



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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Council Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton continues search for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

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ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — On Sunday, Madam Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton (Shiprock) of the Law & Order Committee joined event organizers for a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women’s march to hold local authorities accountable for an increase in violent cases in the Albuquerque area. The family of Pepita Redhair helped organize the event after she went missing in March of 2020.

“When I was 17 years old, I went missing and my parents were told not to worry because I was in a previous relationship where I was a victim of domestic violence. The police deemed me ‘troubled’ because there was alcohol in my community and they assumed I was drinking,” said Madam Chair Eugenia Charles Newton. “The concerns of my parents were not valid and I was just a teenager. We need to come together and no longer blame our missing and murdered relatives. Pepita Redhair’s life matters, her story needs to be told, and she deserves to come home.”

Nationally, Indigenous women face extremely high rates of violence, an epidemic that is marked by the lack of data around the number of women who go missing or are murdered in and around Tribal nations.

In April, Secretary Debra Haaland created the Missing and Murdered Unit (MMU) within the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services (BIA-OJS) to pursue justice for missing or murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives.

“Violence against Indigenous peoples is a crisis that has been underfunded for decades. Far too often, murders and missing person cases in Indian country go unsolved and unaddressed, leaving families and communities devastated,” said Secretary Debra Haaland. “The new MMU unit will provide the resources and leadership to prioritize these cases and coordinate resources to hold people accountable, keep our communities safe, and provide closure for families.”

Earlier this year, President Biden signed a proclamation declaring May 4, 2021, as Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day. This was an affirmation of the Administration’s commitment to working with Tribal nations to address the disproportionately high number of missing or murdered Indigenous people, increase coordination to investigate and resolve these cases and ensure accountability.

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