

Coast Guard Repatriates 27 Migrants to the Dominican Republic

SAN JUAN,

Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard repatriated 27 migrants Sept. 5 to the Samaná, Dominican Republic, following the interdiction of two illegal migrant voyages in Mona Passage waters off Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

Four men and a woman, among the interdicted migrants, remain in Puerto Rico, where they face possible federal prosecution for attempted illegal re-entry into the United States.

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

“The collaboration between the Coast Guard, CBP and the Dominican Republic navy helped save 32 lives and ensure the quick return of the repatriated migrants,” said Capt. Eric King, commander of Sector San Juan.

“The migrants are very fortunate, they risked losing their lives by capsizing or

drowning since both vessels were grossly overloaded, unseaworthy and had little or no lifesaving equipment onboard.”

On the morning of Sept. 5, the crew of a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Air and Marine Operations DHC-8 marine patrol aircraft detected a migrant vessel near Mona Island.

Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan diverted a Coast Guard cutter on patrol, while a CBP marine unit also responded to interdict the suspect vessel.

The crew of the CBP marine unit interdicted the 16-foot makeshift boat with 17 migrants aboard, 16 men and a woman, who claimed to be from the Dominican Republic. The cutter arrived on scene shortly thereafter and safely embarked the migrants. The U.S. Coast Guard transported five migrants from this group to Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, where Ramey Sector Border Patrol agents received them.

The crew of a CBP Air and Marine Operations DHC-8 marine patrol aircraft sighted a second illegal migrant voyage Wednesday night in the Mona Passage.

A Coast Guard cutter diverted to the scene and interdicted a 20-foot boat with 15 migrants aboard. The cutter crew safely embarked 11 men and

four women from the makeshift vessel, who claimed Dominican nationality.

The Coast Guard cutter rendezvoused with a Dominican Republic Navy vessel Thursday night just off Samaná, Dominican Republic, where the repatriation of the migrants was completed.