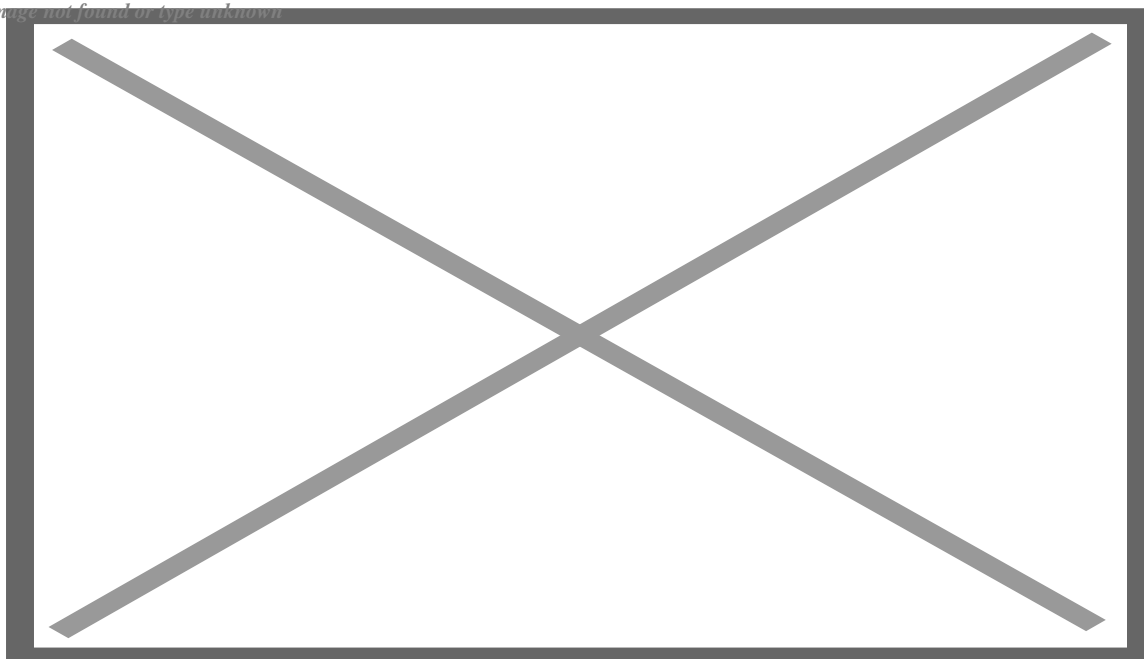


More than 300 Haitian migrants detained en route to the U.S.

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Thousands of Haitians have fled their country in recent months in an attempt to migrate to the United States, many of them through the dangerous Caribbean Sea route. | Photo: U.S. Coast Guard.

Miami, August 8 (RHC)-- U.S. authorities detained more than 300 Haitian migrants off the coast of the Florida Keys, in the southern tip of the country, immigration authorities reported.

The migrants were picked up over the weekend in two groups by two different U.S. law enforcement agencies: 218 were picked up by Coast Guard boats and another 113 who jumped from the boat and swam to the shore were handed over to the Border Patrol.

Local authorities also reported that after being evaluated on land, two of the people had to be transported to a local hospital due to dehydration.

This new interception comes at a time when there has been an increase in recent months in the trafficking of fragile vessels with migrants on board seeking to illegally reach Florida's shores.

Two weeks ago, 17 Haitians died when the boat in which they were traveling capsized in the Bahamas due to bad weather. Authorities there managed to rescue more than two dozen people they found

clinging to the hull of the capsized boat in the middle of the night. Authorities are investigating the case as a suspected human smuggling operation to the United States.

Haiti saw its structural crisis worsen after paramilitaries assassinated President Jovenel Moïse a year ago and gangs seized control of the situation in the capital over the course of this year.

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