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LOCAL NEWS

Man shot following attack on Border Patrol agent

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BY MARK RANDALL, SUN STAFF
WRITER
Jun 6, 2006, 11:25 pm

An afternoon shooting along the Colorado River involving a U.S. Border Patrol agent



sent one man to the hospital after the agent was forced to defend himself while rounding up a group of suspected illegal immigrants.

U.S. Border Patrol agents and investigators search the area of the levee where an agent shot an illegal immigrant who attacked the agent and attempted to drag the agent into the Colorado River Tuesday. PHOTO BY ALFRED J. HERNANDEZ/THE SUN

Border Patrol spokesman Rick Hays said the incident occurred around 2:20 p.m. Tuesday near

County 7-1/4th Street at the Colorado River. An agent was assaulted while attempting to detain a group of suspected illegal immigrants.

Details of the incident are still unclear at this time, but according to Hays one of the men in the group attacked the agent and the two scuffled along the river.

"There was an altercation," Hays said. "We're still sorting it out. But our agent was in fear for his life and discharged his weapon."

The suspect was wounded in the arm by the agent.

Additional agents were called in, including a Customs and Border Protection helicopter that searched a section of the river.

Hays was unable to provide details of how many suspected illegals were involved or the identity of the suspect.

"We do have an individual in custody," Hays said. "He is in the hospital. It does look like they are non-life-threatening injuries. Whether he is involved in any type of illegal activity is still unknown at this point."

The incident is being investigated by the FBI and the patrol's Yuma sector Critical Incident Team.

"An assault or any type of injury or altercation like this falls under the jurisdiction of the FBI whether it is a Border Patrol or

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ATF agent," Hays said.

This is not the first time this year that Border Patrol agents have been assaulted and had to use their weapons to defend themselves, Hays said.

Hays said incidents of violence against their agents are on the rise, especially as the agency continues to clamp down on popular border crossing spots frequented by illegals.

Yuma sector has already recorded over 100,000 arrests of illegal aliens. Last year sector agents arrested nearly 140,000 illegals and are on pace to break that record this year.

"Unfortunately, to us, that is a sign that we are being successful in our enforcement efforts," Hays said. "As we disrupt and frustrate these organized criminal smuggling enterprises and they are unable to carry out their trade, they lash out against the people who are causing this."

Hays said they are just glad their agent was unharmed.

"Our agents are highly trained federal law enforcement officers and are trained to deal with highly stressful situations," Hays said. "And we gladly place ourselves in harm's way not only to protect the homeland, but our community which we are members of ourselves."

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U.S. BORDER Patrol agents and investigators search the area of the levee where an agent shot an illegal immigrant who attacked the agent and attempted to drag the agent into the Colorado River Tuesday. PHOTO BY ALFRED J. HERNANDEZ/THE SUN

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