

Man deported from US jumps to death at Mexican border crossing

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On Tuesday, Guadalupe Olivas Valencia, a Mexican man who had been deported from the United States less than an hour before, was found unconscious after jumping from a bridge at the San Diego border crossing to Tijuana, Mexico. He was pronounced dead in a hospital a short time later. The cause of death was reported to be a heart attack and concussion.

Valencia had attempted to cross back into the US, where he has family and had previously worked, but was apprehended by customs officers. This was the third time he had been deported from the country. Mexican authorities in Baja California are currently investigating his death, which is presumed to be a suicide.

Responsibility for Valencia's death, as with countless others, lies at the hands of the Democratic and Republican establishment in Washington. His likely suicide follows the recently released immigration policies of the Trump administration, under which hundreds of thousands of immigrants are to be arrested and deported, in many cases without appearing before a judge.

White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer recently announced that as many as 15 million immigrants are in the crosshairs for removal from the country, whether or not they have been convicted of a crime. Last week, some 700 migrants were rounded up by authorities, actions that have provoked fear and panic among immigrants, many of whom have legal documentation to reside in the US.

One of those rounded up and being detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is 23-year-old Daniel Ramirez Medina, who has status under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DCAC). The program initiated by the Obama administration ostensibly grants minors a renewable

two-year stay in the US.

Multiple press agencies reported eyewitness accounts of Valencia screaming moments before jumping to his death that he did not want to return to Mexico and that he was going to kill himself. The *Los Angeles Times* interviewed Valencia's niece, who stated that he had trouble finding work in Mexico and was trying to cross the border to "take care of his children" and that he threw himself off the bridge "in desperation over the deportation." His aunt, Irma Delgado Rios, "blamed Trump for dealing 'psychological blows' to immigrants."

Valencia was found next to a plastic bag containing a change of clothing and a small amount of food, presumably given to him by ICE for his trip back to Mexico. According to Mexican authorities, Valencia had turned down lodging in a migrant shelter after being handed over by the ICE authorities. Valencia was reported to have spent years working as a gardener in California to support his three children in Mexico.

Valencia was originally from Sinaloa, a Mexican state dominated by the drug cartels. A new wave of violence has hit Sinaloa in recent weeks. Over a two-day span in early February, 12 lives were taken and nearly 150 schools were closed as a result. The violence is possibly related to a recalibration of power within the state after Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán of the Sinaloa Cartel was arrested last month and extradited to the US. Two of his sons suffered injuries in early February after assassination attempts. Many who have emigrated from the region cite fleeing violence as their primary motive.

The memos recently released by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) place greater restrictions on asylum seekers as well as unaccompanied minors and leave much of the discretion for deportations up to immigration authorities rather than the courts and legal

channels. The DHS is also to begin sending asylum seekers while they await asylum proceedings to the contiguous territory where they initially entered the US, in the majority of cases Mexico, regardless of where they are from.

Hundreds of individuals die attempting to cross the US-Mexico border every year. The recent death of Valencia exposes the level of disdain of the ruling class for the lives of immigrant workers and the measures that will be taken to prevent a unified opposition of the working class to their policies of unending war and austerity.



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