

## Two Foreign Nationals Sentenced in USVI for Immigration-Related Offenses

**A Dominican man and a Brazilian woman were sentenced last week in St. Thomas for immigration violations—one for smuggling ten illegal aliens by boat to Puerto Rico, and the other for reentering the U.S. after a prior deportation in 2019.**

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ST. THOMAS — In two separate federal cases, a Dominican Republic man and a Brazilian woman were sentenced last week in St. Thomas for immigration-related offenses following investigations led by Homeland Security Investigations and U.S. Customs and Border Protection Marine Interdiction Agents (CBP-MIA).

According to court documents, on May 30, Chief U.S. District Court Judge Robert A. Molloy sentenced 36-year-old Omaily Sanchez Taveras, a citizen of the Dominican Republic, to ten months in prison for illegally smuggling aliens. The sentencing follows a two-day jury trial that resulted in a guilty verdict.

According to court records, on October 13, 2024, federal authorities received a tip that a vessel was loading illegal aliens in Fortuna Bay, located on the western end of St. Thomas. Agents from CBP's Air and Marine Operations responded and located a disabled vessel anchored near West Cay. On board were eleven undocumented individuals, including the boat's captain, later identified as Taveras.

Among the passengers were four citizens of the Dominican Republic, four from Romania, and two from Brazil. All ten passengers admitted to paying Taveras to transport them from St. Thomas to Culebra, Puerto Rico.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Everard E. Potter and Denise George.

The day prior, on May 29, Joice Iara Costa De Souza, a 28-year-old Brazilian national, was sentenced by Judge Molloy to seven months imprisonment for illegally reentering the United States after having previously been deported.

De Souza had been deported on November 22, 2019, after pleading guilty to a prior illegal entry offense. However, on March 12, 2020, she was arrested at the Urman Victor Fredericks Marine Terminal in Red Hook, St. Thomas, where she admitted to lacking legal documentation to enter or remain in the United States.

Her case was also prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Denise George.