

Calls for independent justice committee

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People lay flowers yesterday during a memorial service for victims of the 228 Massacre at the National 228 Memorial Museum in Taipei. The service was organized by Taiwan 228 Incident Care Association and the Memorial Foundation of 228.

Photo: Chien Jung-fong, Taipei Times

Taiwan 228 Incident Care Association director-general Pan Hsin-hsing (潘欣興) yesterday called for the establishment of a privately run transitional justice promotion committee to monitor the state-run nine-member transitional justice promotion committee, which could begin operations this month.

Most 228 Incident victims' families believe that transitional justice should be comprised of three stages: Uncovering the truth, punishing perpetrators and promoting reconciliation, Pan said at a 228 Incident memorial service hosted by the association and the 228 Memorial Foundation at the National 228 Memorial Museum in Taipei.

Pan proposed establishing a committee run by the private sector with the aim of monitoring its public-sector counterpart without intervening in its work.

"I am especially concerned about perpetrators being able to negotiate punishments. It is against 'procedural justice' if perpetrators go unpunished," he said. "To give such favors is to take advantage of others and is a form of injustice."

Hsu Shih-hsiung (許士雄), a family member of a 228 Incident victim, said that punishment should not only be imposed on those "in the public view," but also on every member of the military police, secret agents and soldiers who plundered private property and murdered people during the White Terror era.

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Punishments should deal with symbols of injustice rather than arresting and punishing perpetrators of the Incident, Pan said.

“Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall is clearly an injustice. So much money went into the construction of that temple so that Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) could be a fake deity,” he said.

While Pan said that he does not personally know transitional justice promotion committee chairman-designate and former Control Yuan member Huang Huang-hsiung (黃煌雄), there has been “mounting criticism” of him, which concerns many family members of the massacre victims.

President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) might have overlooked the potential shortcomings of Huang when she made the appointment, Pan said, adding that he would rather believe that the president made a “wise” choice.

“After all, she is on our side as she is not a president who turns to China all day, every day,” he added.

The foundation is to compile a comprehensive report on how transitional justice can be upheld in the context of the massacre, which would officially mark the beginning of the quest for transitional justice, foundation chairman Hsueh Hua-yuan (許雪姬) said.

The research methodology adopted for the report would help establish facts about the Incident and determine accountability, Hsueh said, adding that the report “would not disappoint.”

Under the Act on Promoting Transitional Justice (促進轉型正義法), the Executive Yuan is to establish a nine-member committee to carry out tasks related to transitional justice.

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Premier William Lai (賴清德) has so far nominated six members.

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