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Outcry after Trump officials reveal sixth migrant child died in US custody

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Ten-year-old girl from El Salvador died on 29 September ‘due to fever and respiratory distress’ after complications with surgery.

The [Trump administration](#) has been forced to reveal that a 10-year-old migrant girl died in its custody more than seven months ago, sparking further outcry after a spate of recent migrant child deaths while detained by the US government.

The 10 year-old girl from El Salvador is the sixth child to die in custody in the past eight months amid the [immigration crisis](#). Her death was not previously reported by authorities and was only made public late on Wednesday [after a report by CBS News](#).

The child’s name and how she entered the US has not been made public by authorities, but a spokesman for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which administers the care of unaccompanied minors, told CBS the child had a history of congenital heart defects.

The spokesman said the child was taken into the custody of an Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) facility in Texas on 4 March last year in a “medically fragile” state. The girl underwent surgery and was left in a coma after complications with the procedure. She was eventually transferred to a children’s hospital in Nebraska and died on 29 September “due to fever and respiratory distress”.

The revelations follow the announcement of another child death in custody earlier in the week.

Carlos Hernández Vásquez, 16, an unaccompanied minor from Guatemala, was found dead in immigration custody in south Texas. The teenager had been held in custody by US border patrol for a week, twice the time that is legally allowable. [Reports indicate](#) the teenager had been diagnosed with flu before his death but it remains unclear what, if any, treatment he received for his illness from authorities.

Carlos is the fifth child from Guatemala to die in immigration custody over the past eight months. Wilmer Josué Ramírez Vásquez, two, died earlier this month after being taken into custody in April and falling sick. Juan de León Gutiérrez, 16, an unaccompanied minor, died on 30 April after falling ill in detention in south Texas. Felipe Gómez Alonzo, eight, died in December 2018 in New Mexico after falling sick in custody. And Jakelin Caal Maquin, seven, [died the same month](#) after contracting sepsis in custody.

Jess Morales Rocketto, chair of Families Belong Together, a group that campaigns against the [forced separation](#) of migrant [families](#) after crossing the [US-Mexico border](#), said: “Yet another tragedy on our watch.”

She added, about the latest report: “It is simply outrageous. It is unacceptable that the nation is hearing about this tragedy for the first time eight months after her death, and it raises serious questions about how many other migrant children’s deaths the Trump administration either doesn’t know about, doesn’t care about or is sweeping under the rug.”

Congressional Democrats are calling for an investigation into the death of the 10-year-old girl as US border agents temporarily closed the primary migrant processing facility in south Texas due to an outbreak of poor health conditions.

Although HHS was not legally required to make the death of the 10 year-old public, a number of Democrats have accused the Trump administration of a cover-up. the former US housing secretary and Democratic candidate for president [Julián Castro](#)? described the administration as “[morally bankrupt](#)” for withholding the details.