

U.S. border agents fire tear gas again to stop migrants at Mexico border



Tijuana, January 2 (RHC)-- U.S. border agents have once again fired tear gas canisters to deter Central American migrants from crossing the U.S.-Mexico border, news agencies report.

The Associated Press said U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents launched at least three volleys of tear gas onto the Mexican side of the border near Tijuana's beach in the early hours of Tuesday.

The attack on New Year's Eve reportedly affected families including men, women and children who arrived last month with a migrant caravan that set out from Honduras.

Reuters said clouds of the noxious gas could be seen around the border fence, adding that one migrant picked up a canister and threw it back across the border into U.S. territory.

Photos released by Reuters showed migrants trying to take cover as a thick wall of tear gas surrounded them, or crying out in pain after they were hit by the gas. The agency said 25 migrants, including two minors, were detained after Tuesday's violence.

The incident comes one month after the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump was blasted for tear-gassing a group of migrants, including mothers and children as well as toddlers, at the border.

Trump later defended the use of tear gas on the migrants, claiming that border agents were “being rushed by some very tough people.” The U.S. president also claimed the gas was “very safe,” and only a “very minor form” of tear gas.

The death of a 7-year-old immigrant child reignites criticism of Trump's harsh anti-immigration policies. Trump has made toughening immigration policies a central tenet of his presidency and has vowed to build a wall along the US-Mexico border to curb the flow of migrants from Mexico and Central America.

Funding for the wall has led to a budget impasse, causing the ongoing partial government shutdown. Trump demands \$5 billion but Democrats are not offering more than \$1.3 billion, denouncing the project as impractical and costly.

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