



23rd Navajo Nation Council

April 7, 2016

Honorable Loretta E. Lynch
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

Re: Demand for Investigation

Dear Attorney General Lynch:

We, the Navajo Nation Council, respectfully urge the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate the fatal shooting of Loreal Tsingine by a Winslow Police Department Officer in Winslow, Arizona on Easter Sunday (Mar. 27, 2016). We understand the main purpose of the Civil Rights Division is to uphold the civil and constitutional rights of all Americans, particularly some of the most vulnerable members of our society. We also understand the Civil Rights Division enforces federal statutes prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, disability, religion, familial status and national origin. As understood, the Civil Rights Division, led by Vanita Gupta, Principal Deputy Assistant, is the office that conducts investigations of this magnitude, for example the shooting in Ferguson, Missouri.

Although a local investigation is currently being conducted by the Arizona Department of Public Safety ("AZDPS") regarding the fatal shooting of Loreal to determine whether excessive force was warranted resulting in the officer shooting her five times, we firmly believe intervention by the Civil Rights Division is necessary. History has proven that the small towns, or border towns, surrounding the Navajo Nation have discriminated against Native Americans. Loreal was a 27-year old Navajo woman and was allegedly holding a pair of scissors when she was shot five times after allegedly shoplifting from a convenience store a block and half away. On Tuesday, April 5, 2016 the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission ("NNHRC") met with Chief of Police Stephen Garnett to discuss policy and procedures when a firearm is discharged and to collect data information; the NNHRC was informed that Garnett is prohibited from discussing the case unless the Winslow City Attorney is present. Thus, a follow-up meeting is scheduled for April 13, 2016.

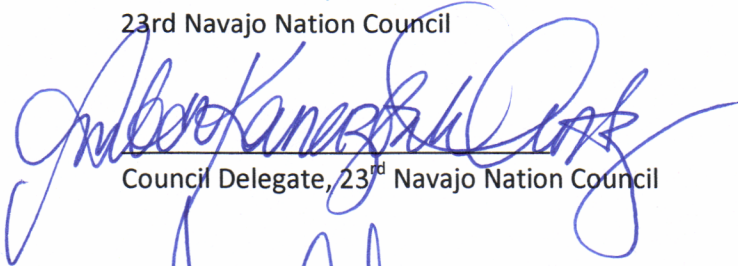
While we understand the fatal shooting of Loreal is under investigation by AZDPS, the Navajo Nation Council has deep concerns about the use of excessive force by law enforcement officers in border towns that surround the Navajo Nation. What occurred in Winslow, Arizona on Easter Sunday is a tragic example of the concerns of the Navajo Nation Council. It is clear the death of a young Navajo lady who was 95 pounds and 5 feet tall does not fit the alleged shoplifting incident.

The Navajo Nation Council is demanding the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, formally investigate this tragedy and address the longstanding and deep seated concerns of unlawful police stops, use of excessive force, and other coercive activities of Navajos by the Winslow Police Department. Our Nation's peoples have lived with questionable border town law enforcement practice directed at Native People for many generations. Your assistance in addressing this matter is urgently needed and greatly appreciated. Thank you.

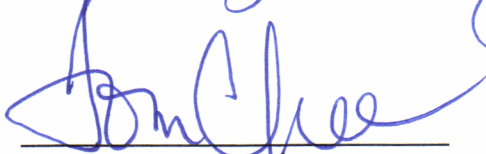
Sincerely,



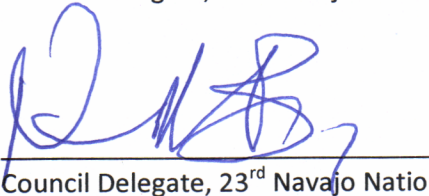
LoRenzo Bates, Speaker
23rd Navajo Nation Council



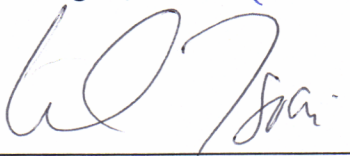
Council Delegate, 23rd Navajo Nation Council



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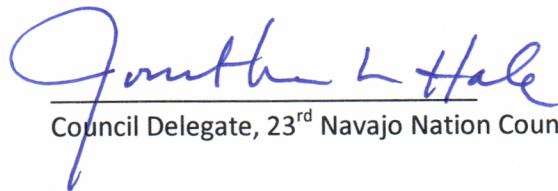
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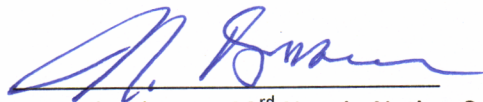
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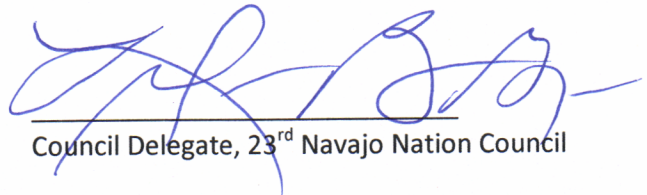
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Cc: Vanita Gupta, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice
Tracy Toulou, Office of Tribal Justice, U.S. Department of Justice
Arizona Senate Congressional Delegation
New Mexico Senate Congressional Delegation