



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

To: Subcommittees on Oversight and Investigations; and Indian and Insular Affairs
Republican Members

From: Subcommittees on Oversight and Investigations; and Indian and Insular Affairs
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Date: Monday, July 13, 2026

Subject: Oversight Hearing titled *“Innovative Technologies and Initiatives to Tackle the
MMIP Crisis in Indian Country”*

The Subcommittees on Oversight and Investigations and Indian and Insular Affairs will hold an oversight hearing titled *“Innovative Technologies and Initiatives to Tackle the MMIP Crisis in Indian Country”* on **Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 10:15 a.m., in 1324 Longworth House Office Building.**

Member offices are requested to notify Seneca Feys (Seneca.Feys@mail.house.gov) by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, July 13, 2026, if their Member intends to participate in the hearing.

I. KEY MESSAGES

- Through treaties and statutes, the federal government has maintained legal and moral obligations “of the highest responsibility and trust”¹ to tribes, including the duty to protect tribal citizens.
- However, a persistent crisis of violence, often referred to as the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) crisis, afflicts tribal communities. In response, Congress and federal agencies have worked to bridge gaps in data collection, increase law enforcement coordination, and employ advanced forensics and other innovative technologies.
- The Trump administration has bolstered MMIP law enforcement efforts at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). By sending personnel, employing new technologies, and allocating additional resources, the administration has strengthened partnerships and public safety in Indian Country and doggedly pursued justice for tribal families.
- Investigators have been empowered to resolve MMIP cases through advancements in DNA and genetic analysis; drones equipped with LiDAR, infrared, or thermal imaging optics that can quickly scan vast areas; futuristic, artificial intelligence (AI)-powered sonar devices capable of scanning deep, murky water; and other technologies.

¹ Seminole Nation v. United States, 316 U.S. 286 (1942).

II. WITNESSES

Panel I (Administration Witnesses):

- **Mr. Charles Addington**, Principal Director of Justice Services and Law Enforcement, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

Panel II (Outside Experts):

- **Ms. Abigail Echo-Hawk**, Executive Vice President, Urban Indian Health Institute, Seattle, WA
- **Mr. OJ Semans, Sr.**, Executive Director, Coalition of Large Tribes, Mission, SD
- **Dr. David Mittelman**, Chief Executive Officer, Othram Inc., The Woodlands, TX
- **Dr. Grace Bulltail**, Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison Madison, WI
[Minority Witness]

III. BACKGROUND

Introduction

The U.S. government has maintained a federal trust responsibility toward American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN).² This responsibility was established through a multitude of treaties, statutes, and court decisions.³ In *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*,⁴ decided by the Supreme Court in 1831, Chief Justice John Marshall detailed this intricate legal obligation for the first time, setting the precedent that a future Court would rely on to proclaim that the U.S. “has charged itself with moral obligations of the highest responsibility and trust” to tribes, and that America’s relationship with tribal nations ought to be judged by “the most exacting fiduciary standards.”⁵

Although the U.S. government has worked to meet its obligations by enacting legislation and establishing federal agencies to assist tribes and mitigate tribal issues, one particularly devastating issue has persisted: the scourge of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP).⁶ Rates of murder, rape, and violent crime among AI/AN populations exceed national averages.⁷ An estimated 84 percent of AI/AN women and 82 percent of AI/AN individuals have experienced violence in their lifetimes.⁸ Yet, the total number of MMIP is unknown due to

² See Nicole T. Carter, et al., CONG. RSCH. SERV., R48093, FEDERAL-TRIBAL CONSULTATION: BACKGROUND AND ISSUES FOR CONGRESS (June 12, 2024), <https://www.crs.gov/reports/pdf/R48093/R48093.pdf>. See also 25 U.S.C. § 5601(3).

³ See Nicole T. Carter, et al., CONG. RSCH. SERV., R48093, FEDERAL-TRIBAL CONSULTATION: BACKGROUND AND ISSUES FOR CONGRESS (June 12, 2024), <https://www.crs.gov/reports/pdf/R48093/R48093.pdf>. See also 25 U.S.C. § 5601(3).

⁴ See *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, 30 U.S. 1 (1831).

⁵ *Seminole Nation v. United States*, 316 U.S. 286 (1942).

