

Aboriginal groups urge revisions

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Aboriginal rights advocates yesterday called on the Presidential Office's Indigenous Historical Justice and Transitional Justice Commission to force revisions of controversial demarcation guidelines, while condemning the Democratic Progress Party (DPP) caucus for remaining silent.

"We hope that the commission will not be a rubber stamp for the Executive Yuan and truly reflect our communities' voices by responding to our appeal," Paiwan People's Council preparation group member Ljegay Rupeljengan said at a news conference.

Several Aboriginal rights groups condemned the DPP and the People First Party caucuses for refusing to take an official stance on the revision of the guidelines.

In response to requests from advocates, the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and New Power Party (NPP) caucuses called for the guidelines to be revised to remove restrictive language allowing only for the inclusion of public land and requested amendments to allow Aboriginal communities to demarcate their land without the approval of local governments, the groups said.

"We view a refusal to respond as being the same as saying no," said Taiwan Indigenous Peoples' Policies Association president Oto Micyang, an Amis.

The demarcation guidelines have been controversial since they were announced in February, and the legislative review process stalled after the Internal Administration Committee referred them to legislature-wide cross-caucus negotiations this month.

"This is not just about private land, because nearby public land would also be affected. Under public land release regulations, companies can apply for public land to be made private if related development plans win approval," said Center for Indigenous Traditional Territory Land Policy Promotion executive secretary Pasang Tali, an Atayal, adding that there was a danger that the DPP only plans to pay lip service to Aboriginal causes without granting substantive rights.

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Advocates maintain hope that President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) — who chairs the commission — will force changes to the guidelines drafted under the direction of the Executive Yuan at a commission meeting tomorrow, he said.

“We will evaluate where we stand after the meeting and then decide our next steps,” he said, adding that advocates have been encouraging Aboriginal communities to begin demarcating their traditional areas without first winning government approval, with nine having taken action.

“It is not enough for Tsai to apologize to Aborigines. What is crucial is whether the massive government bureaucracy takes proactive measures to restore Aboriginal rights, land and dignity based on her apology,” said NPP Legislator Kawlo Iyun Pacidal, an Amis.

“If there is nothing, then the apology would look extremely cheap,” she added.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2017/06/29](#)