



## The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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## Vice President Lizer joins President Trump for signing of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons executive order



Official White House Photo by Joyce N. Boghosian.

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – On Tuesday, Navajo Nation Vice President Myron Lizer and Second Lady Dottie Lizer joined President Donald Trump in the Oval Office, for the signing of an executive order to establish an inter-agency task force to address the epidemic of missing and murdered American Indians and Alaska persons. U.S. Attorney Gen. William Barr, U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary David Bernhardt, and other tribal leaders were also in attendance at the White House for the ceremony.

“This is another step forward for Indigenous nations throughout the country. I commend President Trump and his administration for recognizing the traumatic epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous relatives. Throughout our tribal nations, we hear far too many stories of families, victims, and survivors so we need to keep our sacred women and children safe and protected,” said Vice President Lizer, who also had the honor of providing a prayer in the Oval Office moments prior to the signing of the executive order.

On Nov. 22, Attorney Gen. Barr announced the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples Initiative, which will invest \$1.5 million to hire specialized coordinators within the offices of U.S. Attorneys who will be tasked with developing protocols for a more coordinated response to violence against Indigenous people.



**Official White House Photo by Joyce N. Boghosian.**

Tuesday’s executive order will launch “Operation Lady Justice,” a task force led by Attorney General Barr and Secretary Bernhardt to develop an aggressive, government-wide strategy to improve the safety of Native American communities. The order will also allow tribal and local law enforcement to seek assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Justice Department, who will conduct an in-depth review of federal databases to determine best practices for collecting data on missing and murdered Indigenous persons.

“Our Native American people experience violence at a higher rate than any other nationality in the country. The lack of reporting and investigation of missing and murdered Indigenous peoples needs to be taken seriously,” said Vice President Lizer. “The executive order gives hope to our tribal nations that justice is being sought and that there is a path for healing of our families, victims, and survivors.”

“The issue of missing and murdered Indigenous persons has not only affected families, but it impacts communities. As leaders, we must continue to advocate for safety and justice for Native women and children. Most importantly, we need to address efforts to restore balance, love, and harmony within Native homes and communities,” said Second Lady Lizer.

The murder rate is ten times higher than the national average for American Indian women, with 84-percent experiencing some form of violence during their lifetime. There is still no reliable way of knowing how many Native women go missing each year because the databases that hold

statistics of these cases are outdated. Besides, issues have arisen due to the lack of coordination between law enforcement agencies.

President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Lizer also continue to support the Savanna's Act, which aims to protect American Indian women, men, and children from violent crimes. The Senate moved forward with its version in the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Committee earlier this week.

"The issues of Missing and murdered Indigenous women is a priority for the Nez-Lizer Administration. On behalf of the Navajo Nation, we extend our appreciation to the administration for taking this step to protect Indigenous women, children, and families. Much more needs to be done at every level of government to protect our people," said President Nez.

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