



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

News Release

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ICE detainee from Guatemala passes away in Texas

DALLAS – A Guatemalan woman in the custody of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at the Prairieland Detention Center (PDC) in Alvarado, Texas, died Sunday at an area hospital.

Maria Celeste Ochoa Yoc de Ramirez, 22, was pronounced dead at 8:42 a.m. local time by medical professionals at Texas Health Downtown Fort Worth (THDFW), where she had been hospitalized since Feb. 28.

The cause of death was autoimmune hepatitis, complicated by septic shock and acute liver failure.

Consistent with the agency's protocols, the appropriate agencies have been notified about the death, including the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG), and the ICE Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR). Additionally, ICE has notified the Guatemalan consulate and Ochoa's next of kin.

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 national average for the U.S. detained population.

The agency's comprehensive review will be conducted by ICE senior leadership, including Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) and the Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (OPLA).

On Sept. 4, 2019, U.S. Border Patrol arrested Ochoa after she illegally entered the United States near Hidalgo, Texas. On Sept. 6, the Border Patrol transferred her to El Valle Detention Facility in Raymondville, Texas, where she entered ICE custody.

On Oct. 8, 2019, USCIS issued Ochoa a Notice to Appear following a positive credible fear determination. She remained in ICE custody where removal proceedings were initiated with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR).

On Feb. 7, Ochoa was hospitalized for a medical procedure, and two days later she underwent surgery. She was medically discharged Feb. 10 and returned to an ICE detention facility. On Feb. 13, ERO Dallas transferred Ochoa to the Prairieland Detention Center (PDC) in Alvarado, Texas. And on Feb. 18, ERO Dallas transported Ochoa to an area hospital for additional medical treatment. On Feb. 28, she was transferred to THDFW. She remained hospitalized there until she passed away March 8, 2020.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities. For more information, visit: www.ICE.gov. To report suspicious activity, call 1-866-347-2423.