Coast Guard Repatriates 82 Dominican, 5 Haitian Migrants



Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez on scene with a vessel interdicted Oct. 6 in Mona Passage near Puerto Rico. The interdiction was one of five in the passage that weekend that intercepted 87 migrants and landed eight others in custody for possible federal prosecution. U.S. Coast Guard

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutters Joseph Tezanos and Heriberto Hernandez repatriated 82 migrants from the Dominican Republic and five Haitians to a Dominican navy vessel on Oct. 7 following the interdiction of five illegal migrant voyages in Mona Passage, according to a Coast Guard release.

Eight other Dominican migrants remain in Puerto Rico to face possible federal prosecution for trying to illegally re-enter the United States.

The interdictions were a result of ongoing efforts in support of operations Unified Resolve and Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG). Since Oct. 1, 2018, the Coast Guard and CBIG federal and state partner agencies have interdicted 2,078 migrants at sea near Puerto Rico.

“The Coast Guard, along with our partners in the Caribbean Border Interagency Group, remains postured with cutters and aircraft to stop illegal maritime migration in the Mona Passage and the Caribbean,” said Capt. Eric King, commander of Coast Guard Sector San Juan.

The first interdiction took place on the morning of Oct. 4, after a U.S. Customs and Border Protection air and marine operations DHC-8 patrol aircraft crew sighted a migrant boat just off Mona Island. The Coast Guard Cutter

Mohawk diverted to the scene and interdicted the 17-foot migrant vessel with 13 Dominican men aboard. Hours later, the crew of a Coast Guard HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft detected a second migrant boat near Mona Island. Mohawk interdicted that vessel, which had another 20 Dominican men aboard.

The third and fourth interdictions took place Oct. 5 after a HC-144 and the crew of a Coast Guard MH-65 Dolphin helicopter from Air Station Borinquen detected two illegal voyages in Mona Passage. Heriberto Hernandez interdicted one of the vessels, which carried 14 Dominican migrants, 12 men and two women, and the other with 34 migrants, including five Haitians, a woman and four men, and 29 Dominicans, 27 men and two women.

The fifth interdiction took place Oct. 6 after an Ocean Sentry aircraft detected an illegal migrant voyage transiting Mona Passage. The cutter Joseph Tezanos diverted and interdicted a 25-foot makeshift vessel with 14 Dominican migrants aboard, 13 men and a woman.

Ramey Sector Border Patrol agents in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, assumed custody of the eight migrants awaiting federal prosecution.