



PRESS RELEASE

DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION PUBLIC RELATIONS UNIT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 7, 2025

02/25

34 MIGRANTS TRANSFERRED TO IMMIGRATION CUSTODY AFTER SMUGGLING INTERCEPTIONS

Nassau, Bahamas - The Department of Immigration wishes to inform the public that a total of thirty-four mixed migrants were transferred to its custody by the United States Coast Guard (USCG) Cutter *Paul Clark* on January 5, 2025. These individuals were intercepted in three separate incidents involving smuggling activities in Bahamian and international waters. The transfers were conducted in accordance with established procedures under the Comprehensive Maritime Agreement (CMA) between The Bahamas and the United States. Details of the incidents are as follows:

Incident 1: Cay Sal, The Bahamas

On January 3, 2025, USCG aircraft observed a group of fifteen (15) suspected migrants attempting to disembark from a motor vessel at Cay Sal. The USCG Cutter *William Flores* intercepted the vessel, and the migrants were subsequently handed over to Bahamian authorities. Further investigation confirmed that the group consisted of Cuban nationals, as follows:

- Nine (9) adult Cuban males
- Three (3) adult Cuban females
- Three (3) Cuban minors

Incident 2: Near Hillsborough, Florida, USA

A 25-foot cabin cruiser was interdicted by the USCG on January 3, 2025, with fifteen (15) individuals onboard, including two (2) suspected Bahamian smugglers. The alleged smugglers are currently detained by U.S. Homeland Security for further investigation. The thirteen (13) migrants were transferred to Bahamian custody under the CMA. The group of migrants included:

- Four (4) adult Chinese males
- Three (3) adult Chinese females
- Two (2) adult Romanian males
- One (1) adult Jamaican female
- One (1) adult Bermudian male
- One (1) adult Ecuadorian female
- One (1) adult Guyanese male

Incident 3: Near Biscayne Bay, Florida, USA

On January 3, 2025, U.S. Customs and Border Protection interdicted a vessel in this incident, uncovering one (1) suspected Bahamian smuggler and six (6) migrants onboard. The individual is currently detained pending further investigation into human smuggling activities. The migrants transferred to Bahamian custody included:

- Three (3) adult Chinese males

- One (1) adult Chinese female
- Two (2) adult Dominican males

All migrants are currently being processed by the Department of Immigration in accordance with immigration laws. They have undergone health evaluations, which yielded satisfactory results, and were tested for COVID-19, with all results returning negative.

The public is further reminded that the Department remains fully committed to its mandate. It continues to work efficiently alongside local law enforcement and international stakeholders to address the challenges of illegal migration and human smuggling. The Department is steadfast in ensuring compliance with the Statute Laws of the country while reinforcing its dedication to protecting national borders.

For more information, call the Public Relations Unit at **1-242-322-7530** or **1-242-604-0027**, visit our website at **www.immigration.gov.bs**, or call our Investigation hotlines (anonymously) at **1-242-604-0249, 1-242-604-0171/2** or **1-242-604-0196**.

End.

MISSION STATEMENT

To regulate the movement of people across the borders of The Bahamas so as to ensure the security, facilitate economic advancement and promote the harmonious social development of The Bahamas through the collaborative efforts of responsible government and non-government agencies both nationally and internationally.



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