

## **20. LORENZO ANTONIO BATREZ VARGAS.**

**Who was Lorenzo Antonio Batrez Vargas?** Lorenzo Antonio Batrez Vargas, called “Lenchito” by family and friends, was 32 years old, and was a Dreamer, or a recipient of the DACA program. He came to the U.S. at age five, was raised in Flagstaff, Arizona, and graduated from Coconino High School in Flagstaff.

Those who knew him described him as respectful, a good listener, and "he could make you feel seen, even when he often felt invisible himself.” His family described him as a beloved son, brother, and friend. They said the light came through in the way he loved his family, and in the tenderness he showed to those he trusted.

**How did Lorenzo Antonio Batrez Vargas end up in ICE custody?** On Aug. 2, 2025, Flagstaff Police Department arrested Lorenzo Batrez Vargas and charged him with drug paraphernalia possession and use, a felony. ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations/Phoenix took Mr. Batrez Vargas into ICE custody the next day and transported him to the Phoenix ICE office for processing. The following day Mr. Batrez Vargas was transferred from the Phoenix ICE office to the Central Arizona Correctional Complex in Florence, AZ.

**How did Lorenzo Antonio Batrez Vargas die under ICE custody?** Lorenzo Vargas died in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody on Sunday morning, August 31, 2025.

On August 11, Mr. Vargas reported having a sore throat, cough, and congestion. Three days later, with worsening symptoms, he tested positive for Covid-19 and was placed in isolation. He remained in isolation with medical checks for approximately 2 weeks. On the afternoon and evening of August 30th his symptoms notably worsened but he remained in the isolation unit with nursing checks. At approximately 6:32 the next morning he was noted to be unresponsive in his housing unit. Emergency procedures were initiated, EMS were called and took over care. Lorenzo Antonio Batrez Vargas was pronounced dead at the Correctional Complex at 7:02 a.m.

His family alleges Mr. Batrez Vargas did not receive adequate medical care while he had COVID-19 in the Central Arizona Correctional Complex.

ICE has reported that the cause of his death is currently unknown. Immigrant justice groups are demanding an immediate investigation and public release of the findings related to Mr. Batrez Vargas’s death. According to TRAC at Syracuse University, the Central Arizona Correctional Complex exceeded its capacity in 2025, at times detaining over 100 people beyond capacity.

**What happened after Lorenzo Batrez Vargas’s death?** A GoFundMe was set up to cover funeral expenses to bring Lorenzo Batrez Vargas—known as "Lenchito"—back to Flagstaff where "his family can lay him to rest with the love and dignity he deserves.” "His passing is a tragedy compounded by the circumstances under which he died; alone, likely from complications of COVID-19, and without the medical attention he deserved," wrote Amber Vargas, the GoFundMe organizer. "No one should have to suffer in silence, and no family should have to wonder whether their loved one’s life could have been spared with more compassion, more care, or more justice.”

Immigrant justice groups are demanding an immediate investigation and public release of the findings related to Mr. Batrez Vargas's death. They make reference to the findings that the Central Arizona Correctional Complex frequently exceeded its capacity in 2025, at times detaining over 100 people beyond its capacity.

Representative Mariana Sandoval, a Democratic member of the Arizona House of Representatives, called for answers regarding the August 31st death of Lorenzo Vargas while in the custody of the U.S. ICE. Vargas lived in Flagstaff and was being detained in Florence; he was the 12th person to die in ICE Custody in 2025 to that point. "The death of Lorenzo Vargas was tragic and avoidable," Sandoval said. "He was a person in custody, which implies protection under our laws and adequate medical care, which clearly did not happen. The rising toll of deaths in ICE custody – especially in custody of private prison contractors -- cannot be ignored."

State Sen. Minority Speaker Catherine Miranda echoed the sentiment and said his family deserves answers, and ICE needs to be held accountable.

#### **Sources:**

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