



FIRST NATIONS WOMEN'S ALLIANCE

Public Statement

Removal of Christopher Columbus Statues

June 13, 2020

WASHINGTON, DC | The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the largest and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization in the country, does not acknowledge Christopher Columbus as a hero. To Indigenous peoples, he was the opposite:

[O]ut of timbers for the *Santa Maria*, . . . Columbus built a fort [on Hispaniola], the first European military base in the Western Hemisphere. . . . He took . . . Indian prisoners and put them aboard his two remaining ships. . . . [H]e got into a fight with Indians who refused to trade as many bows and arrows as he and his men wanted. Two were run through with swords and bled to death. Then the *Nina* and the *Pinta* set sail. . . . When the weather turned cold, the Indian prisoners began to die. . . .

In the year 1495, they went on a great slave raid, rounded up fifteen hundred Arawak men, women, and children, put them in pens guarded by Spaniards and dogs, then picked the five hundred best specimens to load onto ships. Of those five hundred, two hundred died en route. The rest arrived alive in Spain and were put up for sale. . . .

Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, 3-4 (1980 Ed.).

"This growing movement across the country to rid our shared spaces of symbols that represent hate, genocide, and bigotry illustrates that it is past time for all cities to stand on the right side of history moving forward," said NCAI President Fawn Sharp.

NCAI also strongly supports the recent actions taken by United States citizens and the international community calling for proper law enforcement reforms and the recognition of basic human rights for the African American community and all communities of color. We are humbled that these voices are including Indian Country's perspectives. NCAI encourages local governments and their citizens to seek mutual understandings of their diverse perspectives and to develop peaceful solutions that are mindful of all human beings and our rich distinct and shared histories. Together we can build the tomorrow our children deserve to lead.

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About the National Congress of American Indians:

Founded in 1944, the National Congress of American Indians is the oldest, largest and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization in the country. NCAI advocates on behalf of tribal governments and communities, promoting strong tribal-federal government-to-government policies, and promoting a better understanding among the general public regarding American Indian and Alaska Native governments, people and rights. For more information, visit www.ncai.org.