

# Border wall threatens Kumeyaay Nation burial sites

written by Zola Fish  
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Photo: Bobby Wallace

Members of the Kumeyaay Nation gathered in Boulevard, Calif., on June 30 to halt the building of Donald Trump's border wall. The Army Corps of Engineers has been using dynamite to blast an existing wall which is located on sacred burial sites of the Kumeyaay ancestors. Indigenous artifacts and bones have been found at the blasting site.

Many of the hundreds of protesters were members of the Kumeyaay Original Peoples Alliance. Additionally, members of the American Indian Movement, Warriors of Awareness, the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee and Black Lives Matter were in attendance, along with allies from other organizations. Marchers chanted, "We didn't cross the border! The border crossed us!"

According to the organizer, Cyn Parada from the La Posta band of Kumeyaay, "Customs and Border Patrol [CBP] has not worked in good faith to permit monitors."

The Kumeyaay are native to both San Diego County and Northern Baja California. The border wall divides their tribal lands. The Kumeyaay are now divided into bands all over the east and north county sections of San Diego.

The blasting was stopped for the day, but will continue. Cyn Parada explained that the demonstration was meant to draw attention to the scheduled construction, which she said is just one example of a project that did not do enough to safeguard the ancestral lands of local tribes.

Blue Eagle Vigil, a member of the Viejas band of Kumeyaay, said, "We're sick and tired of not being at the table when our ancestors are being dug up."

"Our ancestors fought for us and died for us," Parada said. "It's time for us to start saving that history and passing it on to our children, instead of just watching it get desecrated."

Border Patrol officials said they are working to reschedule the blasting.

The actions are continuing. Another protest was held at the blasting site on July 3, and a march was [held in downtown San Diego](#) on July 5.

This reporter has seen construction trucks still going up the road to the wall. The colonizers want their monument to racism, even if it means desecrating an ancient people's culture.

Trump's wall is a monument to white supremacy. It's a monument to himself. Walls are about racism and xenophobia. The border wall is to remind Latinx people they are not welcomed in the U.S.

For Native Americans, the U.S./Mexico border is an imaginary line. The traditional homelands of 36 federally recognized tribes, including the Kumeyaay, Pai, Cocopah, O'odham, Yaqui, Apache and Kickapoo peoples, were split in two by the 1848 treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the 1853 Gadsden Purchase, which carved modern day California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas out of northern Mexico.

Colonial powers claim Indigenous lands as their own. It takes a lot of arrogance for the colonizers to stand on stolen land and complain about immigration. This is Indigenous land and it's time to take it back.

*Zola Fish is a member of the Choctaw Nation.*

