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12/03/2018

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Russian national in ICE custody passes away at Florida hospital

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – A Russian national in the custody of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at the Baker County Detention Center died Friday afternoon at a Jacksonville hospital after he went into cardiac arrest and efforts by hospital medical staff to revive him were unsuccessful.

Guerman Volkov, 56, was pronounced dead at University of Florida Health Jacksonville Medical Center. Mr. Volkov died two days after he was discharged from another Jacksonville hospital after he made the decision to discontinue all medical treatment. The official cause of Mr. Volkov's death is under investigation but is believed to be cardiac-related natural causes.

Baker County Detention Center previously transported Mr. Volkov to Ed Fraser Memorial Hospital in Macclenny, Florida, for assessment and treatment Nov. 26 after Baker County medical staff noted abnormal vital signs. The hospital subsequently transferred Mr. Volkov to Memorial Hospital in Jacksonville the same day where medical staff admitted Mr. Volkov for evaluation and treatment of hypovolemia.

Two days later, on Wednesday, Memorial Hospital notified Baker County Detention Center that the hospital was discharging Mr. Volkov due to his decision to refuse all medical treatment. Upon his return to ICE custody, Baker County Detention Center placed Mr. Volkov under medical observation.

On Friday, at approximately 11:48 a.m., facility medical staff called Baker County EMS due to Mr. Volkov experiencing shortness of breath. EMS arrived at the facility at approximately 12:05 p.m. and transported him to University of Florida Health Jacksonville Hospital where he arrived at 12:59p.m. Mr. Volkov went into cardiac arrest at approximately 1:11 p.m. and hospital medical staff performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation and advanced life support for nearly an hour until medical staff pronounced him dead at 1:59 p.m.

Consistent with the agency's protocols, the appropriate state health and local law enforcement agencies have been notified about the death, as have the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General and the ICE Office of Professional Responsibility. Additionally, ICE has advised Russian Embassy representatives.

ICE is firmly committed to the health and welfare of all those in its custody and is undertaking a comprehensive agency-wide review of this incident, as it does in all such cases. Fatalities in ICE custody, statistically, are exceedingly rare and occur at a fraction of the rate of the U.S. detained population as a whole. This agency's comprehensive review will be conducted by ICE senior leadership to include Enforcement and Removal Operations, the Office of Professional Responsibility and the Office of the Principal Legal Advisor.

AILA Doc. No. 16050900. (Posted 12/4/18)

Mr. Volkov had multiple prior criminal convictions in Florida and had entered ICE custody in June 2017 as an unlawfully present foreign national due to overstaying his non-immigrant visa. A federal immigration judge subsequently ordered him removed from the U.S. in December 2017. He was in custody pending his removal from the U.S. in accordance with federal law, agency policy and the order of the courts.

Mr. Volkov is the third individual to pass away in ICE custody in fiscal year 2019.

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