



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL  
Office of the Speaker

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## Law & Order Committee responds to departure of Navajo Nation Police Chief Phillip B. Francisco

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PHOTO: Madam Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton addressing Domestic Violence Awareness marchers at the Navajo Nation Council Chambers.

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — Members of the Law and Order Committee of the 24th Navajo Nation Council respond to the official departure of Navajo Nation Chief of Police, Phillip B. Francisco. He departs the largest tribal law enforcement agency in the country at the end of December.

On Tuesday, President Jonathan Nez announced that Chief Francisco will step down as the head of the Navajo Nation Police Department and transition to the position of Bloomfield Police Chief in New Mexico.

“The Law and Order Committee listened to the Navajo people and they continue to share that crimes in their communities were never properly addressed under the leadership of Chief Phillip Francisco,” said Chairwoman Eugenia Charles-Newton (Shiprock). “As the elected officials for the Navajo Nation, we are obligated to hold Executive Branch divisions and programs accountable. The Division of Public Safety has major internal issues they need to address and a federal audit investigation continues to hinder their ability to apply for new federal funding to support our officers. Chief Phillip Francisco does not understand the importance of keeping lines of communication open and he would rather speak to news reporters to get his points across.”

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Chief Phillip Francisco has reported the lack of support from the 24th Navajo Nation Council and expressed in a recent news article his disappointment in the 'bureaucracy within the Navajo government which hindered the police department's ability to move forward and improve.'

"We requested multiple times for reports, updates, and better communication between victims of crime and our law enforcement officers under the leadership of Chief Francisco," said Council Delegate Vince James (Jedito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kinłichii, Steamboat). "The Law and Order Committee took action to reestablish the Navajo Nation Police Training Academy, to recruit additional officers, and has consistently advocated for the salary increase of our police officers - especially during this pandemic since they are on the frontlines keeping us safe. It is easy to point out people for wrongdoings, but Chief Francisco is a political appointee and the Division of Public Safety is led by the Executive Branch."

The Law and Order Committee continues to affirm its commitment to working with the Nez-Lizer Administration to address the public safety needs of the Navajo people and fully supports the men and women of the Navajo Nation Police Department.

"From my professional experience, Chief Francisco continues to be an proactive and diligent leader who is well respected by our Navajo law enforcement officers," said Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Church Rock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau). "We need to remind ourselves that he took on a difficult role that was not filled for over 10 years and uplifted the position of Navajo Police Chief. His record as a devoted public servant to the Navajo people speaks for itself. Chief Franciso worked with our police officers to keep our communities safe during this pandemic and we will never forget that. We appreciate his service to the Navajo Nation and wish him the best in all he does moving forward."

Before his appointment in 2016, Chief Phillip Francisco worked for the Farmington and Aztec Police Departments in New Mexico. An Army veteran, he was a member of the New Mexico National Guard and previously served with the San Juan County Sheriff's Department as an investigator.

"Our people have experienced much trauma the last two years during this pandemic and our Navajo police officers were the warriors on the frontlines. As naat'áaniis, K'é should be the catalyst in bringing us together during difficult times. The Council is setting the record straight in regards to the comments Police Chief Phillip Francisco shared in an public interview about the governing body of the Navajo Nation. If we are to heal together, Hozhó needs to guide us forward," said Chairwoman Eugenia Charles Newton.

The Executive Branch announced that current Deputy Chief of Police Daryl Noon will serve as the new Navajo Nation Chief of Police beginning in December. He served in this position since 2019 and previously was with the Farmington Police Department for more than 23 years

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