September 03, 2023

**VIA EMAIL AND MAIL**

Attorney General Merrick Garland

U.S. Department of Justice

950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20530-0001

[DOJ Email Submission](https://www.justice.gov/doj/webform/your-message-department-justice)

Attorney General Garland,

I write to demand that the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) investigate local law enforcement agencies that refuse to investigate the homicides of Native victims. Currently, the DOJ provides law enforcement funding to many law enforcement agencies that actively discriminate against Native victims and do not investigate homicides committed against Native people. Although Secretary Haaland has created the Missing and Murdered Unit (“MMU”) at the Department of the Interior, the MMU can do very little to investigate a homicide that a local law enforcement agency originally investigated if that local agency refuses to cooperate with the MMU and allow the MMU to investigate. DOJ continues to fund local law enforcement agencies that refuse to cooperate with the MMU.

The case of Kaysera Stops Pretty Places illustrates this injustice. In August 2019, 18-year-old Kaysera Stops Pretty Places was murdered in Big Horn County, Montana. She went missing on August 24, 2019 in a suburban neighborhood of Hardin, Montana, about three hundred yards from the Crow Reservation boundary. On August 29, her body was found in that same neighborhood. Law enforcement knew they had found Kaysera’s body, but did not tell the family that Kaysera’s body had been found until September 11—causing the family to hopelessly search for almost two weeks.

Days before Kaysera went missing, she filmed and posted to social media the beating of her 15-year-old brother by law enforcement at Crow Fair. The officers beating the minor in a wheelchair included Big Horn County deputies. There is reason to believe that one of the Big Horn County Sheriff’s deputies under investigation for the scene filmed by Kaysera was a responding officer when her body was discovered.

Despite the suspicious circumstances surrounding Kaysera’s death, the FBI, the Big Horn County Sheriff’s Office, and the Montana Department of Justice have done absolutely nothing to investigate. Kaysera’s family has provided the authorities with tips and evidence to aid the investigation, yet they continue to be ignored.

The State of Montana has the fourth highest rate of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (“MMIWG”) in the country. There have been over ninety MMIWG cases in Big Horn County alone. Federal and State law enforcement must be held accountable for failing the citizens they are sworn to protect.

As Attorney General of the United States, it is your duty to supervise the administration of justice in this country. It is your responsibility to uphold the trust responsibility of the United States. For four years, Kaysera and her family have been ignored by the very people sworn to protect them—Kaysera’s family has done everything in their power to find justice, but they cannot do it alone.

You have the ability to correct the failures of your Department and all the other agencies who have failed Kaysera and her family. Please use your power to finally bring Justice for Kaysera. If you require the FBI to investigate the murders of our Native women and girls, the FBI might, finally, start to take the murders of our Native women and girls seriously. If you require your United States Attorneys to prosecute the individuals who murder our Native women and girls, criminals will think twice before the murder our Native women girls. As of now, because of your inaction, they are able to murder with impunity.

We are asking to you to take action and ensure that, under your leadership, the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation will finally fulfill its federal trust duty and responsibility to protect and preserve the lives of our Native women and girls.

Respectfully,