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U.S. BORDER PATROL AGENT WAS 'BRUTALLY BEATEN,' TRUMP SAYS

Texas agent, whose partner died Sunday, is expected to survive, president says

By Alicia A. Caldwell
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President Donald Trump said Monday a U.S. Border Patrol injured in an incident that killed another agent was "brutally beaten" but is expected to survive.

Mr. Trump described the unidentified agent's condition before a Cabinet meeting in Washington, where he also renewed his pledge to build a wall along the U.S. border with Mexico.

"As you heard, we lost a Border Patrol officer just yesterday, and another one was brutally beaten and badly, badly hurt," Mr. Trump said. "And we talk about the wall – we're going to have the wall. It's a part of what we're doing. We need it."

Border Patrol Agent Rogelio Martinez, 36 years old, **died at a hospital Sunday** from injuries suffered while he and his partner were patrolling an area near Interstate 10 in the vicinity of Van Horn, Texas, about 120 miles southeast of El Paso. His partner reported that both needed help and other agents were able to get them to a local hospital.

The Border Patrol has said only that the two agents were responding to activity in the area when the incident occurred. The Federal Bureau of Investigation is leading the probe, and on Sunday agents from the Border Patrol's Air and Marine Operations searched the area for suspects and witnesses.

Art Del Cueto, the vice president of the National Border Patrol Council, told an El Paso television station, KTSM, that union officials believe that rocks were used to assault the agents. Officials with the agents' union didn't respond to requests for comment.

However, U.S. Customs and Border Protection hasn't released details of what may have happened to the agents.

Acting Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan said in an internal message to the Border Patrol Monday that the other agent's condition has been upgraded to stable. The Wall Street Journal obtained a copy of the email.

Mr. McAleenan said in his email that "every possibility of what happened to these agents is being investigated. The FBI and CBP are committed to uncovering all the facts and where they lead."

Mr. Trump and others cited the incident as the need for more border security. And for Mr. Trump, it prompted another call for a border wall.

"We will, and must, build the Wall!" Mr. Trump tweeted hours after Mr. Martinez's death was announced on Sunday.

On Monday, he said, "We have to stop the massive drug flow from pouring in."

Sen. Ted Cruz (R., Texas) described the incident as an attack and said it is a "stark reminder of the ongoing threat that an unsecured border poses."

"I remain fully committed to working with the Border Patrol to provide them with all the resources they need to safeguard our nation," Mr. Cruz said in a statement Sunday.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican, on Monday offered a \$20,000 reward from the state for information leading to an arrest in the case.

Mr. Martinez and his partner were assigned to the Border Patrol's Big Bend Sector, a sprawling, sparsely populated stretch of desert dotted with a few small towns. The patrol area includes the state's Big Bend Ranch State Park and the Big Bend National Park, and agents there routinely record the fewest arrests along the Mexican border.

Rugged mountains and towering cliffs along the Rio Grande also mark that stretch of border, making it difficult and likely impractical for a wall or fencing to be built in the area.