



Coalición de Derechos Humanos

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For Immediate Release

October 11, 2007

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Final Count for Recovered Bodies on the Arizona- Sonora Border 237 as Border Patrol Continues to Report Decreases in Crossings

Arizona— The final number of bodies recovered on the Arizona-Sonora border for the fiscal year that began on October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007 is 237, reports Coalición de Derechos Humanos. The data, which is compiled from medical examiner reports from Pima, Yuma, and Cochise counties, is an attempt to give a more accurate reflection of the human cost of failed U.S. border and immigration policies. The final count includes 181 males, 51 females, 5 of unknown gender, and approximately 39% unknown identity. Countries represented in the final count include México, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Ecuador.

The figures for 2006-2007 outpace last year's final count of 205 by a significant margin. While last year's count of 205 included all three border counties, this year's figure for Pima County alone was 206—an all-time high for that county. While recent statements by Border Patrol claim a decrease in the number of individuals crossing through the Tohono O'odham Nation, data from the Binational Migration institute does not show any significant difference in regards to recovered bodies on the Tohono O'odham Nation.

“In FY 2006 the Tohono O'odham Police Department was involved in 41% of the recovered body cases reported to the Pima County Medical Examiner. In FY 2007, it was involved in 43% of the recovered body cases reported. Although there was a 2% increase between FY 2006 and FY 2007, this change was not statistically significant.” says Daniel Martinez of the Binational Migration Institute. “In other words, we can confidently conclude that there is no significant difference in the number of bodies that were reported by Tohono O'odham Police Department to the Pima County Medical Examiner between FY 2006 and FY 2007.”

As the immigration issue continues to spur controversy and heated debate, the Department of Homeland Security continues to announce increases in militarization in the form of walls, agent presence and high-powered pepper bullets; meanwhile, the human rights crisis continues on the southern border. It has been estimated that the lives of more than 5,000 men, women and children have been lost on the U.S.- México border since the mid-1990s. The recovered body count for Arizona has surpassed 200 since the fiscal year 2002-2003, yet the loss of life has been shockingly described by Border Patrol officials as “collateral damage.” This desensitization of the human issue is as alarming as the checkpoints and surveillance towers going up in border communities, and the continued failure of accurately reporting human casualties is detrimental to the immigration discussion.

“It is important that we have clear, accurate data to show what the actual effects of militarizing our communities have been” continued Martinez. “Without this, the public is denied the opportunity to engage in the discussion with all of the information necessary to make the policy changes that are needed to ensure the protection of our communities.”

The complete list of recovered bodies is available on the Coalición de Derechos Humanos website: <http://www.derechoshumanosaz.net>. This information is available to anyone who requests it from us and is used by our organization to further raise awareness of the human rights crisis we are facing on our borders.

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