Coast Guard Repatriates 86 Haitian Migrants

MIAMI – The Coast Guard Cutter Thetis crew repatriated 86 Haitian migrants Nov. 11 to Cap-Haïtien, Haiti, the 7th Coast Guard District said in a release.

While on routine patrol, a Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew, forward deployed to Great Inagua, Bahamas, located an overlaed 40-foot sail freighter 26 nautical miles north of Punta Maisi, Cuba. Thetis was diverted, arrived on scene and safely embarked the migrants for safety of life at sea concerns.

The Jayhawk helicopter crew provided overhead support while embarkation was conducted due to deteriorating weather in the area.

“This illegal migrant venture and vessel were ill-equipped to carry its passengers and dangerously overloaded,” said Cmdr. Luis Rodriguez, deputy chief of enforcement. “If it had capsized before we arrived on scene, this situation could have ended differently as we have tragically seen before.”

Once aboard Coast Guard cutters, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and medical attention.

Approximately 221 Haitian migrants have attempted to illegally migrate to the U.S. via the maritime environment since Oct. 1 compared to 2,488 Haitian migrants in fiscal year 2018. These numbers represent the total number of at-sea interdictions, landings and disruptions in the Florida Straits, the Caribbean and Atlantic.

Thetis is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Key West, Florida.