



Tohono O'odham Nation  
Office of the  
Chairman and Vice Chairwoman

Ned Norris Jr. Wavalene M. Saunders  
Chairman Vice Chairwoman



Thursday, May 5, 2022

**Executive Office Statement on  
Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day**

SELLS, Ariz. – Today, the Tohono O'odham Nation and the entire United States commemorates Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day. It is a day to remember those that we have lost and those that are still missing, particularly Native women and girls.

It is also a day to reaffirm our determination to address this ongoing crisis in our communities. The Nation is committed to working with our local, state and federal partners to investigate these cases, bring perpetrators to justice, and support families who are missing a loved one. We appreciate the dedication of the Nation's law enforcement officers to this urgent task.

We also recognize the important steps being taken by the Biden Administration to make this issue a priority by directing Federal agencies to improve public safety and criminal justice for indigenous people. The signing of the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act this past March also ensured that tribal courts and law enforcement can prosecute non-Native perpetrators of sexual assault, child abuse, stalking, and sex trafficking on tribal lands.

But more needs to be done to address the root causes of the disproportionate murders and missing persons cases afflicting our communities. Greater attention and resources are needed to confront issues of domestic violence, economic disparity, substance abuse and others.

We can continue to make progress by working together. Today, let us re-dedicate ourselves to building a safer, more prosperous O'odham community with justice for all.

Handwritten signature of Ned Norris, Jr.

Ned Norris, Jr.  
Chairman, Tohono O'odham Nation

Handwritten signature of Wavalene M. Saunders.

Wavalene M. Saunders  
Vice Chairwoman, Tohono O'odham Nation