



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

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 11, 2021

## Navajo Nation recognizes and celebrates Indigenous Peoples' Day

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer issued a proclamation on Monday, recognizing Indigenous Peoples' Day on the second Monday of October in recognition of the hope, future, and resilience of Indigenous people, including Navajo people, and to honor and celebrate Indigenous cultures, languages, and indigeneity.

“The Navajo Nation has long been opposed to celebrating Columbus Day because it celebrates colonialism, oppression, and injustice inflicted on Indigenous peoples. He is credited by many with ‘discovering’ the Americas, but this characterization ignores the fact that the land was already inhabited by numerous peoples with advanced cultures, technologies, and systems of government. For generations, Indigenous communities throughout the Americas have fought to survive colonization, assimilation, disease, and genocide. Transforming Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day will encourage young Indigenous peoples to have pride in the place and people they come from and to be a part of a movement to reteach the history of the country,” said President Nez.

He also commended U.S. President Joe Biden for issuing the first presidential proclamation of Indigenous Peoples' Day to honor Indigenous peoples' resilience and strength, and the immeasurable contributions made to American history and society.

In 2019, the New Mexico State Legislature voted to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day. A total of 13 states and more than 100 cities have recognized Indigenous Peoples' Day. President Nez and Vice President Lizer said that more states and local governments should take the initiative to recognize Indigenous peoples and their contributions.

“We commend all the states, cities, towns, counties, community groups, churches, universities, schools, and other organizations that are observing Indigenous Peoples' Day to honor our rich history, culture, and languages. Today, we all need to rethink American history and stand together to make our elders and ancestors proud. The importance of honoring our survival and experiences has never been clearer,” said Vice President Lizer.

On Oct. 1, President Nez and Vice President Lizer spoke in support of a new bill introduced by U.S. Sens. Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) and Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.), and U.S. Rep. Norma Torres (D-Calif.)

that would replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day as a federally recognized holiday. The congressional bill is also supported by the Indigenous People's Day Initiative, the National Council of Urban Indian Health, the National Congress of American Indians, the Association of American Indian Affairs, and the All Pueblo Council of Governors.

The proclamation issued on Monday recognizes October 11, 2021 as the "Navajo Nation Indigenous Peoples' Day" to honor and celebrate all Indigenous Peoples' around the world.

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**THE NAVAJO NATION**

*Proclamation*

**RECOGNIZING OCTOBER 11, 2021 AS  
“NAVAJO NATION INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ DAY”**

**WHEREAS**, the Navajo Nation recognizes “Indigenous Peoples’ Day” on the second Monday of October in recognition of the hope, future, and resilience of Indigenous people, including Navajo People, and to honor and celebrate our cultures, languages, and indigeneity; and

**WHEREAS**, the Navajo Nation has long been opposed to celebrating Columbus Day because it celebrates colonialism, oppression, and injustice inflicted on Indigenous peoples. Christopher Columbus is credited by many with ‘discovering’ the Americas, but this characterization ignores the fact that the land was already inhabited by numerous peoples with advanced cultures, technologies, and systems of government; and

**WHEREAS**, for generations, Indigenous communities throughout the Americas have fought to survive colonization, assimilation, disease, and genocide. Together, we advocate for the abolishment of Columbus Day and support and official recognition of Indigenous Peoples’ Day across all communities and governments; and

**WHEREAS**, transforming Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples’ Day will encourage young Indigenous peoples to have pride in the place and people they come from and to be a part of a movement to reteach the history of the country; and

**WHEREAS**, the Navajo Nation commends the Biden-Harris Administration’s Indigenous Peoples’ Day proclamation in honor of Indigenous peoples’ resilience and strength, and the immeasurable contributions made to American history and society.

**NOW THEREFORE, I, JONATHAN NEZ**, President of the Navajo Nation and **I, MYRON LIZER**, Vice President of the Navajo Nation do hereby proclaim October 11, 2021 as the “Navajo Nation Indigenous Peoples’ Day” to honor and celebrate all Indigenous Peoples’ around the world.

**PROCLAIMED THIS 11<sup>th</sup> DAY OF OCTOBER 2021**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Nez".

Jonathan Nez, *President*  
**THE NAVAJO NATION**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Myron Lizer".

Myron Lizer, *Vice President*  
**THE NAVAJO NATION**