



**Coalición de Derechos Humanos  
Alianza Indígena Sin Fronteras**

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**For Immediate Release  
Community Demands Answers to Shooting by Border Patrol Agent  
October 18, 2004**

The Coalición de Derechos Humanos/Alianza Indígena Sin Fronteras demands answers to an incident which occurred in Sierra Vista on Sunday, October 4th, in which a Border Patrol agent shot an unarmed migrant in the face during a routine stop.

According to news accounts, Jose Juan Rodriguez, 21, of Mexico, was ordered to stop by Border Patrol agents. Rodriguez drove approximately two miles further down the road, and then proceeded to pull the vehicle over; at this point, there were several agents on the scene. One Border Patrol agent, who authorities refuse to identify, approached the vehicle and fired at Rodriguez, striking him in the head. It has been reported that the Agent claims that Rodriguez "leaned over." Rodriguez was unarmed when he was shot.

"The case of Jose Juan Rodriguez is just the tip of the iceberg in the long and bloody history of Border Patrol abuse and violation of rights," says Arnoldo Garcia of the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. "As long as there is no independent community monitoring and oversight of the Border Patrol and other immigration police agents, we will continue suffering their violent disregard for the rights of those they detain."

This incident, and many others that have involved Border Patrol shooting unarmed individuals, crystallizes a problem that the U.S. government has failed to address—the almost complete lack of accountability on the part of agents to the communities that they are charged with serving.

In 1997, the Advisory Committees of Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas to the United States Commission on Civil Rights reviewed similar incidents involving violence on the border. In March of 1997, a report was issued with several recommendations that the Committee deemed vital to assure accountability and full protection of Civil Rights on the border. To date, none have been seriously reviewed or implemented in any way.

Among the Advisory Committees' principal findings and recommendations is: "The Congress should establish a Federal immigration enforcement review commission to investigate independently serious misconduct charges and recommend disciplinary action, as appropriate." The Advisory Committees' deemed this recommendation fundamental to true effectiveness in dealing with internal affairs, complaint systems, and achieving public confidence.

This recommendation is a vital key to addressing the problem of lack of accountability and oversight on the part of Border Patrol. The inherent conflict of interest between law enforcement agencies prevents any meaningful investigation and prosecution of charges against fellow officers. As noted in the 1997 report, local law enforcement agencies are being increasingly subjected to greater public accountability; this should naturally transfer to immigration law enforcement, which represents the largest police force in the United States. Accountability is essential to healthy communities that trust that their complaints and concerns are addressed in a fair and objective manner.

Coalición de Derechos Humanos/Alianza Indígena Sin Fronteras demands that the shooting of Jose Juan Rodriguez be independently and objectively investigated, particularly since the FBI has announced that its inquiry is being restricted to whether "assault on a federal officer" was committed. We demand answers as to why this young man was shot in the head, without provocation, according to witnesses to the incident. We further demand the immediate implementation of the recommendations put forth by the Advisory Committees to the United States Commission on Civil Rights, which have been repeatedly ignored and disregarded.

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