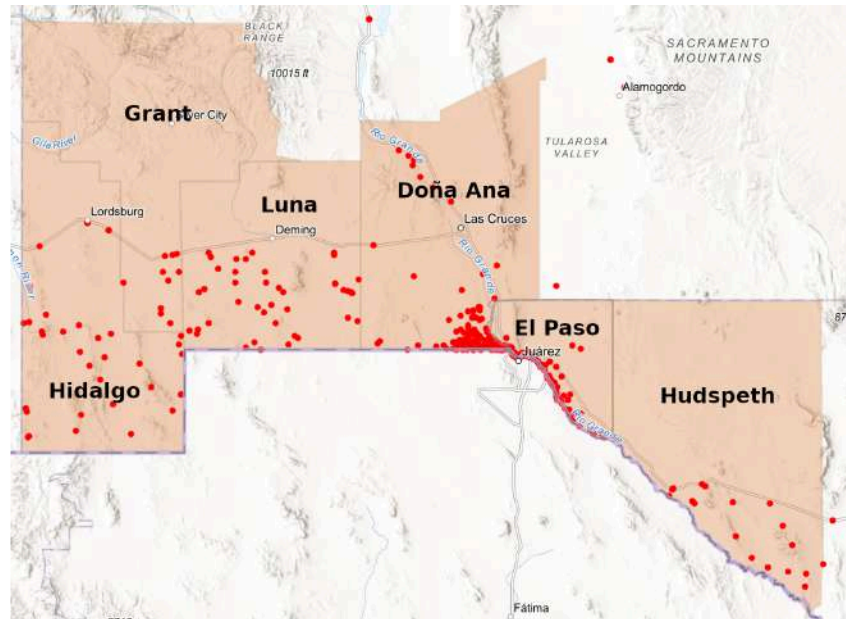


## El Paso Sector Migrant Death Database

The migrant death database published here is an attempt to address the lack of comprehensive, transparent, and publicly available migrant death data for New Mexico, El Paso and border-wide. The accessibility of this information is essential to understanding and preventing death and disappearance in the US/Mexico borderlands.



The data for this project was collected from the New Mexico Office of the Medical Investigator (OMI), US Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT), the El Paso County Office of the Medical Examiner (EPCOME), Hudspeth County Justices of the Peace Districts 1 and 2, the IOM's Missing Migrant Project, independent news sources, and statements from the Sunland Park Fire Department, as well as direct observation by volunteers in the field.

This project consists of an openly accessible database for all migrant deaths we have identified within the state of New Mexico and El Paso and Hudspeth counties, a map that can be easily searched, filtered, and downloaded for further use, and a report that briefly analyzes this data.

### **CBP undercounts migrant mortality data**

From 2012 to 2022, our database shows a higher number of deaths than CBP's data for the El Paso Sector, with some years showing as much as two, three, or even four times (in 2020) as many deaths.

### **Border Patrol abuses**

Our database attributes 15% of all migrant deaths in CBP's El Paso Sector to wall falls, chases, use of force, and custody. This does not include the numerous cases we found of non-migrants killed by Border Patrol.

### **Failure to account for CBP-related deaths**

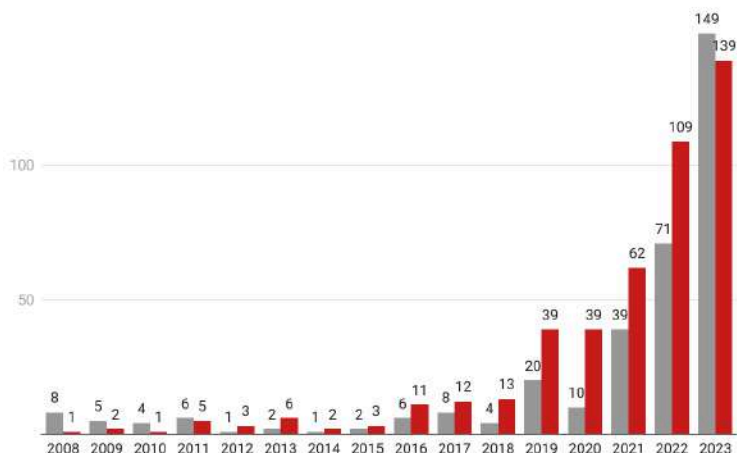
Of the 16 CBP-related deaths we've identified for 2022, only 6 appear in the official OPR (Office of Professional Responsibility) count.