⁶ See GOV’T ACCOUNTABILITY OFF., GAO-22-104045, MISSING OR MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN: NEW EFFORTS ARE UNDERWAY BUT OPPORTUNITIES EXIST TO IMPROVE THE FEDERAL RESPONSE (Oct. 28, 2021), <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-104045.pdf>.

⁷ *Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Crisis*, INDIAN AFFAIRS, <https://www.bia.gov/service/mmu/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-people-crisis>.

⁸ See *Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men*, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE (June 1, 2016), <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/violence-against-american-indian-and-alaska-native-women-and-men>.

discrepancies in data collected from federal, tribal, state, and local law enforcement sources and the absence of a centralized database.⁹

The Trump administration has worked to strengthen law enforcement coordination, data collection, and technology use to protect tribal citizens and bolster the federal government's response to, and effectiveness in solving cases of, MMIP. This hearing provides an opportunity to discuss these initiatives and advancements and hear the perspectives of both the Trump administration and tribal experts on the recent federal MMIP response.

The House Committee on Natural Resources (Committee) previously held hearings discussing the role of criminal cartels in fueling drug trafficking and violence in Indian Country, activities that may contribute to instances of MMIP. For additional background, please see the Committee's hearing memos.¹⁰

Barriers to MMIP Data Collection and Consistency

Although no single federal database contains comprehensive national data on MMIP, four federal databases—the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs), National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS), and National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS)—provide information on missing or murdered individuals.¹¹ The Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) Missing and Murdered Unit (MMU) also posts case profiles of MMIP to solicit public tips concerning active cases.¹² Researchers and advocates have identified significant gaps in available MMIP data that mask the full extent of this crisis.¹³ For example, in 2025 the FBI reported 1,476 AI/AN individuals missing from the NCIC database,¹⁴ but only 909 AI/AN missing individuals were listed in the NamUs database.¹⁵

Artificial intelligence (AI) offers a promising path to reviewing large datasets and finding patterns among missing or murdered individuals. The partnership between Veritone, a Los

⁹ See GOV'T ACCOUNTABILITY OFF., GAO-22-104045, MISSING OR MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN: NEW EFFORTS ARE UNDERWAY BUT OPPORTUNITIES EXIST TO IMPROVE THE FEDERAL RESPONSE (Oct. 28, 2021), <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-104045.pdf>.

¹⁰ See, e.g., *Biden's Border Crisis: Examining the Impacts of International Cartels Targeting Indian Country*, Oversight Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Natural Resource, 118th Cong. (Apr. 10, 2024), <https://naturalresources.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=415813>; *Biden's Border Crisis: Examining Efforts to Combat International Criminal Cartels & Stop Illegal Drug Trafficking Targeting Indian Country*, Oversight Hearing before the Subcomm. on Oversight and Investigations of the H. Comm. on Natural Resources, 118th Cong. (June 4, 2024), <https://naturalresources.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=416080>.

¹¹ See GOV'T ACCOUNTABILITY OFF., GAO-22-104045, MISSING OR MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN: NEW EFFORTS ARE UNDERWAY BUT OPPORTUNITIES EXIST TO IMPROVE THE FEDERAL RESPONSE (Oct. 28, 2021), <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-104045.pdf>; see also Nathan James, CONG. RSCH. SERV., R47010, MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS PEOPLE (MMIP): OVERVIEW OF RECENT RESEARCH, LEGISLATION, AND SELECTED ISSUES FOR CONGRESS (July 3, 2023), <https://www.crs.gov/reports/pdf/R47010/R47010.pdf>.

¹² See *Missing and Murdered Cases*, INDIAN AFFAIRS, <https://www.bia.gov/service/mmu/missing-murdered-cases>.

¹³ See Nathan James, CONG. RSCH. SERV., R47010, MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS PEOPLE (MMIP): OVERVIEW OF RECENT RESEARCH, LEGISLATION, AND SELECTED ISSUES FOR CONGRESS (July 3, 2023), <https://www.crs.gov/reports/pdf/R47010/R47010.pdf>.

¹⁴ See *2025 Missing American Indian (AI) and Alaska Native (AN) Persons Data from the FBI's National Crime Information Center Missing Person File*, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (May 4, 2026), <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/cy-2025-mmip-missing-ai-an-one-pager-05042026.pdf/view>.

