



No More Deaths • No Más Muertes

Humanitarian Aid Is Never A Crime

Spring 2016

Edited by Denise Holley

Why do people disappear in the desert?

By Alicia Dinsmore

In June 2015, No More Deaths and La Coalición de Derechos Humanos (Human Rights Coalition) received \$10,000 from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee to write three reports that document how border enforcement policies and practices cause people to disappear while crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. The first of these reports, to be released in early summer, focuses on two Border Patrol practices: destroying life-saving humanitarian aid and intentionally scattering groups of migrants during apprehension.

No More Deaths has collected nearly four years of data documenting the destruction of food and water left out on trails for people crossing the border. We are currently working with a team from the University of Arizona to analyze the destruction patterns coming out of this data. We've also been collecting stories from deported people who get help at a dining hall, shelters and a Mexican agency in Nogales, Sonora. The deportees describe how Border Patrol intentionally scatters groups of migrants, causing people to become separated from their group, separated from their guide, lost and disoriented in the deadly desert terrain.

These practices are extensions of the failed border policy of "prevention through deterrence," which uses the threat of death in the desert to dissuade individuals from crossing. The U.S. Border Patrol has been re-branding itself as humanitarian, claiming that their agents are reducing migrant deaths in the desert. This claim will be contested in the second report in this series. It is the duty of humanitarian aid groups to publicly denounce this gimmick and expose the Border Patrol policies that cause

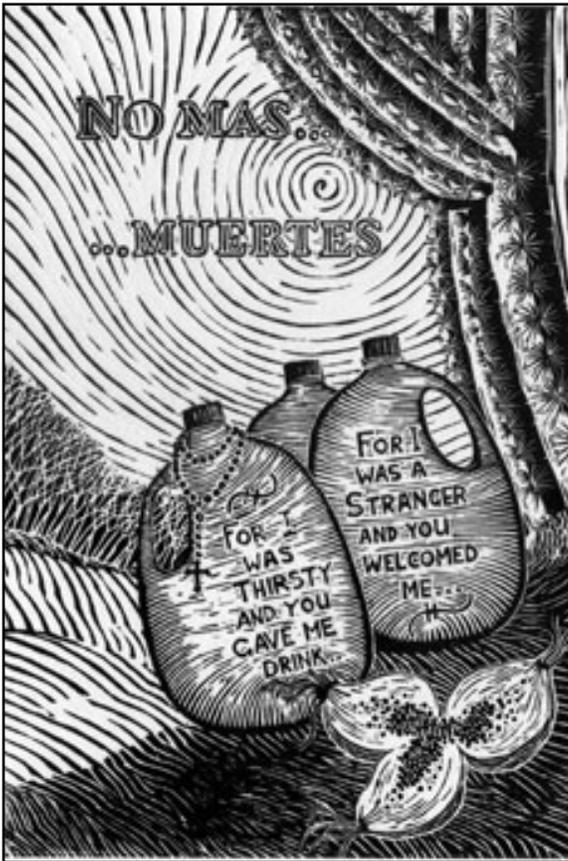


Photo by Sophie Smith

Volunteers sometimes find slashed water bottles on migrant trails, usually left by other No More Deaths or Samaritan volunteers. The vandalism denies life-saving water to dehydrated travelers who follow these trails through the desert, like this area near Arivaca, Arizona.

the deaths and disappearances of migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border.

No More Deaths is an organization whose mission is to end death and suffering on the border between the United States and Mexico by mobilizing people of conscience to uphold fundamental human rights. Founded in 2004, in Tucson, Arizona, NMD provides water, food and medical assistance to migrants walking through the Arizona desert, monitors U.S. operations on the border, works to change the "war zone" policy, and brings the plight of migrants to public attention. It is a ministry of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson. To contact No More Deaths, call (520) 333- 5699 or visit the website www.nomoredeaths.org



