



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL  
Office of the Speaker

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## National Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples Awareness Day honored by Navajo Nation Leaders

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PHOTO: Council Delegates Amber Kanazbah Crotty and Nathaniel Brown walk to support missing relatives and surviving families in Kayenta, Ariz.

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — Speaker Seth Damon and members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council were joined by Madam Chair Amber Kanazbah Crotty of the Sexual Assault Prevention Subcommittee and Interior Secretary Debra Haaland to recognize National Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day to uplift the voices of families and survivors while remembering those who still remain missing.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, it was shared that Native Americans face some of the highest rates of violence in the country, experiencing violent crime at higher rates than the national average. Native women and girls experience disproportionately high rates of sexual and gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence.

“Justice must be served for the families and victims of violence, and our missing Indigenous people must be found. The Navajo Nation is working with the Justice Department to implement the Not Invisible Act, sponsored by Secretary Deb Haaland during her time in Congress. This is a national crisis that needs our immediate attention and to bring healing to our communities,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh).

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Yesterday, President Joe Biden signed a proclamation declaring May 5, 2022, as Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day. This was an affirmation of the commitment of the federal government to work with tribal communities to address the disproportionately high number of missing or murdered Indigenous people across the United States.

“When our relatives experience violence or go missing, it deeply hurts our communities. This is an ongoing crisis deeply impacting Indian Country where hundreds of our women are going missing and are never found. We stand here on this sacred land knowing that 154 years ago, the generational trauma of violence since the Navajo Long Walk still impacts us. The Navajo Nation says loudly, enough is enough,” said Madam Chair Amber Kanazabh Crotty (Cove, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Red Valley, Tsé’áłnáoozt’í’í, Sheep Springs, Beclabito, Gad’ii’áhí/Tó Ko’í).

In 2021, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported that murder is the third-leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaska Native women and that rates of violence on reservations can be up to ten times higher than the national average. It was also noted that Native men experience higher rates of violence than other demographic groups, while the LGBTQ+ community is also a target of physical assault.

“In order to restore harmony and begin the healing process for our families, criminal cases must fully be investigated and prosecuted. We appreciate our Diné advocates who worked for decades to develop state, federal, and tribal coordination to bring justice to our Diné relatives. We must bring closure and healing to our missing and murdered relatives across Indian Country,” said Vice Chairman Carl Slater (Round Rock, Rock Point, Tsé’ch’izí, Lukachukai, Tsaille-Wheatfields).

According to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Report, the National Crime Information Center reports that, in 2016, there were 5,712 reports of missing American Indian and Alaska Native women and girls, though the US Department of Justice’s federal missing person database only logged 116 cases.

“We are grateful to President Joe Biden, Secretary Deb Haaland, and our Congressional leaders for recognizing Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples Awareness Day. In the Diné culture, our women are sacred matriarchs that we respect and honor. There are relatives that are still out there that are not accounted for and we have to work to find them,” said Council Delegate Charlaine Tso (Mexican Water, Tólikan, Teec Nos Pos, Aneth, Red Mesa).

In a White House statement, President Biden added, “The Federal Government has an obligation to ensure that cases of missing or murdered persons are met with swift and effective action. My Administration is fully committed to investigating and resolving these cases through a coordinated law enforcement response, as well as intervention and prevention efforts. We are also dedicated to researching the underlying causes of this violence and to working with Native communities to address them.”

The Navajo Nation Council supports the establishment of 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.

Earlier this week, Madam Chair Amber Kanazbah Crotty was also honored with the Eleanor E. Roehrig Advocate Award for being an outspoken champion for the MMIWR movement, the elderly, young people, and the LGBTQ+ community.

The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Report can be accessed here: <http://www.uihi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Missing-and-Murdered-Indigenous-Women-and-Girls-Report.pdf>

U.S. Department of Justice and Tribal Justice and Safety Division launched the Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) webpage here: <https://www.justice.gov/tribal/mmip>

A virtual event to highlight the Not Invisible Act Commission and 2022 National Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples Awareness Day with Secretary Debra Haaland can be viewed here: <https://www.doi.gov/live>

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