



No More Deaths • No Más Muertes

Humanitarian Aid Is Never A Crime

Fall 2015

Edited by Denise Holley

Nine of the 12 Streamline bus-stoppers, with their attorney, Margo Cowan (left) cheer their reprieve from an additional sentence and the opportunity to speak their minds in court on Aug. 7. From left to right they are: (Back row) Maryada Vallet, Paula McPheeters, Ethan Beasley and Steve Johnston. (Front row) Gabriel Schivone, Michelle Jahnke Raygada, Jaye Harden, Angie Loreto-Wong and Sarah Launius. Six of the 10 people pictured volunteer with No More Deaths.



Photo by Paige Winslett

Streamline bus-stoppers speak out at sentencing

By Dorothy Chao

Chao attended the July 20, 2015 sentencing of 12 local people (some of them No More Deaths volunteers) who chained themselves to the wheels of two buses carrying undocumented migrants to federal court in Tucson on Oct. 11, 2013. The protesters stopped federal marshals from taking the group to Operation Streamline, a fast-track proceeding that sentences migrants to prison for illegal entry. In March, Pima County Justice Court Judge Susan Bacal found the defendants guilty of obstructing a highway and creating a public nuisance.

I am crowded into this Tucson courtroom with images in my head from my morning spent in Nogales, Sonora, working as a No More Deaths (NMD) volunteer with recently deported people. The distressed faces of people I met in Nogales this morning who went through Streamline and spent time in jail are here in the courtroom with me.

The courtroom is packed; the air charged. Twelve of the defendants are facing sentencing today; potentially 150 hours of community service each. They stopped two buses of migrants on the I-10 access road here in Tucson and chained themselves around the buses' gigantic wheels. The buses carried randomly selected migrants who would have been tried "en masse" in Operation Streamline court. They would have faced criminal charges for illegal entry and sentenced to a few months to a few years of prison time.

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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

NMD branches out to reach more migrants

Dear Friends of No More Deaths:

We adopted a \$300,000 budget for the year that started on July 1, 2015 and ends on June 30, 2016. We've never had a budget this large, nor have we ever taken on so much work. We need your help more than ever.

After each working group submitted their budget estimates, we wrestled with the question of our capacity to make it happen. No one wanted to make cuts because we know the death rates of those crossing through Southern Arizona are higher than ever. Each dollar goes toward direct aid work that is vital to our mission of ending death and suffering in the borderlands.

Remembering that we are an all-volunteer, faith-based movement, we took a deep breath and committed to raising the money. We created a "fundraising action working group" that meets regularly to brainstorm and implement ideas for funding our work. We welcome ideas and contacts you could share (reach us at fundraising@nomoredeaths.org).

In alliance with Derechos Humanos, we formalized an expanded search and rescue (SAR) team to respond to emergency calls received by the Missing Migrant Project hotline. We are building capacity to respond as quickly as possible with dedicated vehicles, equipment and volunteers on call.

On monthly trips to the migrant center in Altar, Sonora – one of the major staging grounds for those crossing our area – we bring harm reduction kits, food, and clothing. Our commitment to supporting the center and its efforts to relieve the suffering of migrants has deepened.

Each time we put together another newsletter, we ask you – people of conscience across the country and globe – to renew your partnership with us. We need your help to support our largest budget and most wide-ranging efforts to date.

The crisis in the borderlands plays out in the remote desert, but it is a crisis of national policy and an international humanitarian disaster. On behalf of our migrant brothers and sisters, thank you for your heartfelt commitment to creating a more just and loving world.

