



A Culture Of Cruelty

Examples of Family Separation of Migrants by U.S. Officials during Deportation from U.S. Border Patrol Facilities

We are extremely troubled to witness the impact of In recent years, the U.S. Government has increased the incidents of migrant families being separated through programs such as the Alien Transfer Exit Program (ATEP). These programs are administered by the Department of Homeland Security, in which deportees from Mexico are flown or bussed hundreds of miles from where they were apprehended to be repatriated far from where they may have initially entered the country. The goal of these programs is to limit migrants from re-entering the United States. In this program, groups traveling together may be split up and deported hundreds of miles away from one another, including women who are separated from male family members or husbands. These kinds of programs exacerbate the extreme and dangerous conditions in which people migrate, and put the most vulnerable migrants, often women and children at risk for sexual assault, robbery, kidnapping, trafficking and other violent attacks. Migrants arrive to their destinations scared, disoriented, and extremely vulnerable to abuse and violence.

In our recent report “A Culture of Cruelty: Abuse and Impunity in Short-term U.S. Border Patrol Custody,” we included the number of incidents of family separation documented between the Fall of 2008 and Spring of 2011.¹ During this time, we documented **869 cases of family separation**. Of those 869 cases 58 were incidents of minors being separated from their family members.²

In addition to this documentation, volunteers at Casa Nazaret, a women's shelter in Nogales, Sonora run by the Kino Border Initiative, started documenting family separation issues in October, 2011. Between October, 2011 and January, 2012, volunteers at Casa Nazaret interviewed **144 women**. Of those 144 women:

- **63 women migrated alone**
- **26 women migrated with another female**
- **55 women had been separated from male family members by U.S. officials and deported to different border towns**
 - Of the 55 women, **32 were separated from their husbands** by U.S. officials and deported to different border towns

Please find below a selection of **cases of family separation** documented by No More Deaths and the Kino Border Initiative in January 2012

January 26th 2012

Husband and wife separated. Wife, Maura Paula Santos, (D.O.B. December 22nd, 1976) was held in the Tucson Border Patrol station and deported on Friday, January 26th to Nogales, Mexico without her husband. By calling the Mexican Consulate hotline, she was able to find out that her husband, Angel Garcia Hernandez, age 33, was transferred via ATEP to California to be deported through Tijuana. She was left alone in Nogales with no family or friends.

¹ “Culture of Cruelty: Abuse and Impunity in Short-term U.S. Border Patrol Custody.” No More Deaths. 2011.

² For more information concerning this documentation, please see pages 28-29 of this report.

Husband and wife separated. Wife, Rufina Feliciano Martines (D.O.B. September 1st, 1990) was detained on Wednesday, January 24th, with her husband Francisco Flores Baustista/Bautista (D.O.B. March 22nd, 1983). They were held in the Tucson Border Patrol station. When she was deported on Friday, January 26th, she was told that her husband had already been deported, but she did not know where. She later found out he had been deported through Nogales, AZ as part of the ATEP program. She was left alone in Nogales with no family or friends.

Husband and wife separated. Wife, Diana Mendoza Ramirez, (D.O.B. January 11th, 1994) was detained with her husband, Rogelio Duran Vazquez (D.O.B. February 10th, 1991) on the night of January 22nd. She was deported through Nogales on January 26th. She called the Consulate and was informed that he was taken to a detention center in California (ATEP), and that his date of deportation is not yet known.

Husband and wife separated. Wife, Rosalina Bautista Santiago (D.O.B. March 7th, 1988) and Leobardo Duran Vazquez (D.O.B. February 7th, 1989) were detained the night of January 22nd. She was deported through Nogales at 10:00 a.m. on January 26th, he at 4:00 p.m. that day. Leobardo is also the brother of Rogelio Duran Vazquez (see above), who was sent to California as part of the ATEP program.

Husband and wife separated. Wife, Rafaela Ortiz Lopez, born in 1996, is a minor. She was detained with her husband, Rutilio Gonzalez Aguilar, (D.O.B. July 20th, 1992) on the night of January 22nd. Rafaela told the officials at the detention center not to separate her from her husband because he speaks only limited Spanish, and they slammed the door. She said that some shifts treated them well and others did not, and that they would not let them communicate with each other. She was deported alone on January 24th at 10:00 a.m., while her husband was not deported until 4 p.m. on January 26th.

January 24th, 2012

Husband and wife separated. Emilia Leticia Cruz Cruz (D.O.B. May 30th, 1990) was detained in the desert with her husband, Alfredo Ramiro Cruz Amayo (D.O.B. September 20th, 1983) on Friday, January 20th, by the Border Patrol. They were brought to Tucson for one night and then to another location, whose name she did not recall, for two nights. On the morning of January 23rd, officials told her that her husband was going to court, and she was immediately deported alone.

Husband and wife separated. Wife, Florentina Solano Gonzalez (D.O.B. April, 14th 1989) was detained near Sonoita with her husband, Eusebio Hernandez Ramirez (D.O.B. August 2nd, 1982/3) on Sunday, January 22nd. They were taken to Ajo that night and then to Tucson at dawn. She told officials that she wanted to be with her husband and that she did not have any money on her. An official told her, "Sorry, I don't know about that," and she was deported alone through Nogales on January 24th.

Husband and wife separated. Wife, Elena Pulido Lopez, (D.O.B. January 12th, 1972) and husband, Juan Rivera Segundo (D.O.B. June 24th, 1963) became separated from their group near Sasabe and became lost. They were apprehended on January 23rd and detained in Tucson. Elena is pregnant and informed officials of her pregnancy, but was deported alone through Nogales on January 24th.

