

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Puerto Rican Convicted for Drug Trafficking in St. Thomas Waters Receives 10-Year Sentence

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ST. CROIX — A 45-year-old man from Puerto Rico, Carlos Caez-Torres, was sentenced to a ten-year prison term on Friday, after being convicted of possession with intent to distribute cocaine. The announcement came from United States Attorney Delia L. Smith.

District Court Judge Robert A. Molloy handed down the sentence which included 120 months of incarceration and five years of supervised release following his prison term. Caez-Torres was also ordered to pay a special assessment of \$100.

The case dates back to February 28, 2023, when in the early morning hours, the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Marine Interdiction Unit spotted a suspicious

vessel off the west coast of St. Thomas. The boat, carrying two individuals and moving without navigational lights, was headed towards Puerto Rico.

Despite orders from the CBP to halt, the vessel attempted to evade capture. The CBP agents witnessed the occupants discarding a black bag into the ocean. The vessel was subsequently disabled and the black bag was retrieved, revealing 18 kilograms of cocaine.

The case was investigated by U.S. Customs and Border Protection and Homeland Security Investigations. Assistant United States Attorneys Everard Potter and Natasha Baker spearheaded the prosecution.

This case was part of an ongoing investigation by the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF). The OCDETF aims to identify, disrupt, and dismantle top-tier drug traffickers, money launderers, gangs, and transnational criminal organizations that pose a threat to the United States. The task force uses a prosecutorial-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach, leveraging federal, state, and local law enforcement resources against formidable criminal networks.