

The Virgin Islands Consortium

CBP's Air And Marine Operations Stops Vessel With Four Immigrants Crossing Near St. John

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U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Air and Marine Operations' (AMO) agents on Sunday intercepted a vessel with four immigrants navigating without lights crossing the border between Tortola and St. John, according to a release CBP issued Monday.

"AMO crews spend many hours patrolling the Caribbean region to discover smuggling ventures into US territory," said Johnny Morales, Director of Air and Marine Operations in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.

During the evening of Oct. 21, an AMO maritime crew observed a vessel eastbound crossing along the northern coastline of St. John USVI, near North Haulover Bay, without

navigational lights, according to the release.

AMO crew intercepted the vessel finding five men; one US citizen, two males from the Dominican Republic, one male Venezuelan citizen, and one male with dual citizenship from the Dominican Republic and Argentina.

The AMO agents transferred custody of the group to U.S Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) for questioning and investigation. HSI St. Thomas arrested the captain of the vessel for alien smuggling and the four aliens for illegal entry into the United States. All five defendants made an initial appearance in federal court.

According to the release, AMO is a federal law enforcement organization 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.