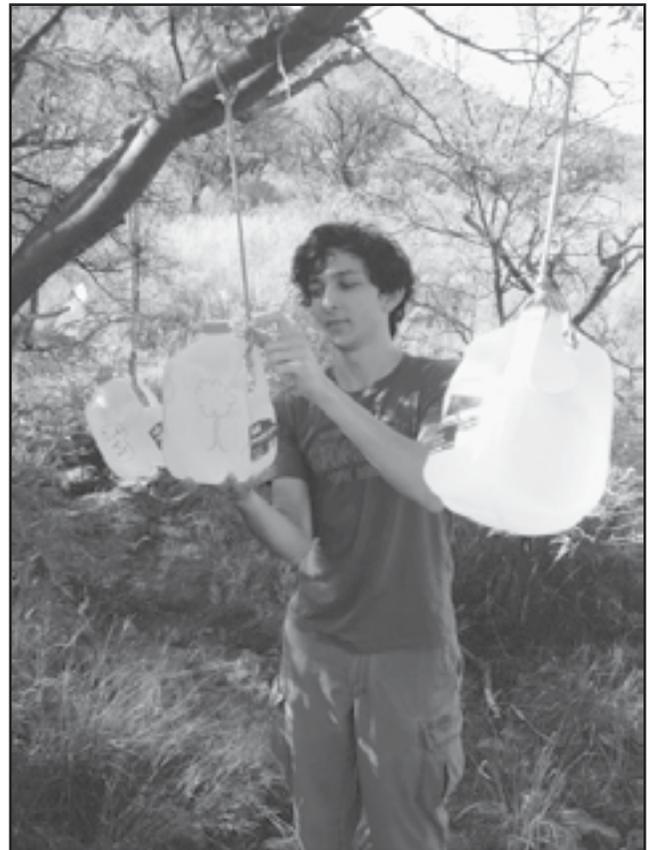
In solidarity,

The No More Deaths Community

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



NMD volunteers Tayeb Zaidi, Lois Martin, and Ryan Tombleson walk a trail west of Tucson, Arizona, in August to leave jugs of water where thirsty migrants may find them.



No More Deaths volunteer Tayeb Zaidi hangs water bottles from a tree limb along a migrant trail west of Tucson, Arizona, in August. Photos by Jim Marx

One year in sanctuary: Community leaders, church members, volunteers stand with Rosa

By Denise Holley

In the noontime heat outside the downtown library, a pastor and government leaders shouted their support for an undocumented Tucson mother. They called on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to close her deportation case and allow her to live in peace with her family.

More than 100 people gathered Aug. 7 to mark one year since Rosa Robles Loreto entered into sanctuary at Southside Presbyterian Church.

"I believe God stands with Rosa," declared the Rev. Alison Harrington, the Southside pastor. She asked President Obama, DHS and ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) "Where do you stand?"

County Supervisor Richard Elias said, "Rosa's case is low priority, yet she has faced incarceration in a private prison."

The guest of honor couldn't see the long half-circle of signs with her family's picture that read, "We Stand With Rosa," nor hear the words of support and applause. For her safety, she had to remain inside the gates of the church.

Robles Loreto, a native of Hermosillo, Mexico, has lived in Tucson since 1999, she said. She and her husband work and are raising two sons, ages 9 and 12. Her legal troubles began with a minor traffic violation in 2010, and led to a deportation order for Aug. 8, 2014. The day before, she sought protection at Southside, a church that offered sanctuary for Central American refugees in the 1980s.

Although ICE has said Robles Loreto is a low priority for deportation, the agency has refused to close her case.

Her case has run its course in local courts, said Margo Cowen, Robles Loreto's current attorney. "This is a case of national importance."

Another immigrant who took sanctuary at Southside in spring 2014 fared better. Daniel Neyoy Ruiz was granted a one-year stay of deportation after five weeks at the church with his wife and son. When the stay expired in June this year, he briefly entered sanctuary at another church. Then ICE granted him another one-year reprieve.

"Daniel has a U.S. citizen child and Rosa doesn't," Cowan said.

Keep Tucson Together, a No More Deaths affiliate that works to stop deportations, hosted the press conference. The group created "We Stand with Rosa" signs to drum up publicity and support in Tucson neighborhoods. NMD voted last March to donate \$5,000 to make more signs.

KTT launched a push to finish posting nearly 10,000



Photo by Denise Holley

Rosa Robles Loreto (right), with Ana Bitsoie, chops vegetables for Cross Streets Community, a program of free meals and showers at Southside Presbyterian Church. During her year living at the church, Robles Loreto has come to know homeless people she used to see in the streets, she said. "Now, for me, these people have a face."

signs at homes during a "25 Days for Rosa" campaign. It began July 13, Robles Loreto's birthday, and culminated on Aug. 7, her one-year anniversary living in sanctuary.

While she misses her home and her sons' baseball games, Robles Loreto has immersed herself in the life of Southside Presbyterian. She is grateful for the love and support she receives from members and from Keep Tucson Together.

"I fell into the hands of a blessed group," Robles Loreto said about KTT.

Immigrants don't come to the U.S. to take away any rights from citizens, she asserted. "We only come seeking opportunities."

Because of a minor traffic infraction, Robles Loreto fears she may lose her opportunity to one day manage her own

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Nogales Project evolves to aid dis



An early version of the No More Deaths aid station for deportees in Nogales, Sonora, in 2006 or 2007.

By Nancy Myers

Shortly after No More Deaths began going into the desert to help rescue migrants 11 years ago, legal team member Margo Cowan, with help from Maryada Vallet and other volunteers, realized that something needed to be done to help deported migrants. Each day, hundreds were dumped across the border into Mexico with no possessions, identification, or money, and often injured, hungry and thirsty.

