

U.S. activist Scott Warren to be retried in helping migrants case



Phoenix, July 3 (RHC)-- U.S. activist and member of the humanitarian group "No More Deaths", Scott Warren, will be retried after a jury was unable to agree on a verdict for charges for helping migrants at the border with Mexico, U.S. prosecutors said Tuesday.

The initial felony charges included harboring migrants and conspiring to transport them. Charges of conspiracy have been dropped and Warren will now be brought to trial in November for allegedly sheltering migrants, said Glenn McCormick, a spokesman for the U.S. Attorney's office in the state of Arizona.

During his trial in June, his defense explained he was just trying to help migrants by providing them some food, water, and shelter. Prosecutors insisted that the migrants in question were not in distress and did not need the help that was given to them.

Warren volunteers within the "No More Deaths" organization, a humanitarian and faith group located in southern Arizona which aims at providing assistance to migrants at the Mexico-U.S. border.

The thirty-six-year-old man was arrested on January 17, 2018, after Border Patrol (BP) agents set up surveillance around one of "No More Deaths" aid shelters.

The day of his arrest, his humanitarian group released a video showing U.S. Border Patrol agents destroying water bottles they left for migrants. Warren's lawyers believe his arrest was a revenge for the video. They added he was simply exercising his religious beliefs and his rights to help migrants in distress.

On their website, @NoMoreDeaths wrote: "The targeting of humanitarian aid workers, although new, is only an escalation of the kind of violence and repression that BP and other state agencies have been unleashing on migrants and undocumented communities for decades."

The initial trial was supposed to pave the way as being the first one of its kind since Donald Trump's administration asked prosecutors to take severe measures on people caught helping migrants.

Mary Katherine Morn, president, and CEO of Unitarian Universalist Service Committee said that Warren should have never been arrested and the retrial "highlights just how far the Trump administration is willing to go to punish migrants and those who provide them with life-saving assistance."

More than 3,000 migrants have died since 2001 trying to cross through the harsh conditions of the Sonoran Desert which covers large parts of southwestern U.S. in Arizona and of northwestern Mexico in Sonora. The temperatures there routinely exceed 40°C.

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