¹⁵ See *Missing Persons Search*, NATIONAL MISSING AND UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS SYSTEM (July 2026), <https://www.namus.gov/MissingPersons/Search>.

Angeles-based AI and data company, and the Cold Case Foundation is an encouraging example.¹⁶ Under this partnership, the Cold Case Foundation utilizes Veritone’s AI-powered technology to compile data from numerous sources into a single searchable system, allowing investigators to more rapidly identify key pieces of evidence from decades’ worth of materials.¹⁷

Law Enforcement Coordination and Jurisdictional Dynamics

A complex web of jurisdictional boundaries and federal agreements can delay and confuse federal, tribal, and state law enforcement responses to MMIP cases. The FBI’s and BIA’s Office of Justice Services (OJS) has jurisdiction over specific crimes in Indian Country¹⁸ under the Major Crimes Act (if the defendant is an Indian)¹⁹ and the General Crimes Act (if the defendant is a non-Indian).²⁰ Under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, tribes can enter into self-determination contracts, or self-governance compacts with BIA to empower the tribe to provide technical assistance or enforce tribal law in Indian Country.²¹ Of course, tribal law enforcement entities also have inherent sovereignty to prosecute Indians who commit crimes in Indian Country.²²

Additionally, state and local law enforcement agencies can exercise jurisdiction over certain tribal crimes, depending on the status of the crime, whether the federal government has transferred responsibility for major crimes to States through Public Law 83-280,²³ and whether the victim was Indian.²⁴ States have created task forces to allocate resources to MMIP cases and compiled their own databases to streamline information on MMIP cases.²⁵

Under President Trump, the FBI and OJS have prioritized tackling crime in Indian Country, yielding successful results through various initiatives to solve MMIP cases.²⁶ In 2026, the FBI initiated personnel surges in 11 field offices across the country in support of Operation Not Forgotten.²⁷ Additionally, in 2025, the U.S. Department of the Interior’s (DOI) Victim Assistance

¹⁶ See Keely Quinlan, *Can AI help solve cold cases?*, STATESCOOP (Apr. 21, 2026), <https://statescoop.com/can-ai-help-solve-cold-cases/>.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ “Indian country” is a legal term of art that generally refers to all lands within a federal Indian reservation, all dependent Indian communities, and all tribal member allotments. See 18 U.S.C. § 1151.

¹⁹ The Major Crimes Act applies if the defendant is an Indian. See 18 U.S.C. § 1153.

²⁰ The General Crimes Act applies if the defendant is a non-Indian. See 18 U.S.C. § 1152.

²¹ See 25 U.S.C. §§ 5301-5423.

²² *Talton v. Mayes*, 163 U.S. 376 (1896); 25 U.S.C. § 1301(2).

²³ See Pub. L. No. 83-280, 67 Stat. 588. Public Law 280 granted six states—Alaska, California, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon, and Wisconsin—jurisdiction to prosecute crimes by or against Indians in Indian country and allows the other 44 states the option of assuming this jurisdiction with a tribe’s consent. See 18 U.S.C. § 1162(a); 25 U.S.C. § 1321(a)(1).

²⁴ See Nathan James, CONG. RSCH. SERV., R47010, MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS PEOPLE (MMIP): OVERVIEW OF RECENT RESEARCH, LEGISLATION, AND SELECTED ISSUES FOR CONGRESS (July 3, 2023), <https://www.crs.gov/reports/pdf/R47010/R47010.pdf>.

²⁵ See *Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) State Resources*, DEP’T OF JUSTICE OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME OFFICE, <https://ovc.ojp.gov/topics/missing-murdered-indigenous-persons/state-resources>. Examples of states with MMIP task forces or databases include [Arizona](#), [Michigan](#), [Minnesota](#), [Montana](#), [New Mexico](#), [Oklahoma](#), [Utah](#), and [Washington](#).

²⁶ See *BIA launches Operation Spirit Return to help solve Indian Country missing and unidentified person cases*, INDIAN AFFAIRS (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.bia.gov/news/bia-launches-operation-spirit-return-help-solve-indian-country-missing-and-unidentified-person>.

²⁷ See *FBI Surges Personnel to Support Operation Not Forgotten 2026, Expanding Investigative Resources Across Indian Country*, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (Apr. 2, 2026), <https://www.fbi.gov/news/press-releases/fbi-surges-personnel-to-support-operation-not-forgotten-2026-expanding-investigative-resources-across-indian-country>.

