

Sexual Violence Against Native Women & Girls

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MAINE COALITION AGAINST
SEXUAL ASSAULT

Tribal nations maintain separate cultures, histories and practices. In Maine today, there are four federally recognized Indian Tribes with five tribal communities: the Aroostook Band of Micmacs; Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians; Passamaquoddy Tribe at Indian Township; Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point; and the Penobscot Nation. The Tribes in Maine and New Brunswick, Canada, are known as the Wabanaki, "People of the Dawn." Approximately 1.3% of Maine's population is fully or partially American Indian or Alaska Native.¹

Prevalence

Over a quarter of Native women will be raped in their lifetime, and almost half of Native women will experience sexual violence other than rape in their lifetime.² Native women living in Maine are experiencing sexual violence at a higher rate than their white peers. A report by Amnesty International on the sexual victimization of Native women notes, "The fact that Native American and Alaska Native women have been dehumanized throughout US history informs present-day attitudes. It helps fuel the high rates of sexual violence perpetrated against them and the high levels of impunity enjoyed by their attackers."³

For Native women, this violence is compounded by a legal system with varying jurisdictional procedures and, often, a fear of State authority based on the historically problematic relationship with government agencies, making reporting difficult on a systematic level as well as an emotional one. Native victims also have an additional set of unique barriers related to their culture that presents the need for culturally specific responses to sexual violence.

Unique dynamics

As with women of many other races, the majority of sexual violence against Native women is committed by a non-stranger, with a large percentage of offenders being intimate partners.⁴ Consistent with this data, 65% of sexual assaults against American Indian and Alaska Native women occurred at or near

their private residences,⁵ not in public places. However, the offender is non-Native in 2/3 of sexual violence cases perpetrated against Native women.⁶

Native women who experience sexual violence also experience a higher level of physical violence during sexual violence experiences. The National Crime Victimization Survey reports that 91% of American Indian and Alaska Native women were hit when sexually assaulted and 25% experience sexual violence within the presence of a weapon.⁷ This is twice the rate at which white women experience sexual violence with a weapon.

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-Amnesty International

Learn More

[Wabanaki Women's Coalition](#)

The Wabanaki Women's Coalition's mission is to increase the capacity of Tribal Communities to respond to domestic and sexual violence, and influence Tribal, National, and Regional systems to increase awareness, safety, justice and healing for all their relations.

[Indian Law Resource Center](#)

Indian Law Resource Center is a non-profit law and advocacy organization established and directed by American Indians. We provide legal assistance to Indian and Alaska Native nations who are working to protect their lands, resources, human rights, environment and cultural heritage. Our principal goal is the preservation and well-being of Indian and other Native nations and tribes.

[Mending the Sacred Hoop](#)

Mending the Sacred Hoop Technical Assistance Project is a Native American program that provides training and technical assistance to American Indian and Alaska Native communities in the effort to eliminate violence in the lives of women and their children.

[Maze of Injustice: The failure to protect Indigenous women from sexual violence in the USA](#)

This report highlights the prevalence of sexual violence against Native women, as well as the complexities of reporting to law enforcement specific to Native populations, the legal histories of tribes in the US as it relates to violence against Native women, the intersections of Native women identity and views sexual violence against Native women from a human rights abuse perspective.

[Reproductive Health of Urban American Indian and Alaska Native Women: Examining Unintended](#)

[Pregnancy, Contraception, Sexual History and Behavior, and Non-Voluntary Sexual Intercourse](#)

This report presents information on pregnancies, births, sexual history and behavior, contraceptive use, non-voluntary sex, and unintended pregnancy among urban American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) women nationwide.

Sources

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