

MMDR Task Force seeks voting members to address Navajo missing persons epidemic

Written by gallupsun
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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives (MMDR) Task Force is currently seeking applicants to serve as voting members of the task force.

In March 2019, Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty established a working group to begin addressing the ongoing crisis of missing and murdered relatives on the Navajo Nation.

“Domestic violence affects four out of five Native American women, which is three times the national average,” Crotty said. “Domestic violence is a byproduct of intergenerational trauma, both of which impact the epidemic of Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives. We need commitment to solve these problems and to provide for a better and brighter future for our people.”

The MMDR Task Force is a multidisciplinary team tasked with developing a framework to establish a Missing & Murdered Diné Relatives data institute, encourage community action, and develop a missing persons community action toolkit to empower Navajo communities to be proactive in prevention, awareness, and mobilization to recover missing relatives and to provide support to families of MMDR.

Crotty noted that the statistics regarding domestic violence in Native American communities are staggering.

“More than 60% of crimes reported on tribal nations are sexual assault cases,” she said. “Approximately half of all Native American women and a quarter of Native American men have been victims of sexual violence. It’s time that we, as Indigenous People, as Diné, live up to our responsibility to hold our communities accountable. We need your help to combat this violent epidemic.”

On Sept. 6, the Navajo Nation strengthened victim’s rights and advocacy by enacting the Navajo Nation Victim’s Rights Act of 2023. This legislation increases awareness to victims of sexual assault and rape, domestic violence, and other violent assaults, regarding their rights and the protections and support that are available to them and their families as they await justice.

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“The Navajo Victim’s Rights Act of 2023 is a tool that strengthens policies and laws within our public safety system to protect victims of violent crime,” Crotty said.

The Missing and Murdered Dine' Relatives (MMDR) Task Force is currently seeking three Navajo community members to serve as voting members of the task force.

Interested applicants should have a comprehensive understanding, extensive experience, and knowledge about MMDR issues. Applicants will need to submit a letter of interest to the MMDR Task Force in person at the Navajo Nation Office of the Speaker or emailed to sonlatsa.jim@navajo-nsn.gov. The deadline is Oct. 10 at 5 pm (MDT).

