

Coast Guard Rescues 48 Haitian Migrants Stranded on Monito Island



A Coast Guard HC-144 aircrew spots a group of 48 Haitian migrants stranded on Monito Cay, Puerto Rico during a routine patrol in the Mona Passage Aug. 11, 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD*
SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – Coast Guard and Puerto Rico Police crews rescued 48 Haitian migrants Aug. 13, stranded on Monito Cay, Puerto Rico in the Mona Passage, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

“This was a very complex rescue and the migrants were in pretty bad shape after being abandoned by smugglers in this austere and highly dangerous environment,” said Lt. Benjamin Williamsz, Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser commanding officer. “The Winslow Griesser crew performed superbly, while working with our Puerto Rico Police and Border patrol partners, in rescuing and saving the migrants from the cliff’s edge and jagged rocks and bringing them to the safety of the cutter.”

Watchstanders at Coast Guard Sector San Juan were initially contacted late Wednesday night by the aircrew of a Coast Guard HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft, who spotted the migrants flashing a light and waving their hands for assistance.

Coast Guard watchstanders proceeded to divert the Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser and launched an MH-60T Jayhawk helicopter from Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen to further investigate and rescue any persons in distress. A Puerto Rico Police marine unit also responded to assist.

Upon arriving on scene, the crew of the Winslow Griesser located the migrants, 26 men and 22 women, on the side of the

cliff and taking shelter inside nearby caves. The Winslow Griesser launched their Over-the-Horizon IV small boat to recover the migrants.

The migrants were transported to Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, where they were transferred to awaiting U.S. Customs and Border Protection Border Patrol agents, who rendered assistance to the migrants along with emergency medical service personnel at the scene.