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# Understanding the Problem

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## What is 'border militarization'?

The term *border militarization* describes the growing use of military-style tactics to police US borders. Walls, vehicle barriers, checkpoints, surveillance towers, ground sensors, drones, all-terrain vehicles, helicopters, and agents carrying military-grade weaponry are in daily use by US Customs and Border Protection to control the national boundary.

## When did border militarization start?

In the 1980s, President Reagan's War on Drugs first delivered military-grade weapons to the US Border Patrol for the purposes of cross-border drug enforcement. In 1994, the Border Patrol officially revolutionized the approach to border control. With the help of security tacticians from the Department of Defense, the Border Patrol created a southern border strategy called "Prevention Through Deterrence," which is still in operation today.

## What is "Prevention Through Deterrence"?

"Prevention Through Deterrence" aims to control the flow of undocumented peoples across the national border not by completely sealing off the 2,000-mile border, but by making the crossing increasingly costly and even deadly. Throughout the 1990s Border Patrol constructed walls, placed surveillance technology, and concentrated Border Patrol agents in and around binational cities. The intention was to shift migration traffic away from urban areas that were usually easier and safer to cross. Funneling people away from cities into "hostile terrain" was a strategy that sought to place travelers "in mortal danger" in the backcountry, far from aid or rescue. Border Patrol officials acknowledged that deaths would likely occur, but insisted that making the journey not only risky but potentially deadly would deter people from trying to enter the US without documentation. They were wrong. By the late 1990s undocumented migration was happening in mass across the desert wilderness, a journey which many people continue to undergo to this day. Using the desert as a weapon has not deterred people from crossing, although thousands have lost their lives in the attempt.

## Why did the Border Patrol adopt this new strategy in 1994?

In 1994, the US signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which radically liberalized trade in the hemisphere, loosening regulations on imports and exports between the US, Canada, and Mexico. Soon after, US-government subsidized corn flooded the Mexican market, decimating many of the small-scale agricultural economies which had existed for generations. As millions of Mexicans suddenly could no longer make ends meet, many fled northward in search of work. Though waves of Mexican labor-driven migration have flowed into the US for more than a century, it was in the context of this surge of labor-driven migration into the US that the Border Patrol adopted a new approach to police the southern boundary.

## Is this strategy still in use today?

Yes. The post-9/11 creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) led to the reinforcement of this Prevention Through Deterrence approach by ballooning the size of the US Border Patrol to more than 20,000 agents, and by changing the priority mission of the border enforcement agency to one of counter-terrorism. As part of the Global War on Terror, border militarization became heavily funded by government spending on the bolstering of military-grade

weapons technology and infrastructure. Prevention Through Deterrence continues to be the dominant doctrine underlying border enforcement policies to this day, including the deployment of the National Guard and US military troops, which further pushes people into more and more remote areas of desert wilderness.

### **Does border militarization work to stop undocumented migration?**

No. There is no evidence that Prevention Through Deterrence works to stop people from entering the United States without permission. In fact, a 2006 study by the Pew Research Center shows that, during the first decade of border militarization, there were at least 7 million successful unauthorized crossings between ports of entry. Since the adoption of Prevention Through Deterrence in 1994, the undocumented population inside of the US has grown to nearly 13 million people.

In fact, border militarization increases permanent undocumented residency in the United States: laborers who, in the past, would cross seasonally to work in the US and then return home, now face the threat of death in the remote borderlands. As a result of these heightened risks, many undocumented laborers have opted to move their whole families to the United States rather than risk multiple crossings.

