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Courts and Police

Patrol agent fired on near border; officer coming to aid of deputy attacked by rock-throwing illegals

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BY JONATHAN ATHENS
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Federal authorities said an illegal immigrant fired six shots at a U.S. Border Patrol agent early Sunday morning as the agent was coming to the assistance of a Yuma County Sheriff's Office deputy who was under attack by a group of rock-throwing illegal aliens.

No one was reportedly injured and federal authorities are investigating the incident, which they say points to evidence of escalating violence along the border.

Joe Brigman, spokesman for the Border Patrol's Yuma sector, said a group of illegal aliens were throwing rocks at a female deputy at County 23rd Street and the Colorado River levee.

The deputy called the Border Patrol for help. When an agent arrived, he was fired upon "at close range" by an illegal immigrant who was among another group of about six illegal immigrants near Salinity Canal, Brigman said.

Brigman said both groups of illegal aliens fled on foot back into Mexico.

The Border Patrol did not release the name of the agent who was fired upon and the YCSO did not return calls placed by The Sun seeking additional information.

Brigman declined to speculate on why the Border Patrol agent did not shoot back and said Mexican authorities were notified of the incident.

The shooting, Brigman said, is indicative of the rise in violence along the border.

"Unfortunately, violence along the border directed at illegal aliens, American citizens as well as law enforcement and the Border Patrol, is on the rise," Brigman said.

The Sunday morning shooting marks the second time in eight months area law enforcement officers have been reportedly fired upon near the Mexico border.

In mid-December 2004, two sheriff's deputies were shot at by an unidentified gunman on the Mexican side of the border.

No one was reportedly injured and the gunman was never caught.

Since July 2004, there have been two reported murders along the border here in the Yuma sector. In both instances the victims were illegal immigrants from Mexico. Both homicides remain unsolved.

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