



Department of Justice

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ATTORNEY GENERAL HOLDER ANNOUNCES VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN TRIBAL PROSECUTION TASK FORCE IN INDIAN COUNTRY

Task Force of Federal and Tribal Prosecutors to Improve Law Enforcement Strategies

WASHINGTON – Attorney General Eric Holder today announced the formation and inaugural meeting of the Violence Against Women Federal and Tribal Prosecution Task Force.

The creation of the Prosecution Task Force fulfills a pledge made by Attorney General Holder at the department's Tribal Nations Listening Session in October 2009.

“We know too well that tribal communities face unique law enforcement challenges and are struggling to reverse unacceptable rates of violence against women and children,” said Attorney General Holder. “The creation of the Violence Against Women Tribal Prosecution Task Force has been a priority for me since my visit with tribal leaders last year, and I believe it is a critical step in our work to improve public safety and strengthen coordination and collaboration concerning prosecution strategies with tribal communities.”

United States Attorney Deborah Gilg of the District of Nebraska, six Assistant United States Attorneys working in Indian Country, and six representatives from tribal governments comprise the Task Force. They include:

- U.S. Attorney Deborah R. Gilg, District of Nebraska, *Chairperson*
- Tribal Prosecutor Diane S. Cabrera, Crow Tribe (MT)
- Assistant U.S. Attorney Glynette R. Carson McNabb, District of New Mexico
- Assistant U.S. Attorney Gregg S. Peterman, District of South Dakota
- Assistant U.S. Attorney Susan Roe, Western District of Washington
- Assistant U.S. Attorney Trina A. Higgins, District of Utah
- Assistant U.S. Attorney Marcia Hurd, District of Montana
- DOJ's National Indian Country Training Coordinator Leslie A. Hagen
- Deputy Attorney General M. Brent Leonhard, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (OR)

- Chief Judge Theresa M. Pouley, Tulalip Tribal Court (WA)
- Chief Prosecutor Sheri Freemont, Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian (AZ)
- Tribal Attorney Michelle Rivard Parks, Spirit Lake Tribe (ND)
- Staff Attorney Joshua Breedlove, Mississippi Choctow (MS)

In addition to the six assistant U.S. Attorneys and six tribal attorneys, the task force includes a group of advisors and liaisons from the Justice Department's Office of Violence Against Women, health care professionals and law enforcement officials.

Within a year of convening, the Task Force is directed to produce a trial practice manual on the federal prosecution of violence against women offenses in Indian Country. In the short term, the Task Force will explore current issues raised by professionals in the field, and recommend "best practices" in prosecution strategies involving domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

Violence against American Indian women occurs at epidemic rates. In 2005, Congress found that one in three American Indian women are raped during their lifetimes, and American Indian women are nearly three times more likely to be battered in their lifetimes than Caucasian women.

The launch of the Task Force marks another step in the Justice Department's ongoing initiative to increase engagement, coordination and action on public safety in tribal communities. This effort is driven largely by input gathered from the department's 2009 Tribal Nations Listening Session on Public Safety and Law Enforcement, the department's annual tribal consultation on violence against women, and from written comments submitted by tribal governments, groups and organizations to the Justice Department.

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