### **Why do people die on the border?**

The US Border Patrol is heavily armed and has an appalling track record when it comes to the use of excessive and deadly force: since 2010, at least 77 people have died after an encounter with a Border Patrol agent. While this number is egregious, the vast majority of those dying when attempting to cross the border succumb from dehydration, heat-related illness, and other exposure related issues. In order to cross the border without permission, many travel on foot for days, even weeks, through arid deserts, humid brushlands, and dangerous waterways. To evade border enforcement officials, people crossing the border often travel on difficult terrain in areas far from civilization and militarization, and in doing so, people can become injured or fall ill during the journey. Wounds as minor as blisters or twisted ankles may quickly become deadly if the pain of those injuries prevent an individual from keeping up with their travel companions. In the intense heat of the Sonoran Desert, dehydration and heat-related illnesses are also life-threatening. Without access to clean drinking water in wilderness areas, many resort to tapping dirty water from cattle troughs and in doing so, can contract gastrointestinal illnesses. Others, unable to find or carry enough water for the multiple day journey, quickly perish.

Pre-existing medical conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and pregnancy, may also be dangerously exacerbated and become life-threatening to those undertaking the trek. In the case of a medical emergency there is often no way to contact rescue: there is little cell phone reception in remote areas and cell phones lose battery quickly. All of these factors combined make for deadly conditions on the migration trail.

For the majority of the fatalities on the border, the cause of death is exposure or undetermined—the latter due to the fact that many remains are not discovered until they have already become skeletal.

### **How many people have died while crossing through the US-Mexico borderlands?**

There have been more than 8,000 confirmed human remains recovered from the deserts of the US southwest over the last twenty years. However, because people are perishing in remote backcountry areas, many bodies are never found. Although the Federal Government's approach to immigration

enforcement ordains the death-penalty for this population, there is minimal Federal Government effort to record or recover the dead. The crisis on the border is not only one of death, but one of mass disappearance. The full human cost of “Prevention Through Deterrence” remains unacknowledged.

### **Who is crossing the border? Why?**

The Border Patrol strategy of Prevention Through Deterrence was originally aimed primarily at controlling the flow of Mexican nationals crossing the border in search of labor. However, since 1994, many new populations have been caught up in this deadly migration system, including but not limited to:

- Families of Mexican laborers (adults, children, the elderly) who are crossing to rejoin their loved ones and to permanently resettle inside of the US.
- Parents who have been deported and are returning to mixed-status or largely citizen-families in the US.
- Central Americans, particularly from the Northern Triangle (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador). Multiple push-pull factors propel Central American migration. These include the economic deteriorations caused by the Central American Free Trade Agreement, the rise of the US-backed drug war, which routinely catches civilian populations in the crossfire, the subsequent growth of organized crime and political and economic instability (such as the 2009 coup of the Zelaya government in Honduras). These factors and more have created hundreds of thousands of new refugees who are now fleeing for their lives. Many are asylum seekers and many of those children.
- “Climate refugees.” Though not an officially recognized population by domestic or international law, many climate refugees are being created by carbon emissions, global warming, the melting of polar-ice caps, the rise of sea levels, and the increasing number of superstorm systems. These crises disproportionately affect island-nations, people living on the delicate isthmus of Central America, those residing in drought-stricken areas, and the poor. The United Nations predicts that ecological factors will displace up to 250 million people by 2050. The *New York Times* predicts a climate refugee crisis of up to 750 million.

### **What about terrorist threats to our national security coming across the border?**

There have been zero known terrorists, terrorist groups or terror plots to do harm to people within the United States ever connected with the U.S.-Mexico border. The majority of people who have been apprehended attempting to enter the US with connections to ‘known terror groups’ have sought to enter the country by plane or across the US-Canadian border. Apparently such individuals and groups prefer to enter with visas by plane or vehicle at ports of entry rather than on foot through a remote and deadly desert.

### **Why were children being separated from their families at the border by CBP in the summer of 2018? Are families still being separated?**

In April, we learned that US authorities had abducted more than 2,500 children from their asylum-seeking parents. Though the state-sanctioned practice of child kidnapping has since been officially

suspended, the threat of the return of child abduction still looms as the Trump administration takes the fight for their right to indefinite family detention to court. Meanwhile, many of those children still have not been returned to their parents. Some mothers have been 'reunited' with their small children only to dwell together in detention while being held separately from husbands and fathers.

