



No More Deaths • No Más Muertes

FALL 2016

EDITED BY DENISE HOLLEY AND DAVID HILL



Volunteers lug water in the Sonoyta–Ajo–Gila Bend corridor 114 miles west of Tucson in July. PHOTO: JASON OUTENREATH.

Dear friends of No More Deaths,

As we close out one of the hottest summers on record, our hearts are heavy. In June, the bodies of 25 people were recovered from the deserts of southern Arizona. In July, the bodies of 24 people were found.

Of all the migrants and refugees whose remains were found and identified in the last year, the youngest is a 15-year-old boy. The oldest is a 58-year-old man. The unidentified outnumber the identified by a

factor of four, and we don't know how many are never found. We honor all their souls and keep their families in our hearts.

Their deaths move us to action; we don't only mourn. Border militarization, deportations, raids, free-trade policies, and U.S. intervention in Latin America have created a crisis where undocumented people die every day crossing from Mexico into the U.S. We undertake daily, direct acts of intervention to end the death and suffering on the border.

We also honor the living, and each person who

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Dear friends CONTINUED

makes the difficult choice to cross. We celebrate their determination to reunite with their families and communities. We are overwhelmed by the spirit of those who spend weeks crossing first Mexico, then the southern Arizona desert, in search of safety and refuge.

We honor you, our community of supporters. For 12 years, you have been the fuel in our trucks, the soles of our hiking boots. No More Deaths/No Más Muertes simply wouldn't exist without your volunteer labor, your contributions, and your advocacy. We

All contributions are tax-deductible. To **donate** in support of our work, please visit our website **nomoredeaths.org**.

Or, write a check payable to "UUCT/No More Deaths" and mail it to:

No More Deaths
P.O. Box 40782
Tucson, AZ 85717

raise 85 percent of our budget from grassroots fundraising and individual donors like you.

We celebrate that you lift up your voices, calling for love, inclusion, and change when others advocate fear, cruelty, and division.

Your contribution today keeps us running. Please donate today — online or by check — and keep building our national community.

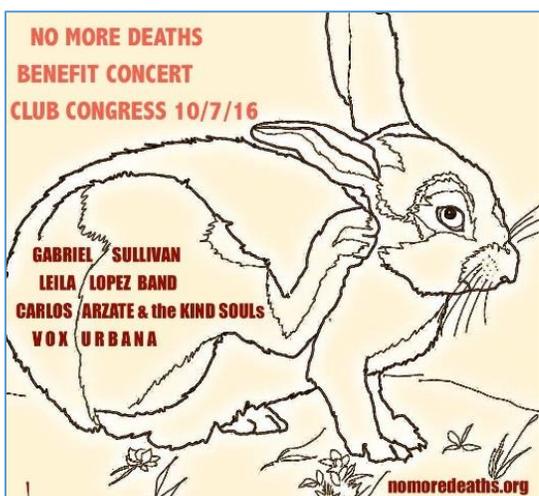
Thank you,

The No More Deaths/No Más Muertes community

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

No More Deaths gratefully accepts stocks, bonds, endowed gifts, and bequests. Please contact us at **fundraising@nomoredeaths.org** for more information.

We welcome your ideas and suggestions for fundraising opportunities.



Benefit concert for NMD

Join us Friday, October 7 at Club Congress (311 E. Congress St.) in downtown Tucson for a **benefit concert** supporting the work of No More Deaths! The concert is being held on the first evening of the SOA Watch Border Convergence and is included in the Convergence's **calendar of events**. From 7 to 11 p.m., enjoy live cumbia, Sonoran rock, and folk by Gabriel Sullivan, the Leila Lopez band, Carlos Arzate & The Kind Souls, and Vox Urbana. Then stick around for DJ Dirtyverbs and a Selena cover band extraordinaire on the Hotel Congress patio. Admission is \$5–\$20 sliding scale, with all proceeds donated to No More Deaths.

