

National Briefing—Addressing the National Crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women:

Advocacy in Action



**NATIONAL
INDIGENOUS**
WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

APRIL 29, 2021

Partnering Sister Organizations



Alaska Native Women's Resource Center
Alliance of Tribal Coalitions to End Violence
Indian Law Resource Center
National Congress of American Indians
Pouhana O Na Wahine
StrongHearts Native Helpline



**NATIONAL
INDIGENOUS**
WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER



STRONGHEARTS
Native Helpline



INDIAN LAW
RESOURCE CENTER
JUSTICE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES



National Briefing - Addressing the National Crisis of MMIW: A Call to Action

Moderated by: Amy Sparck (*Cup'ik, Alaska*), NIWRC Policy Specialist

- ▶ Traditional Opening - Juana Majel Dixon (*Pauma Band of Luiseno Indians*), Tribal Traditional Councilwoman, NCAI Secretary & NCAI Violence Against Women Task Force Co-Chair
- ▶ Welcome - Lucy Rain Simpson (*Diné*), Executive Director, NIWRC
- ▶ Members of Congress:
 - ▶ Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Vice Chairman, Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
 - ▶ Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Senate Committee on Indian Affairs

Panelists:

- ▶ MMIW Family Members Perspective - Patricia Whitefoot (*Yakama Nation*) - Sister of Daisy Mae Heath
Yolanda Frazer (*Northern Cheyenne*) and Grace Bulltail (*Crow*)- Relatives of Kaycera Stops Pretty Places
- ▶ MMIW Tribal Services/Resources Perspective - Lori Jump (*Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians*) Director, Stronghearts Native Helpline
- ▶ Tribal Justice Perspective - Alfred Urbina (*Pascua Yaqui Tribe*), Attorney General
- ▶ National Tribal Policy Perspective - Kerri Colfer (*Tlingit*), Senior Native Affairs Advisor, NIWRC
- ▶ Closing Remarks - President Shannon Holsey (*Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians*), NCAI Treasurer & NCAI Violence Against Women Task Force Co-Chair

Traditional Opening: National Briefing to Honor Our Native Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women



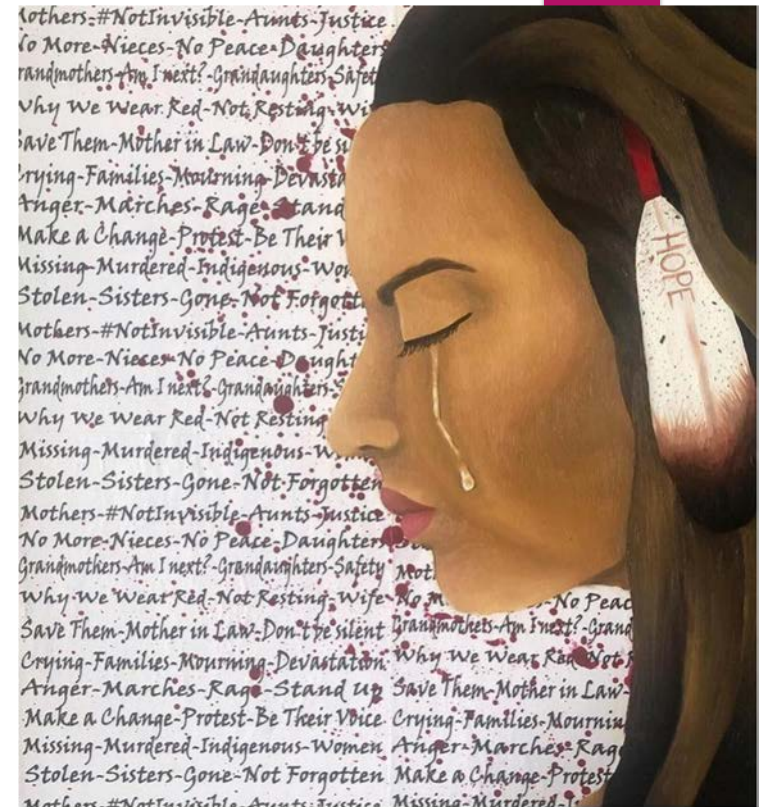
Juana Majel Dixon
Pauma Band of Luiseno Indians
Tribal Traditional Councilwoman,
Secretary of NCAI, and
NCAI Violence Against Women Task Force
Co-Chair

Moderated by:
Amy Sparck
(Cup'ik)
NIWRC
Policy Specialist



In the United States: An Alarming Pattern of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

- ▶ 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 third leading cause of death of Native females between ages of 1-44.





