

Boat with 22 Cuban migrants lands in Honduras

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TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras --
(AP) -- A boat packed with 22 Cuban migrants washed ashore in Honduras, officials said Friday.

The group, 19 men and three women, arrived last Saturday at the Honduran island of Guanaja, 250 miles north of Tegucigalpa, after leaving Cuba on May 13 from the southern city of Mula, police spokesman Elias Chavez said.

They remained free as Honduran officials processed their immigration papers.

Immigration director German Espinal said the Cubans paid smugglers \$22,000 to \$55,000 each to be taken to Miami.

Some 80 Cubans have arrived in Honduras this year, and about 600 have been documented in the past two years, Espinal said.

"That's a conservative number because there are many cases that authorities don't know about," he said.

Most Cuban immigrants are granted temporary residency of 15 to 30 days, which can be extended for a longer period. However, most immediately leave for the United States.

Cuba and Honduras reinstated diplomatic relations in January 2001, nearly four decades after breaking formal ties.