



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

MEDIA CONTACT:

nnlb.communications@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 7, 2026

MMDR Task Force highlights awareness, prevention, and action at MMDR symposium



Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty, Chairwoman of the Missing and Murdered Diné Relative Task Force, provided opening remarks at the MMDR Symposium.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives Task Force, in partnership with the Navajo Nation Division of Behavioral and Mental Health Services, hosted a two-day symposium on May 4–5 focused on raising awareness, strengthening prevention, and advancing solutions to the MMDR crisis.

Members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, including MMDR Task Force Chair Amber Kanazbah Crotty, Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez, and Speaker Crystalyne Curley, stood in solidarity with families while emphasizing prevention, healing, and coordinated response efforts.

Delegate Crotty opened the symposium by emphasizing the urgent need to protect Navajo youth through education, outreach, and stronger community connections.

“Our children are precious. They are our future and among the most vulnerable to these crises,” said Delegate Crotty. “We must strengthen prevention, outreach, and community support to ensure our youth feel safe, protected, and connected.”

Throughout the symposium, presenters from tribal programs, nonprofit organizations, and public safety departments shared resources and expertise on crisis response, victim services, prevention education, traditional healing, and community-based intervention strategies.

Families of missing and murdered loved ones also participated in discussions, sharing their experiences navigating investigations, interactions with law enforcement, and the ongoing pursuit of justice and accountability.

Presentations addressed issues impacting Indigenous communities, including trauma-informed care, youth empowerment, domestic violence prevention, coordinated emergency response systems, mental health support, cultural healing practices, victim advocacy, and barriers families face when reporting missing relatives.

A screening of the documentary “She Cried That Day” was held during the first evening of the symposium. The film follows the family of Dione Thomas and documents their experiences seeking answers and justice following her death. It highlights the emotional toll on families, challenges encountered with law enforcement, and broader systemic issues affecting Indigenous communities.

On the second day, Speaker Curley delivered remarks focused on reframing how communities perceive and respond to missing and murdered Diné relatives by confronting harmful stigmas and stereotypes that often delay urgent action and support for families.

“When a loved one goes missing, our response must begin with compassion, urgency, and respect for the family,” said Speaker Curley. “We must reject harmful stereotypes and respond with empathy, accountability, and immediate action to protect our relatives.”

Speaker Curley also encouraged participants, advocates, and service providers to remain spiritually grounded while engaging in MMDR advocacy work, acknowledging the emotional weight carried by families, frontline workers, and community members.

To close the symposium, Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez spoke about the importance of collective remembrance, healing, and ongoing community support for families impacted by violence and loss.

“K’écommunity is our assurance that strengthening communities through k’é is supportive to everyone and to the best of our ability, regardless of your unique and beautiful backgrounds or the way you appear,” said Delegate Dr. Nez. “Healing requires unity, empathy, and standing beside one another during difficult times.”

The MMDR Symposium focused on addressing the crisis through cultural healing, prevention education, community accountability, crisis response systems, narrative change, victim advocacy, and spiritual wellness.

###