

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Customs And Border Protection Stops Private Vessel Transporting 5 Aliens Near St. John

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ST. JOHN -- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Air and Marine Operations (AMO) interdiction agents intercepted Wednesday a vessel with a United States citizen transporting five illegal immigrants from the Dominican Republic, navigating without lights on the western coast of St. John, CBP announced Friday.

“AMO crews spend many hours patrolling the Caribbean region to discover smuggling ventures into US territory,” said Johnny Morales, director of Air Operations.

During the evening of May 9, an AMO crew observed a boat traversing near St. John without navigational lights. Upon following the boat, the six persons on board were trying

to conceal themselves by laying down. The crew energized the blue law enforcement lights, siren, and all available means of hailing the vessel to stop. After the use of warning shots, the vessel's captain still failed to heave.

Due to the captain's failure to stop, the AMO crew employed a disabling shot to the engine to disable it and safely end the pursuit. When the boat came to a stop, the agents boarded the vessel and arrested all occupants.

A U.S. Citizen and five aliens from the Dominican Republic (two males, three females) were transported to the National Park Dock where Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) agents assumed custody for investigation and prosecution.

AMO is a federal law enforcement organization that is part of CBP, dedicated to serving and protecting the American people through advanced aeronautical and maritime capabilities. With approximately 1,800 federal agents and mission support personnel, 240 aircraft, and 300 marine vessels operating throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands, AMO conducts its mission in the air and maritime environments at and beyond the border, and within the nation's interior.