

Aid volunteer faces 20 years in prison for helping migrants



Phoenix, June 1 (RHC)-- A United States federal court is weighing in on the case of volunteer Scott Warren, who is on trial and facing 20 years in prison on what is being called charges of "smuggling" -- offering humanitarian aid to undocumented migrants in Arizona.

A member of the humanitarian group, No More Deaths, Warren is being put on trial on three felony charges: two for allegedly harboring an immigrant couple and one for conspiring to transport them. The thirty-six-year-old man was arrested on January 17, 2018 after Border Patrol agents set up surveillance around one of the organization's humanitarian aid shelters in Ajo, Arizona.

Defense attorney Greg Kuykendall described Warren as a "Good Samaritan" who never intended to conceal the pair of immigrant men. Warren says he believes the federal government is infringing on his right to religious freedom which inspired him to help those in need.

"It is life or death here. And a decision not to give somebody food or water could lead to that person dying," he said, adding that he has shared food, water and shelter to dozens of people braving the deadly desert outside his home.

Warren is not the first member of No More Deaths to be taken to trial. In 2017, eight other volunteers were charged with misdemeanors related to their humanitarian efforts. "It is scary to be intimidated like

this and to be targeted but there really is no choice," said Warren, who believes that the state may be expanding their definition of "harbor."

During a court session in Tucson, both the defense and the prosecution had the opportunity to present the arguments they expect to make over the next two weeks. Select border agents are expected to testify during the trial.

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