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***** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE *****

NamUs Recognizes Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives Awareness Day

Fort Worth, Texas (May 5, 2020) – Today, President Donald Trump proclaimed May 5, 2020 as Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives Awareness Day. President Trump’s proclamation recognizes that:

- More than four in five American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) adults have experience some form of violence in their lifetime.
- While homicide rates continue to decline for the total U.S. population, the rate among AI/AN individuals is rising.
- Since 1979, AI/AN individuals have been twice as likely to die of homicide as the total U.S. population.
- Tribes across the country are taking concerted action to address the crisis of missing, trafficked, and murdered tribal members.

Agencies and programs across the federal government, including the Department of Justice’s (DOJ’s) [National Missing and Unidentified Persons System \(NamUs\)](https://www.nam.us.gov/), are taking action to support tribes in their fight against violence. A federal task force, known as [Operation Lady Justice](#), has also been established to consult with tribal leaders and officials, and determine how to strengthen investigations, improve information sharing, and raise public awareness.

NamUs is proud to support these efforts with tools and resources to share case information and locate missing loved ones, bringing resolution to searching families. Since 2007, NamUs has providing database technology (located at www.NamUs.gov), forensic services, and investigative support to local, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement agencies to support investigations involving missing, unidentified, and unclaimed person cases. In 2019, NamUs added a Victim Services Division to provide additional services to families impacted by the death or disappearance of a loved one. Funded and administered by the DOJ’s National Institute of Justice (NIJ), and managed through a cooperative agreement with the UNT Center for Human Identification, all NamUs resources are provided at no cost.

NamUs is administered by the National Institute of Justice and managed through a cooperative agreement with the University of North Texas Health Science Center’s UNT Center for Human Identification (award number 2016-MU-BX-K007).



Recognizing the need to increase use of NamUs for cases involving missing indigenous persons, in 2017, NamUs expanded training and outreach efforts to tribal communities across the nation. Since January 1, 2018, NamUs has participated in 47 training and outreach events for tribal law enforcement, leaders, and community members. Due in large part to these efforts, the number of long-term AI/AN missing person cases entered into NamUs has increased 48% in the past year, from 355 to 527 missing person cases. In addition, the NamUs system was enhanced in December 2018 to allow for better collection of data on missing persons who:

- Have gone missing from tribal land
- Had a primary residence on tribal land at the time of their disappearance
- Are enrolled in, or affiliated with, a state- or federally recognized tribe

For unidentified decedent cases, NamUs also allows medical examiners, coroners, and their designees to indicate if remains were found on tribal land.

With support from tribal law enforcement agencies, as well as local, state, and federal agencies across the country, NamUs is helping to resolve the gap in missing indigenous person data, and is providing resources to support the resolution of cases, bringing answers to searching families. As of May 5, 2020, NamUs has supported 497 AI/AN missing person cases that have been resolved.

Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives Awareness Day was established on May 5th in recognition of Hanna Harris, a 21-year-old mother and member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe who was born on May 5, 1992. Hanna was reported missing from Lame Deer, Montana in 2013. Her body was found five days later; she had been raped and murdered.

On this Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives Awareness Day, we wish to extend our deepest sympathies to families and friends impacted by the death or disappearance of a loved one. NamUs is committed to supporting AI/AN communities across the nation to bring their missing persons home.

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About NamUs

Launched in 2007, NamUs is the national information clearinghouse and resource center for missing, unidentified, and unclaimed person cases throughout the United States. NamUs is funded and administered by the U.S. Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and is managed through a cooperative agreement with the University of North Texas (UNT) Center for Human Identification (award number 2016-MU-BX-K007). With funding from NIJ, NamUs provides the following services and resources at no cost to agencies and families of the missing:

- State-of-the-art database technology (NamUs 2.0)
- Investigative and analytical case support
- Forensic anthropology, DNA profiling, and CODIS searching through UNT Center for Human Identification laboratories
- Fingerprint examination
- Forensic odontology (dental comparisons)
- Victim services for families impacted by the death or disappearance of a loved one

To learn more about NamUs, visit www.NamUs.gov.