Honoring Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women to Guide Our Advocacy for Change

MAY 5, 2020
Partnering Sister Organizations

Alaska Native Women’s Resource Center
Indian Law Resource Center
National Congress of American Indians
Native Women’s Society of the Great Plains
Southwest Indigenous Women’s Coalition
Welcome, Cherrah Giles, Chair, NIWRC Board of Directors

NCAI Violence Against Women Task Force Co-Chairs
  Michelle Demmert, Tlingit, Eagle, Kaax’oos hittaan clan
  Juana Majel Dixon, Pauma Band of Luiseno Indians, Tribal Traditional Councilwoman & Secretary of NCAI

The Voice of a Mother Calling for Justice
  Malinda Limberhand, Mother of Hanna Harris, Missing and Murdered, July 2013

Honoring the Missing and Murdered Through Action
  Virginia Davis, Senior Policy Advisor, NCAI

Honoring Native Women
  Tami Jerue, Executive Director, Alaska Native Women’s Resource Center
  Carmen O’Leary, Executive Director, Native Women’s Society of the Great Plains
  Leanne Guy, Executive Director, Southwest Indigenous Women’s Coalition

International Update on Efforts to Address MMIW
  Christopher Foley, Staff Attorney, Indian Law Resource Center
Welcome
Honoring Our Native Women Missing & Murdered

A National Day of Awareness
May 5th, 2020

Cherrah Giles, NIWRC Board Chair
NCAI Task Force on Violence Against Women, Co-Chairs

Michelle Demmert

Juana Majel-Dixon
In the United States: An Alarming Pattern of Missing and Murdered in the U.S.

- Native women are murdered and go missing at a higher rate than any other ethnic group.
- Many of these cases are part of the spectrum of violence against Native women.
- On some reservations women are murdered at a rate 10 times higher than the national average.
- 2017 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) homicide is the 6th leading cause of death of Native females between ages of 1-44.
Honoring Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

Public Awareness

Public Honoring

- Honor the women
- Support their loved ones
- Support community healing
Lack of Consequences for Violent Crimes Against Native Women

- Native women as a population are vulnerable to violent crimes.
- The National Institute of Justice reports that more than four in five AIAN adults (83 percent) have experienced some form of violence in their lifetime. Among AIAN women, more than 1 in 2 have experienced physical violence by intimate partners or sexual violence in their lifetime, and more than 1 in 12 have experienced it in the past year.
- Vulnerability is due in part to the lack of legal consequences reflected in the minimal to zero number of federal prosecutions of domestic violence and sexual assault abusers and sex traffickers.

  - 2018 – 39%
  - 2017 – 37%
  - 2016 – 34%
  - 2015 – 39%
  - 2014 – 34%
  - 2013 – 34%
  - 2012 – 31%
  - 2011 – 38%

- In 2018, federal prosecutors filed cases against
  - 172 defendants under VAWA’s 2013 enhanced federal assault statutes and obtained 115 convictions
  - 51 defendants using domestic assault by habitual offender (18 U.S.C. Sec. 117) and obtained 33 convictions

- In 2018 consistent from previous years, 65.2% of declinations by federal prosecutors involved categories of physical and sexual assaults, sexual exploitation, or failure to register as a sex offender

- Due to this reality tribal domestic violence programs are encouraged to have a protocol prepared to respond if a Native woman goes missing.
A Pattern of Failed Systemic Response

- Native woman is missing
- Report is made
- Inadequate response by criminal system
- Community search for MMIW
- Community walk and other social justice actions

A mother’s account of a daughter’s missing days.
Malinda Limberhand

- A National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls
- May 5th is the birthday of my daughter Hanna Harris who went missing on July 4, 2013 and was murdered.
- Organize for changes needed at the tribal, state, and national level
- Increase public awareness: wear red, post your efforts on social media
- Honor our Native women and girls
IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES
APRIL 4, 2019

Mr. Daines (for himself, Mr. Tester, Mr. Horowitz, Mr. Brown, Ms. Warren, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Shaheen, Mr. Lankford, and Ms. Murkowski) submitted the following resolution, which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

RESOLUTION

Designating May 5, 2019, as the “National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls”.

