Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Relatives (MMIWGR)

The Crisis

“The crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women is not new. It is more than an epidemic—instead is part of the spectrum of violence experienced by Native women. This crisis of MMIW has deep roots in colonization and genocide and can be attributed to the lack of legal protections as a result of the systematic erosion of tribal sovereignty stretching back more than 500 years.” - National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center

• Indigenous women are 2.5x as likely to experience violent crimes and 2x more likely to experience rape or sexual assault crimes.1
• Homicide is the #3 leading cause of death for Indigenous women 10-24 years old and the #5 leading cause of death for Indigenous women 25-34 years old.3
• 40% of victims of sex trafficking are identified as Indigenous women.4
• Unlike other racial groups, violence against Indigenous women is more likely to be perpetuated by someone outside their racial group.2

More than 4/5 Indigenous women have experienced violence in their lifetime.1

In 2020, there were 5,293 reports of missing American Indian and Alaska Native women and girls; only 690 cases were logged in the federal missing person database.5

We include “Relatives” to acknowledge that Indigenous men, children, elders, and Two Spirit individuals are also at a great risk of experiencing violence in their lifetimes.

The Movement

MMIWGR is a movement that works to raise awareness about this crisis, seeks to offer support to communities and families with missing and murdered individuals and address the underlying causes of this crisis.

There are several organizations and government bodies now working to address this crisis:

• The passing of the “Not Invisible Act of 2020” created the Missing and Murdered Unit of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). There are currently 15 BIA offices around the country with Missing and Murdered Units.
• May 5 was designated as the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls in 2019.
• The National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center, Native Hope, and Native Women’s Wilderness are just a few organizations working to address the crisis by raising awareness, educating, and offering support.

Resources

• National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center
• Native Hope
• Native Women’s Wilderness
• Bureau of Indian Affairs
• Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women (NM)
• Minnesota Indian Women’s Sexual Assault Coalition
• Urban Indian Health Institute’s “Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls” report
• National Criminal Justice Training Center’s National Statistics on Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls
• “Alaska Daily” ABC television series
• “The Roundhouse” novel by Louise Erdrich
• “Wind River” 2017 film

1National Criminal Justice Training Center’s National Statistics on Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls. 2National Institute of Justice”Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men” report. 3Urban Indian Health Institute’s “Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls” report.