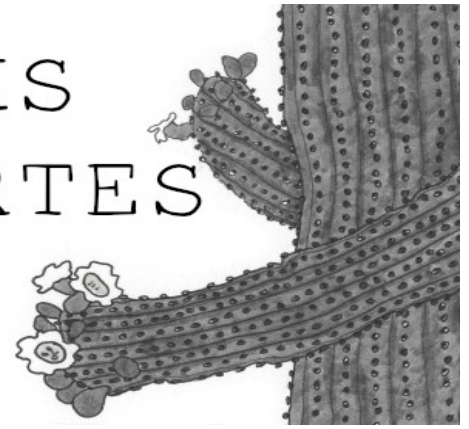


NO MORE DEATHS NO MÁS MUERTES



Spring/Summer 2022



Dear Friends of No More Deaths / No Más Muertes,

Long-term drought conditions in Arizona continue and spring temperatures across the state have been warmer than normal. Migrants who are traveling through the desert experience the consequences of these drought conditions. At the same time, the harmful Border Patrol policy of "prevention through deterrence" pushes travelers further into remote areas of the desert and leaves them vulnerable to the harsh environment of the borderlands. Furthermore, many are refugees of the global climate crisis that contributes to severe political and economic instability in their home countries.



We are now in the second year of this "new" administration and have seen no improvements to the US anti-immigrant system. We are also witnessing a deep disparity in treatment towards refugees from European countries and refugees from the Global South. With Biden's rightful commitment to welcoming 100,000 Ukrainian migrants to the US, we can't help but reflect on the thousands of Latin American and Caribbean refugees who have been deported by this very administration. In this context, our mission is clear: we embrace civil initiative to end death and suffering in the Mexico/US borderlands rather than waiting for "leaders" to take action.

The purpose of No More Deaths/No Más Muertes and many allied organizations is to fill a gap of what society and government can't and won't provide. The death and disappearance of migrants in the borderland is not natural, necessary or inevitable; it is the result of decisions and policies that willfully dehumanize migrants of color. The forces behind these policies are incredibly powerful, but we know we can mitigate some of the harms they cause with direct support. We remain committed to offering support on both sides of the man-made border.

We are a ministry of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson. To contact us, call (520) 333-5699 or visit our website at nomoredeaths.org. You can make a tax-deductible donation online at nomoredeaths.org or by check.

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

Please email fundraising@nomoredeaths.org for any fundraising related questions.

No More Deaths is a humanitarian aid organization that values consensus and community based approaches to our work. Our volunteers are the thesis of the organization, their time and efforts make desert aid a reality.

Our efforts in northern Mexico and Nogales include purchasing bus tickets for recently deported migrants, cashing checks issued by ICE, recovering lost or confiscated items, and providing financial support to migrant shelters. Recently, we responded to the crisis in Yuma, one of the hottest areas of Arizona, where asylum-seekers are stranded without food or water because of the US government's failure to respond. In other areas of the Arizona borderlands, our desert aid volunteers continue to make weekly water drops on migrant trails and maintain our humanitarian aid camp.



Our desert aid volunteer, Mago, assessing humanitarian aid supplies on a trail.

In this issue, you will read an interview with our Missing Migrant Hotline team, a critical project within our organization that began in 2017. You can also read our thoughts on the ending of Title 42 and an update from our desert aid working group on the current status of our work in the borderlands.

As we approach the summer's rising temperatures (our busiest time of year), we ask you to join our Longest Day Campaign, which will culminate on June 21st, the longest day of the year. This year we hope to raise \$300,000 to support our desert aid, search & rescue, Missing Migrant Hotline, and northern Mexico work. Please support the Longest Day Campaign by giving a gift online at nomoredeaths.org or by using the enclosed envelope. We greatly appreciate your continued generosity and support. Whether that means a gift, reading this newsletter, or sharing it with a friend, we are so glad to have you with us.

*With much gratitude,
The No More Deaths/No Más Muertes community*

An Interview with No More Deaths' Missing Migrant Hotline

The death and disappearance of people migrating through the US-Mexico borderlands is a tragedy that affects families and communities across the Global South. For those who have lost contact with their loved ones migrating through Arizona, No More Deaths' Missing Migrant Hotline can help them find answers.

The Hotline was created in 2013 by La Coalición de Derechos Humanos, a grassroots organization in Tucson formed to fight border militarization and promote the civil and human rights of migrants. In 2017, volunteers brought the Hotline to No More Deaths as a new "working group." For several years, a few people operated the Hotline, spending countless hours on the phone each week. Exhausted by this model, the Hotline working group recently restructured in order to ensure that this critical resource for migrants and their families continues to operate and grow. Thanks to your support and the efforts of staff and volunteers, the working group now includes one coordinator and four hotline operators.

The following interview with the Hotline working group has been shortened and edited for clarity.

Who are the families that the Hotline helps?

They are the families of folks who immigrate to the US due to violence in their home countries or lack of resources. They are trying to find a better future for their families. We get a lot of calls from moms and you can hear the worry in their voices. They say, "I don't know where my son is," or "I talked to my son two days ago and he said his phone had 5% battery." Sometimes they have a location, which makes it easier to file a report. But when they don't, it's difficult. At the end of the day, it's a lot of moms looking for their kids and not knowing what to do or how to find them. It's families who are full of panic and frustration and a feeling of *impotencia*.

How do you describe your work as a Hotline operator?