### **Is family separation part of the strategy of Prevention Through Deterrence?**

Yes. Taking Central American refugee children from their asylum-seeking parents is part and parcel of immigration enforcement meant to establish "a tough deterrent." CBP seeks to use these extraordinary punishments as a means of deterring other refugees from seeking protected status inside the United States (despite legal protections guaranteed by domestic and international asylum law). With its policy of child separation, the US immigration system seeks to control refugee populations by inflicting pain and suffering on them at every turn.

Many commentators have pointed out that this policy of child separation and family internment relies on a false premise: that those seeking aid have other ways of pursuing safe haven. In reality, however, those who knowingly enter into US custody and who have endured indefinite detention and even the loss of their children have done so because they face certain violence if returned to their countries of origin.

Underreported in the media frenzy around child separation is that these state-sanctioned practices of child kidnapping and indefinite incarceration keep many people with legitimate asylum claims from seeking sanctuary at official ports of entry. Instead they end up crossing on foot through remote wilderness areas along the southern border, far away from population centers. It has become commonplace to encounter asylum-seeking minors and families who are lost, ill, and injured in remote border regions:

### **What is the 'border zone'?**

Many living and working in the southwest region no longer describe the region as "the border" but rather as the "border zone." This is due to the fact that militarization tactics employed by the US Border Patrol have claimed a massive swath of land for their patrol activities. Federal regulations give Customs and Border Protection authority to operate within 100 miles of any US "external boundary." Roving patrols, helicopter fly-overs, drone surveillance, motion-detecting sensors, and an army of Border Patrol agents freely circulate throughout this zone within the United States, effectively extending the border from a line to a 100-mile wide enforcement zone.

### **How have the conditions on the border changed under the Trump Administration?**

Under the Trump Administration, there has been a dramatic escalation of an already deadly border policy. Along with the calls for more expansive and expensive walls built along the border, the Trump Administration has deployed the National Guard, and the US military, further augmenting border enforcement activities in and around rural border communities.

The rise of the Trump Administration has also led to increased prosecutions against humanitarian aid workers. Scott Warren, an Ajo, Arizona community member and humanitarian volunteer with the Ajo Samaritans, No More Deaths, Aguilas del Desierto, and others, is currently facing three felony charges for allegedly providing "water, food, beds and blankets" to two Central American people migrating through the Ajo deserts. Nine No More Deaths volunteers are facing misdemeanor charges for conducting civilian Search and Rescue efforts and placing water on known migration trails on the Cabeza Prieta Wildlife Refuge. And, a known No More Deaths humanitarian aid station

in the Arivaca, Arizona area was served a search warrant based on Border Patrol video surveillance targeting the station. The serving of the warrant led to the military-style raid of the humanitarian station during a summer heatwave and the arrest of multiple individuals receiving medical care. As the Trump administration targets undocumented communities and asylum-seekers for criminalization, humanitarian efforts in the border region are being increasingly targeted as well.

### **What about the rise of the far right?**

The rebirth of the far right since the Trump presidential campaign has caused the growth of a new border militia movement. So-called border militias are vigilante groups that conduct heavily armed civilian patrols of remote border regions. Members of these groups have known ties to white supremacist and neo-Nazi organizations. This is a relatively small movement that has received increased notoriety and wider acceptance during the years of a presidential administration that refuses to distance itself from violent white supremacy.

### **What are interior immigration checkpoints?**

The Border Patrol has established vehicular checkpoints on all major roads in the southwest border region. Checkpoints are positioned between 25-75 miles north of the national boundary. Armed agents use cameras, vehicle scanning technology, K-9 units, and other technology and infrastructure to stop and examine all northbound vehicle traffic in the region. The stated purpose of checkpoints is to interdict people without papers, narcotics, and other contraband. However, the use of checkpoints carries much deeper consequences for the lives of undocumented travelers and border residents.

