

12. Royer Perez Jimenez

Who was Royer Perez Jimenez? Royer Perez Jimenez was a 19 year old youth from the Mexican municipality of San Juan Chamula in Chiapas, and a member of the Tzotzil indigenous community in San Juan Chamula. He immigrated to the US at age 15, to help out his family. His uncle, Manuel Perez, describes his nephew as a “hard worker”. With his death, he became the youngest person to die in ICE custody since Donald Trump took office.

How did Royer Perez Jimenez end up in ICE custody? The teenager was apprehended on Jan. 22, 2026, and since Feb. 21 was in the custody of ICE in Glades County Detention, in Moore Haven FL. He had been arrested by the Volusia, FL, County Sheriff's Office on Jan. 22 and was charged with felony fraud for impersonation, and misdemeanor resisting an officer. An officer told Royer Perez-Jimenez to stop while he was riding a scooter down a Florida road. The officer repeatedly called for Perez-Jimenez to "come over here," but he continued riding. His family states he was not fluent in English and likely did not understand the arresting officers. "He was unjustly accused as a criminal. ... They fabricated a crime," his uncle told reporters.

How did Royer Perez Jimenez die under ICE custody? Royer Perez Jimenez was found unconscious and unresponsive on March 16th 2026 at 2:34 AM. Per ICE reporting, the sheriff's office staff initiated CPR efforts, and medical staff continued CPR when they arrived. ICE has called his death a "presumed suicide" without offering any evidence.

The family of Royer doubts the official ICE report that Royer died of an apparent suicide. The official cause of death remains under investigation but, per his uncle, "What we want is a thorough investigation because, unfortunately, we do not believe suicide was the cause of his death, rather we suspect it was probably a homicide". Press outlets requested a copy of the autopsy report but were denied because the case remains under investigation.

What happened after Royer Perez Jimenez's death? ICE states that, consistent with their policies, after the teenager's death they notified the Department of Homeland Security, the DHS Office of Inspector General, and the ICE Office of Professional Responsibility. The Mexican consulate and his next of kin were also notified. His family received their loved one's body from the US on Thursday April 02, per his uncle Manuel Perez. He was buried according to Tzotzil custom on Saturday April 04th. Hundreds of Tzotzil and other community members gathered for his burial.

A report released in January by several groups, including the ACLU of Florida and the Detention Watch Network, found troubling conditions at the Glades County Detention Center from 2008 to 2022. These included being sprayed by antimicrobial sprays at toxic concentrations, exposure to carbon monoxide leaks, and being pepper-sprayed for being asked for human necessities such as water and toilet paper. Per the report's lead author, Emma Shaw Crane, assistant professor of anthropology at Stanford University. "These hazards made the air inside the jail unbreathable and collectively punished detained people who could not breathe freely inside this facility."

Sources:

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/mexican-teen-died-ice-custody-funeral-denounce-charges/>

https://theicelist.org/index.php/Death_of_Royer_Perez-Jimenez_in_ICE_custody

<https://www.cbsnews.com/miami/news/teen-dies-florida-immigration-detention-center-ice-glades-county-detention-center-moore-haven/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/mar/19/teenager-ice-detention-florida-dies>

<https://afsc.org/newsroom/another-florida-detention-center-plagued-toxic-chemicals-and-unbreathable-air-according>

<https://www.ksby.com/investigations/ice-inc/police-video-shows-arrest-of-19-year-old-immigrant-who-died-in-ice-custody>