

29. Alberto Gutierrez Reyes

Who was Alberto Gutierrez Reyes? Alberto Gutierrez Reyes was a 48-year-old Mexican immigrant, born in Veracruz, Mexico, who emigrated to the United States in 2001. He earned his living working in construction. He met his wife, Patricia Martinez when she was working as a seamstress, in Los Angeles.

How did Alberto Gutierrez Reyes end up in ICE custody? Alberto Gutierrez Reyes was arrested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents on January 9, 2026, in the predominantly Latino Echo Park neighborhood of central Los Angeles as he went out for breakfast. ICE agents saw him and got out of their car to arrest him. He tried to run but they caught him, threw him to the ground, and injured his arm, knee and part of his head. ICE sent him to Adelanto ICE Detention Center on January 12, 2026.

How did Alberto Gutierrez Reyes die in ICE custody? According to Patricia Martinez, immediately after his arrest Alberto was held briefly in a previously undisclosed holding cell at the ICE federal building in downtown Los Angeles. It was here, she said, that he developed a cough after being made to sleep on the cold floor in a cold room with only laminated paper sheets for blankets. On Wednesday, February 18 Alberto and other detained immigrants were taken out by guards to the yard for an hour, despite the heavy rain and biting cold. “The day turned very cold, and when they returned them to their cells, Alberto felt feverish. He started submitting papers requesting to be taken to the doctor. They ignored him, and since he didn’t get better and developed a cough, he continued asking for medical attention over the following days, without any response,” said his wife Patricia.

On February 24, 2026, Alberto Gutiérrez was still unwell, but even in poor health he appeared at a bail hearing in court. “That day . . . he told me that he hoped they would finally take him to the doctor, because he continued to feel unwell,” said Martinez. But on February 25, she heard nothing more from her husband. Alberto’s niece received a call from a cellmate, who told Martinez her husband had been taken to the hospital after fainting. Alberto Gutierrez Reyes died at Victor Valley Medical Center, Victorville, on February 27, 2026.

What happened after Alberto Gutierrez Reyes’s death? According to Alberto’s wife Patricia Martinez, “We are going to do everything we can to get justice. My husband died due to medical negligence by ICE. If he had received medical attention in time, he would be alive today.”

The office of foreign affairs in Mexico said “an immediate and thorough investigation will be demanded into the conditions that led to the deaths of Mexican nationals in the custody of this agency, in order to determine responsibility and ensure that such incidents do not occur again.” Mexican president, Claudia Sheinbaum, said during her daily press briefing that the government is “demanding all the information. How did it happen? What happened? Why did it happen?” “This is not the first case, and this diplomatic note was stronger because we must protect the lives of our compatriots,” Sheinbaum said. “In every case, a diplomatic note has been sent, and in every case, the families are being supported in filing complaints in the United States, in the appropriate courts.”

Sources:

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/mar/06/detainee-died-ice-custody-california>

<https://americancommunitymedia.org/immigration/mexican-immigrant-dies-in-adelanto-ice-detention-center/>