This is the image (linocut) that artist Fernando Marti of Justseeds Artists' Cooperative made for No More Deaths. It is available as a limited-edition No More Deaths T-shirt, for sale through our truck crowdfunding campaign. (See article on page 4)

RIGHT: No More Deaths volunteers Max Danielewicz (left) and Catherine Gaffney fasten rivets on a 24-foot dome at Byrd Camp near Arivaca, Arizona on Feb. 21. Pacific Domes of Ashland, Oregon heard



Photo by Lois Martin

about the work of NMD and donated the dome, said Easton Smith, who served as volunteer coordinator for summer 2015. Once it is covered, the dome will replace the aging medical tent as a treatment area for migrant gue

Dear Friends of No More Deaths

With the spring equinox (March 21), we celebrate equal amounts of day and night over the earth. In native cultures, the triumph of the sun over winter means life held in the earth reappeared and is renewed.

Spring for No More Deaths is a season of renewal and commitment to our work. During March, in our hands-on alternative spring break program, students from all over the country come and volunteer in the desert. Their experiences, like seeds planted in the earth, are transformative. To see and experience first hand the “systemic human grinder” that is our border policy and to see what our migrant brothers and sisters go through is, for many, life changing. They return to their schools and communities with a commitment that only experience can inform, to work for justice and change.

The students come to understand, especially now as anti-immigrant/migrant sentiment permeates our society, how important it is to participate in justice work and to stand in solidarity with people who are victimized by our oppressive and deadly institutional practices.

Thank you to our spring volunteers and to all long-term No More Deaths volunteers who keep the work going year-round. On behalf of our migrant brothers and sisters, thank you, our financial contributors, for your continuing support.

To contribute, write a check payable to UUCT/No More Deaths and send it to: UUCT/No More Deaths, P.O. Box 40782, Tucson, AZ 85717, or visit our website www.nomoredeaths.org and select the “donate” button.

Actors mimic Operation Streamline on court's 10th anniversary

Giant puppets created by Marc David Pinate of Borderlands Theater represent the contract defense lawyers, federal prosecutor, interpreter, and federal judge/magistrate of Operation Streamline, who quickly counsel, arraign, convict and sentence up to 70 border-crossers on most working days. Volunteers from No More Deaths and other groups that make up the End Streamline Coalition staged the enactment Dec. 16, 2015 in the front of the DeConcini Federal Courthouse in Tucson as part of a week of public actions to protest the Streamline court on its 10th anniversary.

Photo by Paige Winslett



Judge to decide if Border Patrol must improve conditions

By Denise Holley

Lawyers have asked a federal judge for immediate relief from “unconstitutional conditions of confinement” at Border Patrol stations in the Tucson sector, said James Lyall, an attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Arizona.

Lyall and other attorneys went to federal court in Tucson in June 2015 on behalf of two women who were detained in the Tucson Border Patrol station and a Tucson man detained twice in that facility. They, along with hundreds of other immigrants in short-term custody, shivered in cold, crowded cells without beds, blankets, adequate food, water and medical care, the suit *Doe v. Johnson* alleges.

Border Patrol responded by destroying or recording over some videotapes last summer that showed conditions inside the detention areas. But their action backfired when

Judge David Bury sanctioned Border Patrol and ordered it to turn over other video footage and database information to the plaintiffs’ lawyers.

“Much of that evidence is under seal and we’re asking for release to the public,” Lyall said.

In January, Judge Bury denied a motion by the government to dismiss the case and granted class status to “all people who are or will be detained overnight in Tucson Sector Border Patrol stations,” Lyall said. The briefing on the plaintiffs’ motion for preliminary injunction was recently completed and is now pending before the court.

Lawyers cited two reports that No More Deaths released in 2008 and 2011 that documented mistreatment of people in Border Patrol custody. The American Immigration Council, the National Immigration Law Center, the ACLU of Arizona, the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area, and Morrison & Foerster LLP are working together to represent the plaintiffs.

