

JOIN OUR CAMPAIGN TO SAVE LIVES ON JUNE 21 — THE MOST SUN-BEATEN DAY OF THE YEAR



# No More Deaths • No Más Muertes

JUNE 2018

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## Volunteers fight back against prosecutions

Dear friends of No More Deaths,

Over the past few months we have seen an outpouring of support from individuals and organizations who stand in solidarity with our work.

Over five hundred people have donated to our legal-defense campaign. And many civil and legal organizations across the country and beyond have reached out to us, including the American Civil Liberties Union, Amnesty International, and the United Nations.

All have echoed to us how pivotal this moment is, and how important it is that we continue to resist state repression and assert the right to give and receive aid in the borderlands. Our thanks and blessings go out to all of you. **Your contributions are crucial to our ability to continue providing humanitarian aid in the borderlands.**

### EVOLVING SITUATION, EVOLVING CAMPAIGN

As conditions on the ground and in court change day

You can donate by check or online. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Make checks payable to "UUCT/No More Deaths." Mail them to PO Box 40782, Tucson, AZ 85717.



A mural in Ajo, Arizona upholds the principle that animates our work and that of other groups. Nine No More Deaths volunteers are currently facing federal charges.

by day, it's almost impossible to predict what the actual trial dates might be. Stay tuned for updates on email and social media. If you'd like us to come to you for a speaking engagement, send us an email at [dropthecharges@nomoredeaths.org](mailto:dropthecharges@nomoredeaths.org).

In solidarity,

The No More Deaths community

To donate online, please visit our website at [nomoredeaths.org](http://nomoredeaths.org) and select "Donate."

Please consider setting up a recurring donation, so that we can rely on your support.

No More Deaths gratefully accepts stocks, bonds, endowed gifts, and bequests. We also welcome your ideas for fundraising opportunities.

Please contact us at (520) 333-5699 or [fundraising@nomoredeaths.org](mailto:fundraising@nomoredeaths.org).

## Campaign fundraising progress



Amazing! At press time, our crowdfunding campaign to support the legal defense of our prosecuted volunteers has been shared two thousand times and has generated \$36,442 in contributions from over five hundred donors. Help us reach our goal of \$50,000 by sharing the above URL with your networks.

*Save the date*

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18**

*An evening with*

**LUIS ALBERTO URREA**

*Critically acclaimed author  
The Devil's Highway  
and fifteen other books*

*Moderated by Ernesto Portillo Jr.  
Editor, La Estrella de Tucson  
Columnist, Arizona Daily Star*

*Frances McLelland Community Center  
YWCA Southern Arizona  
525 North Bonita Avenue  
Tucson, Arizona 85745*

**A BENEFIT FOR NO MORE DEATHS**

## *In June, volunteers take borderlands perspective to international audience*

Kate Morgan of No More Deaths and César Ortigoza of Armadillos Búsqueda y Rescate are traveling to Amsterdam in June to give the opening remarks at “**Border Deaths and Migration Policies: State and Non-state Approaches**.”

This international conference is being held at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and is cosponsored by the United Nations, the International Organization for Migration, and Médecins sans Frontières. The conference will convene policy makers, nongovernmental organizations, activists, and researchers from all over the world to address the topic of migration-related border deaths.

### **A PLATFORM TO EXPOSE THE BORDER CRISIS**

“I hope to use the opportunity to talk about the policies that create the crisis of death and disappearance happening on the US–Mexico border,” said Kate Morgan. “And I want to talk about why civilian and nongovernmental responses are required when the State is the primary actor in the creation of the crisis.”

### **INVITATION FOLLOWS REPORT AND ARREST**

The invitation for the two groups to speak at the conference came after the release of the abuse-documentation report detailing the destruction of humanitarian-aid supplies by Border Patrol agents. That same day Scott Warren, a volunteer with No More Deaths, was arrested while providing aid to two border crossers.

### **FOCUSING INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION**

“We will be speaking to the government’s attempt to criminalize the work of No More Deaths,” said Kate, “as well as the targeting of community leaders and activists like Scott. We will have the attention of an international audience and I hope we can focus it on what is happening here on the border.”

*For more information on Armadillos Búsqueda y Rescate, please find them on Facebook @ArmadillosBusquedaYRescate.*

# What does recovering human remains mean?

“You can’t call somebody dead who struggles for life.” —Anonymous

There is no easy way to write about this. The words when put side by side are shrill. A keen.

