On Friday, Green Island Human Rights Memorial Park will debut a series of events to mark the 60th anniversary of the declaration of martial law, during which an updated name-list of White Terror victims will be unveiled.

The memorial park's administration said a total of 8,296 names would be disclosed, which is seven times the number disclosed in 1999 by the Bo Yang Human Rights Educational Foundation. The park's administration entrusted Taiwan Art-in Design with collecting and verifying the information concerning White Terror victims.

Taiwan Art-in Design president Ronald Tsao, who is also a board member of the Deng Liberty Foundation and the Chen Wen-chen Memorial Foundation, said the new list covers a time span stretching from just after the 228 Incident in 1947 to 1989, two years after Marial Law was lifted in 1987.

The 228 Incident refers to the military crackdown by the then-Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) administration on civilian protesters that started on Feb. 27, 1947. Historians estimate that around 30,000 people were killed.

What followed the 228 massacre has been labeled the White Terror, during which numerous people were arrested. Many lost their lives after the declaration of martial law.

Most of the victims were prominent Taiwanese, including lawyers, prosecutors, doctors, professors and media workers. There is no official tally of the number of people who were jailed, went missing or were killed.

"The sources for such a long list came from several places, including the National Archives Administration, household registration offices, published or unpublished memoirs or oral accounts from White Terror victims, the disciplinary facility for political prisoners in Tucheng, as well as those that have already been compensated by the government for mistreatment during the Martial Law period," Tsao said.

Tsao said some family members were able to find their fathers or other relatives when a list of "White Terror" victims was released two years ago.

However, family members cannot simply use the list as a way to demand compensation from the government, Tsao said, adding that they must follow the -government's procedures.

Recounting the difficulties in tracking down White Terror victims, Tsao said his research team had asked to view more than 100,000 digital files and hard copies of information from the National Archives Administration. The team spent about 10 years tracing the victims and comparing the information, he said.

"Some of the victims shared the same name," Tsao said. "Some of the victims' court rulings were lost and others did not even have rulings in their files."

Tsao said that of the 1,061 people on the name-list who were executed, 63 percent were Taiwanese, while 35 percent were from China. Seventy-six percent of the victims were between 20 and 40 years of age. The youngest of the executed was 19 years old and the oldest was 65, he said.

Those who were executed were from all walks of life, including farmers, vendors, coal miners, small shop owners, sailors, reporters, inspectors of the Taiwan Railway Administration, students, school principles and military officials, he said.

Tsao said the intelligence agency even used daughters of the victims to solicit information from Chinese spies.

Names and photos of the updated list will be gradually posted online at http://2009greenisland.blogspot.com/.

Source: Taipei Times 2009/07/06