NMD’s spring break program draws volunteers to the desert to walk where migrants tread



Student volunteers from United World College in New Mexico rest after hiking in an area where migrants try to cross the desert near Arivaca. The group participated in the first week of No More Deaths’ spring break program. The spring volunteer program was three weeks long, from March 5-26, and participants stayed for one week at a time. We had 17 volunteers for week 1, 20 for week 2 and 21 for week 3. Volunteers were based out of Byrd Camp in Arivaca and in Ajo. As spring break wraps up, the year-round volunteer program continues to provide humanitarian aid all year long.

Photo by Laura von Dohlen

Observers watch Border Patrol work at another highway checkpoint

Residents of Arivaca, Arizona, can't leave their peaceful town near the border with Mexico without encountering military checkpoints. Agents of the Border Patrol stop all traffic and ask questions while a dog sniffs the vehicle for drugs. Drivers may be asked to show ID and even ordered out of their vehicle while agents search it.

People Helping People, a local group allied with No More Deaths, has asked Border Patrol to remove these interior checkpoints. When their request fell on deaf ears, Arivaca residents showed up at a checkpoint on Arivaca Road, near Interstate 19 and the route to Tucson, in 2013 to observe any harassment and violation of people's rights.

In February 2016, monitors set up chairs across from the checkpoint west of Arivaca on Highway 286, north of the border town of Sasabe, and began taking notes. The agents were tolerant on Feb. 3, when monitors peacefully observed the primary inspection area for six hours. But when monitors arrived the next day, the checkpoint was roped off with signs that read: "No pedestrians."

"We're about 200 feet back and not able to hear," said PHP volunteer Sophie Smith about the new "enforcement zone."

Border Patrol also barricaded the checkpoint on Arivaca Road in reaction to citizen monitoring at that location, Smith said. She believes monitors provide oversight and prevent abuse of motorists while they are present. Arivaca monitors found that Latino drivers were 26 times more likely to pull out their ID than white motorists and 20 times more likely to be pulled into secondary inspection.

Border Patrol says the checkpoints are necessary to apprehend unauthorized immigrants and drug shipments.

"We've been monitoring for more than two years now (at least weekly) and we've never observed anyone apprehended for crossing into the U.S. without papers," Smith said.

NMD launches campaign to maintain its desert trucks

No More Deaths has launched its first-ever online crowdfunding campaign to raise money for our vehicle expenses so we can keep our volunteers rolling all year-round.

Our trucks are vital to getting water and aid to migrants and refugees in southern Arizona's back country. We hope to raise \$47,842 – the real annual cost of maintaining our trucks – by May 1. The campaign features a great video with a star appearance by long-term volunteer Jim Marx and a soundtrack by Vox Urbana. We are offering T-shirts, posters and other "perks" for your contribution. All donations go directly to No More Deaths.

To find our campaign, visit us on Facebook (facebook.com/nomoredeaths), Twitter ([@NoMoreDeaths](https://twitter.com/NoMoreDeaths)), or our website (www.nomoredeaths.org). Please visit, click and share with your networks!



Photo by Liza Corr

Observers from People Helping People in Arivaca, Arizona, monitor a Border Patrol checkpoint Feb. 3 on Highway 286, located 26 miles north of the Mexico border, to prevent harassment and document any abuses against motorists. Agents were diplomatic to the group and allowed them to observe the primary inspection area, but erected barricades when the monitors returned the next day.

Instead, border crossers make a wide detour around the checkpoints, hiking farther into the Arizona desert where they risk running out of water and dying.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed a lawsuit against U.S. Customs and Border Protection on behalf of two resident observers, according to PHP. The suit cites the installation of the enforcement zone as a constitutional rights violation, which restricts free speech and free assembly activity at the checkpoint.

In October 2015, the ACLU released a report that identified more than 140 citizen complaints against Border Patrol at Arizona checkpoints between 2011 and 2014, said ACLU attorney James Lyall. Most allege violation of the individual's Fourth Amendment right against unreasonable search and seizure. Virtually none of the complaints have been investigated, according to CBP records provided to the ACLU.