Many, including women and children, were dropped off in the middle of the night. Families were separated and their belongings and money were either stolen or lost somewhere in the criminal justice process.

Working with the Mexican authorities from the state of Sonora at the border, NMD started a massive emergency volunteer effort in 2006. Volunteers set up a tent to offer first aid, coffee, food, water and a chance to rest and make a phone call. They gathered donated clothing, food, water and medicine. A Cruz Roja (Red Cross) mobile unit, a trailer holding supplies, and a makeshift soup kitchen were all part of the evolving endeavor.

Along with providing humanitarian aid, volunteers also documented migrants' experiences in custody, and two years later, the Abuse Documentation Project produced its first report, *Crossing the Line*.

In 2008, the Nogales group took on another proj-

ect, called the Pertenencias Project, to help migrants get their belongings back. Working with the Mexican Consulate and lawyers assigned to migrants going through Operation Streamline, volunteers took many steps to reconnect people with their property after they had been arbitrarily separated from it.

As government officials came and went, and drug cartels started interfering with the migrants, the first aid tent became unsafe. The volunteers felt vulnerable and frustrated because coyotes were soliciting migrants. At the same time, other community efforts arose to provide aid to migrants. So NMD began providing phone calls and first aid at Grupos Beta, a Mexican government aid base, and a privately owned bus transportation center.

The phone-call service, allowing people in crisis to communicate with their families in Mexico, the



Photo by Steve Johnston
No More Deaths volunteer Maryada Vallet treats the injuries of a deported migrant at the NMD tent in Nogales, Sonora in 2007.

dispossessed migrants in Sonora



No More Deaths volunteer David Hill (left) talks with a deported man at the Comedor in Nogales, Sonora, who may need help reclaiming possessions or cashing a check.

U.S. or Central America, became our core Nogales service. For a time, NMD supported two or three long-term volunteers to live in Nogales, Arizona while doing this work.

The Kino Border Initiative, a Catholic organization, had opened the Centro de Atención al Migrante Deportado (Aid Center for Deported Migrants), a safe dining space, in 2009. From the beginning, NMD actively supported this project, informally known as the “comedor.”

People come into the *comedor* with injuries or illnesses, fear, and stories of kidnapping, abuse by authorities and missing family members. Many need their money or personal belongings returned. A couple of years ago, NMD arranged with KBI to provide phone calls and other services there. Currently, Samaritans from Tucson and Green Valley and NMD volunteers travel to the *comedor* daily.

In 2013, NMD volunteers noticed that many deportees who had been incarcerated had their money returned in a check they could not cash in Mexico. They developed multiple strategies for helping them recover this money, including arrang-

ing for a new check to be issued by the prison in the name of No More Deaths so that it could be cashed in the United States. Volunteers provide this “check-cashing” service to up to ten people a day.

During the past year, in addition to deportees, more Hondurans, Guatemalans, and Salvadorans arrived heading north. Usually they hadn’t talked to their family for a month or more as they traveled through Mexico. Often they arrived with injuries from weeks spent on top of trains or at the hands of bandits or drug cartels.

Many speak good English from living in the U.S. They come with a small piece of paper or notebook with a few phone numbers and little else, hoping to find relatives in California, New York, Florida and other far-flung places.

Whether they connect with family north or south of the border, the conversations are always emotional, often tearful, for them and the volunteers. NMD has helped hundreds of people make a phone call in the last 12 months.

If you want to join the effort or donate, visit www.nomoredeaths.org

Lawyers sue over Border Patrol's harsh treatment of migrants

By Denise Holley

Men, women and children apprehended by Border Patrol in the Tucson, Arizona sector are locked up under inhumane conditions that violate the U.S. Constitution and the Patrol's own policies, according to a lawsuit filed June 8 in U.S. District Court in Tucson.

Legal groups filed the class-action suit, called *Doe v. Johnson* (Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson) on behalf of three plaintiffs who said they were held in cold, dirty and crowded cells at the Tucson Border Patrol Station. The plaintiffs described having nowhere to sleep, no soap or showers, and inadequate food, water and medical attention.

The lawsuit charges Border Patrol with unconstitutional conditions of confinement and violating its own inter-



Jack Driscoll, a friend of No More Deaths, died on July 6, 2015. He was a special member of the Arivaca, Arizona, community and a valuable volunteer with People Helping People in the border zone and the Arivaca Humanitarian Aid Office. We honor his memory and celebrate his life as we continue to work for justice, as he did, in the borderlands.

