



# Coalición de Derechos Humanos

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## **Count for Recovered Bodies on the Arizona- Sonora Border Reaches 128 Despite Proclamations that Numbers are Down**

Arizona— The current number for bodies recovered on the Arizona-Sonora border for the fiscal year that began on October 1, 2006 through June 30, 2008 is 128, 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 brutal U.S. border and immigration policies. These numbers include 86 men, 35 women, 6 children, including a miscarried fetus.

While Border Patrol has proudly proclaimed that the slight decrease in recovered bodies is a result of militarization and deterrence strategies imposed on border communities, the more likely reason for the minimal decrease is the weather—cooler weather was seen all the way up through May. At the end of June 2007, there were 150 bodies recovered, while the current year is at 128. However, the number of recovered bodies for the month of June outpaced those of last year.

“Despite the slight overall decline of bodies being recovered on the Arizona-Sonora border, the reality is that while there were 35 bodies recovered in June of 2007, 40 were recovered in the month of June this year” says Kat Rodriguez of Derechos Humanos. “Historically, July has been the most brutal month, and we are dreading the count that the harsh temperatures will bring.”

Increasingly alarming are the high number of unidentified human remains recovered. Of the 35 female remains recovered, 21 are still unidentified, and 51 of the 86 males have yet to be identified. All in all, 72 of the 128 remains recovered are unidentified, and not enough of the remains of six of these individuals were recovered to even determine gender; this speaks to the anguish that family members suffer as they wait to hear of their loved ones, and the reality that some might never know what became of them.

While the Border Patrol continues to applaud their efforts to control the border, men, women and children are pushed into more harsh, isolated areas, where humanitarian aid and detection is less likely. This is, in fact, an intentional strategy that has proven deadly as more than 5,000 men, women and children have died on the U.S.-México border. And through this, there is no evidence that these militarization efforts have done anything to affect the numbers of people crossing the border.

“It is a natural, global phenomenon and human right to migrate” said Rodriguez. “Continuing with these deadly strategies that cost the lives of hardworking women and men while lining the pockets of corporations and military industrialists is leaving a shameful legacy.”

*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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