



Press Release

Date: January 14, 2009

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Thirty seven Haitian migrants were rescued from the 20-foot sail freighter Tuesday (U.S. Coast Guard photo)



For the migrants safety, crewmembers from Cutters Seneca and Confidence distribute personal flotation devices to each person aboard the grossly overloaded 20-foot vessel. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

Coast Guard repatriates 37 Haitian migrants

MIAMI - Crewmembers from the Coast Guard Cutter Seneca returned 37 Haitian migrants to Port au Prince, Haiti, Wednesday.

While conducting routine Caribbean patrols, an HH-60 Jayhawk helicopter from Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater, deployed in support of Operation Bahamas Turks and Caicos, located a grossly overloaded 20-foot Haitian sail freighter about 22 miles north of Cuba Tuesday. Small boat boarding teams from Coast Guard Cutters Confidence and Seneca approached the vessel, distributed personal flotation devices to each person aboard and transferred the Haitians to the cutter Seneca without incident.

The Coast Guard continues to maintain its patrol presence in the Caribbean during the winter season when stronger winds and larger than normal waves can increase already extremely dangerous conditions for migrant voyages. These overloaded and unseaworthy vessels can quickly lose stability and capsize sending migrants into the water. More often than not, migrants do not have personal flotation devices and do not carry sufficient supplies of food, water and medicine. These factors only compound extremely dangerous and potentially deadly situations for migrants who make the ill-advised decision to take to the sea.

Once aboard Coast Guard cutters, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and necessary medical attention.

Since Jan. 1, Coast Guard crews have interdicted a total of 296 Haitians.

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

The cutter Confidence is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Port Canaveral, Fla.

U.S. Coast Guard: Saving Lives Since 1790