

Coast Guard Rescues 27 Migrants Stranded on Monito Island, Puerto Rico



The Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless rescues 27 stranded migrants from Monito Island, Puerto Rico Nov. 27, 2021. The rescued migrants, 25 Haitian and two others of undetermined nationality, reportedly were traveling with 10 other Haitian migrants, who were also rescued by the cutter Dauntless from a disabled migrant vessel near Monito Island Nov. 24, 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless rescued 27 migrants Nov. 27 after the migrants abandoned a disabled vessel Wednesday and ended up stranded on Monito Island, Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The rescued migrants, 25 Haitian and two others of undetermined nationality, reportedly were traveling with 10 other Haitian migrants who were rescued by the Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless Wednesday from a disabled makeshift vessel near Monito Island.

Coast Guard rescue crews ended the search for possible migrants in the water Friday afternoon, after confirming the migrants who abandoned the disabled vessel had safely reached Monito Island.

"This case was a very close call, and I commend the efforts of our partner agencies and all Coast Guard units and personnel who helped save 37 lives from a disabled migrant vessel and from the harsh and dangerous environment of Monito Island, preventing what could have been a major loss of life," said Cmdr. Beau Powers, Sector San Juan chief of response. "To anyone considering taking part in one of these voyages we urge them to not take to the sea, you are putting your life and the life of others at risk. If caught, you are also risking prosecution for migrating illegally to the United States. Migrants, who are interdicted at sea and not prosecuted, will be returned to the country they departed from."

During search efforts Thursday, the crew of a Coast Guard MH-60T Jayhawk helicopter from Air Station Borinquen observed there were more than 20 people stranded on Monito Island.

The crew of the cutter Dauntless combined efforts with a Coast Guard HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft, U.S. Border Patrol agents and a Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action marine unit Friday to deliver food, water and a hand-held radio to the stranded migrants. Shortly thereafter, the crew of the cutter Dauntless established successful radio communications with the migrants on Monito Island who confirmed, along with statements received from survivors of the disabled migrant vessel, that all the passengers from the illegal voyage were accounted for and safe.

The following morning, the Dauntless crew used the cutter's Over the Horizon boats to rescue the stranded migrants from Monito Island, while a Coast Guard helicopter flew rescue support on scene. During the rescue, the Coast Guard boat crews recovered several migrants from the water who jumped from the bottom of the cliff, including a pregnant woman.

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention. Throughout rescue efforts, Coast Guard crewmembers were equipped with personal protective equipment to minimize potential exposure to any possible case of COVID-19.

The 27 rescued migrants were transported to Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, where they were received by awaiting Border Patrol Agents and Emergency Medical Service personnel.

The Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Pensacola, Florida.