

# 52-year-old Guatemalan father killed on Los Angeles freeway fleeing ICE raid at Home Depot

**Alex Diaz****18 August 2025**

Roberto Carlos Montoya Valdez, a 52-year-old father from Guatemala, was fatally struck by an SUV on the 210 Freeway Thursday morning while fleeing an ICE raid at the Home Depot in Monrovia, California, where agents detained eight immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras.

As armed agents swarmed the Home Depot on Mountain Avenue, Montoya and others attempted to flee the area. After running across Evergreen Avenue onto the 210 Freeway, he was struck near Myrtle Avenue, according to the California Highway Patrol. Agents left the scene without calling for medical aid, and after widespread public backlash, ICE claimed they were not aware of Montoya's death until hours after the raid concluded.

A spontaneous protest broke out that evening, as workers and community members gathered at the Home Depot to condemn the killing and oppose ICE raids in Los Angeles and across the country.

In a notice to the press, the Department of Homeland Security claimed that Montoya was not being pursued by federal officials. The statement was a flagrant attempt to blame Montoya for his own death.

Pablo Alvarado, co-executive director of the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, responded, "Whether they were chasing him or not, the fact is that when you have operations of this kind, the first reaction of any human being is to run."

Witnesses reported that Montoya Valdez was not the only worker who attempted to flee arrest and detention. Mattias, a worker who escaped the raid, told NBC Los Angeles, "My boss told me to run because immigration was there," adding, "Some people ran regardless of their immigration status because nowadays they don't know if undocumented or documented people will be detained."

Mattias himself was injured in the raid while fleeing and jumping a fence.

Montoya Valdez was among the 44 million immigrants working in the US who sent remittances back to his family and four children in Guatemala. His death was the second reported instance of someone killed while attempting to flee the ongoing ICE raids across Southern California, following the death of 56-year-old Mexican farmworker Jaime Alanis Garcia in July, who fell 30 feet from a greenhouse roof during a raid at Glass House Farms near Camarillo, California.

The National Day Laborer Organizing Network held a rally and vigil for Montoya Valdez Friday evening at the Monrovia Home Depot. Nearly a thousand community members and activists from the area and surrounding cities marched with signs demanding "ICE out of Monrovia" and declaring "ICE is not welcome."

The killing of Montoya Valdez was preceded by a Tuesday afternoon ICE raid at the Handy J Car Wash on Washington Boulevard in Culver City, where armed agents in white vans abducted at least eight workers, including the brother of the manager. Witness video showed him pinned to the ground and zip-tied by masked agents, while several bystanders demanded they release him. Security footage from the car wash also showed agents chasing and forcefully grabbing other workers.

District 28 Representative Judy Chu (D-Calif.) attended Friday's vigil and addressed the rally, stating, "Make no mistake, his death is a direct result of the Trump administration's strategy of sowing fear and intimidation throughout our community." In a statement to ABC7 News, she added, "It is a horrible situation. That is why we have to stop these ICE raids, we have to stop terrorizing our community."

Who Chu meant by "we" when she declared, "we have

to stop terrorizing our community,” is unclear. Masses of people within the US and internationally are enraged by the growing number of gestapo-style ICE raids throughout the country. By “we,” Chu may have been referring to the collaborative role of local law enforcement in the so-called “sanctuary cities,” where immigrant raids have continued unabated.

Despite attempts to assign full responsibility to Trump and the Republicans, the most fitting interpretation is that the “we” referred to the Democratic Party, which fully supports the attacks on immigrants despite hollow displays of concern.

The Biden administration carried out more than 700,000 formal deportations. At the same time, it continued Trump’s use of Title 42 to summarily expel more than 2.4 million people at the border, denying them the right to claim asylum. This policy was carried out even as Biden dismantled COVID-19 mitigation measures and social spending, falsely declaring the pandemic over. During Obama’s two terms in office, he oversaw the largest deportations in US history, with 3 million.

The killing of Montoya Valdez was followed by the abduction of Colombian TikTok activist Tatiana Martinez in downtown Los Angeles at Fremont and Temple on Friday. Martinez was livestreaming to her 41,000 followers when she was seized, and a witness’s video of the incident went viral on social media. She went into shock after being dragged from her car and pinned to the ground and was hospitalized at White Memorial Hospital. The workers from the Handy J Car Wash and Martinez were being held at the downtown ICE detention center.

The following day in San Bernardino, an ICE operation ended in gunfire after agents surrounded a family inside their vehicle. Agents smashed the car’s windows and opened fire, later claiming the driver had struck two of them while attempting to flee. The family was able to drive back to their home at which point agents surrounded it and a seven hour standoff ensued.

Family members, however, have disputed the official account, stating they were ambushed and terrorized without provocation. Witnesses reported children screaming inside the vehicle as agents fired, leaving the family traumatized. The incident exposes the increasingly violent and lawless methods of the immigration police, who habitually lie to justify their barbarism.

With the signing of H.R.1, misleadingly dubbed the “Big Beautiful Bill,” in July, a historic allocation of \$170.7 billion for immigration and border enforcement over four years was approved. Immigration detention

capacity in the United States has expanded from 41,500 under Biden to over 60,000 in August 2025 and is projected to reach at least 116,000 beds by 2029. According to Reuters, border czar Tom Homan stated in late May that the administration had deported around 200,000 people in a four-month period, which was actually fewer than the 257,000 deportations under Biden during the same February–May timeframe in 2024.

The brutality toward immigrants is the direct result of decades of collaboration between the two parties of the ruling class, which Trump’s latest assaults have only intensified. According to data from the Department of Homeland Security, since Trump took office in January some 352,000 migrants have been arrested, including 4,481 in Los Angeles. DHS also reported that more than 324,000 individuals have been deported.

The fascistic president is carrying out a campaign of mass deportations to terrorize and scapegoat immigrant workers for the deepening social and political crisis. This is a central plank of the far right. The assault on immigrants is not a question of race but of class. It is directed at the entire working class and can only be answered through class struggle. The working class must fight for its global unity and for the right of all workers to live and work wherever they choose.

The Democratic Party—the party of Wall Street, the banks, and the military brass—uses racial and identity politics to conceal these class issues while collaborating in the assault on immigrants. The working class must advance a socialist program, uniting across all races, religions, and national origins, to defeat both capitalist parties and defend immigrant workers as part of the fight against war, dictatorship, and exploitation.



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