Program partnered with the U.S. Department of Justice’s National Indian Country Training Initiative, U.S. Indian Police Academy, FBI, Drug Enforcement Agency, and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms to, “curb violent crime in Indian Country” and provide “comprehensive training to improve how law enforcement and service providers respond to violent crime and enhance support for victims in tribal communities.”²⁸ This partnership has led officials to seize over \$2 million worth of fentanyl in tribal communities.²⁹ In May 2026, Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum issued Secretarial Order 3450, titled “*Honoring Our Commitment to Protecting Indian Country Communities*,” which created the Indian Country Violent Crime Task Force within OJS to address high rates of violent crime, unsolved cases, and illegal drug activity occurring in and around Indian Country.³⁰

Federal agencies like BIA and FBI work with tribal law enforcement partners to solve MMIP cases and combat violent crime and drug trafficking in Indian Country. Examples of criminal activity targeted by such coordination include the following:

- **Missing Persons.** In February 2026, BIA MMU and Chickasaw Lighthorse Police Department, working alongside multiple federal and state partners, conducted a large-scale search operation for two missing Chickasaw citizens in southern Oklahoma.³¹ As a result of the coordinated search operation, on April 6, 2026, BIA MMU positively identified remains as Molly Miller, a Chickasaw citizen who had been marked as missing since 2013.³² The resolution of this search, while tragic, finally offers the victim’s friends and family an opportunity for closure.
- **Crimes Against Children.** On June 9, 2026, a month after the formation of OJS’s Violent Crimes Task Force, the Task Force successfully coordinated with tribal and Arkansas police departments to arrest an individual for “alleged attempted crimes against children online.”³³
- **Drugs.** On November 15, 2025, OJS’s Division of Drug Enforcement (DDE) and Pueblo of Isleta Tribal Police conducted a drug interdiction and successfully seized 37,000

²⁸ See *The Department of the Interior and Federal Agencies Launch Training Series to Combat Violent Crime in Indian Country*, INDIAN AFFAIRS (July 14, 2025), <https://www.bia.gov/news/department-interior-and-federal-agencies-launch-training-series-combat-violent-crime-indian>.

²⁹ See *Interior Department Announces Major Fentanyl Seizure Following Joint Operation on Pueblo of Isleta Reservation*, U.S. DEP’T OF THE INTERIOR (Nov. 17, 2025), <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-department-announces-major-fentanyl-seizure-following-joint-operation-pueblo>; *BIA OJS K-9 Unit Seizes More Than \$621,000 in Fentanyl During Arizona Traffic Stop*, BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS, <https://www.bia.gov/news/bia-ojs-k-9-unit-seizes-more-621000-in-fentanyl-during-arizona-traffic-stop>.

³⁰ See U.S. DEP’T OF THE INTERIOR, SECRETARIAL ORDER NO. 3450, HONORING OUR COMMITMENT TO PROTECTING INDIAN COUNTRY COMMUNITIES (May 5, 2026), <https://www.doi.gov/document-library/secretary-order/so-3450-honoring-our-commitment-protecting-indian-country>.

³¹ This operation involved multiple agencies, including the FBI, Oklahoma Department of Corrections, Oklahoma Highway Patrol, Oklahoma Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Chickasaw Nation Emergency Management, and Texas Search and Rescue. See *Bureau of Indian Affairs Missing and Murdered Unit Conducts Large-Scale Search in Oklahoma: Remains Found*, INDIAN AFFAIRS (Feb. 20, 2026), <https://www.bia.gov/news/bureau-indian-affairs-missing-and-murdered-unit-conducts-large-scale-search-in-oklahoma>.

³² See *BIA MMU positively identifies missing Chickasaw Nation member*, INDIAN AFFAIRS (Apr. 6, 2026), <https://www.bia.gov/news/bia-mmupositively-identifies-missing-chickasaw-nation-member>.

