

11. Leo Cruz Silva

Who was Leo Cruz Silva? Leonardo Cruz Silva was a 34 year old immigrant from Mexico. He was first known to have come to the US, specifically to Tennessee, without legal authorization in 2010, when he was about 19 years old. He was never accused nor convicted of any violence in the U.S. during all the time he was present in the US.

How did Leo Cruz Silva end up under ICE control? Mr Cruz Silva had been apprehended by Festus, MO police on September 30, 2025, for public intoxication. After being apprehended, the next day Leo Cruz Silva was handed by the county police over to ICE, who informed him of their intention to reinstate a prior deportation order. At the time of his death he was being held at the Ste. Genevieve County jail in Missouri, but under ICE custody.

How did Leo Cruz Silva die under ICE custody? During ICE processing on October 01, he was documented to be paranoid, with auditory hallucinations. An LVN at the St. Genevieve County jail where he was brought noted him to be paranoid and hallucinating, screaming and hiding under his bed. The LVN ordered that he be placed on every-15 minutes checks, and notified ICE about his "mental health crisis". A psychiatric evaluation was requested by ICE for the following week. On October 03, his condition was noted by fellow detainees to have worsened. The next afternoon at 3:20 pm he was found hanging in his cell with a sheet tied around his neck, in a presumed suicide attempt. Paramedics were called but were unable to resuscitate Mr. Cruz Silva. It is not clear if he was still on the every-15 minute safety checks at the time of his death, nor the time he was last seen alive.

What happened after Leo Cruz Silva's death? A Missouri community group, Abide in Love-Ste. Genevieve, held a memorial vigil for Mr. Cruz Silva on Sunday October 12th in front of the Ste. Genevieve County Detention Center. They described his death as devastating to those of Abide-In-Love and "...just a tragedy for our community." They also expressed concern that the county jail was now thought to be housing up to 100 people held by ICE every day, with detainees brought in and rapidly sent out to the next facility. Two psychiatrists who reviewed Leo Cruz Silva's case stated that his treatment "defies any reasonable standards" and that his acute mental health crisis constituted a true emergency and he should have had an urgent psychiatric evaluation. Physicians for Human Rights and Human Rights Watch also reviewed the circumstances surrounding Mr. Cruz Silva's death and identify suicides while in ICE custody, such as his, as among the deaths that raise increasing concerns about preventability.

ICE stated that all relevant authorities, including the Department of Homeland Security's inspector general and the Mexican consulate, were notified of the death of Mr. Cruz-Silva.

Sources:

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/projects/2026/ice-detention-deaths-database/>

<https://firstamendmentcoalition.org/news/post/behind-the-headlines-how-the-san-francisco-chronicle-revealed-the-deadly-toll-of-misdiagnoses-and-delayed-care-in-ice-detention/>

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2026/06/25/dying-in-detention/rising-deaths-in-an-expanding-us-immigration-detention-system>

<https://www.aila.org/library/deaths-at-adult-detention-centers#2025>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10244140691588484&set=death-142a-nurse-identified-that-a-man-in-ice-detention-was-experiencing-a-menta>

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/ice-detainees-dying-by-suicide-at-alarming-rate-ap-investigation-finds>

<https://www.cnn.com/2026/07/14/americas/mexicans-deaths-ice-custody-operations-latam-intl>

Leo Cruz Silva, 34

MEXICO

Death #142

Experienced an Acute Mental Health Crisis,
Evaluation Planned the Next Week,
Died by Suicide Over the Weekend

Died October 4th, 2025