

# *Salvadoran immigrant is first person to die of COVID-19 in ICE custody*

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San Diego, May 8 (RHC)-- In U.S. immigration news, a 57-year-old man from El Salvador is the first person to die of COVID-19 while in custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Carlos Ernesto Escobar Mejia arrived from El Salvador with his family in the 1980s during the country's U.S.-backed civil war. He was the youngest of five siblings and the only one who hadn't been able to obtain permanent residency.

Escobar Mejia had been detained at the for-profit Otay Mesa Detention Center near San Diego since January. At the time of his passing, he had been in the hospital on a ventilator for over a week.

The San Diego Union-Tribune reports, as of Tuesday afternoon, over 200 people in custody at Otay Mesa have tested positive for COVID-19 — as the facility has the largest coronavirus outbreak of any ICE jail in the U.S. This is asylum seeker Oscar Nevarez Diaz, who's jailed at Otay Mesa.

Asylum seeker Oscar Nevarez Diaz, who's being held in jail at Otay Mesa, told reporters: "He was so sick, and he kept complaining about it. He wouldn't come out of the room. And the only thing that they would do when he complained, they would take him to sick call, and the only thing they would give him is pain

medication or a cold medicine. They don't care here. They don't care about us human beings. They don't even see us as human beings. They see us — since we're immigrants, we're less than human to these people. They don't care about us at all. We're fleeing our home country because we're afraid for our lives. We come here as a safe haven, and now we're put in a situation where our lives are in more danger than they were back in our home country even.”

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