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During the May 1986-May 1989 period, 300 cases were reported of human and civil rights abuse by US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) agents working in the Tijuana-San Diego area. The incidents included physical abuse of undocumented Mexicans and Central Americans, inappropriate use of firearms resulting in six deaths, and the illegal arrest of US citizens. According to the Mexican consulate in San Diego, there are 11 cases of Mexican citizens killed or seriously wounded by the US Border Patrol currently in process in the California court system. Jose Manuel Valenzuela Arce, a researcher with the Colegio de la Frontera Norte in Tijuana, said there has been an alarming increase in the number of hate-motivated crimes against Mexican immigrants in San Diego this year. Thus far in 1990, 17 Mexicans have been killed by INS agents and racist groups patrolling the border. According to a study by Colegio de Mexico researcher Maria Jimenez, the militarization of the border by the US began in 1989, and could lead to armed conflict between the two countries. In May this year, 400 attempts on the lives of Mexican immigrants were made by official and unofficial border patrols in Texas. Also in May, in San Diego 318 murder attempts against Mexican immigrants by such groups were reported. The Mexican Foreign Ministry's migration issues and human rights coordinator Miguel Gonzalez Felix says the ministry receives over 40,000 complaints every year describing abuse occurring in the US. Most are investigated. In the past three years, 60 cases involving violence against Mexican nationals required diplomatic intervention. Gonzalez added that the majority of complaints pertain to people detained by authorities, workers not paid the minimum wage, and inadequate living conditions. Ministry statistics indicate that in the first seven months of 1990, almost 500,000 Mexican workers were expelled from the US. In the same period, the federal government extended legal assistance to 60,000 Mexican workers living abroad. Among suggestions to deal with the problem are the National Action Party's call for a meeting of state legislatures on both sides of the border to address human rights abuses perpetrated against Mexican citizens in the US, and a proposal by the Mexican-US Opportunities Foundation for establishing a binational police force. (Sources: El Financiero, 10/26/90, 11/17/90, 11/19/90; La Jornada, 10/31/90; Notimex, 11/02/90, 11/08/90, 11/14/90; El Nacional, 11/17/90)

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