

## White Terror database released

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Transitional Justice Commission Chairwoman Yang Tsui uses a notebook computer to browse the Taiwan Transitional Justice Database at its official launch in Taipei yesterday.

**Photo: CNA**

Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) presided over 3,195 military court cases during the White Terror era, the most on record, the Transitional Justice Commission said yesterday as the Taiwan Transitional Justice Database went online.

The database has records and photographs of victims of political persecution during the White Terror era, as well as the names and ranks of perpetrators, in the hope of enlightening the public about how such trials were conducted, the commission said.

It allows analysis using certain subsets of data, such as ethnicity, gender, place of residence and charge, it said.

Then-chief of general staff Chou Chih-jou (周至柔) presided over 2,506 cases, while then-navy commander Kuei Yung-ching (桂永清) was in charge of 1,241 cases, the database shows.

As head of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) government, Chiang had the ultimate say on the rulings and he repealed them in 266 cases, the commission said, adding that the other presiding officers ultimately bowed to Chiang's will.

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The database shows that both Taiwanese and Mainlanders — those who fled to Taiwan from China with the KMT in 1949 — were victims during the White Terror era, with Taiwanese accounting for 55 percent of cases and Mainlanders 44 percent.

The main priority of the commission was to identify victims, how the victims were oppressed and who the oppressors were, commission spokeswoman Yeh Hung-ling (葉 Hung-ling) said.

The database would allow the public to have a better understanding of the cases and help further academic study, as well as providing names of individuals and their actions during the trials, Yeh said.

Due to time and funding constraints, the database does not include information on the arrest and interrogation of victims, or how the ruling was carried out, commission Chairwoman Yang Tsui (楊 Tsui) said.

Such information — such as whether torture was used during interrogation and victims were harassed after their release — would form the basis of further investigation and research, Yang said.

The database would allow the public to learn about what happened during the trials, National Human Rights Museum director Chen Chun-hung (陳 Chun-hung) said, adding that it could help provide the answer to the saying: “There are tens of thousands of political victims, yet there are no oppressors.”

“The establishment of the database is only the first step, and we hope that data on agents of the state and efforts to monitor the movements of the public will also be made public to catalogue historical facts,” Chen said.

The database only includes information on cases taken to court and does not include details of other victims, such as artist Chen Cheng-po (陳 Cheng-po) and lawyer Tang Te-chang (唐 Te-chang), who were executed without trial, the commission said.

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The 228 Incident refers to an uprising that began on Feb. 27, 1947, and was violently suppressed by the KMT government starting the next day.

Estimates of the number of deaths vary between 10,000 and 30,000 or more.

It marked the beginning of the White Terror era.

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