Interior checkpoints act as a 'second border' for those crossing through the region. Because checkpoints are positioned on all major roadways, those crossing the US-Mexico border must attempt to circumvent them by way of the backcountry. In this way, checkpoints greatly extend the distance that people crossing must cover on foot in the wilderness. As a consequence, many people who perish in the desert die dozens of miles inside of the United States, but south of the system of interior checkpoints. As a tactic of Prevention Through Deterrence Strategy, checkpoints effectively heighten the risk of death for those crossing the border.

### **How do checkpoints affect border residents?**

For local borderlands residents, immigration checkpoints lock down border communities. The appearance of checkpoints on roadways mark the region as dangerous and policed to the public, which has diminished tourism, driven down property values, and depressed local economies. In small towns and rural areas like Arivaca, Arizona, where there are few local services, residents must pass through checkpoints daily to go to the bank, to work, or to visit a doctor. Arivaca children must pass through checkpoints on their morning bus ride to primary school. For a generation of young people in the border region, interacting daily with armed federal agents has become a way of life. The 1976 *United States v. Martinez-Fuerte* Supreme Court decision ruled that Border Patrol agents at interior checkpoints have additional legal authority to stop vehicles for brief questioning of its occupants even if there is no reason to believe that the vehicle contains unauthorized travelers. The court further held that Border Patrol agents "have wide discretion" to refer motorists selectively to a secondary inspection area for additional questioning and searches.

This legislation leads to regular rights violations of residents and citizens at interior checkpoints. Warrantless vehicle searches, excessive questioning, unlawful detentions, seizures, and the verbal and physical assault of locals have all been documented at Border Patrol checkpoints. Racial profiling is

rampant; an independent monitoring effort conducted by Arivaca residents of more than 2,400 vehicle stops found that Latinx motorists are 26 times more likely to show identification at an immigration checkpoint and 20 times more likely to be required to submit to secondary inspection.

### **Do checkpoints work?**

No. There is no evidence to show that checkpoints play any significant role in apprehending people without papers travelling through the border region. According to the Government Accounting Office, interior checkpoints account for less than 2% of all immigration-related apprehensions border wide, but demand 4% of Border Patrol personnel to staff. It is an open secret that the vast majority of unauthorized migration traffic is routed around interior checkpoints. While checkpoints do not work to apprehend people, they do support the overall aim of Prevention Through Deterrence doctrine, forcing people over dangerous wilderness terrain in order to expose them to mortal danger.

### **Are Border Patrol agents to blame for the crisis?**

Border Patrol agents are tasked with carrying out a deadly policing mission. The daily practices and tactics used by agents on the ground exacerbate the threat to life in the borderlands. Agents routinely chase and scatter groups of travelers in remote areas where they are vulnerable to losing life-saving supplies, being injured, and being separated from their guides and companions in an un-navigable desert. Agents have also been documented destroying more than 2,000 gallons of water placed by humanitarian aid workers in the most deadly migration corridors along the border.

The rapid militarization of the agency has led to systemic issues around the excessive use of force. Border Patrol agents have been involved in the shooting deaths of more than 50 people since 2005. In 2018, a Border Patrol agent shot and killed Claudia Patricia Gomez Gonzalez, a 20-year old Guatemalan woman, in the back as she fled. However, that agent has not been charged with a crime. In fact, not one Border Patrol has ever been disciplined for the excessive use of force while on duty. Agent Lonny Swartz, who shot 16-year old Jose Antonio Elena Rodriguez ten times in the back in 2012, was the first on-duty Border Patrol agent to be charged with homicide. However, in 2018 he was acquitted of all charges.

While not all Border Patrol agents commit abuses, the agency as a whole suffers from a stark lack of transparency and accountability around these issues, producing a culture of cruelty and impunity. To this day, it is unknown whether the Border Patrol conducts internal investigations when its agents use deadly force in the field. The ACLU has thus stated, “We don’t know very much about the Border Patrol, except that they are the most lawless, abusive, and unaccountable law enforcement agency in the country.”