 Whereas, according to a study commissioned by the Department of Justice, in some Tribal communities, American Indian women face murder rates that are more than 10 times the national average murder rate;

 Whereas, according to the most recently available data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2017, homicide was the sixth leading cause of death for Amer-

Organizing for Changes Needed
Honoring the Missing and Murdered Through Action

- Education and awareness that MMIW is preventable
- Increased support of Indian tribes to respond
- Development of tribal, state, and federal protocols
- Reform of law enforcement response

First Capitol Hill MMIW Briefing

Virginia Davis, NCAI
Alaska Native Women’s Resource Center

Efforts to Address MMIWG

- Raising Awareness
- Breaking the Silence
- Support for Alaska Tribes efforts to respond, addressing the absence of law enforcement in Alaska villages, and other barriers.
- Assist Alaska Tribes in their efforts to develop MMIW protocols at local, state and federal level

Tami Truett Jerue, Executive Director
Native Women’s Society of the Great Plains
NWSGP Face Book Page
http://www.nativewomenssociety.org

Carmen O’Leary, Executive Director, NWSGP
Southwest Indigenous Women’s Coalition
AZ MMIWG Bill Signing May 2019
May 5th MMIW National Day of Awareness Event
LGBTQ/2S Relatives

- Jarrod Marks
- Aiyana Catherine-Germain
- Raina Autumn Demarrias
- Vernon K Renville
- Dallas Farmer
LaVerda Sorrell Missing since July 2002

MISSING PERSON
LAVERDA SORRELL
July 4, 2002
Fort Defiance, Arizona

DESCRIPTION

Date(s) of Birth: Do: November 28, 1967
Race: Native American
Height: 5'6"
Weight: 130 pounds
Sex: Female

REWARD
The FBI is offering a reward of up to $10,000 for information leading to the identification, arrest, and conviction of the person(s) responsible for the disappearance of LaVerda Sorrell.

REMARKS
Sorrell wears glasses. She previously resided in Nacozari, New Mexico.

DETAILS
The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Albuquerque Field Office is asking for the public's assistance in determining the whereabouts of LaVerda Sorrell.

Sorrell's husband reported her as missing on July 4, 2002, when he dropped her off at an office in Fort Defiance, Arizona. A family member reported her missing to the Navajo Police, Window Rock, Arizona, on July 4, 2002.

If you have any information concerning this person, please contact your local FBI office or the nearest American Embassy or Consulate.

Field Office: Albuquerque

WANTED
$10,000 REWARD OFFERED
BY THE FBI

LAVERDA SORRELL
DOD: 15/26/57
Height: 5'6"
Weight: 110
Hair: Black
Eyes: Brown

Sorrell was last seen in Ft. Defiance, AZ, on 07/04/02. The FBI is offering a $10,000 reward to anyone providing information which results in the arrest and conviction of a suspect(s) involved in the disappearance of Sorrell. If you have any information regarding the disappearance or whereabouts of Sorrell, please call the FBI Gallup BA at (505) 734-6000, toll free at (866)737-2439, or the Albuquerque Division of the FBI at (505) 889-1109 (24 hours).
Indian Law Resource Center

- International Recognition
- UN Commission on the Status of Women

Christopher Foley, ILRC
The system is broken. I lost my daughter and I know my granddaughters face the same danger. We all do.

—Mother of a missing native woman found murdered

The Missing and Murdered Native Women Crisis
Resources

- Alaska Native Women’s Resource Center: www.aknwrc.org
- Indian Law Resource Center: www.indianlaw.org
- National Congress of American Indians: www.ncai.org
- Native Women’s Society of the Great Plains: www.nativewomenssociety.org
- Southwest Indigenous Women’s Coalition: www.swiwc.org
- ATCEV: www.atcev.org
- StrongHearts Native Helpline: http://www.strongheartsheLINE.org/
- Senate Committee on Indian Affairs: Missing and Murdered: Confronting the Silent Crisis in Indian Country link: https://www.indian.senate.gov/hearing/missing-and-murdered-confronting-silent-crisis-indian-country
Local: Read: MMIW Update, Restoration, Feb. 2020: [link]

Explore: NIWRC’s Organizing a Groundswell to End the Injustice of Murdered and Disappeared Native Women and Girls in the Advocate! Beyond the Shelter Doors e-newsletter and NIWRC’s Online Resource Library.

Download: Tribal Community Response When a Woman is Missing: A Toolkit for Action from the NIWRC Resource Library.


Report: CDC Report | Racial and Ethnic Differences in Homicides of Adult Women and the Role of Intimate Partner Violence: [link]
The National Indigenous Women's Resource Center's participation in this webinar was supported by Grant Number 90EV0409 from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Thank you
Feel Free to Contact Us

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