

Tsai vows to name 228 Incident perpetrators

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People place lilies in front of the 228 Massacre Monument yesterday after a ceremony to mark the 71st anniversary of the 228 Incident at Taipei's 228 Memorial Park.

Photo: Chang Chia-ming, Taipei Times

On the 71st anniversary of the 228 Incident, President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) yesterday pledged to ascertain responsibility for the 228 Massacre, as she called for reconciliation and promised increased efforts to uncover and make public more information about the massacre and past authoritarian injustices.

Yesterday was the first observed anniversary of the Incident following the passage of the Act on Promoting Transitional Justice (促進轉型正義法) on Dec. 5 last year, a major step toward coming to terms with Taiwan's tragic past, Tsai said.

The passage necessitates the establishment of a committee on promoting transitional justice, which would be responsible for collecting and making public political archives, removing authoritarian symbols and redressing judicial injustices.

Tsai said she would ask the committee to write a report on transitional justice with a special chapter dedicated to the massacre, which should reveal the truth and name those who were behind the violence following the Incident, which led to the White Terror era.

"The report should be a systematic examination of the persecution of the authoritarian era and be accompanied with recommendations. I hope Taiwan, through transitional justice, can become a freer and more democratic nation with better human rights protections," Tsai said.

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Discoveries about the massacre are still being made, as in the past year, the National Archives Administration, Academia Sinica and the 228 Memorial Foundation have identified more than 1,000 possible victims of the White Terror era through government archives, Tsai said.

The South Korean blockbuster *Taxi Driver* is a cinematic reflection of that nation's authoritarian past, and the Ministry of Culture is encouraging more creative projects about Taiwan's transitional justice to make its history known to the world, she said.

"Suffering does not end by pretending it is not there. Only by facing it do we have a chance to start again. That is why Taiwan has to achieve transitional justice," she said.

"I hope, when it comes to the 'Taiwan miracle,' that the world will not only recognize the nation's economic development and democratization, but also our successes in transitional justice," Tsai added.

Meanwhile, Premier William Lai (賴清德) said that the Cabinet would immediately nominate the members for the committee to be approved by the legislature, while providing the committee with sufficient authorization and funding to uncover more truths about the Incident.

Lai's promise was made in response to the comments of Lin Li-tsai (林麗姿), a 228 Memorial Foundation director and relative of a victim of the Incident.

Lin said the government failed to identify Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) as the main culprit of the Incident and limited the functions of the foundation due to insufficient government authorization.

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