



# What is tribal sovereignty?

From 1801 to 1820, Choctaws ceded 25,000 square miles of homelands to the U.S. government. In return, treaties granted them certain rights and benefits.

Legal decisions in recent years have brought additional attention to this concept. However, the complex nature of the topic – and multiple rulings – can cause confusion. Let's separate myths from facts.

## Myths

vs

## Facts

The U.S. Supreme Court's *McGirt* decision would turn eastern Oklahoma into a reservation



The ruling affirmed tribes' right to govern within their respective reservation

Native Americans in state prison will automatically be released



Native Americans affected by rulings remained in prison or faced re-prosecution and re-incarceration by federal or tribal authorities

People living within the Choctaw Nation reservation cannot call 911 in an emergency



Everyone should still call 911 in an emergency. Cross deputization agreements enable law enforcement agencies to work together to provide care for everyone in our communities

Prosecution of crimes within Choctaw Nation is only handled by tribal authorities



Generally, tribal members who commit crimes will be subject to federal or tribal prosecution, and non-tribal members are subject to state prosecution

Non-Natives who commit crimes against Natives on reservations can get away with their crime



In general, states retain jurisdiction to prosecute non-Native people accused of committing crimes on reservations. The Choctaw Nation retains limited jurisdiction to prosecute non-Natives accused of committing certain crimes on reservations

Native Americans cannot receive speeding tickets on the reservation



In *Hooper v. Tulsa*, the court ruled municipalities do not have criminal jurisdiction (including traffic offenses) over Native Americans on a reservation