We give resources to families looking for loved ones out in the desert or disappeared in the desert. We also get calls from people who are in the desert themselves and

tell us, "I'm here, I don't have any water, I don't have any food, I'm injured," and so in that moment it's like being a nurse and triaging over the phone. We tell them to send us their location, full name, and date of birth. If they consent, we call Border Patrol, give them the coordinates, and ask them to pick the person up. Then we do follow-up calls every hour to see if they've been found. Nobody ever gets off the phone with Border Patrol and says, "That went really well." Usually they just tell us, "We'll go out and search." Sometimes we get lucky and there will be an agent who lets us know when the person is found, but it's really rare. Other times Border Patrol is really disrespectful and ignores the report. They have said to us, "They're illegal, it's their problem" or "They chose to do this." We also get calls from folks who haven't had contact with their loved one recently and they don't have any coordinates. If it's been more than three days since their last contact, Border Patrol won't do a search. At that point, we get the family in touch with the consulate because if the person was deported or detained, Border Patrol has an obligation to inform the consulate. If the consulate doesn't have information, it means that the person is either still in the desert or, unfortunately, did not make it. We tell the families how to contact the Colibri Center for Human Rights and the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, which are organizations that do interviews with the families of people who may be deceased.

How has your work been affected by changes at the border?

We can see the effect of US policies at the border and across the world by looking at which countries people are calling from. We're currently trying to find more resources for people calling from Brazil, Colombia, Haiti and a few other places. Sometimes we learn that there just aren't any resources to be found.

Other than answering calls, what does the Hotline working group do?

We spend a lot of time gathering resources. We are constantly analyzing where to find information and who is helpful. We are cautious to not give out information that isn't updated or useful. For example, we've learned that it's not helpful to tell people to call the detention

centers, because they never tell the families anything. We also work on building relationships with allied organizations that are doing similar work in other parts of the borderlands. As far as we know, we are the only hotline. But there are search and rescue groups and we want to work together so that we can share our resources and collaborate on searches whenever we can.

How do you take care of yourself and each other in order to continue doing this difficult work?

We understand that each of us has a life, that we deserve time off to spend with our families, and that although this work is important, it should not encompass our entire existence. We only have one day off per week right now, which sounds like very little, but two years ago people were working 24/7. We have created a space where people can share if they have an emergency and need help covering their work. We've written policies to deal with conflict, to give and receive feedback, and to check-in regularly. Everybody's input is included in everything.

What are your hopes for the Hotline's future?

Someday we'd like to have 20 hotline operators, whether paid or volunteer, and extend our work to other parts of the border. As a working group, we strongly believe that this work doesn't belong to us. We don't want to be the only ones holding this knowledge. We want to find people who are interested in starting hotlines and help to train them and support them. We want to start holding community assemblies again to share information, such as teaching people how to fill out paperwork or meet with consulates. Overall, we're just hoping to get as much information out as possible and to be a resource within the Tucson community.

Missing Migrant Hotline: 520-585-5881
From Latin America: 001-520-585-5881

Reflections on Title 42

As we send this newsletter to print, Title 42 is expected to end on May 23, 2022. We are grateful for all the work by UndocuBlack, the Haitian Bridge Alliance, and others

who fought for a (potential) end to Title 42, which used the public health emergency of Covid-19 to limit the ability to apply for asylum. Public health measures should never be used as an excuse to control, detain, mistreat, or deny people access to asylum. However, the end of pandemic restrictions and a return to "regular border controls" is not sufficient. US border enforcement policy intentionally causes suffering, disappearance, and death. When people are turned away at ports of entry when seeking asylum, they are denied their due process and subsequently funneled into the desert.

All people fleeing violence have a right to apply for asylum and seek safety regardless of the manner in which they are traveling, their country of origin, or which conflict they are fleeing. Racist double standards in asylum and application processes are unacceptable.

Migration is a human right. Families and individuals fleeing violence should be met with medical care, access to legal counsel, and other forms of material support, not detention and abuse. Ending Title 42 is a step in the right direction, but to end death and suffering along the border we must defund CBP, decriminalize migration, and demilitarize the border.

which have been impacted by border wall construction. Alongside resupplying water drops, we continue to maintain our humanitarian aid camp and improve infrastructure. Some recent projects have included building composting toilets, expanding our water and food storage, and creating more shaded and sheltered areas. As temperatures rise and conditions intensify going into the summer, Desert Aid volunteers remain committed to the work of preventing death and suffering in the desert to the best of our abilities.

We are always looking for more volunteers to help support this work. Please email volunteer@nomoredeaths.org for more information on our current volunteer openings.

Desert Aid Update

This past winter and spring have been among the busiest that we've seen in the desert. Water drops are being used at rapid rates. Groups of volunteers continue to hike into the desert to resupply them multiple times a week, leaving an estimated 1,200 gallons of water in the desert over the last six months. Volunteers also adapt water drops to reflect changing migration trends,



Desert Aid volunteers on a water drop.

No More Deaths has monthly opportunities for folks from Southern Arizona and across the states to be engaged in border solidarity efforts. Applications for our Local Volunteer Program and the Desert Aid Month Long Volunteer Program are posted every month.

We also have an active BIPOC Desert Aid working group that recruits and provides support/context for BIPOC volunteers.

Our application process prioritizes BIPOC folks. Keep an eye out for upcoming BIPOC Month Long Volunteer programming.

Check out our website for more details on how to get involved: [NoMoreDeaths.Org/Volunteer/](https://nomoredeaths.org/volunteer/)

For questions about volunteer opportunities please reach out to the Desert Aid Volunteer Coordinators at volunteer@nomoredeaths.org.