



U.S. Department of the Interior News Release

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Secretary Haaland Continues Pursuit of Justice in Indian Country, Begins Implementation of ‘Not Invisible Act’

WASHINGTON – Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland announced today that she is moving forward to implement the *Not Invisible Act*, including establishing a Joint Commission led by the Departments of the Interior and Justice on reducing violent crime against American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Congress enacted the *Not Invisible Act* in October 2020 to increase intergovernmental coordination to identify and combat violent crime against Indians and within Indian lands. The Act calls for the Interior Department to coordinate prevention efforts, grants, and programs related to missing and murdered Indigenous peoples. Secretary Haaland was the lead sponsor of the *Not Invisible Act* when she served in Congress. The bill was passed unanimously by voice vote in both chambers of Congress.

“A lack of urgency, transparency, and coordination has hampered our country’s efforts to combat violence against American Indians and Alaska Natives,” **said Interior Secretary Deb Haaland**. “In partnership with the Justice Department and with extensive engagement with Tribes and other stakeholders, Interior will marshal our resources to finally address the crisis of violence against Indigenous peoples.”

Secretary Haaland is coordinating with Attorney General Merrick Garland to establish a joint Commission and appoint members. The Commission must be composed of at least 27 federal and non-federal members who represent diverse experiences, backgrounds, and geography, and who are able to provide balanced points of view with regard to the duties of the Commission. The Commission will hold hearings, take testimony, and receive evidence in order to develop recommendations for the federal government to combat violent crime against Indians and within Indian lands.

“For too long, Tribes have suffered from high rates of violent crime that ripple across the entire community. It is incumbent on the federal government to partner with Tribes to support and sustain safer communities,” **said Attorney General Merrick Garland**. “I look forward to working closely with Secretary Haaland to honor our treaty and trust responsibilities to the Tribes,

to fulfill the requirements of the *Not Invisible Act*, and to further our nation-to-nation partnership with Tribal governments.”

Today’s announcement follows Secretary Haaland’s recent formation of a new [Missing & Murdered Unit \(MMU\)](#) within the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services (BIA-OJS) to provide leadership and direction for cross-departmental and interagency work involving missing and murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives. The MMU will help put the full weight of the federal government into investigating these cases and marshal law enforcement resources across federal agencies and throughout Indian country.

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