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Office of the President and Vice President

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## Navajo Police Officers to provide law enforcement support to the White Mountain Apache Tribe as they grieve the loss of Officer Adrian Lopez, Sr.



**PHOTO:** Navajo Nation Police Officers take the oath to help provide public safety support for the White Mountain Apache Tribe in Whiteriver, Ariz. on June 3, 2022.

**WHITERIVER, Ariz.** — On Friday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez visited the White Mountain Apache community, to offer his support and condolences to the family and fellow officers of fallen White Mountain Apache Police Officer Adrian Lopez, Sr., who died in the line of duty on Thursday at the age of 35, after being wounded by a firearm during an altercation.

White Mountain Apache Chief Judge Georgina Hastings administered the oath of office to 10 Navajo Police Officers, which allows them to patrol and perform public safety duties on the Fort Apache reservation while the White Mountain Apache Police Department mourns the loss of Officer Lopez.

President Nez also met with White Mountain Apache Chairman Kasey Velasquez and police officers to offer a prayer for protection and healing. He also encouraged the officers to seek counseling and healing resources as they grieve and spend time with family over the weekend.

“Our hearts go out to Officer Lopez’s wife, son, the White Mountain Apache Police Officers and community. The Navajo Nation stands with our brothers and sisters of the White Mountain Apache Tribe as we grieve the loss of a warrior and protector of the people. When called upon, Navajo Police Chief Daryl Noon did not hesitate to mobilize and send officers to provide public safety support for the community of Whiteriver. We have some of our Nation’s finest officers here to relieve the community so they may begin the healing process and be with their families during this difficult time. May we also be reminded of the dangers and risks that our frontline warriors encounter to keep our communities and families safe. May it serve as a reminder to honor and respect our law enforcement officers and all frontline warriors. Together, we pray that Officer Lopez’s loved ones take comfort in knowing that he is now with God,” said President Nez.

President Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer also offer prayers for White Mountain Apache Police Sgt. Lonnie Thompson was also wounded in Thursday’s shootings and is now recovering in a Phoenix hospital. The White Mountain Police Department has also received support from neighboring law enforcement from the communities of Pinetop, Snowflake, Show Low, Arizona DPS, Arizona State Troopers, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The Office of the President and Vice President and the Navajo Police Department worked with the White Mountain Apache Tribe to finalize the agreement to have Navajo Police Officers provide public safety coverage. President Nez and Chairman Velasquez signed the agreement on Friday afternoon, and Navajo Police Officers began their first shift at approximately 6:00 p.m. MST.

“Today, the Navajo Police Department sent officers and dispatchers to provide police coverage to the community for the next three to four days. It is important for our brothers and sisters of the White Mountain Apache Police Department to be able to mourn the loss of Officer Adrian Lopez and to pray for a speedy recovery for Sergeant Lonnie Thompson, without worry. The law enforcement community is truly a family, and that is so much more evident in Indian Country. The Navajo Police Department sends our sincerest condolences to the White Mountain Apache Police and community. We are here for you,” said Navajo Chief of Police Daryl T. Noon.

“We appreciate the support of Chairman Velasquez and the entire White Mountain Apache Police force. On behalf of my wife, Dottie and our family, we pray and grieve alongside all of the family members, officers, and community. Our words are not enough to express the sorrow that we feel for the people of Whiteriver, but we offer our support through the service of our proud Navajo Police force,” said Vice President Lizer.

The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President will continue to coordinate and support the White Mountain Apache Tribe and the family of Officer Lopez.

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