

Juan De Leon Gutierrez, Guatemalan forced migrant child, dies in U.S. custody: No end in sight to violence and desperation for Guatemalan majority

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/juan-de-leon-gutierrez-guatemalan-forced-migrant-child-dies-in-us-custody>



Tránsito Gutiérrez Oloroso and her husband Tanerjo De León seated on bed of their son Juan De Leon Gutierrez (Foto Prensa Libre: Mario Morales)

As the U.S. and Canadian governments continue with illegal and deeply harmful efforts to overthrow the government of Venezuela - supported by “open for international business” “democratic allies” in Guatemala, Honduras, Brazil, Colombia, ... - more and more and more Guatemalans and Hondurans are forced to flee government repression and corruption, land evictions and destitution in their home countries.

Guatemalan boy detained by US border agency dies at Texas hospital The 16-year-old, who has not been named, is the third migrant child to die in US custody in the past five months

By [Nina Lakhani](#), 1 May 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/may/01/guatemalan-boy-migrant-dies-us-custody-texas>

A 16-year-old Guatemalan boy has died in a [Texas](#) hospital after he was detained by Customs and Border Protection (CBP), becoming the third migrant child to die in US government custody in the past five months. The boy, who has not been named, died on Tuesday at a Texas children’s hospital in the McAllen area after several days in intensive care. The cause of death has not been released.

It was unclear where and when the boy was detained, but on the evening of 20 April, he was taken by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Ice) agents to a facility run by Southwest Key – [a not-for-profit](#)

[organization which houses up to 5,000 migrant children in more than 20 shelters](#) – apparently in good health.

He was taken to an emergency room the following morning with symptoms including fever, chills and a headache, but discharged back to the shelter later that day. The youngster's health did not improve, according to a statement by Administration for Children and Families (ACF), and he was returned to the emergency room by ambulance on 22 April.

From there, the sick boy was admitted to an intensive care unit, where he died just over a week later.

The boy was under the care of the Office of Refugee Resettlement, which contracts private companies and registered charities to house thousands of children separated from their parents at the border by Ice officials – as well as those detained after making the perilous overland journey from Central America without adult relatives.

Two other children died in US custody within three weeks of each other in December 2018, but unlike in the latest case, they were in custody of CBP. Jakelin Caal, seven, who died on 8 December at an El Paso children's hospital, and [Felipe Gómez Alonzo](#), eight, who died on Christmas Eve at a New Mexico hospital, were also Guatemalan – part of [a mass exodus from the impoverished Central American country](#) in recent months.

In November, Guatemalans overtook Mexicans as the largest nationality taken into CBP custody – an extraordinary figure considering that the population of Mexico is seven times larger than that of its southern neighbour.

Southwest Key has yet to comment on the child's death, but ACF spokeswoman Evelyn Stauffer said in a statement: "Arrangements were made for the minor's brother and Guatemalan consular officials to visit the minor while he was hospitalized. The family who resides in the home country received frequent updates from hospital staff. The cause of death is currently under review, and, in accordance with standard ORR policies and procedures, the case will be subject to full review."

Southwest Key has collected \$1.7bn in federal grants in the past decade, [according to a New York Times investigation](#). Its founder [resigned in March](#) amid questions over its handling of government funds. The Guatemalan consul in McAllen has been contacted for comment.

What to do?

Why Hondurans and Guatemalans Flee

The U.S. and Canadian governments, and northamerican and global businesses and investors (hydro-electric dams, mining, African palm, tourism, cattle, fruit, etc.) maintain profitable relations with corrupt, repressive governments in Honduras and Guatemala, turning a blind eye to and benefitting from repression, environmental devastation, human rights violations, corruption and impunity.

These are "U.S. & Canadian problems"

Keep sending copies of this information, and your own letters, to families, friends and networks, to politicians and media, to pension and investment funds, asking: Why our governments, companies and investment firms benefit from and turn a blind eye to poverty, repression and violence, environmental and health harms in places like Guatemala and Honduras?

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