

Coast Guard Repatriates 36 Interdicted Migrants to the Dominican Republic



The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser (WPC-1116) cutter boat is on scene with an illegal migrant vessel in waters south of Mona Island, Puerto Rico Sept. 17, 2020. U.S. Coast Guard SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser (WPC-1116) repatriated 36 of 38 migrants to a Dominican Republic Navy vessel Sept. 19, following the interdiction of an illegal migrant voyage Sept. 17 in Mona Passage waters south of Mona Island, Puerto Rico.

Two women in the migrant group who required medical attention ashore, were medevac'd and taken to a local hospital in Puerto Rico. During the interdiction, the Winslow Griesser crew also seized seven kilograms of cocaine, which are estimated to have wholesale value of more than \$154,000.

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

“The professionalism and skill displayed by the crew, our partner agencies and Dominican Republic Navy allies led to a smooth interdiction and the safe recovery and repatriation of the migrants,” said Lt. Joel Wyman, cutter Winslow Griesser commanding officer. “These 38 lives were in great danger, their makeshift boat was grossly overloaded, they had little to no lifesaving equipment onboard, and were rapidly taking on water. The outcome could have been tragic.”

The interdiction occurred during a routine patrol Thursday morning, when the crew of a U.S. Customs and Border Protection

dash-8 marine patrol aircraft detected an illegal migrant voyage, approximately 20 nautical miles south of Mona Island, Puerto Rico.

The migrant group was traveling aboard a 30-foot makeshift boat that was transporting 35 men and three women, who claimed Dominican Republic nationality. The crew of cutter Winslow Griesser safely embarked the migrants for safety of life at sea concerns, as the migrant vessel was taking on water and had accumulated over four inches of water inside.

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 in these cases reported to have any COVID-19 related symptoms.

Cutter Winslow Griesser transported the remaining migrants to Dominican Republic territorial waters off Punta Cana, where it rendezvoused with a Dominican Republic Navy vessel, who received the repatriated migrants.

Cutter Winslow Griesser is a 154-foot fast response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.