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El Paso, May 27 (RHC)-- A coalition of migrant advocacy groups are demanding justice for an 8-year-old Central American girl who died in U.S. Customs and Border Protection custody earlier this month.

The #WelcomeWithDignity campaign for asylum rights remembered Anadith Tanay Reyes Álvarez, an 8-year-old girl who came to the United States with her Honduran parents, following her death on May 17 after CBP agents "neglected to heed her parent's requests for medical assistance," according to the coalition.

"Anadith deserves to be alive today," said #WelcomeWithDignity interim campaign manager Bilal Askaryar. "Border Patrol staff ignored the minimum safeguards for protecting the lives in their custody."

"Anadith's parents should be preoccupied with helping their 8-year-old daughter prepare for her new life in the United States and making the journey to meet her aunt in New York," Askaryar added. "Instead, they are grieving an unspeakable tragedy and trying to raise money to take Anadith's body to their new home with them."

Reyes, who suffered a congenital heart condition and sickle cell anemia, was a Panamanian citizen who traveled with her Honduran parents and her two older siblings to the southern U.S. border at Brownsville, Texas. The family was detained by CBP agents on May 9 and held for more than a week.

On May 14, Reyes' mother Mabel Álvarez took the child to a treatment area after she complained of abdominal pain, nasal congestion, and a cough, CBP said. Reyes tested positive for Influenza and was given medications including Tamiflu and Zofran. CBP said she was also given acetaminophen and ibuprofen.

Reyes and her family were then transported to a CBP facility in Harlingen, Texas, which is "designated for cases requiring medical isolation for individuals diagnosed with or closely exposed to communicable diseases," according to the agency.

Medical records show that Álvarez took Reyes to the Harlingen station's medical facility three times on May 17. On the last visit, Reyes appeared to be having a seizure. After her body went limp and she began bleeding from the mouth, medical staff started CPR and CBP had the girl rushed to Valley Baptist Medical Center in Harlingen. She was pronounced dead less than an hour later.

"They killed my daughter, because she was nearly a day-and-a-half without being able to breathe," Álvarez claimed in an interview with the New York Daily News. "She cried and begged for her life and they ignored her. They didn't do anything for her."

"They never listened to me just because I am an immigrant," Álvarez said in a separate interview with Noticias Telemundo. "We want this not to go unpunished. We don't want this to happen to any other child."

"We are heartbroken to learn of another child's tragic death in government custody. No child should be locked in a jail, no matter where they were born," said Jennifer Anzardo Valdes, deputy director at Americans for Immigrant Justice.

"There is a long and well-documented history of systemic abuse and mistreatment of children in CBP custody," she added. "In a landscape barren of rights for unaccompanied children, babies, and children coming to the United States with their parents, it is imperative that these vulnerable individuals are greeted with compassion and respect as they seek refuge and a better life in the United States. How

many more children must die for CBP to effectuate change?"

Vanessa Cárdenas, executive director at America's Voice, said that "it is atrocious that yet another family has to mourn their child because of our collective inability to fix our broken immigration system."

"Our hearts are with her family, and tens of thousands of other families whose pursuit of a better life ends in tragedy," she added. "The CBP needs to learn from this tragedy and take the necessary steps to ensure it doesn't happen again."

Reyes is the first known migrant child to die in CBP custody during the Biden administration. At least two other Honduran minors—17-year-old Ángel Eduardo Maradiaga Espinoza and a 4-year-old "medically fragile" girl—have died in U.S. custody in recent weeks.

The children's deaths come as the Biden administration rolls out controversial migrant policies following the expiration of Title 42, which was invoked by both Biden and his predecessor, former President Donald Trump, in order to deport millions of asylum-seekers under the pretext of the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/internacionales/323905-campaign-demands-justice-for-8-year-old-girl-who-died-in-us-border-patrol-custody>



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