

Coast Guard Repatriates 66 Migrants to the Dominican Republic



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Donald Horsley repatriates 66 migrants to a Dominican Republic Navy patrol boat just off Punta Cana, Dominican Republic May 18, 2021, following the interdiction of two illegal voyages in Mona Passage waters off Puerto Rico. The interdictions are the result of ongoing efforts by Caribbean Border Interagency Group partner agencies in their common goal of securing the borders of Puerto Rico against illegal migrant and drug smuggling. *U.S. COAST GUARD* SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Donald Horsley crew repatriated 66 migrants to the Dominican Republic May 18, following the interdiction of two illegal voyages in Mona Passage waters off Puerto Rico.

The interdicted migrants consisted of 55 men and 11 women claiming to be Dominican Republic nationals.

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

The aircrew of a U.S. Customs and Border Protection maritime patrol aircraft detected the first illegal voyage May 17, approximately 47 nautical miles northwest of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. The Coast Guard Cutter Donald Horsley responded to the sighting and interdicted the suspect vessel with the assistance of the cutter's small boat. The cutter's crew safely embarked the migrants, 44 men and 10 women, from a grossly overloaded 28-foot makeshift vessel that was riding low and taking on water.

The crew of a Puerto Rico Police Joint Force of Rapid Action marine unit interdicted the second illegal voyage May 18,

approximately three nautical miles off the coast of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser arrived on scene shortly thereafter and embarked the migrants, 11 men and a woman, from the 20-foot makeshift vessel. The migrant group later embarked aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Donald Horsley for their repatriation.

Prior to embarking, the Coast Guard crews provided the migrants with lifejackets. Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, they receive food, water and basic medical attention.

“Illegal migrant voyages in the Mona Passage are incredibly dangerous,” said Lt. Christopher Martin, cutter Donald Horsley commanding officer. “The vessels utilized in these ventures are often unseaworthy, lack basic safety equipment, and are grossly overloaded putting each person on the voyage at risk. We are fortunate we were able to locate these vessels before the situation worsened, safely removing all 66 persons and repatriating them to the Dominican Republic.”

The cutter Donald Horsley rendezvoused with a Dominican Republic Navy vessel just off Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, where the crew transferred and completed the repatriation of the migrants to Dominican Republic Navy authorities.

Cutters Donald Horsley and Winslow Griesser are 154-foot fast response cutters homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.