

Morakot survivors protest against government's policies

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The Indigenous Peoples Action Coalition of Taiwan (IPACT) held a rally last night on the Ketagalan Boulevard in front of the Presidential Office to pray for the souls of the dead a year after Typhoon Morakot struck Taiwan, took some 700 Taiwanese lives and left thousands homeless.

President Ma Ying-jeou has come under heavy fire for his government's slow response after the monster typhoon slammed into Taiwan Aug. 7-9 last year, and triggered massive floodwaters and landslides that buried native peoples alive and isolated their villages in the south.

An estimated 500 typhoon survivors from Kaohsiung, Taitung, Pingtung and Chiayi went up to Taipei to protest against the central government's inappropriate reconstruction policies.

The IPACT slammed the Ma administration over hasty relocation that cut links between native peoples and their hometowns. Many local villagers felt disrespected because the current recovery plans forced them to leave their homes, according to the alliance.

During the 16-hour event, the protesters held roadside memorial services to honor those killed by the typhoon. They also called on the government to overhaul reconstruction measures and to let them decide their relocation sites.

Mindful of repeated criticism and setbacks, the president has pledged massive efforts to rebuild the agricultural heartland that Morakot destroyed.

He and Premier Wu Den-yih attended a ceremony yesterday morning to celebrate the completion of Pingtung permanent houses by Tzu Chi, one of the most active private disaster relief groups.

Buddhist charity Tzu Chi has dispatched hundreds of volunteers to southern Taiwan since last Aug. to help in rescue work in Morakot's immediate wake. But some flood survivors expressed

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dissatisfaction with the houses built by the charity.

On Thursday, the Ministry of the Interior announced a satisfaction survey on the post-disaster recovery efforts for survivors living in permanent houses. The result showed that more than 89 percent of respondents expressed satisfaction with the facilities and infrastructure but they were in urgent need of employment.

Source: [Taiwan News - 2010/08/07](#)