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## Three Illegal Immigrants Arrested at Cyril E. King Airport

**CBP officers detained two Ecuadorian nationals and one Haitian citizen at the St. Thomas airport between Sunday and Monday. Court documents reveal they entered the U.S. illegally by boat from the BVI, St. Maarten, and Haiti.**

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**The Cyril E. King Airport in St. Thomas, USVI. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM**

Customs and Border Protection officers continue to encounter individuals at the territory's airports who appear to have no legal authorization to be in the United States. Between Sunday and Monday, three such individuals were arrested at the Cyril E. King Airport on St. Thomas. Their matters are now before the territory's District Court.

On Sunday, Jimmy Javier Zapata Urbina turned up at the airport for his flight to Miami, Florida. He was then escorted by CBP officers to secondary inspection to verify his legal status in the country. Mr. Urbina reportedly admitted to illegally entering the territory about two years ago, taking a boat across from Tortola and landing on St. John on August 7, 2023.

Urbina, an Ecuadorian citizen and national, said that he left his home country on August 5 of that year and traveled first to Panama and then to the Dominican Republic before flying to Tortola, BVI. According to documents filed in court, Urbina paid approximately \$5000 to be smuggled into the USVI.

On the same Sunday, another Ecuadorian national was also taken into custody. Geannella Melissa Pisco Freire was also ticketed on the same American Airlines flight to Miami, however her final destination was said to be Guayaquil, Ecuador.

When she was escorted to secondary inspection, Ms. Freire told CBP officers that she left Ecuador on December 13, 2024 for Panama. Her next stop was St. Maarten. On December 24, she left St. Maarten and took a boat to St. John. Ms. Freire's father funded and made the arrangements for that journey, officers were told.

Meanwhile, Louius Desrosiers was apprehended at the Cyril E. King airport on Monday when he arrived for his flight from St. Thomas to Chicago, Illinois, with a final destination of St. Louis, Missouri. When he was taken to the secondary inspection area to verify his legal status, he told officers that he was a citizen and national of Haiti.

Desrosiers said that he took a boat from Haiti to St. John sometime in June 2024. He paid “approximately \$2,000 Haitian dollars” for the journey, according to an affidavit filed by the CBP officer responsible for the case. Haiti's currency is called the gourde, with an exchange rate of less than one U.S. cent per gourde.

In the cases of the two Ecuadorians, prosecutors have asked the court to detain both Mr. Urbina and Ms. Freire ahead of trial, arguing that they are flight risks. There has been no such request in Mr. Desrosiers' case, however all three remain in custody pending the determination of the presiding judge in each matter.