NO MORE DEATHS WAS FOUNDED IN 2004 IN TUCSON, ARIZONA. OUR MISSION IS TO END THE DEATH AND SUFFERING OF MIGRANTS ON THE U.S.–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.**

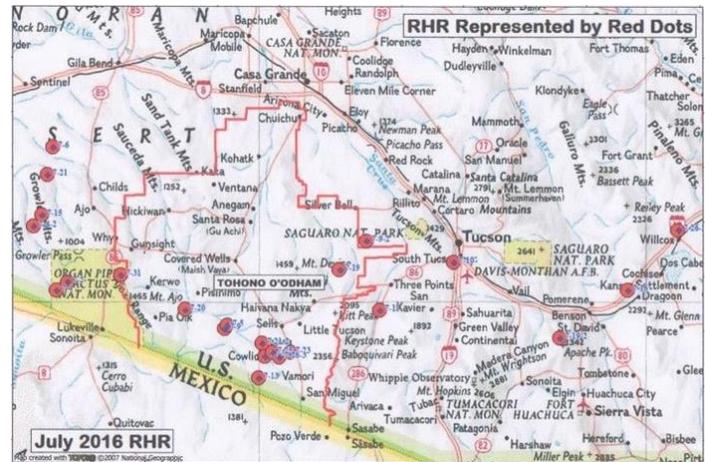
Coverage of heat deaths ignores migrants

BY LOIS MARTIN

The *Arizona Daily Star* ran front-page articles on June 21 and 22 about hikers who died as a result of our extreme summer heat. Since then, the newspaper has published at least two more articles about heat-related deaths, along with warnings to hikers.

At the time of the June articles, I wrote a letter to the editor acknowledging the tragedy of these deaths and thanking the *Star* for its warnings. However, the major content of my letter was about the daily heat-related deaths occurring in our desert that are given no media attention. In the June articles and subsequent ones, the *Star* lamented what grew to be six heat-related deaths of hikers in June. But the remains of 25 people were recovered from our desert that month, and another 24 in July, without a word.

This, of course, is nothing new: hundreds of migrant deaths occur every year without media attention, although the information about human remains found is readily available from the Pima County Forensic Science Center. Ed McCullough of the Tucson Samaritans compiles this data and distributes it to



Locations where the bodies of 24 border crossers were found in July. “RHR” stands for recovered human remains. MAP: ED MCCULLOUGH.

the many involved in humanitarian work in southern Arizona. We also know that this information understates the numbers of deaths because the remains of many who die are never found. So, in my letter to the editor, I asked why there is almost no media interest in these deaths compared to the deaths of a few recreational hikers. My letter was not published.

NMD joins allies to converge on border

BY PAULA MILLER

The No More Deaths community will join thousands of activists from all over the United States and Mexico October 7–10 when the School of the Americas Watch (SOA Watch) moves its annual vigil to the line between Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales, Sonora.

For 26 years, SOA Watch has held a vigil at the gates of Fort Benning, Georgia, where police and soldiers from Latin America are trained in repressive tactics. This year, SOA Watch and **partner groups** will push back against militarization of the border and oppose criminalization of migrants and refugees. We will stand on the side of mutual aid and solidarity, and build power for a culture shift.

The demands of the Border Convergence are:

- End U.S. military, economic and political interventions in the Americas

- Demilitarize the borders
- End the racist systems that criminalize and kill migrants, refugees, and communities of color
- Respect dignity, justice and self-determination of communities

Latin Americans continue to flee from U.S.-trained security forces only to be confronted with a militarized border, racist laws, and the xenophobic rhetoric in this election cycle. We can no longer separate the issues.

The Border Convergence will include **workshops and events** on both sides of the U.S.–Mexico border, as well as art, music, and resistance. We invite you to join us. To learn more about why SOA Watch is moving the Convergence to the border, and to get information about travel, lodging and the schedule, visit SOAW.org/border.

Root causes: An interview with author Todd Miller on climate change and migration

BY CATHERINE GAFFNEY

The impacts of a changing climate seem increasingly difficult to ignore. In southern Arizona, we experienced record high temperatures this summer. The heat combines with entrenched border militarization and reckless enforcement tactics to create deadly conditions for migrants and refugees.



In June, the Sonoran Desert south of Arivaca, Arizona, looks parched and desolate. PHOTO: PAIGE CORICH-KLEIM.

Climate change catches people coming and going. At border aid stations and in the desert, we meet people who have been displaced from their homes by landslides, earthquakes and crop failures. When they seek to rebuild their lives and support their families in the U.S., they face an even hotter and drier desert crossing.

We talked with Todd Miller, a journalist and writer on border issues, about the links between climate change and migration — the subject of his forthcoming book *Storming the Wall* — and how they relate to the work of No More Deaths/No Más Muertes.

