

FACTSHEET: DEADLY ENFORCEMENT PRACTICES

On the night of March 6th, 2015, in the desert southeast of Ajo, Arizona, Jose Cesario Aguilar Esparza died after US Border Patrol agents chased him off of a nearly 200-foot cliff. Jose's case is not an aberration. Immigration enforcement in the US-Mexico borderlands routinely relies on apprehension methods of chase, causing people to *scatter*, directly contributing to their disappearance and death.

WHAT IS CHASE? WHAT IS SCATTER?

- *Chase* is the active period of pursuit of US Border Patrol agents when they attempt to catch or catch up with individuals in order to apprehend them.
- *Scatter* is when individuals separate from their group due to Border Patrol intervention and disperse into the wilderness. Slower moving people, including the very young, very old, sick, and injured are left behind in the chaos -- alone in the backcountry.

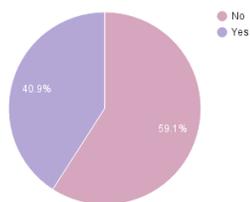
Our report finds that *chase* is the predominant method used by the US Border Patrol to apprehend border crossers in remote terrain.

CHASE



HOW DOES CHASE PUT PEOPLE IN DANGER?

Did the chase result in someone being injured by the terrain while being pursued?



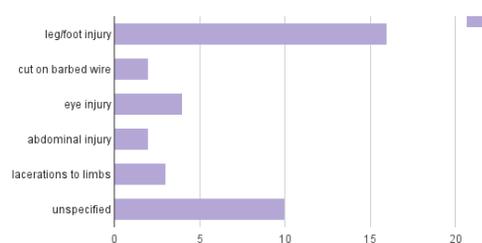
1. Increased Vulnerability to Environmental Hazards

Environmental hazards during pursuit often lead to injury and death. Border Patrol agents chase border crossers through the remote terrain and utilize the landscape as a weapon to slow down, injure, and apprehend people. We show how chases lead to heat exhaustion and dehydration, blisters and sprains, injuries due to falls, and drownings. **40.9 percent of incidents of chase documented by our survey resulted in someone being injured or killed.**

2. Escalated Border Patrol Violence during Apprehension

Border Patrol violence is an outcome of chase. US Border Patrol agents regularly assault border crossers at the culmination of a chase. Assault then contributes to a cycle of violence where border crossers flee both from interdiction and from potential serious injury and death. Chase in remote areas commonly results in excessive use of force. In our survey, tackles, beatings, tasers, dog attacks and assault with vehicles were all reportedly employed by the US Border Patrol against border crossers during chase. **18.2 percent of incidents of chase resulted in someone being injured by Border Patrol agents during apprehension.**

Injuries caused by the terrain during chase



Injuries due to falls and collisions during pursuit

3. Increased Likelihood of Scatter

Scatter is one of the deadly and traumatic outcomes of chase. The scatter of border crossers causes spatial disorientation, separation from one's guide and companions, loss of supplies and belongings, and exposure to the hazards of hostile terrain. In the remote wilderness, this directly leads to death and disappearance. **41.5 percent of respondents reported someone in the group becoming lost after being chased by agents.**

HOW IS THIS RELATED TO DISAPPEARANCE?

In those cases that explicitly spoke of chase and scatter in the wilderness as the event that caused the person to go missing, 35.7% ended in death or disappearance.

HOW CAN WE MAKE APPREHENSION MORE SAFE?

Based on our research and our on-the-ground observation of border enforcement activities, we assert that there is no policing method for interdicting border crossers in wilderness terrain that will not entail high risk of injury, death and disappearance.



SO THEN WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

We call for the immediate end of Prevention Through Deterrence as an enforcement doctrine, as well as the removal of all walls, fencing, barriers and other border infrastructure that serve to push migration into the deadly backcountry.

We will only see the end of the crisis of disappearance with the complete de-militarization of the US-Mexico border. Federal immigration policy must be rewritten to protect human life and human rights, and to address the US-sponsored violence and economic disruption causing so many to seek refuge within these borders.

**To download the full report: www.thedisappearedreport.org
For more information on No More Deaths: www.nomoredeaths.org
For more information on La Coalición de Derechos Humanos: derechoshumanosaz.net**