Lack of Consequences for Violence Against Native Women

- ▶ Native women as a population are vulnerable to violent crime.
- ▶ A National Institute of Justice report found:
 - ▶ 83 percent of AIAN experienced violence in their lifetime.
 - ▶ More than 1 in 2 AIAN women have experienced physical violence by intimate partners or sexual violence in their lifetime.
 - ▶ 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.
- ▶ In the past decade, the DOJ had steadily declined to prosecute over a third of referred cases.
- ▶ In 2018 consistent from previous years, 65.2% of declinations by federal prosecutors involved categories of physical, sexual assaults, sexual exploitation, or failure to register as a sex offender

Welcome by
Lucy Rain Simpson
(Diné)
Executive Director
NIWRC



Addressing a Failed Systemic Response

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



Raising Awareness and Honoring MMIWG

Family and Tribal Community Activism

Public Awareness



Public Honoring

- ▶ Honor the women
- ▶ Support their loved ones
- ▶ Support community healing

Remarks from Members of Congress



U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska)



- ▶ **Awareness and Response to a National Crisis**
- ▶ **Resolution, Legislation and Justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**

U.S. Senator Catherine Cortez-Masto (D-Nevada)



- ▶ **Awareness and Response to a National Crisis**
- ▶ **Resolution, Legislation and Justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**

Tribal Perspectives on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls



MMIW Family Member Perspective Patricia Whitefoot, Yakama Nation



- ▶ Sister Daisy Mae Heath has been missing since 1987
- ▶ Daisy Mae's case is still unsolved

MMIW Family Member Perspective

Yolanda Fraser



- Kaysera Stops Pretty Places was found murdered in 2019
- Kaysera's case is still unsolved

Tribal Services/Resources Perspective

Lori Jump, Director, Stronghearts Native Helpline

- ▶ <https://strongheartshelpline.org>
- ▶ 1-844-7NATIVE (762-8483)
- ▶ a 24/7 safe, confidential anonymous domestic, dating and sexual violence helpline for American Indians and Alaska Natives, offering culturally appropriate support and advocacy



Tribal Justice Perspective

Alfred Urbina, Pascua Yaqui Tribe Attorney General

- ▶ The Pascua Yaqui Tribe was one of the first three in the nation to exercise jurisdiction over non-Indian offenders, following the inclusion of tribal provisions in the VAWA Reauthorization of 2013



National Tribal Policy Perspective

Kerri Colfer (*Tlingit*)

Senior Native Affairs Advisor, NIWRC

- ▶ These family member stories are reflective of thousands of cases of MMIWG where insufficient resources, confusion over jurisdiction, and lack of police presence or response hamper efforts to recover victims quickly



Closing Remarks:
National Briefing
to Honor Our Native
Missing & Murdered
Indigenous Women




**President Shannon Holsey, Stockbridge-
Munsee Community Band of Mohican
Indians, NCAI Treasurer &
NCAI Violence Against Women Task Force
Co-Chair**

Resources

- ▶ National Indigenous Women's Resource Center: www.niwrc.org
<https://www.niwrc.org/restoration-magazine>
- ▶ Alaska Native Women's Resource Center: www.aknwrc.org
- ▶ Indian Law Resource Center: www.indianlaw.org
- ▶ National Congress of American Indians: www.ncai.org
- ▶ Alliance of Tribal Coalitions to End Violence: <http://www.atcev.org>
- ▶ StrongHearts Native Helpline: <http://www.strongheartshelpline.org>
- ▶ Pouhana 'O Na Wahine
- ▶ S. 606, designating May 5, 2020, as the **National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls** <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-resolution/606>
- ▶ Subcommittee Hearing: **Unmasking the Hidden Crisis of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women (MMIW): Exploring Solutions to End the Cycle of Violence** link: <https://naturalresources.house.gov/hearings/unmasking-the-hidden-crisis-of-murdered-and-missing-indigenous-women-mmiw-exploring-solutions-to-end-the-cycle-of-violence>
- ▶ 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>

Additional Resources

- ▶ **READ: MMIW Call to Action, Restoration**
Feb. 2021: <https://bit.ly/3qfGjoY>
- ▶ **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: Report from Urban Indian Health Institute: Missing And Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls: A snapshot of data from 71 urban cities in the United States** (2018)
- ▶ **REPORT: CDC Report | Racial and Ethnic Differences in Homicides of Adult Women and the Role of Intimate Partner Violence:**
https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6628a1.htm?s_cid=mm6628a1_w



This briefing is made possible by Grant Number 90EV0452 from Administration of Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

ITS CONTENTS ARE SOLELY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AUTHORS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE OFFICIAL VIEWS OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.



Thank you
Feel Free to Contact Us

Kerri Colfer, Senior Native Affairs Advisor, NIWRC

kcolfer@niwrc.org

National Indigenous Women's Resource Center

515 Lame Deer Ave. | PO Box 99 (mailing)

Lame Deer, MT 59043

(406) 477-3896 | Toll-Free: (855) 649-7299

www.NIWRC.org