

## The creeping criminalisation of humanitarian aid



Eric Reidy/IRIN

A Humane Borders water station in southern Arizona.

**At the heart of [the trial](#) of a volunteer with American migrant aid group No More Deaths that began in Arizona last week lies the question of when humanitarian aid crosses the line and becomes a criminal offence.**

Scott Warren, 37, faces three felony charges after he helped two undocumented migrants by providing them food, shelter, and transportation over three days in January 2018 – his crime, prosecutors say, wasn't helping people but hiding them from law enforcement officers.

Whichever way the case goes, humanitarian work appears to be under growing threat of criminalisation by certain governments.

Aid organisations have long faced suspensions in difficult operating environments due to geopolitical or domestic political concerns – from [Pakistan](#) to [Sudan](#) to [Burundi](#) – but they now face a new criminalisation challenge from Western governments, whether it's rescue missions in the Mediterranean or toeing the US counter-terror line in the Middle East.

As aid workers increasingly find themselves in the legal crosshairs, here's a collection of our reporting to draw attention to this emerging trend.