

## Aboriginal activist denies claim petition was rejected

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Pingpu Aboriginal activist Jason Pan (潘世偉) yesterday denied a statement by the Council of Indigenous Peoples (CIP) that the UN has rejected a petition he filed to sue the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) government for not recognizing Pingpu Aborigines' Aboriginal status.

Pan, director of the Taiwan Association for Rights Advancements for Pingpu Plains Aborigines, made the remarks at a press conference in Taipei held following his recent return from UN headquarters in Geneva.

Pan said he, along with Siraya Culture Association chairwoman Wan Shu-chuan (萬淑娟), attended the UN Experts Mechanism Session on the Rights of Indigenous Populations, which took place from July 12 until Friday last week.

During the session, Pan said he gave a five-minute briefing on the situation of Taiwan's Pingpu Aborigines and suggested that the session send people to Taiwan to learn more about the Pingpu Aborigines.

He added that he had met with James Anaya, the UN's special rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples.

"Anaya accepted the petition and we met several times during the meeting in Geneva," Pan said. "What proof does the CIP have to claim that my petition was rejected?"

Pan said that while Anaya has expressed sympathy and understanding, he did not specify when he might dispatch people to Taiwan for further investigation.

The Pingpu used to live in the plains areas of Taiwan.

They were recognized as Aborigines until the 1950s, when they failed to register their ethnic status with local governments and in recent decades they have been struggling to regain the status.

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