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CBP Statement on Death in Arizona, Not in Custody

Release Date: April 4, 2021

On April 3, 2021, the Yuma County Sheriff's Office (YCSO) received a call on its 911 emergency line from an individual who stated he and two other people were in medical distress. Utilizing the cellular signal, the YCSO determined the approximate location of the caller. YCSO deputies and Border Patrol Agents (BPAs), including members of the Border Patrol's Search and Rescue team as well as a BPA aboard an Arizona National Guard helicopter, responded to the area. Personnel aboard the helicopter located the individuals and guided in BPAs on the ground. When the BPAs reached the area, they reportedly discovered a 24-year-old female Mexican Citizen, who was already deceased. After the arrival of YCSO, the female was formally pronounced deceased.

The female was reportedly located in the same area as her cousin and one other male. The two survivors told investigators that she became ill while crossing the desert and they were abandoned by the smuggler who was guiding them. The two survivors stated female was deceased for hours prior to being found by the BPAs. Investigators were also informed the group had been walking in the desert since entering the United States several days earlier. Both survivors declined medical assistance and were taken into Border Patrol custody.

This Incident is under review by YCSO, the Yuma County Medical Examiner's Office and the CBP Office of Professional Responsibility. The DHS Office of Inspector General and Homeland Security Investigations were both notified of the incident.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's borders at and between official ports of entry. CBP is charged with securing the borders of the United States while enforcing hundreds of laws and facilitating lawful trade and travel.

Last modified: April 4, 2021

Tags: Search and Rescue, Border Security