

Coast Guard Interdicts, Repatriates 18 Migrants to Dominican Republic

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard repatriated 18 migrants to the Dominican Republic between Aug. 8 and Aug. 11, following the interdiction of an illegal migrant voyage off the coast of Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7th District said in an Aug. 11 release.

The interdiction is the result of ongoing multiagency efforts in support of Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group CBIG.

“Those who take part in an illegal migrant voyage to cross the Mona Passage risk losing their lives, and it’s truly saddening and unfortunate when we find minors taking part in these voyages,” said Cmdr. Beau Powers, Sector San Juan chief of response. “To the parents, friends and loved ones of anyone looking to take part in an illegal voyage, implore that they not take to the sea, the dangers are just too great. These unseaworthy and often grossly overloaded makeshift vessels could easily capsize or sink without notice giving the migrants a very slim to almost no chance of survival.”

While on a routine patrol of the Mona Passage early on Aug. 7, the crew of a Customs and Border Protection marine enforcement aircraft detected an illegal migrant voyage, just off the coast of Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico. The Coast Guard Cutter Richard Dixon and a Puerto Rico Joint Forces of Rapid Action marine unit responded to interdict the suspect vessel.

Shortly thereafter, the crew of the Puerto Rico Police stopped the 25-foot makeshift boat that was transporting 13 adult men, four women and a 17-year-old male minor. The crew of cutter Richard Dixon safely embarked the migrants from the makeshift

vessel.

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants received food, water, shelter and basic medical attention. Throughout the interdiction, Coast Guard crewmembers were equipped with personal protective equipment to minimize potential exposure to any possible case of COVID-19. There were no migrants reported to have any COVID-19 related symptoms.

Cutter Richard Dixon and the Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez carried out the repatriation. The 154-foot fast response cutters are homeported in San Juan.