S. Customs and Border Protection maritime patrol aircraft detected an illegal voyage, approximately 58 nautical miles northwest of Desecheo Island, Puerto Rico. Coast Guard watchstanders diverted the Coast Guard Cutter Charles David Jr. (WPC-1107), which interdicted the 18-foot makeshift boat with the assistance of the cutter’s small boat. The cutter crew safely embarked seven migrants, five men and two women, all of whom claimed Dominican Republic nationality. A female migrant in this group who experienced deteriorating health complications while aboard the migrant vessel, was med-evaced to a local hospital.

A Puerto Rico Police F.U.R.A. marine unit interdicted the third illegal voyage Oct. 11, approximately two nautical miles north of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. The cutter Winslow Griesser diverted to the scene and embarked three men, all of whom claimed Dominican Republic nationality.

Once aboard the Coast Guard cutter, all migrants received

food, water, shelter and basic medical attention.

After embarking all migrants, the crew conducted biometrics processing for the group, which revealed the criminal and immigration history for the two migrants, who are facing federal prosecution. U.S. Border Patrol agents received custody of both migrants in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico.

Cutter Winslow Griesser completed the repatriation of the remaining migrants to a Dominican Republic Navy vessel in waters just off Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

Cutters Winslow Griesser and Charles David Jr. are 154-foot fast response cutters respectively homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico and Key West, Florida.