



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives awareness walk hosted in Kayenta by Navajo Nation Council

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PHOTO: Madam Chair Amber Kanazbah Crotty and Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown lead the Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives awareness walk in Kayenta, Ariz.

KAYENTA, Ariz. — On Saturday, members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council hosted an awareness walk to highlight the growing problem of missing and murdered Diné people in the Kayenta area and across the United States.

Around 150 community leaders, families, and victim advocates joined Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown and Madam Chair Amber Kanazbah Crotty for the two-mile march from Amigo's Cafe parking lot to the Nash Center at Monument Valley High School.

“We are marching to bring a voice to the families searching for missing relatives and to tell the stories of the victims that never returned home. In the Navajo language, there is no word for human trafficking, the missing, and the inhumane violence experienced. Access to support groups, onsite counseling, victim advocates, and traditional medicine people is important for families to heal from this trauma. We need to go back and teach our young men about the sweat lodge ceremonies and the sacredness of our matriarchs. Our male coming of age ceremonies have lessons for our young men on their roles in Navajo society. Navajo men have to reclaim our traditional teachings and protect our women from violence,” said Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Dennehotso, Kayenta, Chííłchinbii'tó).

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A community meeting with men on and off the Navajo Nation will be hosted by Delegate Brown this month. The goal of the gathering is to connect community leaders, engage traditional male practitioners, and discuss ways to support Indigenous women.

The United States Justice Department shared that Indigenous women are murdered at a rate 10 times higher than the national average while more than 4 out of 5 Indigenous women have experienced violence. Most concerning is an average of 40 percent of women involved in sex trafficking identified as Native American from the United States or Canada. This growing epidemic must end so victims are reunited with their families.

“We need to break the silence of the victims and uplift the voices of our survivors. Families cannot heal until justice is fully served as we bring an end to this silent epidemic. We march for baby girl Ashlynn Mike and her memory, so not one more child is harmed. Our families are suffering in silence as the Navajo Nation deals with this monster called violence and murder. Let us reclaim our children and give awareness also to the countless Navajo men who have gone missing in the border towns. Make sure to tell your children that you love them and hold them tightly,” said Madam Chair Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Cove, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Red Valley, Tsé’á’náoozt’í’í, Sheepsprings, Beclabito, Gad’ii’áhí/Tó Ko’i).

Last year, the National Crime Information Center reported nearly 5,300 records were filed for missing Indigenous women, a large majority of that number made up of children and teenagers.

The Navajo Nation Council will identify funding to support a Diné Missing Persons Unit, an MMDR data institute and provide assistance for families actively searching for their loved ones.

“The Navajo Nation will continue to advocate for our missing and murdered Diné relatives so that we can increase resources for reporting and identifying cases and work with law enforcement officers to assist the families affected. Everything must be done to search, locate, and bring home our missing relatives, which will provide closure for the Navajo people. We applaud the leadership of Delegate Nathaniel Brown and Madam Chair Amber Kanazbah Crotty for being outspoken advocates for our women, children, elders, and the LGBTQ+ community,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Łichíí’, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh)

The Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives (MMDR) Task Force is taking action to raise public awareness, promote prevention, and create healing spaces for survivors. More information can be accessed at <https://www.navajommdr.com/>

The National Human Trafficking Hotline can be contacted at (888) 373-7888 or by text message to 233733 (Text “HELP” or “INFO”). The hotline is open 24 hours, 7 days a week. Further information can be accessed at www.humantraffickinghotline.org

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