### **Who profits from border militarization?**

Defense contractors, cartels, and private prison companies all profit from border militarization:

- **Defense contractors:** Prevention Through Deterrence has ushered in a new era of defense industry contracting in the US southwest. As the on-the-ground military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq wind down, war industry outfits have found new opportunities in providing the weaponry and manpower to militarize the border region. Walls, towers, helicopters, drones, scopes, sensors, SUVs, dogs, rifles, and more:

outfitting the border with infrastructure, weaponry, and technology has become a multibillion-dollar global industry. As funding ramps up, new doors are opening for contractors to enter the fold to debut the military equipment of the day, constantly expanding what many now term the “border-industrial-complex,” which is now in an unprecedented growth period.

- **Organized crime:** routing migration through dangerous terrain has meant big business for black-market actors. The looming threat of death in a vast, rugged, and unfamiliar landscape makes crossing the border territory next to impossible without hiring a guide. As a consequence, militarization of the border has birthed a large-scale human smuggling industry, which has quickly become monopolized by organized crime. Cartel organizations on the border control the illicit movement of people across the border. Regional monopolies empower mafia organizations to charge averages of \$3,000-\$5,000 per person for clandestine escort through the wilderness. Many of those migrating pay part or all of this fee in advance; in effect, cartels regularly profit whether or not they successfully deliver their people to their desired destination within the US. The growth of cartel revenue is assured by current federal deportation efforts to remove millions of undocumented people from within the US.
- **Private Prison Companies:** being arrested and deported is a now also source of profit for US corporations: over the last twenty years, the immigration detention system has rapidly expanded to grow the private prison industry. Legislative efforts which promote criminal sentences for the civil infraction of unauthorized-entry in combination with the rapid uptick in refugees surrendering at ports of entry in hopes of receiving political asylum has amounted to an explosion in the undocumented US inmate population. Incarceration giants GeoGroup and Core Civic (formerly Corrections Corporation of America) have received multi-million dollar government contracts to house immigration detainees and asylum-seekers. The revenue of for-profit detention centers is amplified when they put the incarcerated to work for wages of between \$1 and \$3 a day. Ironically, many of those being punished for working illegally in the US now labor inside private detention centers.

### **What are the effects of border militarization nationally? Globally?**

The militarization of the US border with Mexico is not only a local matter. The military-style federal policing practiced for years in the borderlands, has begun to creep into the interior of the country. Border Patrol checkpoints, now normalized in the southwest, are beginning to pop-up throughout New England. Predator drones, purchased for use in the border region, are now routinely loaned out to enforcement agencies throughout the interior; they were even spotted conducting surveillance operations over the Super Bowl. Border Patrol agents were sent to support the violent suppression of the demonstrations for water rights and indigenous sovereignty at Standing Rock. The southwest border acts as a gateway for the creep of these and other militarized law enforcement strategies across the nation’s interior.

The humanitarian crisis in the southwest borderlands is also not limited to the region. The loss of loved ones carries ripple effects for families and communities all across the US, Mexico, and Central America. The mass disappearance of undocumented peoples in US deserts leaves entire family systems and social networks in a state of traumatic unknowing. Untold thousands live day to day

without ever learning of the fate of their loved one who vanished while attempting the journey through the borderlands. In this way, the crisis of death and disappearance amounts to a campaign of social terror against peoples and populations throughout the hemisphere.

## **Making a Difference**

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### **Will electing Democrats stop the border crisis?**

Not necessarily. While some Democratic legislators have favored less border militarization than have most Republican legislators, the lethal approach to border control has always been a bipartisan effort. The policy of Prevention Through Deterrence was a Clinton Administration invention. The strategy was reinforced under George W. Bush with the signing of the Secure Fence Act in 2006. Barack Obama continued to expand the size of the Border Patrol and erected the family detention system that houses refugee mothers and children today. The injustices of border control have entered the mainstream news cycle with the Trump Administration's measures to build more walls, deny asylum seekers, separate families, and deport masses of undocumented people. However, even Bernie Sanders during his presidential campaign stood before the border wall in Nogales, Arizona and stated that he supported enhanced border security measures. While some Democrats have begun to call for the abolition of ICE, there has yet to be a significant Democratic voice calling for full-scale border demilitarization to end the crisis of death and suffering.

