

Alaska Native
Women's
Resource Center



Parallel Event – NGO CSW Forum
UN Commission on the Status of Women 61st Session

Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women as a Step Towards Empowerment

March 15, 2017 at 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Salvation Army, 221 E. 52nd St., New York City, NY



Indigenous women around the world experience disproportionate levels of violence and murder and multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination because they are indigenous and because they are women. Too often, national justice systems fail to respond to this violence, leaving the women that have been assaulted without protection and meaningful access to justice. To empower indigenous women to participate fully in all spheres of public and private life, national laws and policies must fully address this human rights crisis and the UN must act to ensure states meet their commitments and obligations in this regard. Indigenous women leaders will speak to the situation of violence against indigenous women in the United States and Guatemala.

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PROGRAM

Welcome

Moderator — Cherrah Giles (Muscogee (Creek) Nation)
Chairwoman, Board of Directors, National Indigenous Women's Resource Center

Panel

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Trafficking

Nicole Matthews (White Earth Band of Ojibwe)
Executive Director, Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition

Situation of Alaska Native Women

Tamra (Tami) Truett Jerue (Anvik Tribe of Alaska)
Director, Alaska Native Women's Resource Center

Situation of Mayan Women in Guatemala

Juanita Cabrera Lopez (Maya Mam)
Executive Director, International Mayan League

Biographies

Cherrah Giles is a citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and of Cherokee descent. She is Fuswvlke (Bird) Clan and her tribal town is Rekackv (Broken Arrow). She has served as a legislator for over ten years on the Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council where she had been the youngest female elected to the National Council to-date and first female elected as Second Speaker. Cherrah received her Master of Social Work degree from the University of Oklahoma and currently works as an Administration & Programs Director for Iron Gate, a soup kitchen and grocery pantry located downtown Tulsa, Oklahoma. Cherrah is co-founder of the Mvskoike Women's Leadership, member of All Tribes Community Church, Tulsa Indian Club, Oklahoma Federation of Indian Women, Down Syndrome Association of Tulsa and Women Empowering Women for Indian Nations. In 2014, Cherrah was named an "Unsung Hero" by The Mary Kay Foundation for her leadership in and advocacy for domestic violence awareness. Cherrah lives in Jenks, Oklahoma with her husband Justin and her children, Tafv, E'tya, Russell and Ridge.



Tamra (Tami) Truett Jerue is an enrolled member of the Anvik Tribe in Alaska and currently resides in Fairbanks Alaska. She is the mother to four children and the grandmother to five. She is the Director of the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center and also continues to work with her Tribe on various issues. Ms. Truett Jerue has worked in the field of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault for the last 35 years in various capacities. Her education includes a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work, Community Psychology and Secondary Education. She has been involved with many non-profit Boards over the years and has worked and lived most of her adult life in rural Alaska in many capacities as therapist, sexual assault counselor, teacher, tribal administrator, first responder, ICWA social worker and trainer. Tami's many experiences and those of her family and friends with Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault have kept her passionate about helping to facilitate change at a community level, within systems, and in families to help survivors live a violence free life.



Laura Cabrera Lopez (Juanita) is Maya Mam and the executive director of the International Mayan League. She is originally from the Western Highlands of Guatemala. She is a survivor of the internal armed conflict in Guatemala and a former political refugee. She now works with Maya leaders and elders through their traditional institutions for environmental protection, recognition of land rights, human rights, cultural preservation and education. Juanita's work with indigenous peoples has focused on the full and effective use and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Her emphasis is focused on the right of self-determination and collective rights to lands, territories, natural resources and the environment. She holds a Master of International Public Policy from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.



Nicole Mathews is a member of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, and is the Executive Director for Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition, a statewide coalition for American Indian Sexual Assault Advocates in Minnesota. The mission of this coalition is to strengthen the voices of American Indian women to create awareness, influence social change, and reclaim the traditional values that honor the sovereignty of American Indian women and children thereby eliminating the sexual violence perpetrated against them. Their vision is: Creating Safety and Justice for Native Women Through the Teachings of Our Grandmothers. She received her Bachelor of Science degree from St. Cloud State University in Applied Psychology including a minor in Human Relations and Multicultural Education. Nicole was one of five researchers who interviewed 105 Native women used in prostitution and trafficking for their report: *Garden of Truth: The Prostitution and Trafficking of Native Women in Minnesota*. Nicole is also the proud mother of three beautiful children; Jazmin, Kiora, and Kionte. They give her the strength and motivation to continue working to end violence perpetrated against women and children.



Co-sponsoring Organizations

Organized in 2015, the ***Alaska Native Women's Resource Center*** (AKNWRC) is a tribal nonprofit organization dedicated to ending violence against women with Alaska's 229 tribes and allied organizations. AKNWRC board members are Alaska Native women raised in Alaska Native Villages and have 141 years of combined experience in tribal governments, nonprofit management, domestic violence, and sexual assault advocacy (both individual crisis and systems and grassroots social change advocacy at the local, statewide, regional, national and international levels), and other social service experience. AKNWRC's philosophy is that violence against women is rooted in the colonization of indigenous nations.

Founded in 1978 by American Indians, the ***Indian Law Resource Center*** (ILRC) is a non-profit organization that provides legal assistance to indigenous peoples of the Americas to combat racism and oppression, to protect their lands and environment, to protect their cultures, to achieve sustainable economic development and genuine self-government, and to realize their other human rights. Its Safe Women, Strong Nation's project works with indigenous women's organizations and Native nations to end violence against indigenous women. ILRC is in consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council. (www.indianlaw.org).

The ***National Congress of American Indians*** (NCAI) is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments, and is dedicated to ending the epidemic of violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women. In 2003, NCAI created the NCAI Task Force on Violence Against Women to address and coordinate an organized response to national policy issues regarding violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women. NCAI is in consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council. (www.ncai.org).

The ***National Indigenous Women's Resource Center, Inc.*** (NIWRC) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to ensure the safety of Native women by protecting and preserving the inherent sovereign authority of American Indian and Alaska Native nations to respond to domestic violence and sexual assault. NIWRC's Board consists of Native women leaders from American Indian and Alaska Native nations across the United States. NIWRC is a national resource center for Indian nations providing technical assistance, policy development, training, materials, resource information, and the development of tribal strategies and responses to end the violence. In 2015, NIWRC launched the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Sovereignty Initiative to defend the constitutionality and functionality of all VAWA tribal provisions. (www.niwrc.org).

The ***International Mayan League*** is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to promote, preserve, and transmit the culture, history, and contributions of our ancestors in defense of Mother Earth. Our work is guided by the vision and practices of our spiritual and traditional leaders, elders, and authorities to address the root causes contributing to discrimination, inequality, and oppression of the Maya and the destruction of our communities and environment. We join in partnerships with allies from other indigenous nations, human rights organizations, academics, scholars, scientists, and faith based communities to stand in solidarity with the struggle of our peoples. Jointly we address the many critical issues affecting not just the Maya but all of humanity and Mother Earth. (<http://www.mayanleague.org/>)

The ***Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition*** is a statewide coalition for American Indian Sexual Assault Advocates in Minnesota. The mission of this coalition is to strengthen the voices of American Indian women to create awareness, influence social change, and reclaim the traditional values that honor the sovereignty of American Indian women and children thereby eliminating the sexual violence perpetrated against them. Their vision is Creating Safety and Justice for Native Women Through the Teachings of Our Grandmothers. (<http://www.miwsac.org/>)