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District of Oregon

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Contact: Public Affairs Officer
Phone: (503) 727-1000
USAOR.PublicAffairs@usdoj.gov

U.S. Attorney's Office Joins in Recognizing Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day and Announces Appointment of Regional MMIP Coordinator

PORTLAND, Ore.—The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Oregon joins its partners across the federal government, as well as people throughout American Indian and Alaska Native communities, in recognizing May 5, 2024, as National Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) Awareness Day.

The office also announced today the appointment of an MMIP Regional Coordinator based in the District of Oregon. Cedar Wilkie Gillette, who since June 2020 has served as the District of Oregon MMIP Coordinator, will now serve as regional coordinator for the Northwest Region under the Justice Department's MMIP Regional Outreach Program. The Northwest Region includes the states of California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington.

Ms. Wilkie Gillette will work alongside Ms. Bree R. Black Horse who was [appointed](#) in February 2024 in the Eastern District of Washington to serve as the MMIP Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Northwest Region.

"We are delighted that Cedar Wilkie Gillette will serve as northwest regional coordinator for the Justice Department's MMIP Regional Outreach Program. This program is a critical next step in the department's ongoing effort to address this crisis, which has affected tribes and communities across our region and country. Cedar is abundantly qualified for this position and we are eager for her to expand the great work she has done here in Oregon throughout the Northwest Region," said Natalie Wight, U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon.

"There is still so much more to do in the face of persistently high levels of violence that Tribal communities have endured for generations, and that women and girls, particularly, have endured," said Attorney General Merrick B. Garland. "In carrying out our work, we seek to honor those who are still missing, those who were stolen from their communities, and their loved ones who are left with unimaginable pain. Tribal communities deserve safety, and they deserve justice. This day challenges all of us at the Justice Department to double down on our efforts, and to be true partners with Tribal communities as we seek to end this crisis."

Launched in July 2023, the [MMIP Regional Outreach Program](#) permanently places 10 attorneys and coordinators in five designated regions across the United States to aid in the prevention and response to missing or murdered indigenous people. This support includes assisting in the investigation of unresolved MMIP cases and related crimes, and promoting communication,

coordination, and collaboration among federal, tribal, local, and state law enforcement and non-governmental partners on MMIP issues.

The regional outreach program prioritizes MMIP cases consistent with the Deputy Attorney General's July 2022 directive to U.S. Attorney's Offices promoting public safety in Indian Country and fulfills the Justice Department's promise to dedicate new personnel to MMIP consistent with Executive Order 14053, [*Improving Public Safety and Criminal Justice for Native Americans and Addressing the Crisis of Missing or Murdered Indigenous People*](#), and the department's [*Federal Law Enforcement Strategy to Prevent and respond to Violence Against American Indians and Alaska Natives, Including to Address Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons*](#) issued in July 2022.

The Department's work to respond to the MMIP crisis is a whole-of-department effort. In March, the Departments of Justice and the Interior released their [joint response](#) to the Not Invisible Act Commission's recommendations on how to combat the missing or murdered indigenous peoples and human trafficking crisis.

Over the past year, the Department awarded \$268 million in grants to help enhance Tribal justice systems and strengthen law enforcement responses. These awards have also gone toward improving the handling of child abuse cases, combating domestic and sexual violence, supporting Tribal youth programs, and strengthening victim services in Tribal communities.

For additional information about the Department of Justice's efforts to address the MMIP crisis, please visit the Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons section of the Tribal Safety and Justice [website](#). Click [here](#) for more information about reporting or identifying missing persons.

In early 2022, the District of Oregon established an MMIP Working Group to increase multi-agency communication and collaboration in support of and response to Oregon-connected MMIP cases. The working group includes representatives from each of the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon, the FBI, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of Interior Regional Solicitor's Office, U.S. Marshals Service, Oregon Department of Justice, Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office, and Oregon State Police.

Prior to joining the U.S. Attorney's Office in 2020, Ms. Wilkie Gillette served as a law fellow for Earthjustice, a nonprofit environmental law organization. She has a juris doctorate from the Vermont Law School and a bachelor's degree in applied social justice and human rights activism from the University of Minnesota. Ms. Wilkie Gillette is an enrolled member of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation and a direct descendant of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa. She has conducted extensive research on indigenous human rights and environmental justice issues.

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