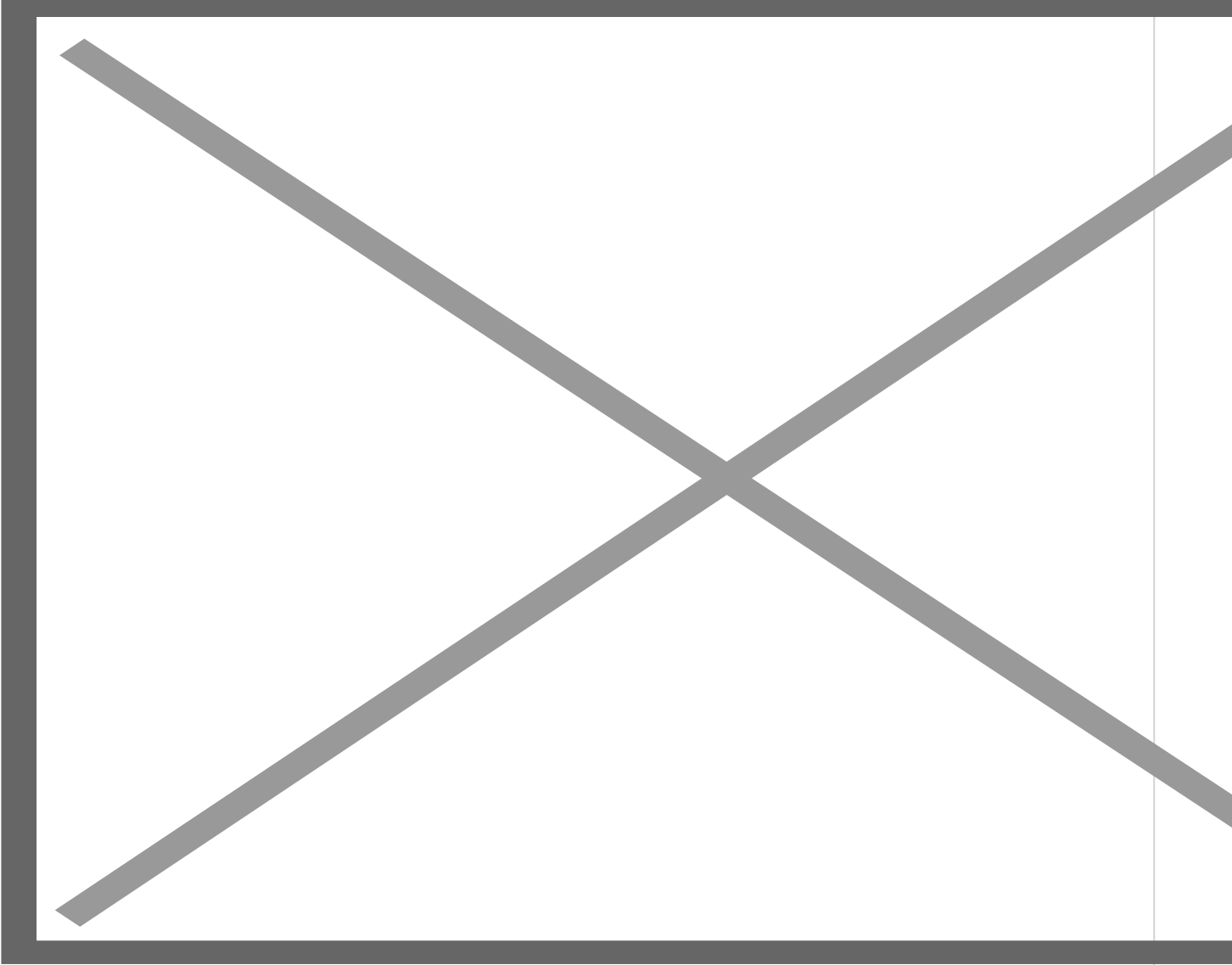


Guatemalan families bury loved ones killed near U.S.-Mexico border

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Family members mourn during the wake of Marvin Tomas, a Guatemalan migrant who was found murdered alongside other 18 people in the northern Mexican state of Tamaulipas. (Photo: Johan Ordonez/AFP)

Guatemala City, March 15 (RHC)-- Families of some of the 16 Guatemalan migrants killed near the Mexico-United States border in late January began burying their remains Saturday in the town of Comitancillo, where 11 of the victims were from.

The victims' charred bodies arrived on Friday night at the region near Guatemala's border with Mexico after being sent from the other side of Mexico, Reynosa, just across the U.S. border from Texas.

"No more. No more violence against migrants," said Reverend Mario Aguilon Cardona at services for mourners in the town's football stadium.

Ricardo Garcia said his daughter Santa Cristina Garcia, 20, had gone north to earn money for an operation for her younger sister. Her remains returned Friday in a coffin. "She sacrificed herself for others. She was a good girl," said Garcia.

The Guatemalan government has declared three days of mourning.

The bodies, along with three others, were found piled in a charred pick-up truck in Camargo, across the Rio Grande from Texas, in an area that has been bloodied for years by turf battles between the remnants of the Gulf cartel and the old Zetas cartel.

A dozen Tamaulipas state police officers were arrested in connection with the killings. Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei said on Friday that his government remained in communication with Mexican authorities to ensure "those responsible for such a deplorable act" are punished. He said the crime must be solved so that nothing similar happens again.

Relatives of the dead first raised the alarm that something horrible had happened in Camargo. Because the bodies had been burned, it took weeks for positive identifications through DNA samples, but the families in Guatemala had already started mourning.

The families had suddenly lost communication with their relatives around January 21st, and believed they had been near the area where Mexican authorities made the grisly discovery.

Giammattei confirmed this month that five Guatemalans had survived the attack and were under protection in the United States.

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