Recovering. Human. Remains.

How does one “recover” another who is dead? Another whose body parts are strewn about, blanched, clotted with dirt, or even intact, sun-seared and gray?

“Humans,” even in death, shouldn’t look like this.

“Remains”: a euphemism. This is what’s left. What wasn’t eaten, or dragged off by coyotes or ravens, or buried in monsoon mud.

A being is reduced to a statistic. A what, rather than a who . . .

Who lived inside this skull anyway? What were their last thoughts? Who is their mother? Lover? Did they have children? Does anyone who loved them know their fate? Why did they come this way? Will I ever get used to this part of the work? Do I want to?

And yet, can I stop? When I encounter some-body, I re-



encounter myself. The living meets the dead. And stops me. Cold. Even at 115 degrees.

Sometimes I go into work mode. I become methodical. Set up a grid search . . . to look for more body parts, more of who this Juan or Juanita Doe was. Mark a GPS waypoint. Take photos. Call the sheriff’s office. Mark the area with bright tape and . . . and, and, and . . .

And yet here or nearby is where someone took their last choking, sun-racked breath.

Sometimes I just sit down in the deep stillness. Paralyzed in the moment. Looking death in the face, or more accurately, in the eyeless skull. Looking into the maw of needless death. Premeditated death. Death by policy. Murder.

My intellect and my emotions collide. And I’m pushed deeper into that dark, dank internal cavern where the query “why” bangs off the walls. And shatters the stillness.

There is no easy way to write about this. How can you call somebody dead who struggled for life?

*This piece was written by John Heid, a No More Deaths volunteer who lives in Ajo, Arizona.*

# Quest for justice for murdered teen continues

José Antonio Elena Rodríguez, sixteen years old, was walking down a street next to the border in his hometown of Nogales, Sonora, Mexico on the night of October 10, 2012. A cross-border incident was taking place. Border Patrol Agent Lonnie Swartz, arriving on the scene, targeted José Antonio, firing sixteen times — from a hundred feet away, through the twenty-five-foot steel border wall that looms over the street. Ten of Swartz's bullets tore into José Antonio's body, two in his head and eight in his back. José Antonio was a son, a brother, an uncle, and a friend.



On October 13, 2012, people walk past flowers placed where José Antonio died. (Photo taken through one of the four-inch gaps through which Swartz fired.)

## FACTS CLEAR, YET AGENT ACQUITTED

As a result of the almost six years that José Antonio's family has fought for justice for him, many members of our community have had the opportunity to visit the place where he died. All have been struck by the way the very geometry of the scene cries murder.

Yet on April 23, after a month-long trial at the federal courthouse in Tucson, a jury acquitted Swartz of second-degree murder. They could not reach a verdict on two lesser charges, voluntary manslaughter and involuntary manslaughter.

In outrage at the verdict and in solidarity with the family of José Antonio, a coalition of community members, including volunteers from No More Deaths, took control of Tucson streets for over seven hours, demanding justice.

## A RACIST JUSTICE SYSTEM

The acquittal of Lonnie Swartz is a glaring example of the racist culture of impunity that enables border

agents to violate human rights and literally get away with murder. The family of José Antonio, in their pursuit of justice, has had everything stacked against them — including their Mexican citizenship. The nativism and white supremacy inherent in the US justice system is reflected in the April 23 verdict, as is the familiar belief in the infallibility of law enforcement that so often serves as a mechanism.

## THE FIGHT CONTINUES

Under public pressure, prosecutors announced on May 11 that they would retry Swartz on the manslaughter charges he was not acquitted on. Whether he is ultimately convicted or not depends, in part, on people like us.

*Justice for José Antonio!  
Justice for all victims of  
Border Patrol violence!*

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No More Deaths was founded in 2004 in Tucson, Arizona. Our mission is to end the death and suffering of migrants on the US–Mexico border by mobilizing people of conscience to uphold fundamental human rights. Our work includes providing aid in the desert, providing aid in Mexico, documenting and denouncing abuse, searching for the disappeared, helping get belongings back, running a biweekly legal clinic for undocumented community members, and alliances with border communities. We are a ministry of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson. To contact us, call (520) 333-5699 or visit our website [nomoredeaths.org](http://nomoredeaths.org).