

# Immigrant Rights are Human Rights

by Angela Orlando

Many human rights and immigrant rights groups are very concerned about the treatment of migrants and immigrants in border towns and other U.S. communities. They are worried that people living in border communities are becoming less safe because there are so many armed people in their communities patrolling the border (including Border Patrol agents, U.S. military and National Guard troops, and militia groups). There have been several reported incidents of shooting deaths of both migrants and U.S. citizens on the border and in border communities. There has also been a rise in border-crossing deaths due to increased border security measures. There are also reports of use of excessive force, wrongful detention, racial profiling, harassment, house raids, and work raids that terrorize immigrant communities.

The two stories to the right are from a report by the Border Network for Human Rights. These are true stories that have been documented by Human Rights Promoters (people trained to identify and write down human rights abuses). Read the stories below and the list of human rights from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. See if you can identify some of the human rights that are being violated.

## Discussion Questions:

1. Read the list of Human Rights on page 48. Do you think we have all of these rights in this country? If not, which do we not have?
2. Do you think that all people should have these human rights (that they are universal)? Explain.
3. Do you think these rights are inalienable—that people have them no matter where they are, who they are, or what they've done? Explain your views.
4. If the human rights of all people were respected, how would the people in the examples above be treated?
5. How can you both protect human rights and enforce the immigration laws of a country?

A woman and her two sons were returning to El Paso after spending some time in Ciudad Juarez. The woman was stopped by an agent at the Port of Entry and taken to an office where she was asked to take off her clothing for an inspection. Though the woman asked for a reason and expressed that she did not want to do it, eventually, after a few more orders from the agents, she removed her clothing and was subjected to a body cavity search. Finding nothing, she was simply told that she fit the description of a drug runner and was told to leave.

A man was walking to El Pasito Market on Desert Meadow Road with his cousin from his home . . . when the sheriff stopped them, asked them for their papers, and asked where they were going. They responded that they were headed to the store. The sheriff told them to get into the car. The sheriff then took the two young men directly to the Rojas Immigration Detention Center. On the drive he insulted them, saying that Mexicans only came here (to the U.S.) to have their children and maintain them with government money. Both men were deported.

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