

Morakot victims to file UN complaint against government

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Aborigines left homeless by Typhoon Morakot said they have decided to file a complaint with the UN against President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) for not respecting their rights.

Aborigines are “disappointed” with the government’s response to their call for the right to decide how they should rebuild their homes, said Oto Micyang, who is in charge of liaison affairs for the Indigenous Peoples Action Coalition, which organized an overnight protest in front of the Presidential Office on Saturday.

More than 600 Aborigines from the Tsou tribe in Chiayi County, the Bunun in Kaohsiung County, the Pingpu from Kaohsiung County’s Siaolin Village (沙林) and the Paiwan and Rukai tribes in Taitung and Pingtung counties, joined the rally to protest against forced resettlement.

They appealed to the Ma government to stop forcing Aborigines to move into so-called “permanent houses” that have been built outside their homelands and constructed in a way that does not reflect traditional Aboriginal lifestyles and culture, Micyang said.

Although the government said it had never forced Morakot victims to move into new settlements, Micyang said it never offered any other options.

“When tribal elders selected a safe place for their new settlement, government officials just called it unsafe, without offering scientific evidence,” he said.

The protesters said rehabilitation should be done step by step. The government, however, was so eager to permanently resettle Morakot victims who lived in mountainous areas, it failed to see their needs and respect their different lifestyles and cultures, they said.

Micyang said the Indigenous Peoples Action Coalition had launched a petition drive, and once it has collected enough signatures it will file a complaint with UN-affiliated organizations advocating human rights and the interests of indigenous peoples.

Morakot devastated portions of southern Taiwan in August last year, triggering massive flooding and landslides that left more than 700 people dead or missing.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2010/08/09](#)