

14. Gabriel Garcia Aviles

Who was Gabriel Garcia Aviles? Gabriel Garcia Aviles was a 56-year-old Mexican immigrant. He was a father of two and grandfather of three. Described as always happy and a man who loved bikes, he was also known as a hard worker, always willing to help others in need. Gabriel was described as a beloved member of the community, a family man who had a work permit and who had been in the U.S. for over 30 years.

How did Gabriel Garcia Aviles end up in ICE custody? Border Patrol agents were observed driving around the city of Costa Mesa, CA, on the rainy Tuesday of October 14th, 2025, close to 11:50 a.m. They conducted a “roving” raid, grabbing any individuals off the street who they believed to be undocumented. Several community watch members in the area at the time confirmed that a total of three people were kidnapped. One of the individuals they grabbed was Gabriel Garcia Aviles.

Gabriel Garcia Aviles made a life-changing phone call to his daughter, Mariel, at 1:02 p.m., just a little over an hour after his kidnapping. After she answered the phone, Aviles explained that ICE had detained him and that he would be sent to Mexico. Mariel, in shock and disbelief, told him not to sign anything that they give him. She overheard officers at Santa Ana Federal Building, where Aviles was being held, instructing him in the background to state the name of the detention center and its phone number, so that Mariel could call the front desk for more information. They then ended the call. After that came a long series of phone calls and misinformation from ICE.

How did Gabriel Garcia Aviles die under ICE custody? On Thursday, October 23rd, at 9:31 a.m., Mariel received a phone call from Homeland Security that came through a private number. They called her to let her know that they had “unpleasant news”: her father was in critical condition at the Victor Valley Global Medical Center in Victorville, CA, and she should let the rest of her family know so that they could say their final goodbyes.

Confused and angry, Mariel and her family had no idea that her father was in such an extreme condition -- a condition that would lead to his untimely death. Mariel said that when she finally saw her father for the first time, he was in a much worse condition than she initially imagined. He remained unconscious, intubated, and had dried blood on his forehead. She says that there was also a cut on his tongue and blood on his lips, and that he had broken teeth and bruising on his body.

Gabriel Garcia Aviles passed away on October 23rd, 2025, a mere seven days after being in custody in the Adelanto Detention Facility and 10 days after being detained by ICE. There was no clear cause of death given, leaving his family distraught and desperately searching for answers. The family told local media that they spent days trying to reach ICE before finally seeing him on a ventilator and unconscious at the hospital.

What Happened after Gabriel Garcia Aviles died? Adelanto's ICE Processing Center has faced years of scrutiny for poor living conditions and inadequate medical care. Immigrants arrested during recent Border Patrol and ICE operations have been held there, and community advocates say that the facility has become increasingly unsafe. They say that detainees face inadequate medical and mental health care, limited access to water and poor food quality. Adelanto is owned and operated by the GEO Group, and is among ICE's sprawling network of mostly private, for-profit detention facilities that are accused of human rights abuses.

Democratic Congresswoman Judy Chu says that she doubts the DHS account of what happened to Gabriel Garcia Aviles, adding that the agency shows little interest in transparency. "They are saying that they will not conduct an autopsy and declare his death due to natural causes," said Congresswoman Chu. "Well, I think that that is just a cover up if they have nothing. If they have nothing to be blamed for, then, why wouldn't they agree to an autopsy? Because the conditions in which he was in which he died, raises so many questions."

Sources: <https://www.kvcnnews.org/local-news/2025-11-06/federal-lawmakers-demand-answers-after-gabriel-garcia-aviles-dies-in-custody-at-adelanto-ice-processing-center>

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