

Historically, violence against Native Americans occurs at higher rates than any other demographic of US citizens. According to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), in 2016 there were estimated to be 5,712 missing Native American and Alaska Native women and girls. Of 5,712 missing persons cases, only 116 were logged in the Department of Justice (DOJ) reporting system or the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs). Legacies of colonialism leave Native communities vulnerable to violence and trafficking. We have incomplete understandings, data, and reporting to quantify the reality of this problematic situation.

Savanna's Act and the Not Invisible Act are good steps forward for Native American communities regarding the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & People (MMIWP). These laws authorize the DOJ to provide funding for implementing policies and protocols for law enforcement interacting with cases of MMIWP as well as compiling MMIWP data. Savanna's Act encourages Native communities and law enforcement to work together to understand the issues and combat them. Savanna's Act seeks to improve relationships between federal, law enforcement, and tribal agencies. The DOJ is directed to develop regionally appropriate guidelines, provide technical assistance to law enforcement, and develop protocols for cases of missing and/or murdered Native Americans.

Following the United States Government Accountability Office Report on MMIW[P] recommendations, the Attorney General should complete planning for ongoing analysis of data and trends in cases of MMIW; develop and implement plans to educate the public about NamUs; conduct outreach to Tribes and tribal organizations, including urban constituencies; and the Secretary of Interior should appoint members to the Joint Commission on Reducing Violent Crimes Against Indians as required by the Not Invisible Act. What is needed now is the full enforcement of the Savanna Act and the Not Invisible Act-- intergovernmental coordination that is culturally competent.