



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

MEDIA CONTACTS

Alray Nelson, Communications Director
Kyrn Hardy, Public Information Officer
E-mail: nnlb.communications@gmail.com
Phone: (928) 530-8329

Councilwoman Amber Kanazbah Crotty joins New Mexico Leaders to create Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Relatives Task Force

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 16, 2021



PHOTO: Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty, N.M. Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, and Navajo Nation First Lady Phefelia Nez look on as Indian Affairs Secretary Lynn Trujillo and Bernalillo County District Attorney Raúl Torrez sign a memorandum of understanding to establish a MMIWR Unit.

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty of the 24th Navajo Nation Council joined New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, Indian Affairs Secretary Lynn Trujillo, Navajo Nation First Lady Phefelia Nez, and Bernalillo County District Attorney Raúl Torrez for the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to establish a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives Task Force sub-unit (MMIWR Unit) within the Second Judicial District Attorney's Office.

The signing ceremony was hosted by the Indian Affairs Department at the All Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque, N.M.

In 2019, House Bill 278 was passed by the New Mexico Legislature and signed by Governor Lujan Grisham creating the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force (MMIW) for New Mexico. The new sub-unit will operate within the Crime Strategies Unit and assist the statewide task force to address jurisdictional gaps, MMIWR data-sharing and analysis, and case investigations.

- MORE -

“The Navajo people commend the leadership of our New Mexico leaders for making the search for our missing relatives a top priority. The late Senator John Pinto is remembered today because he worked to establish this statewide task force. With the support of Governor Lujan Grisham, the Indian Affairs Department is collaborating with New Mexico’s tribal communities to find our relatives, support survivors, and investigate cases. The Navajo Nation Council is committed to creating a missing persons unit within the Public Safety Division and developing a victim services program to bring closure for families,” said Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Cove, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Red Valley, Tsé’á’náoozt’í’í, Sheep Springs, Beclabito, Gad’ii’áhí/Tó Ko’í).

The MOU ensures the MMIWR Unit will work to improve the collection, consolidation, and exploration of MMIWR data, and develop a criminal network analysis software platform to interpret, save, and share information.

“Every family in some way has been affected by domestic violence, systemic racism, and some form of injustice. The Navajo Nation Council created the Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives task force to increase resources for reporting and identifying cases, to work with Navajo law enforcement to identify any barriers, and improve the reporting and investigation of MMDR cases. The violence must end and the stories of our survivors must be told. It is my belief that accountability at all levels is important for families to heal. We applaud the leadership of Honorable Amber Kanazbah Crotty for being an outspoken advocate for our women, children, elders, and LGBTQ+ community,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Łichíí, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh)

Delegate Crotty leads the Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives (MMDR) task force that is developing a framework for a proposed MMDR data institute and the development of a missing persons community action toolkit to empower communities.

“It is clear that our Indigenous women are plagued by high rates of violence and in response, there continues to be a lack of government support to meet the growing needs of our families. In order to restore harmony and begin the healing process, criminal cases must fully be prosecuted and our Indigenous relatives must be found. The lives of our missing Navajo relatives are sacred and their stories must be told,” added Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty.

According to the 2020 New Mexico MMIW Task Force Report, between 2014 to 2019, there have been 660 missing person cases for Indigenous people in the Albuquerque area. Of these case numbers, 287 were women and 373 were men.

###