January 19th, 2012

Brother separated from brother and mother. Juan Remigio Salvador (D.O.B. August 25th, 1993) was detained with his brother, Francisco Remigio Salvador, and their mother, Petra Salvador Perez, on January 18th, 2012, at 9:00 a.m. Only Juan, the youngest, was deported. It was the mother's first detention, but not the brothers'. We called the Consulate and the mother had still not appeared in the system.

January 18th, 2012

Husband and wife separated. Wife, Minerva Morales Mendez (D.O.B. April 20th, 1973) was detained with her husband, Ursulo Cruz Cruz (D.O.B. May 31st, 1969) on January 17th in Ajo, AZ. She was deported through Nogales on January 18th and did not know the whereabouts of her husband.

January 17th, 2012

Husband and wife separated. Fidel Albino Olivera Najera (D.O.B. May 13th, 1987) and his wife Beatriz Vazquez Martinez (D.O.B July, 1995) were detained on January 12th. She is a minor and was deported alone on January 13th through Nogales, while he was deported through Ciudad Acuña on January 16th.

January 16th, 2012

On January 16th, 2012, No More Deaths helped 5 women and 3 men locate missing family members. Only 2 could be located (One was in ICE detention, after going through Operation Streamline. The second was sent to "Otero County" about to be laterally deported through ATEP).

Husband and wife separated. Wife, Leticia Angelica Mejia de Jesus (D.O.B. January 20th, 1979), was taken into custody on Saturday, Jan 14th, and held in Tucson Border Patrol facility, then deported on Sunday, January 15th, to Nogales. Her husband, Mauro Javier Martinez Martinez (D.O.B. December 20th, 1979), was still being held when they deported her and Border Patrol agents did not allow them to communicate prior to her deportation. She was left alone in Nogales with no family or friends.

Husband and wife separated. Wife, Dominga Martinez Antonio (D.O.B. May 16th, 1993), was taken into custody on Friday, January 13th, and held at Tucson Border Patrol facility, then deported on Sunday, January 15th, to Nogales. Her husband, Juan Osorio Antonio (D.O.B. August 10th, 1987) stayed in detention when she was deported. She was given no information or chance to communicate with her husband prior to her deportation. Her husband has a cell phone, so she kept trying to call it, and since he did not answer, she didn't know if that meant he was still detained, or possibly did not get his phone back. She was left alone in Nogales with no family or friends.

January 9th, 2012

Father (Ricardo) separated from daughter (Elsa) and step-daughter (Lucia). Ricardo and Elsa only speak Mixteco, and very little Spanish. Case reported by Lucia Aguilar Lopez (D.O.B. September 12th, 1984), step-daughter to the missing father. Biological daughter is Elsa Aguilar Lopez (D.O.B. April 15th, 1990). Father is Ricardo Aguilar Vasquez, age 49 or 50, D.O.B. Unknown.

Ricardo, Elsa, and Lucia are from a small village in the state of Oaxaca. All speak Mixteco as a first language, but only Lucia speaks Spanish. They have had almost no access to education – even the sister that speaks Spanish is illiterate. They were detained in the desert together by Border Patrol on Sunday, January 8th, 2012, on their 6th day of walking. They were brought to the Tucson Border Patrol facility at which time the father was separated from the daughters and they were not allowed to communicate again. Individual interviews for processing were conducted by a Border Patrol agent who spoke limited Spanish. When Lucia told him she was from Oaxaca, he told her she was lying. She showed him her *credencial* and he said, “That’s fake, I can buy one off the street myself.” Because Spanish was obviously not her first language, he told her that she must be Guatemalan and they should send her to Guatemala. She continued to insist that she is Mexican. Elsa’s intake was conducted with no one to translate to Mixteco. On January 9th, 2012, the next day, Lucia was taken from their shared cell to be deported, but Elsa was being left behind, which they believe is because she had been labeled as Guatemalan. Lucia argued and translated for her sister, and they were able to clear up the confusion, and both were deported through Nogales. However, they know nothing about the whereabouts of their father. They did not know if anyone shared his cell who could communicate with him in Mixteco, and did not know if he had I.D. on him or not. They fear he is being kept to be sent to Guatemala, as Lucia had been threatened with. However, Mixteco is an ethnic group that does not exist in Guatemala, so if an effort were made to identify their real origin, it could be easily resolved.

No More Deaths volunteers contacted the Mexican Consulate on January 9th, 2012, to find out more about the current situation of Ricardo. The consulate said that they were not able to locate anyone with that name in Border Patrol or ICE custody, but reported to both agencies that he is a Mexican national, so as to prevent possible deportation to Guatemala. The consulate could only confirm that he definitely had not been prosecuted through Operation Streamline or other criminal proceedings.

Week of January 1st, 2012

Husbands and wives separated. A group of 3 Mixteca women arrived in the women’s shelter in Nogales. All three of them were separated from their husbands. Only one of the women spoke Spanish, but she told us that they were treated very unfairly by Border Patrol. They repeatedly asked about their husbands and they were told that they wouldn’t tell them anything because their husbands were “criminals”. At one point, when the woman who spoke Spanish asked the guard about her husband, he told her that they sent him to prison because he was a “criminal”. However, later she saw her husband and he tried to speak with her, but was reprimanded by the guard. Similar to all of the cases we see in the shelter, we spent several days calling the Mexican Consulate trying to get more information about the whereabouts of their husbands. After 2 or 3 days, we found out that 2 of the husbands had been released through Ciudad Acuña, and, like most other cases, the women stayed in the shelter waiting for their husbands to travel in order to meet them in Nogales and travel back home together.