



## STATE OF NEW MEXICO INDIAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor  
Lynn Trujillo, Secretary  
Nadine Padilla, Deputy Secretary

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Sherrie Catanach

[Sherrie.Catanach2@state.nm.us](mailto:Sherrie.Catanach2@state.nm.us)

505.469.7599

December 9, 2020

### **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives Task Force Releases Final Report and Recommendations to Governor Lujan Grisham**

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives (MMIWR) task force releases its final report and recommendations to Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham. The MMIWR task force was convened by the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department in 2019 following the passage of House Bill 278, which called on the state to research the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women and relatives.

This issue which has been identified as a national epidemic has come to the forefront as the numbers of abductions and murders of American Indian and Alaska Native women has received national attention through the advocacy of family members and grassroots organizations. Nationally, native women and girls are nearly twice as likely to experience violence as their non-native counterparts. In the southwest region, 46% of native women have reported they have been the victim of sexual assault or violence in their lifetimes. And the most disturbing finding is that murder is the third leading cause of death for American Indian and Alaska Native women.

“We honor and acknowledge the strength and perseverance of all survivors and families who have shared their experiences and testimonies with the task force and helped to guide us with recommendations for the final report that will be submitted to Governor Lujan Grisham,” said Secretary Lynn Trujillo. “The statistics are alarming; it is our responsibility to continue our work towards identifying and breaking down systemic barriers while working towards creating safe spaces for our indigenous women and relatives.”

“On behalf of the Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President, we extend our appreciation to Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, the task force members, partners, and volunteers, who collaboratively gathered data, provided testimonies, analyzed data, and provided recommendations regarding the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives crisis that affects each of our lives and tribal communities. It requires patience, unbreakable focus, and unconditional commitment to identify gaps and barriers that families, survivors, and victims’ encounter. Our work continues within each of our tribal communities, but together with faith and

dedication, we can heal, restore, and reunite families,” said Navajo Nation First Lady Phefelia Nez.

Over the past year, the MMIWR task force worked in collaboration with tribal governments, tribal law enforcement, and the U.S. Department of Justice. The task force has worked to determine the scope of problems, identify barriers, and create partnerships to help improve processes for reporting and investigating cases of missing and murdered Indigenous relatives.

[Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives Final Report.](#)

###