### **Will deportation work?**

No. During the years of increased border militarization, many undocumented workers who had traditionally labored in the United States on a seasonal basis have instead elected to move their entire families to the US interior, rather than risk multiple deadly border crossings. As a result, deportation frequently targets people with deep family and social ties inside of the United States, whose partners and children may be US citizens themselves. Many in this population inevitably attempt to cross back into the US to reunite with their families. Additionally, there are growing numbers of refugees from the Northern Triangle of Central America who are crossing the border in pursuit of safe-haven. As the asylum system fails to protect their lives, deportation to their countries of origin often amounts to a death sentence. For these reasons, deportation only fuels the cycle of death and disappearance in the region.

### **Will building a wall solve the problem?**

No. Along the 2,000 miles of US-Mexico border, there are already more than 650 miles of walling, fencing, and vehicle barriers. These barriers do not stop people from crossing the border: they redirect migration traffic away from urban areas and into remote wilderness areas. The Trump Administration's proposal to build more border walls does not include areas in which the terrain acts as a natural barrier. The new calls for wall-building thus serve only to reinforce Prevention Through Deterrence, and to open markets for private contractors to design and construct more intricate border barriers in and around ports of entry.

### **Will surveillance technology solve the problem?**

No. The US-Mexico border is 2,000 miles long and the zone of militarized border enforcement reaches up to 100 miles inland. The militarized approach to border security has spread unauthorized migration traffic over a vast, remote, and virtually unpoliceable landscape. In these harsh wilderness areas, communication capacity is severely compromised, road access is rugged or nonexistent, and

visibility is extremely limited. Numerous war industry giants have won lucrative contracts to provide technological solutions to these policing obstacles, including 80-foot surveillance towers, motion detecting sensors, infrared camera technology, and even a fleet of Predator drones. However, Government Accountability Office audits of these tech systems have revealed that their contributions to enforcement efforts are negligible: for example, drone surveillance has “contributed to” a mere 1.8% of apprehensions of border crossers in southern Arizona.

The ruggedness of the environment and the enormity of the area constantly undermines the efforts of these systems. Each system failure is an opportunity for another tech outfit to propose an enhanced system. So-called “smart” border technology has been an expensive failure, serving only to push people into harm's way.

### **Can humanitarian relief solve the problem?**

No, not completely. However, humanitarian relief provides critical protection for the lives of many in the borderlands. Humanitarian relief is the provision of basic needs for all people, regardless of identity or immigration status. Humanitarian relief includes life-saving interventions, measures aimed at reducing suffering and preserving human dignity. Food, water, shelter from dangerous exposure to the elements, access to emergency and ongoing medical services, rescue, legal representation, assistance with family unification, and the prevention of further exposure to harm are all forms of humanitarian relief. Humanitarian relief is a vital stop-gap measure to protect the lives of some of those in need in the border region. However, humanitarian relief efforts are extremely limited; aid workers will never be able to access everyone in distress in the border region.

### **Who can provide humanitarian relief?**

Anyone can provide humanitarian aid—you do not have to be affiliated with an institution or government to offer humanitarian relief. In fact, humanitarian efforts must be non-governmental and civilian in nature so that the provision of life-saving relief is not governed by the political interests of a certain administration or regime. For this reason, humanitarian assistance strives to be neutral and universal, ensuring the right to wellbeing that all people deserve.

