

# **Operation Lady Justice: Federal Government Resources on Missing & Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP)**



Elizabeth Sanders, Lamar University  
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## Elizabeth Sanders

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- Previously LS 102 Coordinator & FDLP Coordinator for Southeastern Louisiana University
- [\*Operation Lady Justice: Federal Government Resources on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons \(MMIP\), Part 1—Congressional Publications, Executive Orders, Proclamations, and Public Laws, and Task Forces and Initiatives, 2015–2022\*](#)

# Important Foundations

- I strive to present accurately and compassionately, but I acknowledge my limitations.
  - Tribal and grassroots efforts and advocacy prompted multi-level government response on this issue.
  - Remember the Victims. Over 30 victims' names appear in various sources. I list them in the final slide
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# Presentation Outline

1. What is MMIP?
  2. Timeline: 2015-Present
  3. Operation Lady Justice
  4. Additional Sources
  5. Search Strategies
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# Section 1: What is MMIP?

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# Defining the Problem

- Refers to high rates of violent crime victimization in indigenous populations, particularly women and girls
  - More than 4 in 5 American Indian and Alaska Native women (84.3%) and men (81.6%) have experienced violence in their lifetime ([Rosay 2016](#))
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# Common Acronyms

- MMIP: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons
  - MMIW: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women
  - MMIWG: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
  - MMIWG2S: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two Spirit
  - MMNA: Missing and Murdered Native Americans
  - MMIR: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives
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# Contributing Factors

- Lack of Resources
  - Lack of Culturally Specific Services
  - Jurisdictional Issues
  - Lack of Attention
  - Data Gaps
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# Section 2: Timeline

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# 2015

- [Addressing the Need for Victim Services in Indian Country](#)
    - Senate Hearing, Committee on Indian Affairs
    - Addresses high violent crime victimization rates among Native Americans
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# 2016

- [S.R. 514](#) & [H.R. 807](#)

- First resolutions to designate May 5 as National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls
- Neither passed
- Senate began regularly passing annual resolutions; House less consistent with passing

- [North American Working Group on Violence against Indigenous Women and Girls](#)

- Collaboration with Canada and Mexico begun with Pres. Obama
  - Group addresses high levels of domestic and sexual violence against indigenous women and girls
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# 2017

- [S. 1870, S. 1953, and S. 1942](#)

- Senate Hearing, Committee on Indian Affairs
- Discusses three bills: SURVIVE Act, Tribal Law & Order Act Reauthorization, and Savanna's Act
- None passed, but all brought up in future sessions

- [S. 772](#)

- AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act
  - Later renamed: Ashlynne Mike AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act
  - Bill to amend PROTECT Act to make Indian Tribes eligible for AMBER Alert grants
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# 2018

- Missing and Murdered: Confronting the Silent Crisis in Indian Country

- Senate Hearing, Committee on Indian Affairs
- Directly addresses MMIP crisis and core issues

- Ashlynnne Mike AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act

- P.L. 115-166
  - Named after Ashlynnne Mike, abduction and murder victim; 11 years old, Navajo
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# 2019: Senate Hearings

- [S. 227, S. 288, S. 290, S. 982, and S. 1853](#)
    - Committee on Indian Affairs
    - Savanna's Act (S. 227)
    - Not Invisible Act of 2019 (S. 982)
  - [To Protect and Serve: Joint Law Enforcement Efforts in Building Safe Tribal Communities and Stopping Dangerous Drugs from Entering Indian Country](#)
    - Committee on Indian Affairs
    - Focuses on improving safety and law enforcement
    - MMIP discussed in testimony
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# 2019: House Hearings

- [Unmasking the hidden crisis of murdered and missing indigenous women \(MMIW\): Exploring Solutions to End the Cycle of Violence](#)

- Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States, Committee on Natural Resources
- Historical and contemporary issues
- All 4 witnesses are indigenous women

- [Reviewing the Trump administration's approach to the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women \(MMIW\) crisis](#)

- Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States, Committee on Natural Resources
- Summarizes efforts of 3 Departments
  - Justice
  - Interior
  - Health & Human Services

## 2019: [Exec. Order No. 13898](#)

- Title: Establishing the Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives
  - Pres. Trump issued in response to MMIP concerns
  - Section 3 details membership
  - Section 4 details primary focuses:
    - Consulting with tribal governments
    - Developing protocols and procedures for MMIP cases
    - Establishing team to review cold cases
    - Clarifying roles, authorities, and jurisdiction for MMIP cases
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# 2020: Legislative

