

Four Months into the Fiscal Year, the Count of Arizona Recovered Remains is 61

Sunday, 07 February 2010

Last Updated Sunday, 07 February 2010

For Immediate Release

February 8, 2010

Contact: Kat Rodriguez: 520.770.1373

Four Months into the Fiscal Year, the Count of Arizona Recovered Remains is 61

Arizona- The number of human remains recovered on the Arizona-Sonora border since October 1, 2009 has reached 61, reports Coalición de Derechos Humanos. The data is comprised of medical examiner reports from Pima, Yuma, and Cochise counties, and is an attempt to reflect more accurately the human cost of failed U.S. border and immigration policies. This count includes forty (40) males, four (4) females, and seventeen (17) individuals of unknown gender. Approximately forty-seven (47) of the recovered individuals remain unknown, which is approximately 77% of the total recovered thus far this fiscal year.

This number is a dramatic increase from last year, when the total of recovered remains as of January 31, 2009 was forty-five (45). In addition, approximately twenty-three (23)-approximately 38%- of the remains were skeletal; last year, there were 13 skeletal remains (approximately 29%) at the same time last year. The continued increase in the recovery of skeletal remains indicates that more and more individuals are being funneled into more isolated and desolate terrain of the Arizona-Sonora border. This "Funnel Effect," which has been documented by the Binational Migration Institute, has shown that the practice of sealing of traditional crossing points ultimately pushes migration into the deadliest areas. The extent of this crisis is not known as the numbers of human remains recovered in neighboring states are not available.

"This year, we have seen a record number of recovered remains in the month of January in Pima County, and an alarming spike in the numbers in Cochise County this winter. We continue to see the tragic trend of the recovery of remains of unknown gender and an alarming rate of unidentified individuals" says Kat Rodriguez, Coordinator of Derechos Humanos.

'Unknown gender' indicates that not enough of a body was recovered to determine gender, and without DNA, which is costly, it is impossible to know even this basic information about the individual, making identification and return to their families even more difficult. The dramatic increase in these unknown gender cases are a troubling indicator of what might be to come as people are pushed out into more and more isolated areas, making rescue and detection less likely and the likelihood of death more certain. It is unknown how many remains are currently near the border but have not yet been discovered. Men, women and children continue to perish on our border, communities cry out for justice, and yet nothing has been done to address the policies that have pushed migrants into the deadly Arizona terrain" continues Rodriguez. "We truly are in the midst of a devastating human rights crisis."

###

* The complete BMI study, The "Funnel Effect" & Recovered Bodies of Unauthorized Migrants Processed by the Pima County Office of the Medical Examiner, 1990-2005, is available on the Derechos Humanos website:
<http://www.derechoshumanosaz.net/images/pdfs/bmi%20report.pdf>

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.