

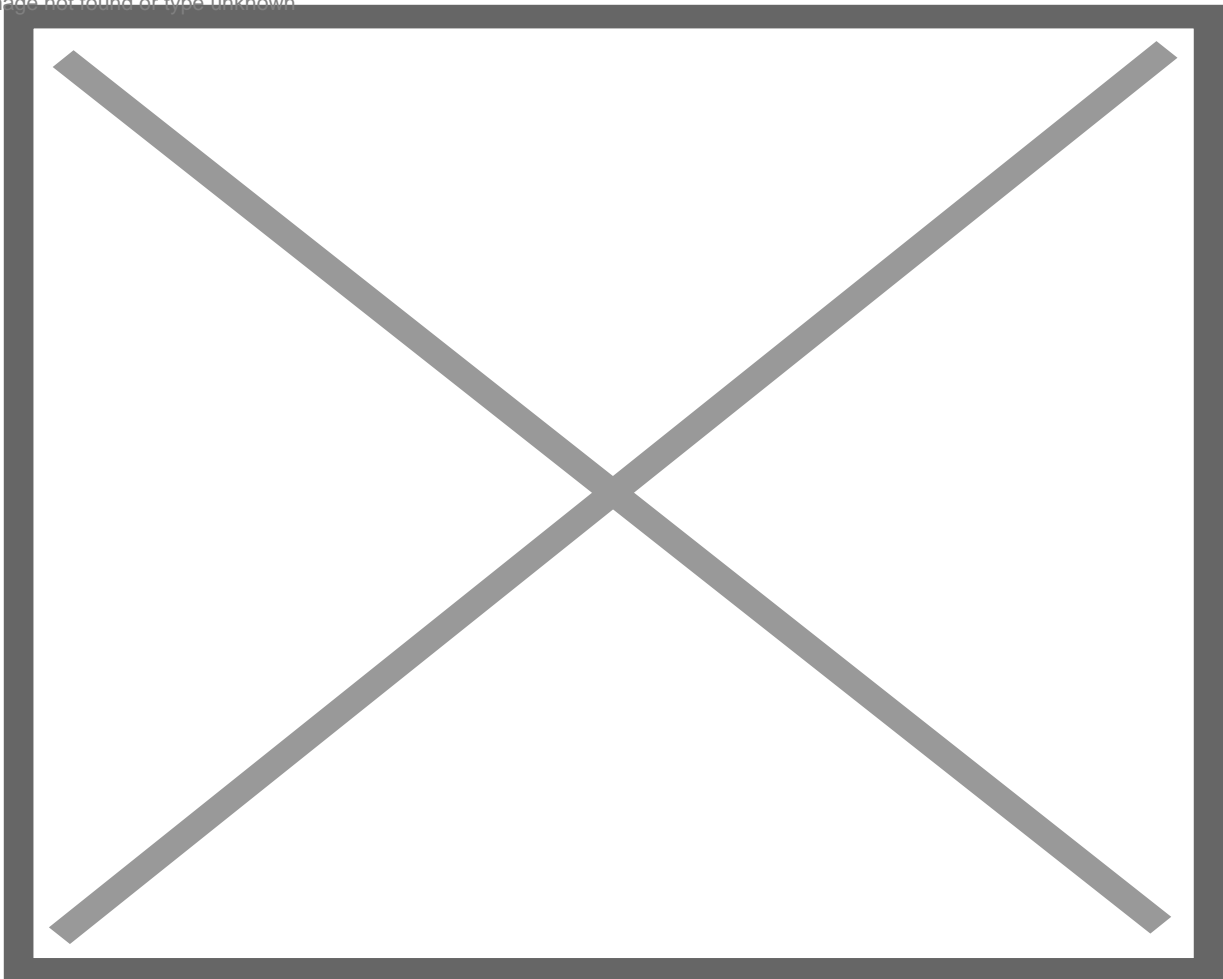
64 Haitian Migrants Abandoned on Puerto Rico's Mona Island Rescued by U.S. Border Patrol

Stranded by smugglers, men, women, and children face legal consequences after being rescued by authorities. Officials warn against the dangers of illegal crossings in the region

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On Thursday, U.S. Border Patrol agents apprehended 64 Haitian migrants who had been abandoned by a smuggling organization on Mona Island, Puerto Rico, according to the U.S. Customs & Border Protection. The migrants, including men, women, and children, were left stranded on the remote island by smugglers, marking another case of human trafficking in the region.

The situation came to light on October 2, when Park Rangers from the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources alerted the Ramey Border Patrol Station. The report

indicated that 64 Haitian nationals had been left behind by smugglers on Mona Island. The following day, a U.S. Coast Guard cutter transported the migrants to the Mayaguez Port of Entry, where custody was transferred to Border Patrol agents. Among the 64 migrants were 30 adult men, 28 adult women, three accompanied minors, and three unaccompanied minors.

This incident follows a disturbing pattern of migrants being abandoned by smugglers in the region. On Sunday, September 29, 14 Haitian nationals were similarly stranded on Monito Island and later brought to the Mayaguez Port by the U.S. Coast Guard. Two weeks prior, federal authorities had removed 31 Haitians from the same area. The repeated occurrences of abandonment in dangerous locations highlight the ongoing issue of human smuggling and the perilous journeys migrants are forced to undertake.

Acting Chief Patrol Agent for the Ramey Sector, Reggie Johnson, reiterated the risks migrants face by turning to smugglers. “I reiterate the fact that there are safe, orderly, and lawful paths to immigrate to the United States. There is no need to risk their lives traversing the Mona Passage in the hands of ruthless smugglers, only to arrive at our coast and face the legal consequences of unlawful entry,” Johnson said. He emphasized the danger posed by smugglers, calling attention to their disregard for the safety and well-being of vulnerable individuals. “Smugglers and bad actors continue to spread falsehoods and show complete disregard for the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable migrants,” he added.

All of the migrants involved in Thursday's incident will be processed for removal proceedings, in line with U.S. immigration laws.

The Ramey Border Patrol Sector, which is responsible for this operation, is unique in its location outside the continental United States. The sector covers the U.S. territorial islands of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, overseeing 6,000 square miles of land and water area. Its entire jurisdiction consists of coastline, making it a critical point for addressing maritime smuggling and illegal immigration in the region.