

More than 200 march in Taipei in memory of 228

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Participants hold a banner and signs at a march in Taipei yesterday to commemorate the 228 Incident.

Photo: Peter Lo, Taipei Times

More than 200 people yesterday marched in Taipei ahead of the 74th anniversary of the 228 Incident.

The incident refers to a crackdown by the then-Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) regime against anti-government protests that began on Feb. 28, 1947, when security personnel at the Governor-General's Office in Taipei — now the site of the Executive Yuan building — opened fire on civilian demonstrators who were demanding the arrest of those responsible for the killing of a bystander in an incident the previous day.

The bystander was part of a crowd that had gathered outside Taipei's Tianma Tea House (天馬茶館) on Nanjing W Road to challenge Tobacco Monopoly Bureau officials after one of them struck Lin Chiang-mai (林江май), a woman selling cigarettes illegally.

The incident was followed by the imposition of martial law, which lasted from May 19, 1949, to July 15, 1987, during which political dissidents were suppressed and many were killed.

Yesterday's rally was the fifth in a series of annual demonstrations first organized in 2017 by the Tsai Jui-yueh Dance Research Institute and the Nylon Cheng Liberty Foundation and Memorial Museum.

The demonstrations are aimed at reminding the government of its "historical duty," organizers said.

This year's event was led by the Provisional Office of the Formosa Youth Council and the

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National Taiwan University Written Taiwanese Society, with “Burying Authoritarianism” and “Making Formosa” the central themes, they said.

Dozens of groups, including the Taiwan Association for Human Rights, Covenants Watch and the 228 Memorial Foundation, were represented at the march, they added.

The marchers, most of whom were dressed in black, gathered outside Rixin Elementary School in Datong District (大同) at about 1:30pm, before starting their march after 2pm.

They walked past the Tianma Tea House, the Taipei branch of the Tobacco Monopoly Bureau and the former site of the Taiwan Broadcasting Station, before stopping at the Executive Yuan.

The purpose of “remembering the past is to move toward a better future,” Nylon Cheng Liberty Foundation and Memorial Museum director Cheng Chu-mei (鄭淑美) said before the march began.

She urged people to think about the kind of country they wanted, adding: “We should continue to speak while we still can.”

The names of people who died during the 228 Incident were also read aloud during the march.

Pointing out that yesterday’s demonstration coincided with International Mother Language Day, National Taiwan University Written Taiwanese Society president Lim Jiu Sin (林久辛) said that in addition to lives, language and culture were also taken.

“I hope that everyone can get our mother language back together,” she said in Hoklo (commonly known as Taiwanese).

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