³³ See *Bureau of Indian Affairs Predatory Crimes Unit Announces Arrest Connected to Wyandotte Nation Reservation*, INDIAN AFFAIRS (June 9, 2026), <https://www.bia.gov/news/bureau-indian-affairs-predatory-crimes-unit-announces-arrest-connected-wyandotte-nation>.

fentanyl pills, worth approximately \$1.5 million, and \$37,877 in cash.³⁴ On June 1, 2026, DDE seized 9.4 pounds of fentanyl powder, worth over \$621,000, in a traffic stop on the Fort McDowell reservation in Arizona, in cooperation with the Fort McDowell Tribal Police Department.³⁵

Legislative Action and Federal Programs Addressing the MMIP Crisis

In recent years, the federal government has kickstarted several initiatives to address the MMIP crisis. Further details are provided below.

Operation Lady Justice

On November 26, 2019, President Trump established the Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives, also called Operation Lady Justice.³⁶ This two-year, multi-agency effort aimed to “enhance the operation of the criminal justice system and address the legitimate concerns of [AI/AN] communities regarding missing and murdered people—particularly missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.”³⁷

Missing and Murdered Unit

BIA’s MMU, within OJS, was established in response to the Not Invisible Act of 2019,³⁸ which President Trump signed into law on October 10, 2020.³⁹ The MMU focuses on analyzing and solving missing, murdered and human trafficking cases involving AI/AN, as well as working with tribal, BIA, and FBI investigators on unsolved missing and murdered investigations.⁴⁰

Operation Not Forgotten

In 2023, under Operation Steadfast Promise, the FBI launched Operation Not Forgotten to surge investigative, intelligence, and victim service support to Indian Country offices to assist with unresolved violent crime cases.⁴¹ The operation emphasized tackling cases involving violence against women and children—which encompasses those who are missing or murdered.⁴²

³⁴ See *Interior Department Announces Major Fentanyl Seizure Following Joint Operation on Pueblo of Isleta Reservation*, U.S. DEP’T OF THE INTERIOR (Nov. 17, 2025), <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-department-announces-major-fentanyl-seizure-following-joint-operation-pueblo>.

³⁵ See *BIA OJS K-9 Unit Seizes More Than \$621,000 in Fentanyl During Arizona Traffic Stop*, INDIAN AFFAIRS (June 1, 2026), <https://www.bia.gov/news/bia-ojs-k-9-unit-seizes-more-621000-in-fentanyl-during-arizona-traffic-stop>.

³⁶ Operation Lady Justice included members from the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of the Interior, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. See Exec. Order No. 13898, 84 Fed. Reg. 66059 (Nov. 26, 2019).

³⁷ Exec. Order No. 13898, 84 Fed. Reg. 66059 (Nov. 26, 2019).

³⁸ See Not Invisible Act of 2019, Pub. L. No. 116-166, 134 Stat. 766 (Oct. 10, 2020).

³⁹ See *Statement from the Press Secretary Regarding the Signing of Savanna’s Act and the Not Invisible Act*, THE WHITE HOUSE (Oct. 10, 2020), <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/statement-press-secretary-regarding-signing-savannas-act-not-invisible-act/>.

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ See *Operation Not Forgotten*, FED. BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/indian-country-crime/operation-not-forgotten>.

⁴² *Id.*

Operation Spirit Return

In 2025, BIA's OJS launched Operation Spirit Return to assist with the investigations of missing and unidentified person cases involving AI/AN.⁴³ BIA's MMU is leading the operation, in partnership with the federal database NamUS, the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, and Othram, a Texas-based company specializing in forensic genetic genealogy to identify human remains.⁴⁴ Together, these groups work to locate and identify remains, close missing person cases, and reunite families with their loved ones. As of February 2025, BIA's MMU was actively investigating 15 unidentified persons cases across the United States.⁴⁵

Not Invisible Act and Savanna's Act

In response to violent crime in Indian Country, Congress enacted the Not Invisible Act of 2019⁴⁶ and Savanna's Act.⁴⁷ The Not Invisible Act of 2019 directs an increase in interagency coordination efforts to reduce violent crime in Indian Country, as well as the creation of a joint commission whose members include DOI and DOJ.⁴⁸ Savanna's Act clarifies the roles of law enforcement agencies in the federal response to MMIP, expands the ability to collect and report data, and provides grants for developing and implementing policies and protocols for law enforcement.⁴⁹

