



THE NAVAJO NATION

RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT

CORRECTION
APRIL 11, 2016

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PRESIDENT BEGAYE REQUESTS US DOJ INVOLVEMENT IN INVESTIGATION OF TSINGINE'S DEATH

WINDOW ROCK-On Wednesday Apr. 6, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye issued a letter to Honorable Loretta E. Lynch, Attorney General of the United States, requesting that the U.S. Department of Justice investigate the shooting death of Loreal Tsingine.

Tsingine was shot five times on Sunday, Mar. 27, by Winslow Police Officer Austin Shipley who responded to an alert of shoplifting at a local convenience store. Officer Shipley aggressively tried to detain Tsingine when a struggle ensued. It was reported that Tsingine pulled out a pair of scissors which the officer saw as a significant threat and he then opened fire on her.

In the letter to Honorable Lynch, President Begaye states that because the shooting of tribal member Tsingine took place outside of Navajo territorial jurisdiction, "the Navajo Nation is not in a position to investigate such an action."

President Begaye also stated that there have been many reports of excessive force and unlawful police stops made by Winslow Police officers to Navajo tribal members.

"We believe these reports strongly indicate that a practice of discrimination exists in the Winslow community against tribal members, and discrimination of this kind is prohibited by federal law and U.S. Department of Justice should investigate and enforce federal law against this discrimination" he stated in the letter.

The president strongly urged the involvement of the U.S. Department of Justice in assisting the Navajo Nation in protecting its tribal membership living the area and for those living outside the Nation's territorial jurisdiction.

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April 6, 2016

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

Dear Attorney General Lynch:

The Navajo Nation public safety departments and district courts are responsible to protect and maintain the public safety of all tribal members within the territorial jurisdiction of the Navajo Nation. When a tribal member becomes adversely involved in a law enforcement action outside its territorial jurisdiction, the Navajo Nation is not in a position to investigate such an action and to ensure that future law enforcement actions by state agencies are conducted in a way that protects the civil rights of tribal members. A shooting of a tribal member outside the Nation's territorial jurisdiction was recently reported. Ms. Loreal Tsingine was shot five times by a police officer after an alleged shoplifting in Winslow, Arizona.

The Navajo Nation respectfully requests that, in accordance with 42 U.S.C. § 14141, the U.S. Department of Justice investigate this shooting. As the President of the Navajo Nation, my Office has received reports of this community's problems with the Winslow Police Department. People have reported incidents such as Winslow police officers using excessive force and making unlawful police stops. We believe these reports strongly indicate that a practice of discrimination exists in the Winslow community against tribal members. Discrimination of this kind is prohibited by federal law, and it is only the U.S. Department of Justice that can investigate such a discriminatory practice against tribal members and enforce federal law against discrimination.

As this shooting is yet another instance of a pattern of adverse conduct by the Winslow Police Department against tribal members, we urge your Office to investigate this shooting so that local police departments can be held accountable for the manner in which they conduct law enforcement actions that involve tribal members. The involvement of your Office in this matter will greatly assist the Navajo Nation to protect and maintain public safety for tribal members who live outside the Nation's territorial jurisdiction.

Respectfully,

THE NAVAJO NATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russell Begaye".

Russell Begaye, *President*