



# THE NEVER-ENDING MAZE

CONTINUED FAILURE TO PROTECT INDIGENOUS WOMEN FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE USA

Sexual violence against Indigenous women in the United States is rampant across tribal communities. US government data shows that **American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) women face some of the highest rates of sexual violence in the country.** The high rates of violence faced by AI/AN women have been compounded by the creation of a complex jurisdictional maze through centuries of contradictory laws and policies, under-resourcing of law enforcement and medical services, and the inadequate response of justice systems to crimes of sexual violence. Furthermore, this epidemic of violence has been exacerbated by the US government's **steady erosion of tribal authority.**

**56.1% OF AI/AN WOMEN  
HAVE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL VIOLENCE  
AND NEARLY 1 IN 3 (29.5%)  
HAVE EXPERIENCED RAPE IN THEIR LIFETIME**

THE RATIO FOR INDIAN COUNTRY  
LAW ENFORCEMENT  
IS APPROXIMATELY  
**1.91 OFFICERS**  
PER 1,000 RESIDENTS  
WHEREAS THE NATIONAL AVERAGE IS  
**3.5 OFFICERS**  
PER 1,000 RESIDENTS

IN 2019, IHS HEALTHCARE  
EXPENDITURES WERE  
**\$4,078** USD  
PER PERSON  
COMPARED TO  
**\$11,582** USD  
PER PERSON  
**FOR FEDERAL**  
HEALTHCARE NATIONWIDE

SINCE 2013, BOTH THE  
**TOTAL FUNDING**  
FOR US ATTORNEY'S OFFICES  
IN INDIAN COUNTRY AND THE  
**NUMBER OF ATTORNEYS**  
**RESPONSIBLE FOR**  
**PROSECUTIONS**  
HAS DECREASED BY **40%**

**Piecemeal legislation, even with good intentions, cannot begin to protect American Indian and Alaska Native women from violence until the jurisdictional complexities within Indian country are resolved.** The US government must act swiftly and holistically to end the crisis of sexual violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women. The US government must:

- **Fully restore tribal jurisdiction** over crimes committed in Indian country and **recognize the authority of tribal courts** to impose penalties proportionate to the offenses.
- Make available **long-term, predictable and adequate funding** for tribal law enforcement, justice services and culturally appropriate support services.
- Ensure all Indigenous survivors **receive timely and adequate post-rape care**, including access to a rape kit and culturally appropriate support services, and **fully fund the Indian Health Service** so that it can meet 100% of the health needs of all Indigenous peoples in the United States.
- Ensure that the handling of cases of sexual violence against Indigenous women are **sufficiently resourced and prosecuted**.
- **Fund data collection, analysis and research** on crimes of violence against Indigenous women.