New Technologies and Initiatives

During FBI's and BIA's Operation Not Forgotten personnel surges, law enforcement officials implemented new technologies to find and identify MMIP. For example, drones equipped with light detection and ranging (LiDAR) or infrared and thermal imaging that can cover large areas in a short amount of time were deployed.⁵⁰ High-tech, AI-sonar devices have also been deployed in searches for bodies in deep water.⁵¹ These devices use AI and sonar to bounce echoes off underwater objects and compare them to the echoes off human bodies.⁵²

Advancements in DNA analysis, exemplified by BIA's partnership with companies like Othram that specialize in advanced genetic analysis, are also providing investigators with new leads in MMIP cases.⁵³ Other advancements being employed include new laboratory methods and

⁴³ See *BIA launches Operation Spirit Return to help solve Indian Country missing and unidentified person cases*, BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS (Feb. 20, 2025), <https://www.bia.gov/news/bia-launches-operation-spirit-return-help-solve-indian-country-missing-and-unidentified-person>.

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ *Id.*

⁴⁶ See Pub. L. No. 116-166, 134 Stat. 766 (2020) (codified, in part, at 25 U.S.C. §§ 2801-02).

⁴⁷ See 25 U.S.C. §§ 5701-5705; 34 U.S.C. §§ 10452(a)(11)-(12), 10461(b)(23)-(24), 20126(b)(2), (4).

⁴⁸ See Pub. L. No. 116-166, 134 Stat. 766 (2020) (codified, in part, at 25 U.S.C. §§ 2801-02).

⁴⁹ See 25 U.S.C. §§ 5701-5705; 34 U.S.C. §§ 10452(a)(11)-(12), 10461(b)(23)-(24), 20126(b)(2), (4).

⁵⁰ See Jolan Kruse, *How search and rescue technology helps find missing people—and its roles in MMIP cases*, BUFFALO'S FIRE (Nov. 7, 2025), <https://www.buffalosfire.com/how-tech-solves-mmip-missing-person-cases>.

⁵¹ See Brian Bull, *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons team brings AI-sonar device to search for missing Oregon man*, KLCC (Oct. 31, 2025), <https://www.klcc.org/science-technology/2025-10-31/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-persons-team-brings-ai-sonar-device-to-search-for-missing-oregon-man>.

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ See *BIA to use forensic technology to help solve Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons cases*, NPR (Mar. 24, 2025), <https://www.kunr.org/local-stories/2025-03-24/bia-forensic-technology-solve-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-persons-cases>; see also *Introducing SNPSuite: Offline Software for Secure Forensic DNA Analysis*, OTHRAM (May 18, 2025), <https://othram.com/research/feature-preview/introducing-snpsuite-offline-software-for-secure-forensic-dna-analysis>.

software tools for analyzing highly degraded human remains that contain poor quality DNA samples.⁵⁴

These methods can open new leads for investigators on stalled cases. For example, in January 2025, Othram found the remains of Michelle Elbow Shield, who disappeared from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota in September 2023.⁵⁵ In 2026, BIA's MMU and the Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office collaborated with Othram to use DNA testing to identify skeletal remains found in 2024 in a desert area several miles from Sacaton, AZ.⁵⁶ This novel DNA testing, known as Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing (FGGS), built a comprehensive profile from extracted DNA that allowed investigators to positively identify the remains as those of Glenn Thomas Tate, Jr., a citizen of the Gila River Indian Community, who had been missing since 2020.⁵⁷ Locating and identifying remains helps law enforcement and the victims' friends and families reach closure in a missing persons case.

⁵⁴ See *Advancing Justice for the Missing and Unidentified Through Research*, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE (Jan. 15, 2025), <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/advancing-justice-missing-and-unidentified-through-research>; see also *Introducing SNPSuite: Offline Software for Secure Forensic DNA Analysis*, OTHRAM (May 18, 2025), <https://othram.com/research/feature-preview/introducing-snpsuite-offline-software-for-secure-forensic-dna-analysis>.

⁵⁵ See *BIA to use forensic technology to help solve Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons cases*, NPR (Mar. 24, 2025), <https://www.kunr.org/local-stories/2025-03-24/bia-forensic-technology-solve-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-persons-cases>.

⁵⁶ See *DNA tests identify remains of missing Gila River man*, ICT (Jan. 31, 2026), <https://ictnews.org/news/dna-tests-identify-remains-of-missing-gila-river-man/>.

⁵⁷ See *id.*