



Joint Press Release

Navajo Nation Office
of the President and the Vice President
and Navajo Nation Office of the Speaker



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Navajo Nation to Hold Missing and Murdered Diné Relative Forum

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President and the 24th Navajo Nation Council in partnership with Diné College are pleased to announce the Missing and Murdered Diné Relative Forum to be held at Diné College on June 27 and 28.

“Through the passionate leadership of Honorable Amber Kanazbah Crotty, former Vice President Rex Lee Jim, and many others, we will come together at this forum to discuss this very troubling and real issue – the disappearance and murdering of many of our own people at very alarming rates,” stated President Nez.

President Nez met with Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi’i’áhi/To’Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé aṅáoz’t’l’í), former Vice President Rex Lee Jim, Diné College School of Business and Social Science Dean – Associate Prof. Michael Lerma, Ph.D., and Executive Director of Yahuaca Knowledge Distribution Adrian Naakai’dine’e Lerma on Wednesday, to discuss ways in which to bring together the various advocacy groups, missing persons groups, and others to have a dialogue on how to collect data on the number of growing missing and murdered persons.

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty said that the forum would provide an opportunity for Navajo leadership and programs to begin discussing Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives through a proposed collaborative working relationship with entities such as Diné College, Northern Arizona University, and local indigenous coalitions.

"For many years, Navajo families have advocated for their missing and murdered love ones, and as leaders, we have heard their pleas. Through a unified collective effort, we seek to create one of the first missing and murdered Diné relatives database in Indian country. The Navajo Nation is taking its first steps to address this issue and to demand that we have access and ownership over our own data. We can no longer solely rely on our federal and state partners, so we must take the reins to tell our own story," said Delegate Crotty.

“With the strong advocacy of the 24th Council and OPVP, states surrounding the Nation are beginning to seriously study the MMIW epidemic. Next, we must develop this critical database to protect our people,” stated Speaker Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí’, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh).

“Working together, this forum will take us a step forward in working more collaboratively and in finding ways as to how we can educate our communities and children about everyday risks and dangers in our communities,” added President Nez.

Details of the two-day Missing and Murdered Diné Relative Forum will be forthcoming.

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