



***There can be no Justice without Addressing the
Crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples***

**A Joint Statement from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and
the National American Indian Court Judges Association**

Historically, Native peoples and tribal communities have been targets of forced assimilation, systemic racism, colonization, and genocide. In the United States, Native Americans and Alaska Natives continue to face higher levels of violence and are victims of violent crime at a rate higher than the national average, including domestic violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking. Available data show that Native American and Alaska Native women are significantly overrepresented not only among the victims of such violence, but also among missing and murdered Indigenous peoples (MMIP).

The violence and attempts to dismantle tribal cultures, languages, and communities have caused significant historical trauma to generations of Native Americans. This historical and continuing trauma affects the victims, their children, families, and communities, and all of us in myriad ways.

Federal laws such as the *Violence Against Women's Act (VAWA)*, *Savanna's Act* and the *Not Invisible Act of 2019* provide tools to courts and communities to address the disproportionate violence against missing and murdered Native Americans, to increase law enforcement collaboration, and to improve collection of and access to data regarding MMIP. The signing of Executive Order 14053, *Improving Public Safety and Criminal Justice for Native Americans and Addressing the Crisis of Missing or Murdered Indigenous Peoples*, recognized the national need to, "prioritize addressing this issue and its underlying causes, commit the resources needed to tackle the high rates of violent crime that Native Americans experience over the long term, coordinate and provide resources to collect and analyze data," and committed the Executive branch to work hand-in-hand with Tribal Nations and tribal partners to build safe and healthy communities.

The National Council of Family and Juvenile Court Judges (NCJFCJ) and the National American Indian Court Judges Association (NAICJA) are partner organizations committed to working

together to support tribal court and state court judicial education and resources, to serving tribal communities, and to collaborating on issues related to missing and murdered indigenous peoples.

As partners, NCJFCJ and NAICJA envision a society in which every family and child has access to fair, equal, effective, and timely justice. Our institutional values of compassion, leadership, education, and community are fundamental to who we are and imbue our efforts to provide all judges, courts, and agencies involved with juvenile, family, and domestic violence cases with the knowledge and skills to improve the lives of children and families who seek justice.

NCJFCJ and NAICJA support protections for Native American people who are victims of any form of violence, including domestic abuse, sexual abuse, and human trafficking. We call for fully funding data collection, analysis, and investigations, and for collaboration among Tribal Nations, urban American Indian organizations, and state and federal partners to ensure protection for Native American families and children. We support all federal, state and tribal efforts to solve MMIP cases, including the development and use of tools such as meaningful prevention, intervention and survivor services developed in collaboration with Tribal Nations and urban tribal organizations, full-faith and credit enforcement of civil protection orders, and safe housing programs.

Native American peoples have diverse languages, cultures, values, and ceremonies that are resilient and healing. NCJFCJ and NAICJA recognize and encourage a trauma-responsive and culturally humble approach to engaging Native American families and children in order to mitigate systemic harm, and to allow for a place of healing through the sacred aspirations of justice. We encourage and support training for our state partners on Native historical trauma, tribal sovereignty, the dynamics of domestic violence and human trafficking, and full-faith and credit enforcement of civil protection orders. To address the MMIP crisis, we encourage and support tribal and state partnerships that are based upon respect of sovereignty, tribal culture, humility, humanity, and solution-oriented approaches.