

Coast Guard transfers custody of 3 suspected smugglers, offloads \$19 million in seized cocaine in San Juan, Puerto Rico



[Release from U.S. Coast Guard 7th District](#)

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Donald Horsley (WPC – 1117) offloaded approximately 1,709 pounds of seized cocaine and transferred custody of three suspected male smugglers to federal law enforcement authorities in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Thursday.

The suspected smugglers are Venezuelan nationals who now face criminal prosecution by the U.S. Department of Justice in the U.S. Federal District Court in Puerto Rico. The seized contraband is estimated to have a wholesale value of \$19 million.

Coast Guard Cutter Donald Horsley interdicted a suspect non-compliant 46-foot go-fast vessel Saturday night, after the aircrew of a maritime patrol aircraft detected the vessel while patrolling Caribbean Sea waters southeast of Puerto Rico. Following a high-speed pursuit and the interdiction of the suspect vessel, the cutter crew apprehended the suspected smugglers and successfully recovered 31 bales of contraband which had been jettisoned from the go-fast vessel during the pursuit.

“The strong collaboration and coordination between our Coast Guard units and our partner law enforcement agencies operating in the Caribbean are instrumental to achieving continued successful outcomes like in this case,” said Capt. José E. Díaz, Coast Guard Sector San Juan commander. “Our shared resolve and collective efforts are critical to further strengthening the security and stability of the region, while safeguarding our citizens in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands from this threat.”

The Transnational Organized Crime Division of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Puerto Rico is leading the prosecution for this case, while Special Agents supporting the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force are leading the investigation.

The interdiction is the result of multi-agency efforts involving the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF), the Caribbean Border Interagency Group and the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF Program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>. For breaking news, follow us on Twitter. For additional information, find us on Facebook and Instagram.

Cutter Donald Horsley is a 154-foot fast response cutter that is homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.