

The Virgin Islands Consortium

7 Venezuelans Sentenced For Possession Of Controlled Substance On Board Vessel With Multiple Kilos of Marijuana

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Staff **February 28, 2019**



ST. CROIX -- United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced that Felix Gomez, 38, Roman Jose Aguilera Gig, 39, Jesus Garcia, 35, Jhoan Gomez, 29, Rosaura Morao, 46, Manual Rodriguez, 52, and Juan Rodriguez, 26, all Venezuelan nationals, were sentenced today in District Court by visiting Judge Anne E. Thompson on one count of possession of a controlled substance on board a vessel.

Each of the defendants, who have been incarcerated since their May 8, 2017 arrest, received a term of imprisonment of twenty-one (21) months and twenty-one (21) days,

with credit for time served, according to the release. Each was ordered deported to their native country of Venezuela, and each was ordered to pay a mandatory special assessment fee of \$100.00.

According to court documents, on May 8, 2017 at approximately 3:45 p.m., a patrol aircraft affiliated with the Joint Inter-Agency Task Force South, located a northbound go-fast vessel (GFV) approximately 105 nautical miles west of Martinique traveling at a speed of 25 knots. The GFV was travelling on a known drug trafficking route. The vessel had five outboard engines, multiple fuel barrels, and suspicious packages visible on deck. The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Donald Horsley was directed to intercept the GFV. As the Donald Horsely approached, members of the GFV crew tossed suspicious packages and fuel barrels overboard. Ultimately, the crew of the Cutter Donald Horsley recovered 8 bound packages, which contained approximately 162 kilograms (357 pounds) of marijuana.

The Coast Guard Cutter Donald Horsley is a 154-foot Fast Response Cutter, stationed in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The case was investigated by the United States Coast Guard and the Drug Enforcement Administration and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Daniel H. Huston and Melissa