In the US-Mexico borderlands, the need for humanitarian aid is dire. In a region where thousands have died from exposures, a bottle of water may be the difference between life and death. For this reason, the provision of humanitarian relief by local borderlands residents is commonplace. A number of groups have established organized efforts to provide humanitarian relief in the region, including Aguilas Del Desierto, No More Deaths, the Samaritans, People Helping People, the South Texas Human Rights Center, Humane Borders, and others.

### **How are rural border residents responding to these issues? Tribal members?**

Rural border residents and tribal members routinely encounter the lost, sick, and injured in the borderlands. Often rural townships and private ranches are the first signs of civilization that those migrating encounter when they are traveling through wilderness areas between ports of entry. For this reason, borderlands residents frequently provide care to those they encounter.

Border residents and tribal members also increasingly live under a military-type Border Patrol occupation, replete with checkpoints, Predator drones, Black Hawk helicopters a veritable army of agents armed with the weapons of war. In this heightened climate, residents of the border zone routinely assert their constitutional rights to prevent illegal searches and seizures, to resist racial

profiling, report Border Patrol harassment, publicize the abusive actions of agents in the field, and build coalition among rural communities living under militarization.

### **What is People Helping People in the Border Zone?**

People Helping People (PHP) is a community organization in Arivaca, Arizona that brings together rural border residents to oppose the humanitarian crisis in the borderlands and to resist Border Patrol abuse. PHP calls for a demilitarized border, working in coalition with other rural border communities to build peace and justice in the border region. People Helping People also supports Arivaca residents giving direct humanitarian aid to those crossing the desert.

### **What is checkpoint monitoring?**

One effort to push back against Border Patrol harassment has been the Arivaca-area effort to independently monitor area immigration checkpoints. Beginning in 2014, Arivaca residents involved with the organization People Helping People in the Border Zone (PHP), began watching enforcement activities at the Arivaca Road checkpoint near the town of Amado. The goals of checkpoint monitoring are threefold:

- 1) **To deter abuse:** by being a third-party witnessing presence, checkpoint monitors seek to deter the abusive behavior of Border Patrol agents. Monitors are equipped with video cameras, binoculars, and recording equipment. By watching Border Patrol agents on this otherwise remote rural highway checkstation, monitors hold agents accountable for their behavior.
- 2) **To document enforcement activities:** if the Border Patrol does keep records about their enforcement activities at specific interior checkpoints, they do not make those records public. For this reason, the number of apprehensions that have been conducted at interior checkpoints is unknown to the public, or even to the US Congress. The agency has offered no data which justify maintaining checkpoints in border communities which operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, for decades. operating 24-hour checkpoints 365 days a year indefinitely in border communities. For this reason, independent monitors collect data on enforcement activities in order to make such information available to the public and elected officials.
- 3) **Visiblizing Resistance:** checkpoint monitoring is a visible protest against interior enforcement activities that target communities at large. By setting up monitoring efforts around area checkpoints with “know your rights” signage and information, checkpoint monitoring demonstrates to the public that such extra-legal enforcement activities will not go uncontested.

### **What can you do to help?**

- Donate [to People Helping People \(PHP\) or to one of our sister organizations](#). Every bit helps!
- Organize a speaking event—we are available with travel support to come visit and speak more about border issues.
- Get involved in the cause in your community: sanctuary efforts, closing ICE detention centers, stopping raids and other threats to undocumented and mixed status families, establishing protection networks, fighting for labor justice, opposing war industry

contractors, resisting the creep of border militarization into daily life across the US, deportation defense, and more.

- Join a local detention support group and consider visiting those in detention, sponsoring an asylum seeker or otherwise supporting individuals fighting their immigration cases. [You can also consider starting an immigration detention visitation program if none exists in your area.](#)
- If you live in a border state, start monitoring nearby Border Patrol checkpoints.
- [Call the US Attorney's office and demand that they drop the charges against humanitarian volunteers.](#)
- Call governors of border states to demand the withdrawal of military troops.
- Come visit the border! Bring a delegation and/or volunteer your time: there are a number of organizations that host groups and take outside volunteers.