

Statement

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69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Parallel Event

An Inclusive Student-Engaged Learning Model to Empower Mountain Women and Girls.”

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Good morning, ladies and gentlemen my name is Alexander Woltjen. I am a political science student. I am 29 years old and therefore a non-traditional student, which is accommodated well by Utah Valley University.

My main focus today will be on missing women that are trafficked within China. Human Rights Watch has reported on women being trafficked from Myanmar, specifically from the mountainous Shan and Kachin states, which are currently embroiled in conflict. In 2017, 226 women were reported to have been trafficked from Myanmar into China. However, this estimate is a fraction of the real number, as many of these cases are unreported or the women are simply missing.

This issue is not widely acknowledged, and China has had difficulty coordinating police work with south east Asian countries. Especially because these women are trafficked from mountainous states and places where there is ongoing conflict. For this reason, these women have a difficult time escaping sexual servitude.

Utah has had a similar problem in the past as of many other states in the United States of America there has been a tragic trend of missing and murdered indigenous women. Utah is home to four native American tribes, all entitled to their own reservations.

Remoteness is a great factor in the pandemic of missing and murdered indigenous women. Many of these communities are mountainous and lack the infrastructure that is found elsewhere in Utah. For this reason, it is difficult for law-enforcement to investigate or even be aware of these disappearances. To overcome these issues, meetings with local authorities to establish trust, cross deputization, and identifying cross-border policing institutions are critical.

At Utah Valley University our International Mountain Forum is promoting clubs that help to bring awareness to this issue. These clubs incorporate both traditional and non-traditional students into activities that give experience to produce students with diplomatic skills to better address issues facing the world's women, especially mountain women. I believe that the principles of transparency and student engaged learning will make an impact on issues facing women if implemented in China and in other countries where kidnapping and trafficking is a regular occurrence. Thank you