Coast Guard Returns 24 Migrants to the Dominican Republic Following At-Sea Interdiction

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser returned 24 migrants to authorities in Santo Domingo Oct. 30 following the at-sea interdiction of a migrant vessel Oct. 17 in waters approximately 22 nautical miles northeast of Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

The interdiction is the result of ongoing efforts in support of Operation Unified Resolve, Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG).

“The excellent coordination between three Coast Guard cutters and Coast Guard Sector San Juan ensured the safe return of all 24 persons to the Dominican Republic and serves as a constant reminder of the inherent dangers associated with taking to the sea in such overloaded and unseaworthy vessels,” said Lt. Luke A. Walsh, Winslow Griesser commanding officer.

During a routine patrol of the Mona Passage, the crew of a Coast Guard HC-144 Ocean Sentry maritime patrol aircraft detected a grossly overloaded 20-foot migrant boat in international waters traveling illegally toward Puerto Rico. Coast Guard Sector San Juan watchstanders diverted the Coast Guard Cutter Thetis to interdict the vessel.

Shortly thereafter, Thetis arrived on scene with the migrant vessel that was disabled and taking on water. Thetis crew safely embarked all 24 migrants, a Haitian man and 23 Dominicans, including an adult woman and two male minors. Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention.

The migrants were subsequently transferred from Thetis to the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier and then to Winslow Griesser for their final transport to the Dominican Republic.

Thetis is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Key West, Florida, while Joseph Napier and Winslow Griesser are 154-foot fast-response cutters homeported in San Juan.