- [Savanna's Act](#)

- P.L. 116-165
- directs review, revision, and development of law enforcement and justice protocols to address MMIP
- Named after murder and fetal abduction victim Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind; 22 years old, Spirit Lake Tribe

- [Not Invisible Act of 2019](#)

- P.L. 116-166
  - increases intergovernmental coordination to identify and combat violent crime within Indian lands and of Indians
  - establishes MMIP coordinator in Office of Justice Services, BIA
  - Establishes Not Invisible Act Commission, joint commission with DOI & DOJ
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# 2020: Presidential

- [Proclamation 10026](#)
    - Recognized May 5, 2020 as Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives Awareness Day
    - Summarizes actions taken to address MMIP from Pres. Trump's administration
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# 2021: Hearings

- [Restoring Justice: Addressing Violence in Native Communities through VAWA Title IX Special Jurisdiction](#)
    - Senate Hearing, Committee on Indian Affairs
    - Discusses impact of Special Jurisdiction and remaining gaps and challenges in tribal jurisdiction
    - MMIP discussed in Q&A
  - [A Call to Action: Native Communities' Priorities in Focus for the 117th Congress](#)
    - Senate Hearing, Committee on Indian Affairs
    - Focuses on consulting Native communities about their priorities for Congressional attention
    - MMIP discussed briefly
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# 2021: Presidential

- [Proclamation 10202](#)

- Recognized May 5, 2021 as Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day
- Summarizes actions taken to address MMIP from Pres. Biden's administration

- [Exec. Order No. 14053](#)

- Title: Improving Public Safety and Criminal Justice for Native Americans and Addressing the Crisis of Missing or Murdered Indigenous People
  - Pres. Biden issued to address underlying causes of MMIP and create long-term improvement of public safety for Native Americans
  - Built around interagency collaboration, both federally and multi-level
  - Broader in scope and objectives than OLJ and no sunset
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# 2022: Legislative

- [The Neglected Epidemic of Missing BIPOC Women and Girls](#)

- House Hearing, Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States, Committee on Natural Resources
- BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, Persons of Color)
- Adds to identified issues:
  - data gaps for Hispanic/Latinos
  - high rates of intimate partner violence and sex trafficking for all 3 groups
  - lack of media attention to BIPOC cases

- [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022](#)

- P.L. 117-103
- Division W: Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2022
- Includes expansion of Tribal jurisdiction and other provisions to address areas influencing MMIP

# 2022: Presidential

- [Proclamation 10389](#)

- Recognized May 5, 2022 as Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day
- Summarizes actions taken to address MMIP from Pres. Biden's administration
- Includes Native Hawaiians

- [Trilateral Working Group on Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls](#)

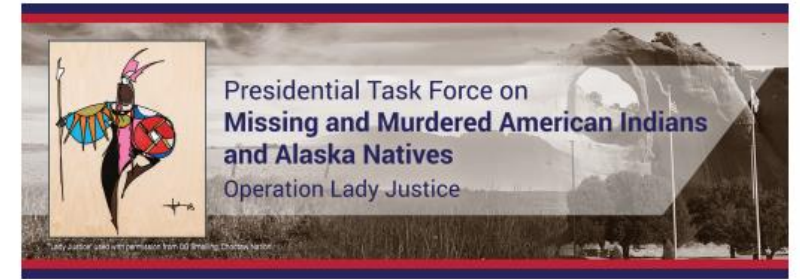
- 4th Convening, 2nd time in US
  - First meeting since 2018
  - Includes Two-Spirit, gender-diverse, and LGBTQI+ persons
  - Includes Native Hawaiians
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# Section 3: Operation Lady Justice

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# Report to the President

- Most comprehensive source for information on task force
- 7 sections, each aligning with specific task from Exec. Order
- 5 Appendices, many reprinting key documents
  - Appendix B: Lists Task Force members & Federal Personnel
  - Appendix E: Lists 35 fact sheets



## Report To The President

Activities and Accomplishments of the First Year of Operation Lady Justice

November 25, 2020



**OLJ** OPERATION LADY JUSTICE



# Listening Sessions & Consultations

- Overview

- 30 total meetings, 16 with tribes
- Most virtual
- Virtual Meetings have:
  - YouTube video
  - Verbatim Transcript
  - Most have captions