What's the connection between climate change and migration, as far as what we're seeing on the U.S.–Mexico border?

According to most reports, the number of people to be displaced by climate change will be staggering and without precedent. The impacts of severe wea-

ther such as hurricanes, floods, sea-level rise, and drought are already hitting Central American countries, the Caribbean, and Mexico very hard. Where there are already unjust economic and political systems in place, climate catastrophes compound precarious situations.

In 2015, there was an unprecedented drought that dried up harvests throughout Central America. More than one million people, mostly small farmers, were affected. I met three of these farmers on the Mexico–Guatemala border as they waited to get on *La Bestia*, the infamous train, to go to the United States. As a Mexican military truck rumbled by with two masked soldiers holding assault rifles, perhaps on a border-policing mission fresh from U.S. training, the farmers told me that they were heading north from their homes in Honduras because there was no rain, no harvest, and no food.

As more “climate refugees” arrive at the border, what will they encounter?

In 2003, the Pentagon envisioned a world in which the U.S. builds a “defensive fortress” to “hold back unwanted starving immigrants from the Caribbean, Mexico, and South America.” Since 2010, climate change has been identified as a top national-security threat. The Department of Homeland Security has created a climate-adaptation roadmap and plan, and made climate change one of the central issues of its 2014 Quadrennial Report. However, there is no discussion of a climate-refugee status, nor expanding U.S. asylum to those displaced by climatic catastrophes.

Instead, at the U.S.–Mexico border, people will face an ever more fortified enforcement zone of patrolling armed agents and sophisticated surveillance systems, such as towers, drones, and surveillance blimps, all under the same Prevention Through Deterrence strategy that has been forcing people into the desert, and killing them, for more than years.

What can we expect to see in the southern-Arizona borderlands, if climate change and extreme weather events continue on their current path?

Even if countries keep to the emission-reduction pledges made at the climate summit in Paris, global temperature increases are projected to be well over the two-degree goal and on track to be beyond the point of no return. Some scientists are predicting unimaginably severe storms capable of heaving boul-

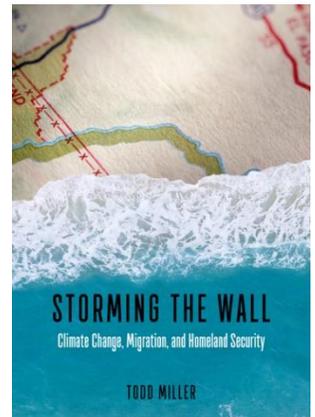
ders, and a sea-level rise that will drown the city of Miami.

For the U.S. Southwest, climate experts at NASA predict megadroughts four times stronger than the 1930s Dust Bowl, which displaced hundreds of thousands of people in the U.S. In the crosshairs of a dwindling water supply, wildfires, and dust storms, it is possible that Phoenix and Tucson will become largely uninhabitable, and there will be massive migrations of people within the U.S. It is also possible that an internal expansion of a homeland-security surveillance regime, with armed guards who can stop, interrogate, and detain people, will be “protecting the homeland” against internally displaced refugees within the U.S.

What are your ideas for what allies of migrants, refugees, and undocumented communities should be doing now to prepare for these impacts?

There are more than 70 securitized borders throughout the globe, where people are targeted, often racially, by armed guards and high-tech surveillance. As we enter an era of extreme and potentially catastrophic weather, unprecedented in human history, there will be more militarized and violent international divides that refugees and displaced persons will have to face. These border zones will be the terrain of battles between the rich and the poor.

This makes No More Deaths’ cross-border solidarity and organizing all the more essential. “Solidarity is not an alternative, it is not an option, it is our only chance,” Filipino climate activist Yeb Sano told me during the research for my upcoming book. “It is our only hope of ever moving forward and confronting this climate crisis.”



Todd Miller is the author of *Border Patrol Nation: Dispatches From the Front Lines of Homeland Security* and the upcoming *Storming the Wall: Climate Change, Migration, and Homeland Security*. His articles and essays can be found at toddmiller.wordpress.com.

NMD volunteers help South Texas aid grow

BY SOPHIE SMITH AND HADLEY POPE

In June, the two of us traveled to Brooks County, Texas, as No More Deaths volunteers. We went to assist Eddie Canales and Ryan Stand of the South Texas Human Rights Center (STHRC) in their efforts to set up water stations in the region. South Texas has seen a huge increase in undocumented migration over the last five years.