Similar data for 2021 suggests a significant shortfall in OPR's accounting of these deaths and underscores the need for oversight, data collection, and accountability by entities independent of border enforcement agencies.

### El Paso Sector Migrant Deaths by Year

\*2022 and 2023 include data from Hudspeth County

■ El Paso Sector Deaths (CBP) ■ El Paso Sector Deaths (This database)



Source: El Paso Sector Migrant Death Database, CBP • Created with Datawrapper

### Wall falls

Our database finds at least 26 deaths attributed to falls from the border barrier in CBP's El Paso Sector since its construction.

Most of the wall deaths we record here were not reported on by any entity, official or independent, and hint at the underreported crisis of injury and suffering due to nonfatal falls.

### Pursuit

Border Patrol chases make up half (35 of 73) of the border enforcement

deaths that we've tracked, 20 by vehicle, 15 on foot. There is evidence in our report of attempts by BP to cover up or diminish their role in these deaths.

### Urban Graveyard

In El Paso and its New Mexico suburbs of Sunland Park and Santa Teresa, it has become commonplace to discover remains in populated areas. While Prevention Through Deterrence initially drew inspiration from the "success" of El Paso's Operation Hold The Line to push migrants away from urban areas, this data shows that border militarization has escalated to the point where now an urban area like El Paso is essentially as deadly as the middle of nowhere.

### El Paso

Thirty-foot steel border barriers, the Rio Grande, a network of canals, and a major interstate separate the Mexican city of Ciudad Juárez from El Paso, TX. These barriers cause nearly all deaths in El Paso, with drownings, pedestrian motor vehicle accidents, or wall falls making up 83% of cases.

Water-related deaths make up over half of the 161 fatalities we have tracked within the El Paso city limits. When upstream dams release water into the canals for irrigation season, the amount of drowning deaths, almost entirely of migrants, rises dramatically, with our data showing 15 bodies recovered from the city's waterways in just two weeks of 2022.

## **Asylum**

We have identified numerous cases of migrants who died crossing into the United States after first applying for asylum.

Recent human remains recovered in the El Paso Sector have more closely resembled the demographics of those seeking asylum, both by nationality and gender; in 2023, women made up over 50% of recovered human remains, a ratio with no precedent in any year for any sector where this data is available.

We believe that these higher numbers of female deaths are connected to recent and continuing restrictions on asylum, and closures of ports of entry to asylum seekers, including the [illegal](#) practices of metering and turnbacks.

## **Demands and Recommendations**

1. CBP and the OPR (Office of Professional Responsibility) have time and again proven themselves to be dishonest in their accounting of migrant deaths. While CBP should make good on its obligation to the [GAO](#) to provide complete data on migrant deaths and take transparency seriously, their accounting will never be trustworthy. Entities independent of border enforcement agencies must provide oversight, data collection, and accountability, working with state and county medical examiners, justices of the peace, law enforcement, and other organizations to make their data reflect the best information available.
2. CBP and the OPR must apply CBP-related death designations consistently and transparently, and allow outside oversight of this process.
3. Restrictions on asylum, like [Texas' Senate Bill 4](#), or those proposed by the [White House and US senators](#) for 2024, will cause death, injury, and suffering on the US-Mexico border, as people escaping violence, poverty, and climate change are forced to find alternative ways to enter the United States. In accordance with US and international law CBP must open ports of entry to asylum seekers, and remove all restrictions on access to the asylum process.
4. End the practices of vehicle and foot chases which have made CBP the [deadliest](#) federal law enforcement agency in the nation.
5. The border wall is humanitarian disaster. Our data shows how the amount of deaths caused by the wall go far beyond what is reported by CBP. These walls have not reduced migration, but have caused untold suffering, and they must be taken down at any cost.