

Dominican Republic Men Plead Guilty to Possessing 619 Kilograms of Cocaine in St. Croix

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Customs and Border Protection

ST. CROIX — States Attorney Delia L. Smith announced today that Dennito Montero-Felix, 48, and Fernandito Michel-Gomez, 56, both nationals of the Dominican Republic, have pleaded guilty to conspiracy to possess cocaine with intent to distribute while on board a vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. The pleas were entered before Magistrate Judge Emile A. Henderson, III.

Michel-Gomez is scheduled for sentencing on December 14, 2023, while Montero-Felix's sentencing is set for December 20, 2023. Both individuals face a maximum prison term of up to 20 years. The final sentence will be determined by a federal district court judge after taking into

account the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

According to court documents, on April 12, 2023, a maritime patrol aircraft, while on routine patrol, spotted a go-fast vessel in international waters about 71 nautical miles south of the Dominican Republic. The vessel had three occupants and was equipped with two outboard engines, excessive fuel barrels, and large visible packages on deck.

A U.S. Coast Guard Cutter later intercepted the vessel and took its occupants into custody. Neither claimed a nationality for the flagless vessel, making it subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. A subsequent search by Coast Guard officers revealed approximately 619 kilograms of cocaine on board the vessel.

The case was investigated by the United States Coast Guard, Homeland Security Investigations, and the Drug Enforcement Administration. Assistant United States Attorney Daniel H. Huston is prosecuting the case as part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) operation.

The OCDETF program aims to identify, disrupt, and dismantle high-level criminal organizations that pose a threat to the United States. This multi-agency, intelligence-driven, prosecutor-led effort uses a comprehensive approach to combat organized crime. Further details about the OCDETF Program can be found at [the Justice Department's OCDETF website](#).