

Navajo man charged with aggravated sexual abuse of a child in Indian Country

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A man who is an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation is facing a charge of aggravated sexual abuse after he allegedly sexually assaulted a child.

According to the indictment and other court records, Pedro Lee Benally, 29, of Montezuma Creek, Utah, allegedly engaged in a sexual act with a child. The alleged assault occurred in San Juan County on the Navajo Nation.

Alexander M.M. Uballez, United States Attorney for the District of New Mexico, and Raul Bujanda, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Albuquerque Field Office, announced March 1 that Benally made an initial appearance in federal court facing two charges of aggravated sexual abuse in Indian Country. A federal grand jury indicted Benally Feb. 23. Benally's detention and preliminary hearing was held March 2.

An indictment is only an allegation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. If convicted, Benally may face up to life in prison.

The Farmington Resident Agency of the FBI Albuquerque Field Office investigated this case with assistance from the Navajo Nation Department of Investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Caitlin L. Dillon is prosecuting the case.

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