Brooks County made news in 2013 when the remains of more than 200 unidentified migrants were exhumed from a mass grave in the local cemetery.

The STHRC has since worked with forensic scientists, university students, and families to conduct DNA identification of the remains and in some cases, return them to their loved ones. Each day, more people perish in the South Texas backcountry and the death rate has grown rapidly to now rival the Tucson Sector in southern Arizona.

As migration from Central America continues to skyrocket, more people are attempting to cross into the United States through the deadly backcountry that surrounds the Border Patrol checkpoint in Brooks County. They face enormous heat and humidity with little access to resources or rescue, and may be scattered and injured by Border Patrol agents. As a result, deaths continue to amass in the South Texas borderlands.

In addition to working with recovered remains, the STHRC has begun placing water stations to aid migrants in distress. Providing humanitarian aid in Brooks County comes with some unique challenges. Unlike the public lands of southern Arizona where No More Deaths works, the lands of South Texas are private. Many are oil and gas ranches, as large as 50,000 acres, and armed with privately contracted security

personnel. Without permission from ranchers, it is impossible to provide water, food, and medical aid in the most deadly stretches of the South Texas terrain.

During our visit, we worked with the STHRC to extend outreach to area ranchers and residents. One ranch manager we spoke with had personally found the remains of 44 migrants over the past decade. We saw how this level of human catastrophe, despite the large presence of Border Patrol in the area, has caused many in Brooks County to see the dire need for nongovernmental humanitarian assistance. We

spoke with many locals who were inspired when they heard about our humanitarian-aid efforts in southern Arizona. Specifically, Brooks County residents were encouraged by the support that No More Deaths and People Helping People provide to border residents giving aid in Arivaca and Ajo.

After joint meetings with community members and groups, the STHRC was able to gain access to several area ranches. Since then, more than a dozen new water stations have gone up on private ranch lands. We hope that as access to ranches grows, so will the

ability to respond to search-and-rescue calls for migrants in distress.

We also worked with the STHRC to use GPS to track trails in the terrain and to map their water stations based on the model we use at No More Deaths. With increased access to the land, the STHRC hopes to develop a better sense of how migrants are moving through the terrain and will be able to place their water stations accordingly. It is a special time for the growth of aid work in South Texas, especially for the collaboration among the many groups doing direct aid across the border zone.



PHOTO: SOPHIE SMITH.

Humanitarian aid on one's doorstep

BY DENISE HOLLEY

I had unexpected guests for breakfast in late April on our rural homestead west of Tucson, Arizona. Two Mexican men banged on the back door and held up their empty water bottles. I asked them in Spanish what they needed. “*Agua* (water),” they replied.

I motioned them around to the patio and brought out juice jugs of filtered water. “Would you like some *pan tostado y café* (toast and coffee)?” They nodded. I cleaned the outdoor table and bustled around the kitchen with a sense of excitement because we have so few visitors.

In a few minutes, I served the men plates of eggs, toast, tortillas and orange slices and set out hot sauce and hot black coffee. They dug in with gusto and I pulled up a chair.

Marco was a native of Oaxaca, a southern state on the Mexican mainland with a large indigenous population. He was bound for a farm in Oregon where he worked every season. His companion, Gregorio, came from Cabo San Lucas, on the tip of Baja California. A house painter by trade, he was trying to get to a job in Atlanta, Georgia.

“Aren’t there a lot of Americans living in Cabo and lots of tourists?” I asked. “Why can’t you find work there?”

“Too much competition,” Gregorio answered. So he left his wife and three daughters at home and trekked to the border.

I noted that they came from distant parts of Mexico. “How did you meet?” I asked.

“At a farm in Sinaloa,” they said. That state, just south of our bordering state of Sonora, produces winter vegetables for the U.S. market.

I thought for a minute about the span of the geography, how two men from far-flung parts of their country teamed up and crossed the border at Sasabe. From there, they walked north for several days to arrive in our neighborhood. Neither wore a backpack.

They both thanked me and then headed down a wash on the last leg of their desert journey with full stomachs and water sloshing in their bottles. I said a

prayer for a safe trip.

When we ride our horses on nearby trails, we see discarded backpacks, clothing and black water jugs from travelers passing through. This was the first time anyone knocked on our door. I feel like I live in a crossroad of the world, where migrating workers from distant points south of the border converge and trek northward to jobs far from the border.

