



Press Release

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Crewmembers from *USCGC Seneca* hand a female toddler from *Seneca's* small boat up a crewmember onboard *Seneca*. (U.S. Coast Guard photo/Jonathan Goulet)

Coast Guard repatriates 100 Haitian migrants

MIAMI -- The Coast Guard Cutter *Seneca* returned 100 Haitian migrants to Cap Haitien, Haiti, Monday, after the Coast Guard Cutters *Bear* and *Seneca* rescued them from their grossly overloaded vessel in the waters northeast of Cuba Friday.

While on a routine Caribbean patrol, *Bear* crewmembers detected the 25-foot sail freighter on radar. Once on scene, *Bear* crewmembers discovered a total of 100 Haitian migrants aboard.

The *Seneca* was diverted from its patrol to assist the *Bear*. To minimize safety concerns in the event the vessel capsized or migrants fell overboard, *Bear* and *Seneca* crewmembers provided each migrant with a personal flotation device prior to transferring them from the overloaded vessel to the cutter.

The Coast Guard has increased its patrol presence in the Caribbean during the winter season when strong winds and larger than normal waves can create extremely dangerous conditions for migrant voyages. These overloaded and

unseaworthy vessels can quickly lose stability and capsize sending migrants into the water. Frequently, migrants do not have personal flotation devices and do not carry sufficient supplies of food, water and medicine. These factors can create an extremely dangerous and potentially deadly situation for migrants who make the ill-advised decision to take to the sea.

Seneca crewmembers provided food, water, shelter and basic medical care to the migrants prior to returning them to Haiti. The Coast Guard has repatriated 259 Haitian migrants since Jan. 1.

To see what can happen when a grossly overloaded migrant vessel loses stability, [click here](#) to view video taken by the Coast Guard Cutter *Dauntless* on May 9, 2008.

Bear is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth, Va.

Seneca is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter homeported in Boston.



Haitian migrants on their overloaded vessel before being rescued by *USCGC Seneca* and *USCGC Bear*. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

U.S. Coast Guard: Saving Lives Since 1790