James Duff Lyall, an attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Arizona, says lawyers who filed this lawsuit used data from reports by No More Deaths that document routine abuse of migrants in custody.

Photo by Denise Holley



nal policies, said James Duff Lyall, an attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Arizona.

Border Patrol denies sleep, warmth, nutrition, hygiene supplies and medical screening to detainees, many of whom arrive exhausted and medically compromised after days in the desert, the suit alleges. Then detainees are held for days at a time in Border Patrol's "temporary" holding cells. Agents routinely take away sweatshirts and jackets and push people into cells so cold detainees call them *hieleras* (iceboxes).

The lawsuit "builds on the excellent and important work No More Deaths has been doing," Lyall said. He referred to the reports "Crossing the Line" (2008) and "Culture of Cruelty" (2011), in which NMD volunteers documented thousands of incidents in which migrants were abused in Border Patrol custody. Both of these reports are cited in the lawsuit.

The suit would cover all people who are or will be detained overnight by Border Patrol in its Tucson Sector facilities, and seeks a court order requiring the Border Patrol to reform its policies and practices.

In addition to the plaintiffs, attorneys collected declarations from more than 75 former detainees, all of whom described experiences consistent with the plaintiffs' allegations. They relied on numerous government and non-governmental organization (NGO) reports describing the same inhumane conditions.

The plaintiffs are represented by the National Immigration Law Center, the American Immigration Council, the ACLU of Arizona, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area, and Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Arivaca residents sit in at Border Patrol checkpoint



Photo provided by the People Helping People media team
Residents of the small border town of Arivaca, Arizona, confront Border Patrol agents at a checkpoint they must pass through to leave town during a protest on May 27.

By Sophie Smith

Some 100 Arivaca residents and supporters gathered at 10 a.m. May 27 and peacefully proceeded to the Border Patrol checkpoint on Arivaca Road to demand its removal. Upon entering the checkpoint, they were met with a blockade of armed Border Patrol agents who used physical force, attempting to move the residents back.

Despite this intimidation, protesters held their ground and sat in while community members held a public hearing to call for the removal of the checkpoint.

At the protest, local business leaders, parents, seniors and youth cited widespread abuse and harassment, rights

Rosa continued

housecleaning company.

She never sought publicity, but realizes she is a symbol, said Robles Loreto, whose story and photo have appeared in newspapers and television reports.

“With my voice and my experience, I want to serve other families who have experienced the same thing, because we are millions,” Robles Loreto said. “Thanks to the sanctuary movement, more families have come out from the shadows.”

CORRECTION

In the front-page article of the spring 2015 NMD newsletter, I stated incorrectly that Rosa Robles Loreto’s sons had mailed their applications for DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) on Feb. 18. The family had this planned, but found out the day before that a federal judge had issued an injunction that put the expanded DACA program on hold. I apologize for the error.

violations, racial profiling, and economic deterioration as direct results of the checkpoints placed on all outbound roads from the small rural community.

“Our reverse-gated community is a barrier to tourists... this checkpoint is choking our community,” said business owner Maggie Milinovich.

Carlotta Wray spoke about her experiences being racially profiled by Border Patrol. “Because of our brown skin, me and most of my family have to reach into our pockets for ID at the checkpoint to prove that we’re legal citizens in our own town,” she said. “I’m sick of it.”

Patty Miller described the ongoing military-style presence of Border Patrol in the Arivaca community as “a war zone all the time.”

Community members called on U.S. Rep. Raul Grijalva to keep his promise to hold a federal hearing on the issue before Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials.

The Arivaca protest was part of the Border Communities Day of Action for demilitarization. That same day, communities across the state held demonstrations against border militarization, including Ajo, Bisbee, Patagonia, and Sells on the Tohono O’odham Nation.

The coalition of autonomous community groups called on DHS to stop the spread of military infrastructure that degrades residential life in the border region. They asked for removal of surveillance towers, inland checkpoints and walls and respect for indigenous sovereignty, environmental regulations, and the separation of local and federal policing powers.

Together, these actions put forth a strong local vision of a demilitarized U.S.-Mexico border.



Photo by Denise Holley
Jose Emiliano (left), son of Rosa Robles Loreto, and her husband, Gerardo Grijalva, distribute “We Stand with Rosa” signs in late July in the neighborhood around Southside Presbyterian Church. Ministry intern Elizabeth Welliver (right) accompanies the family members to ask residents if they would display a sign in their yard.

Bus-stoppers continued

Listening to the defendants' individual testimonies, I am struck by how totally committed these people are to their personal moral values and to being advocates for justice. They put their bodies in physical harm's way. Beyond that, they could have faced jail time and felony charges with all the associated stigma, disenfranchisement, and loss of personal freedom.

