

## Fact Sheet

### Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Indigenous Relatives

#### Prevalence of Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men<sup>1</sup>

The National Institute of Justice in the Office of Justice Programs of the Department of Justice (“NIJ”) published The Research Report: Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men in May 2016 detailing the following:

- More than 4 in 5 American Indian and Alaska Native women (84.3%) have experienced violence in their lifetime and that of Indigenous Women who have experienced violence,
  - 56.1% have experienced sexual violence,
  - 55.5% have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner,
  - 48.8% have experienced stalking, and
  - 66.4% who have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner.
- More than 1.5 million American Indian and Alaska Native women have experienced violence in their lifetime.
- More than 1 in 3 American Indian and Alaska Native Women (39.8%) have experienced violence in the past year with this meaning that overall, more than 730,000 American Indian and Alaska Native Women have experienced violence in the past year.
- More than 4 in 5 American Indian and Alaska Native Men (81.6%) have experienced violence in their lifetime and that, of Indigenous Men who have experienced violence,
  - 27.5 % who have experienced sexual violence,
  - 43.2 % experienced physical violence by an intimate partner,
  - 18.6 % have experienced stalking, and
  - 73.0 % who have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner.
- More than 1.4 million American Indian and Alaska Native Men have experienced violence in their lifetime.
- Overall, more than 595,000 American Indian and Alaska Native Men have experienced violence in the past year.

#### Murder of American Indian and Alaska Native Women<sup>2</sup>

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey](#), non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) females experienced the second highest rate of homicide in 2020. Additionally, in 2020 homicide was in

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<sup>1</sup> [Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men | National Institute of Justice \(ojp.gov\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Crisis | Indian Affairs \(bia.gov\)](#)

the top 10 leading causes of death for AI/AN females aged 1-45. More than 2 in 5 non-Hispanic AI/AN women (43.7%) were raped in their lifetime.<sup>3</sup>

- Non-Hispanic AI/AN males had the second highest rate of homicide compared with males in all other racial and ethnic groups. Homicide was in the top ten leading causes of death for AI/AN males 1 to 54 years old in the year 2020. 1 in 7 non-Hispanic AI/AN males (14.4%) were made to penetrate someone during their lifetime.<sup>4</sup>
- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that in 2021, homicide rates among American Indian and Alaska Native people were nearly four times higher than homicide rates for non-Hispanic White people.<sup>5</sup>
  - The rate of violence on some reservations is up to ten times higher than the national average (this data limited to Indigenous Women living on Tribal or other federal lands).

### **Undercounting Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Urban Cities**

- U.S. policies of assimilation have been the conduit for many American Indians and Alaska Natives living in urban areas. The forced removal of American Indian and Alaska Native children into residential boarding schools was done under color of law and placed these children in the direct path of the physical, sexual, spiritual, and cultural abuse taking place in these boarding schools. This harmed generations of children and these American Indian and Alaska Native Survivors were physically disconnected from their Native Nations, families, Spiritual Practices, Healing Ceremonies, Sacred Sites, and overall Tribal way of life.
- The Urban Indian Health Institute (“UIHI”) published the report *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) – A Snapshot of Data from 71 Urban Cities in the United States*<sup>6</sup> documented:
  - 71% of American Indians and Alaska Natives – 50.2% of whom are Indigenous Women pursuant to the 2016 Census – do not live on Tribal or federal lands.
  - Of the American Indian and Alaska Native Women living in the 71 urban cities where research was conducted, “urban American Indian and Alaska Native people experience MMIWG-related violence in two ways—through losses experienced by extended family and community ties on reservations, in villages, and in urban communities themselves” and by the “critical issues regarding jurisdiction of MMIWG cases on reservation and village lands, lack of prosecution, lack of proper data collection, prejudice, and institutional racism are factors that also occur in urban areas.”
  - The National Crime Information Center reports that, in 2016, there were 5,712 reports of missing American Indian and Alaska Native women and girls, though the US Department of Justice’s federal missing persons database; yet NamUs only logged 116 cases.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bia.gov/service/mmu/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-people-crisis#:~:text=Victimization%20Rates,-Native%20American%20and&text=According%20to%20the%20Centers%20for,rate%20of%20homicide%20in%202020.>

<sup>4</sup> Id

<sup>5</sup> [CDC's Violence Against Native Peoples Fact Sheet](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls – Urban Indian Health Institute \(uihi.org\)](#)

- No research has been done on rates violence among American Indian and Alaska Native women and girls living in urban areas, despite the very high percentage of American Indian and Alaska Natives living in these areas.

### **Trafficking of Native Women**

The Minnesota Indian Women’s Sexual Assault Coalition and Prostitution Research & Education issued the report *Garden of Truth: The Prostitution and Trafficking of Native Women in Minnesota* (“Garden of Truth”)<sup>7</sup> that interviewed 105 Native Women in prostitution and documented these findings:

- 79% had been sexually abused as children by an average of 4 perpetrators.
- More than two-thirds of the 105 Native Women had family members who had attended boarding schools.
- 92% had been raped.
- 48% had been used by more than 200 sex buyers during their lifetimes, 16% had been used by at least 900 sex buyers.
- 84% had been physically assaulted in prostitution.
- 72% suffered traumatic brain injuries in prostitution.
  
- 98% were currently or previously homeless.
- 52% had PTSD at the time of the interview (a rate that is in the range of PTSD among combat veterans), 71% had symptoms of dissociation.
- 80% had used outpatient substance abuse services (many felt that they would have been helped even more by inpatient treatment), 77% had used homeless shelters, 65% had used domestic violence services, 33% had used sexual assault services.
- 92% wanted to escape prostitution.
- 33% spoke of Native cultural or Spiritual Practices as an important part of who they were.
- Of the Native Women interviewed, their most frequently stated needs were for individual counseling (75%) and peer support (73%), reflecting a need for their unique experiences as Native Women in prostitution to be heard and seen by people who care about them, two thirds needed housing and vocational counseling.
- Many of the Native Women felt they owed their survival to Native cultural practices, most wanted access to Native healing approaches integrated with a range of mainstream services.

### **Violence Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Two Spirit Native Americans<sup>8</sup>**

The Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology published *Culture, Trauma, and Wellness: A comparison of Heterosexual and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Two-Spirit Native Americans* that documented that:

- Gender based violence, including sexual assault and physical violence, is committed against 78% to 85% of Indigenous Two Spirit individuals.

### **Additional resources**

#### **The Round House**

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<sup>7</sup> [Garden of Truth: The Prostitution and Trafficking of Native Women in Minnesota | NIWRC](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Culture, trauma, and wellness: A comparison of heterosexual and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and two-spirit Native Americans. \(apa.org\)](#)

The Lac Vieux Desert Tribe of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians shares some wisdom about culture and the significance of the Round House.

[LVD Roundhouse Video](#)

*This video is a part of a cultural video collection United Three Fires Against Violence is creating that will be completed and released at a future date.*

**Sliver of a Full Moon**

Sliver of a Full Moon is a powerful reenactment of the historic congressional reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 2013: a movement that restored the authority of tribal governments to prosecute non-Native abusers who assault and abuse Native women on tribal lands.

Written by Mary Kathryn Nagle (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma)

Directed by Betsy Theobald Richards (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhTqY7PAZ0I>

*(Radcliffe Institute/Harvard University performance)*