

#MMIW: A PRIMER ON MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Violence against women has been a longstanding issue that needs to be addressed in the United States, and for some women, this violence is more prevalent. Indigenous women face the highest rates per capita out of any other race. Statistical data is complicated by inaccurate or absence of race documentation, misreporting gender, and underreporting by victims. Nevertheless, the current data available provides context that illustrates the necessity of community engagement in increasing awareness and addressing all types of violence against Indigenous women. When compared to national averages Indigenous women are:

- 2 ½ times more likely to be assaulted
- 2 times more likely to be stalked
- 5 times more likely to experience interracial violence
- 10 times more likely to be murdered (on some reservations)
- More than 1 in 3 (or 34.1 %) Indigenous women will be raped in her lifetime
- 6 in 10 Indigenous women will be physically assaulted

These statistics reflect the normalization of violence against Indigenous women in this country. *“Indian Law attorney, Sarah Deer, notes that, “Predators may target Native women and girls precisely because they are perceived as marginalized and outside the protection of the American legal system.”*

Jurisdictional issues, as well as federal law and policies, have impacted Indigenous women on reservations and outside of reservation boundaries in tragic ways. The statistics about violence against Indigenous women is alarming. However, the lack of general awareness is equally, if not more, disturbing.

As of 2018, there is no database system in the United States that tracks how many Indigenous women have been abducted and/or murdered. Families are frequently left wondering about their missing loved ones for years or decades, often without acknowledgement from law enforcement or national data reporting. As the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women gains more public awareness, it is now the time for all people to help carry the burden of advocating for greater awareness of the violence against Indigenous women in our Country. This is not just a tribal or reservation issue, this is an issue that affects our towns, cities, and states. It is time to for all people to ask for our local, state, and federal governments to do more to adequately track and address violence against Indigenous women.

AS A CALL TO ACTION, THE FOLLOWING STEPS CAN BE TAKEN IN YOUR COMMUNITY:

- Publicly declare Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women Day on May 5 to help raise awareness
- Work with local Indigenous communities to hold awareness and community healing events
- Contact local legislators to lobby for a national MMIW database as well as law reforms to address the prevalence of violence against Indigenous women
- Support families with missing loved ones in their searches and other needs
- Speak up against violence against Indigenous people in your community

Help raise awareness for all #MMIW and their families