

Funeral held for 7-year-old girl who died in U.S. custody



Guatemala City, December 27 (RHC)-- In Guatemala, friends and family of Jakelin Caal Maquín, the indigenous girl who died in U.S. Border Patrol custody on December 8th, mourned the 7-year-old at her funeral on Christmas Day.

About 150 people gathered around an open casket for the little girl before lowering her into the ground in the impoverished mountain village of San Antonio Secortez. Caal's mother was so despondent, she couldn't bear to attend the funeral.

The girl's uncle, Jose Manuel Caal, said poverty and hunger drove the girl's father to take her to the United States and apply for asylum. He said: "It's clearly because of the poverty that people are migrating away from here. There are no opportunities here. The poverty we live in, the crops we grow aren't enough to support a family."

Caal died on December 8, two days after crossing into the U.S. in a remote part of New Mexico. She had a fever of nearly 106 degrees at the time of her death. Human rights groups have demanded an impartial, independent investigation into the death.



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