One after another we hear their testimonies. They are school teachers, health care professionals, members of nonprofit boards, and former government professionals. Every one of them is committed in their daily lives to doing volunteer work to help ameliorate the suffering caused by our broken U.S. immigration policy.

I want to share what I heard in the courtroom that day from three of the defendants. Steve Johnston spoke about the deaths he has witnessed in the desert; he had trouble speaking and frequently broke down as he relived each memory. Devora Gonzales, holding her newborn close, stated how the birth of her baby served to recommit her to doing everything she could for family unity.

Paula McPheeters was absolutely stunning and straight

to the point: "I am a retired Tucson school teacher," she said, "and I saw the terrible effects of losing a family member on my students every day." The collective testimony was quite an indictment of Operation Streamline and everything it represents. Many in the courtroom, including myself, were in tears.

Margo Cowan, serving as defense attorney, summed things up in her closing statement. She pointed out that it was the city police who decided to close both lanes of traffic (by the buses) instead of just one, and that the people of Tucson put up with traffic rerouting for unknown reasons every day. She commented on the overwhelming amount of community service each of the defendants do every day of their own free will.

How exciting to be in the courtroom when it erupted with pleasure when the judge granted "time served!" (The 14 hours the defendants spent in jail after their arrests.)

I am reminded of why I decided to move to Tucson four years ago. I am honored to live here and be a part of this wonderful activist community, to have a working link to these people through NMD and call them my friends!

In their own words – excerpts from statements by NMD defendants

I took action on October 11, 2013 because I couldn't handle the frustration and pain I feel every time I tell a mother with babies next to her that, in all likelihood, nothing can be done.... Something must be done ... to work toward stopping mass criminalization, mass deportation and mass incarceration Prior to that day, most of the country had never heard of Operation Streamline I did what I did in the hope that many more people would become familiar with the anguish felt by families like Amy's, and take meaningful action to right those wrongs I pray that the actions that we are being sentenced for today have made some difference toward that end, and will contribute ultimately to correcting a terrible wrong that is being committed, every single day, by our government.

– Sarah Launius

I think of my mom, Maria Jesus, who's here in the courtroom today. You came to the U.S. as a child – luckily made it across, got naturalized citizenship later as a young adult, built a family. I and my siblings were born here. But, under different circumstances, I know it could have been you on that bus. So, with that in mind, I locked myself down around that bus's tire and didn't let go even when police ordered me to do so under threat of arrest. I think of my cousin Carla who was living with us ... when I was a child. And then one day she was gone. She had been deported. All she wanted to do here was work, start a family ... and then our immigration enforcement system took it all away. Her daughter and father of her children are still here while she lives separated from them in Mexico with her other child Now the consequences are unimaginably worse on families whose members' lives are ruined by these unjust criminal records and jail sentences. – Gabe Schivone

Streamline tries to grind down people's hopes and dreams of return The U.S. Sentencing Commission recently reported that about 50 percent of immigrant re-entry offenders have children living in the U.S. They all said the word *culpable* or guilty while shackled in front of a judge with **no** due process and little understanding of how that could forever ruin their chances of legalizing their status I locked myself under the bus as a true expression of my faith. I believe in a God of radical love and inclusion who sets the captives free. Operation Streamline is a modern-day slave trade steeped with racism, selling shackled migrants to fill the beds of private prisons for 30, 60, 180 days, and years if caught again. My conduct that day may have been a "public nuisance," but for that day it prevented an unethical and unjust harm to 70 people on those buses. With these charges, now I'll be a criminal too, but in solidarity with my heroes. – Maryada Vallet

Why did I crawl under the Streamline bus on Oct. 11, 2013? For my close friends, the Huerta/Ortiz/Perez family, who immigrated to Tucson from Mexico in 1991 Carlos Omar Perez was arrested illegally "driving while brown" in a white neighborhood, turned over to Border Patrol and ultimately deported A more valuable citizen we could not have, but he's barred from entry into the U.S. for 10 years Why? In memory of Beatriz Adriana Sanchez Salazar, 23, who died of hyperthermia in the mountains south of Ruby Road on July 4, 2005, during my first week with No More Deaths.... Why? For José, 25 years in Phoenix working as a stone mason, arrested and deported for running a stop sign on his bicycle, who we luckily found semi-conscious and near death under a juniper in a wash away from any trail The worldwide civil rights movement of the 21st Century is represented right here by the cruelty of Operation Streamline and a border policy of deterrence based on imprisonment and death. – Steve Johnston