

# Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

## BRIGHTON PARK

# Camp scrapped, but toxins remain

With the planned migrant site shelved, neighbors now want to know how the city will protect them

By **Samantha Moilanen**  
Chicago Tribune

Sofia Salinas' home backs up to a vacant lot at 38th Street and California Avenue in Chicago's Brighton Park neighborhood.

When the city announced a plan to build a migrant camp on the lot, some residents were angry they

weren't consulted. But when that plan was scrapped after the discovery of high levels of toxic metals, including lead, Salinas said it felt like "a slap in the face."

A first-time homeowner who has lived in Brighton Park for four years, Salinas said she and other residents have been working to improve the area through regular

community meetings, welcoming the opening of a new church and helping neighbors keep up their homes. Now she questions whether those efforts have been in vain.

"You don't know whether or not you want to stick around. You don't know whether or not to put your money into building a community when it's toxic. It's like, 'Should I even be living here?'" Salinas said.

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Sofia Salinas walks along the area that was to become a migrant tent encampment near her home in Brighton Park. **JOHN J. KIM/TRIBUNE**

**WHAT THEY FOUND:** After open records requests, the city released an 800-page environmental assessment report by outside contractor Terracon Consultants, which found high levels of mercury, lead, arsenic and manganese and traces of cancer-causing PCBs, among other contaminants on a vacant lot in the Brighton Park neighborhood.



A woman and child get emotional at a Wednesday vigil for a 5-year-old migrant boy who died Sunday at a Lower West Side shelter. **ARMANDO L. SANCHEZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE PHOTOS**

## A 'PREVENTABLE' DEATH. A 'PREDICTABLE' DEATH.

Texas sends migrants to O'Hare on chartered flight, officials say

By **Nell Salzman** | Chicago Tribune

Migrants were flown to Chicago from Texas on a chartered flight Tuesday night in the state's latest effort to ship people to the sanctuary city after buses carrying migrants have been penalized.

The city did not receive notice prior to their arrival and has had no communication with Texas officials, according to Mayor Brandon Johnson's spokesperson Ronnie Reese. Reese said he wasn't sure how the city would respond.

Andrew Mahaleris, a spokesman for Texas Republican Gov. Greg Abbott, said in a statement to the Tribune the migrants had signed consent waivers available in multiple

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Yanitza Rico, 16, from left, Omar Smith, 1, mother Anna Vaccaro, her husband, Jose Orellana, and Gianfranco Matute, 8, all from Venezuela, eat at O'Hare International Airport on Wednesday.

Hundreds attend migrant boy's vigil; advocates demand better

By **Nell Salzman** | Chicago Tribune

Hundreds gathered outside a migrant shelter on the Lower West Side Wednesday night, three days after a 5-year-old migrant staying there died in a medical emergency that has confused and frustrated migrants, volunteers and health care advocates.

For advocates, the death of Jean Carlos Martinez Rivero is a symbol of the effects of repeated chaos between governments struggling to house and care for record numbers of migrants crossing the U.S. southern border.

"When there are folks who are sending (migrants) from the border, coming to us from Texas, and not really respecting human life,

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## US trades Maduro ally for 10 American prisoners, fugitive

By **Joshua Goodman, Eric Tucker and Regina Garcia Cano**  
Associated Press

MIAMI — The United States freed a close ally of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro in exchange for the release of 10

Americans imprisoned in the South American country and the return of a fugitive defense contractor known as "Fat Leonard" who is at the center of a massive Pentagon bribery scandal, the Biden administration announced Wednesday.

The deal represents the Biden

administration's boldest move yet to improve relations with the major oil-producing nation and extract concessions from the self-proclaimed socialist leader. The largest release of American prisoners in Venezuela's history comes weeks after the White House agreed to suspend some

sanctions, following a commitment by Maduro to work toward free and fair conditions for the 2024 presidential election.

The release of Alex Saab, a Maduro associate long regarded as a criminal trophy by Washington, is a significant concession to the Venezuelan leader. U.S. officials said

the decision to grant him clemency was difficult but essential in order to bring home jailed Americans, a core administrative objective that in recent years has resulted in the release of criminals who once were seen as untradeable.

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**TODAY'S WEATHER**



High **44** Low **40**

Complete Chicagoland forecast on Page 16

\$4.00 city and suburbs and elsewhere  
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