- Specific Documents

- [Written Consultation Comments Received 2020](#)
  - [Summary of Operation Lady Justice Tribal Law Enforcement Discussions July-August 2020](#)
  - [Summary of Operation Lady Justice Tribal Law Enforcement Discussions January-September 2021](#)
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# Section 4: Additional Sources

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# Starting Places

- Overviews

- [Missing or Murdered Indigenous People \(MMIP\): Understanding the Issue](#)
- [Missing and Murdered Indigenous People \(MMIP\): Overview of Recent Research, Legislation, and Selected Issues for Congress](#)

- Current Initiatives

- [Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons \(Dept. of Justice\)](#)
  - [The Not Invisible Act Commission](#)
  - [Missing and Murdered Unit \(MMU\)](#)
  - [Keeping Us Whole: Preventing Missing and Murdered Indigenous People - Podcast Series](#)
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# Specific Resources

- Statistics

- [Violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women and men](#)
- [Native American Children Reported Missing to NCMEC](#)
- [Monthly NamUs Case Reports](#)
- [Homicides of American Indians/Alaska Natives — National Violent Death Reporting System, United States, 2003-2018](#)

- Tribal Consultations

- [Tribal Consultations & Advisory Groups \(DOJ\)](#)
- [MMIP Listening Sessions \(DOJ\)](#)
- [Tribal Consultation \(OVW\)](#)
- [CDC Tribal Consultation & Tribal Advisory Committee](#)
- [Tribal Consultation \(DOI\)](#)

# Section 5: Search Strategies

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# Variations in Keywords: People

- people
  - persons
  - women
  - girls
  - women and girls
  - Two Spirit
  - Two-Spirit
  - children
  - relatives
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# Variations in Keywords: Race

- indigenous
  - Native American
  - American Indian
  - Alaska Native
  - Native Hawaiian
  - Tribal member
  - BIPOC
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# Variations in Keywords: Crime

- missing and murdered
  - missing or murdered
  - missing
  - murdered
  - missing person(s)
  - missing children
  - homicide
-



# Related Topics: Crime

- violent crime
  - violence against
  - intimate partner violence
  - domestic violence
  - abuse
  - sex trafficking
  - human trafficking
  - trafficking in persons
  - child abduction
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# Related Topics: Location

- Indian land(s)
  - Indian Country
  - reservation(s)
  - Tribal land(s)
  - Alaska Native Villages
  - Tribal jurisdiction
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# Agencies: Department of Justice

- Office on Violence Against Women
  - National Institute of Justice
  - National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
  - Office for Victims of Crime
  - Bureau of Justice Statistics
  - U.S. Attorney General's Office
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# Agencies: Department of Health & Human Services

- Administration for Children & Families
  - Administration for Native Americans
  - Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
  - National Center for Injury Prevention & Control
  - Indian Health Service
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# Agencies: Department of the Interior

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Office of Justice Services
- Site extension -NSN.gov

# Agencies: Other

- U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
  - Government Accountability Office
  - White House
  - Congress
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# Questions?

- Elizabeth Sanders
- [esanders5@lamar.edu](mailto:esanders5@lamar.edu)

# Victims Named in Sources

- Veronica Abouchuk;
  - Minnie Andy;
  - Katczinski Ariel Begay (Ariel Begay);
  - Teri Benally;
  - Margie Childers;
  - Monica Choyou;
  - Linda Dave;
  - Savanna Greywind (AKA Savanna Greywind-LaFontain, Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind);
  - Freda Gun;
  - Judylee Guthrie;
  - Hanna Harris;
  - Kathleen Jo Henry;
  - Marena Holiday;
  - Ryan Shey Hoskie;
  - Mackenzie Howard (AKA MacKenzie Howard);
  - Ashley Johnson-Barr;
  - Ruthie Kindness;
  - Destiny Lloyd;
  - Olivia Lone Bear;
  - Rosalita Longee;
  - Ashley Loring-Heavy Runner (AKA Ashley Loring Heavy Runner);
  - Faren McGirt;
  - Ruthanne McGirt Staller Rex;
  - Peggie McGuire;
  - Ashley Mike (AKA Ashlynn Mike, Ashlynne Mike)
  - Ian Mike;
  - Alillia "Lala" Minthorn;
  - Henny Scott;
  - Sophie Sergie;
  - Kaysera Stops Pretty Places;
  - Rosenda Strong;
  - Martha Toms;
  - Francile Turpin (AKA Francile Ella Turpin);
  - Misty Upham;
  - Frederick Watson;
  - Amber Webster;
  - Jade Williams
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