Four migrants dead, 11 others injured in SUV crash in Texas

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Authorities in West Texas reported several dead and multiple injuries after an SUV carrying immigrants overturned near a highway in Culberson County around 5:30 a.m. last Friday. Texas state troopers, sheriff's deputies, and Customs and Border Protection agents responded to the scene near State Highway 54, 24 miles north of Van Horn and one mile north of Blue Origin's gate, the launching pad of billionaire Amazon founder Jeff Bezos' space program.

Four migrants were killed and 11 others injured; five of the victims were flown to University Medical Center in El Paso in critical condition, according to a hospital spokesman. All of the 15 migrants on board the SUV were from Guatemala and were between the ages of 20 and 25.

Sheriff Oscar Carrillo told media that the migrants were being smuggled and were picked up by the SUV about an hour before the crash. The driver of the vehicle left the scene of the accident and was picked up by another SUV that was traveling along with them.

The Texas Department of Public Safety said the crash was not the result of a chase in pursuit of the vehicle by police but instead it appeared that the driver may have lost control of the vehicle along a curve in the road. The crash investigation is still ongoing and the driver of the vehicle has not been apprehended.

Car crashes involving immigrants are not uncommon along the border regions of the American southwest. In March of this year, a semi-truck crashed into an SUV carrying more than two dozen people in Imperial County of California, killing 13 (See: " 13 killed in deadly SUV crash near US-Mexico border in southern California ").

In 2020, seven people died when a car carrying immigrants tried to out run Border Patrol vehicles and crashed in El Paso, Texas. A year before, a police chase in south Texas resulted in six dead, the victims also being migrants.

The latest crash in Texas came on the same day that a migrant woman drowned in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of San Diego as she sought to swim around the barrier which juts 300 feet into the water along the US-Mexico border. She was suspected to be among a group of 70 people who were trying to swim into the US along the treacherous route.

Last week's fatal car crash came at a time of unprecedented detentions of migrants along the El Paso Sector of the US-Mexico border. Government figures show a 28-year record of border crossings for the 2021 fiscal year, with Border Patrol agents apprehending 193,918 immigrants, a 265 percent increase from last year.

Although many had hoped that the new Biden administration would lessen the anti-immigrant policies of the previous Trump administration, the recent deaths should serve as another example that the border region continues to be as deadly for migrants as ever and will continue to be no matter which party is in power.

The Biden administration has continued to use the Title 42 provision invoked by Trump to rapidly deport migrants, including children, under the public health grounds of the pandemic. Since its implementation 380,000 people have been expelled from the US, including 1,500 children.

In September, the Biden administration carried out a ruthless crackdown on 15,000 mostly Haitian migrants gathered under a bridge in Del Rio, Texas, sending federal agents on horseback to corral and detain them or push them across the river into Mexico. By September 24, 2,000 had been deported back to Haiti, 5,000 were being processed and 8,000 forced back to Mexico.

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