Eighteen days later, our dog barked loudly from the patio and I found two hot thirsty men standing outside. I didn’t recognize the first man, but the other was Marco. “What happened?” I asked.

The Border Patrol nabbed him alongside a highway, but Gregorio ran into the desert and escaped, Marco said. After an overnight stay at the Tucson station, Marco was bused to the central California desert and deported to Mexicali. I recognized the maneuver. Border Patrol touts its Alien Transfer Exit Program as a way to break the connection between migrants and their guides by dumping them off many miles from their original crossing point. Only Marco didn’t use a coyote.

A migrant shelter helped him, Marco said, and he took a bus east until he reached Sasabe and crossed with a new companion, Andrés.

I brought out water and iced tea and served lunch on the patio. Andrés came from Puebla, where he cooked in restaurants. He was heading for a job in Phoenix, to earn far more money, he said. Four years ago, he got stopped for a traffic violation in Phoenix and was deported. This was his first attempt to cross again.

By coincidence, we all had daughters. I told Marco my daughter lived in Oregon, where he was going. He admired our two mares. He rode horses in Oaxaca and his 7-year-old daughter liked to ride, he said.

“How do you do this?” I asked. How do you walk five days through the desert with little food and water and no blanket for sleeping?

“With our strength,” Andrés answered, and motioned upward. “And with the help of God.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

University of Arizona medical students fill vials of bleach for migrants to use to decontaminate water. The bleach vials are part of the harm-reduction kit that No More Deaths distributes to migrants in Mexico. The students assembled more than five hundred kits July 27. PHOTO: TANWE SHENDE.



Doorstep CONTINUED

Marco took out his new cell phone and asked for my phone number. Then they headed up the wash in the midday sun. Just after midnight, my phone lit up with a text message from Marco. “Good evening, Señora Denise. I am well, thanks to God.”

The work of ending Operation Streamline

BY LAURA MARTINEZ

It goes on. Operation Streamline is criminalization of migrants as a means to deter re-entry to the U.S. Shacked migrants, as many as 75 a day, are rushed through federal court in Tucson, Arizona. The process sometimes happens in less than 30 minutes. After meeting with a government-contracted attorney, they are called to the bench seven to nine at a time. Migrants leave as criminals and are sent to a government-contracted private prison run with billions of taxpayer dollars.

I have witnessed court proceedings since June 2015, heard stories and interacted with families.

The most cited reason for re-entry is family reunification. Others are seeking asylum and should be treated as refugees, not criminals.

I was part of a community group that recently toured the Border Patrol Tucson Sector facility. When we asked several times why migrants who expressed fear were sent to Streamline, the reply was that they had committed a crime. They were criminals.

Sens. McCain and Flake declare Streamline “a success.” But the Department of Homeland Security’s own inspector general issued an audit in May 2015 stating that Streamline is not effective in deterring migration and noted it may be violating international treaties by prosecuting asylum seekers.

There are changes in the courtroom, not necessarily for the better. There’s a new magistrate and some new attorneys. And the silence is palpable. No

longer do we hear statements from migrants or their attorneys about fear, requests for asylum, and other concerns. Why? Observers are looking for answers.

Another change is that observers now must sit on the far right side of the courtroom, where it is more difficult to see and hear the proceedings. The U.S. Marshals will not give a reason. Migrants can no longer see us as they are escorted from the room.

Mondays are still at capacity with 75 migrants. Numbers drop the rest of the week. This is a change.

According to Border Patrol statistics, apprehensions have decreased 90 percent since 2000. But more of those apprehended are criminalized.

The End Streamline Coalition (ESC) continues its work to end Streamline and all criminalization of migrants. In December 2015, the ESC commemorated 10 years of Streamline with a march through downtown Tucson, street theater with big puppets from Borderlands Theater, and a weeklong vigil and information table outside the federal court building.

Local clergy organized their own action and spoke eloquently in the courtroom.

ESC members have met with Chief Judge Raner Collins, U.S. Attorney John Leonardo, and the Border Patrol. Volunteers, including members of No More Deaths, continue to observe in court.

It goes on and must be stopped.

Observers are needed on a regular basis. To volunteer or inquire about meeting times contact Leslie (lacarlson@cox.net). For further information, the Derechos Humanos website has [a section on the ESC](#).