

Cultures divided – Photos

STAR INVESTIGATION: Sealing the border will sever traditional routes for cross-border tribes and communities, threatening the ties that bind them together

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Tucson, Arizona | Published: 09.25.2006

Border tribes

Twenty-six American Indian tribes live near the U.S.-Mexican border, and three have reservation land that directly abuts the international line. Most of the tribes along the border have close ties to indigenous Mexicans and some, like the Tohono O'odham, have members living on both sides of the line.

Tohono O'odham Nation

Southwest of Tucson, has about 28,000 members and sits on 75 miles of the border.

Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas

Has about 500 members and approximately eight miles of border along the Rio Grande.

Cocopah Indian Tribe

Near Yuma, with about 800 members, has seven noncontiguous miles of border land along the Colorado River.



Chiara Bautista/Arizona Daily Star



FAMILY TIES: American resident Javier Lozano kisses daughter Laura, a Mexican citizen, on the U.S. side of the entry port at Puerto Palomas, Mexico. Laura, 11, waited for her father, a judge in nearby Columbus, N.M., to visit on his lunch break and in her excitement ran across the international line to hug him — technically an illegal entry, but one agents here tolerated.



Remembering the past: A broken wooden cross lies on a grave Ofelia Rivas tends on the Tohono O'odham Nation. A few feet away, stakes, painted pink and strung with green ribbon and barbed wire, mark the border. "It would be difficult for us to support a wall or a big fence," O'odham Chairwoman Vivian Juan-Saunders says, citing sensitive archaeological sites and the need of Mexican O'odham for transborder crossings.



Snapshot: Behr Cabanes photographs Border Patrol trucks driving by the home of his grandmother, Ofelia Rivas, on the Tohono O'odham Nation southwest of Tucson. The tribe, one of three American Indian nations on the international line, shares 75 miles of border with Mexico.**na Daily Star**



A family divided: For five generations, Monica Rubio's family has lived in Jacumba, Calif. Rubio, with daughter Christina, left, and niece Marivel Gallego, used to be able to walk across the border and visit relatives in Jacumé, Mexico. She no longer can do so.



Separated: For two years, Nelly Arrizon, left, has seen her 23-year-old son, Roger, only through the border fence between her side in Calexico, Calif., and his side in Mexicali, Mexico. More fencing and stricter security can be an inconvenience for border communities whose residents are used to a short, direct route between towns in the United States and Mexico.

PHOTOS BY Lindsay A. Miller / Arizona Daily