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**民主進步黨**  
Democratic Progressive Party, Taiwan

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# President Tsai & VP Lai attend the 228 Incident Ceremony

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President Tsai Ing-wen, left, poses with family members of 228 Incident victims after awarding them with “certificates of restored reputation” at a ceremony commemorating the 77th anniversary of the Incident in Chiayi County yesterday.  
Photo: Tsai Tsung-hsun, Taipei Times

2024/2/28

**President Tsai's remarks in Chiayi are as follows:**

The 228 Incident sparked the Taiwanese people's desire for democracy and freedom. However, authoritarian and oppressive rule suppressed the growth of the seeds of democracy, plunging Taiwan into the White Terror period.

This difficult past is a scar in Taiwan's history. To heal the scar, we must understand the cause of the injury. Only by facing the truth honestly and listening to each other can we stitch up the wounds, achieve true reconciliation, and ensure that the history of the past no longer divides Taiwan. As a result, the Taiwanese people can better protect democracy together and move forward.

Over the past eight years, we have systematically promoted the project of transitional justice. In terms of legal foundation, we first amended five laws, including “the Act Governing the Settlement of Ill-gotten Properties by Political Parties”, “the Act on Promoting Transitional Justice”, “the Organization Act of the National Human Rights Museum”, “Political Archives Act”, and “the Act for the Restoration of Victim's Rights Infringed by Illegal Acts of the State During the Period of Authoritarian Rule”, laying the groundwork for the transitional justice project.

We also established corresponding specialized organizations or mechanisms as the engine of the transitional justice project. After the completion of the Transitional Justice Commission's phased tasks, the Executive Yuan coordinated six permanent ministries to continue promoting the work of transitional justice.

On this basis, the government completed four truth investigation reports, restoring historical truths; it also legislated the handling of political archives and improper party assets. The improper party assets returned to the state were used to set up a special fund for public welfare and related transitional justice work.

We have also implemented the restoration of honor and compensation for

the victims. The Rights Restoration Foundation has accepted nearly 2,000 compensation claims in just over a year and last year returned for the first time properties confiscated from victims during the authoritarian period due to state illegality; in total, more than NT\$4 billion in compensation has been approved.

Transitional justice is not aimed at a specific political party but a democratic government must take responsibility for and repair the harm caused by past authoritarian state illegal acts. Only by honestly facing Taiwan's past can Taiwan's democratic mechanisms be further deepened and evolve.

Furthermore, after years of effort, the 228 Foundation has identified over 4,000 "potential victims" in addition to the 2,340 confirmed compensation victims.

Later, I will also represent the government in awarding certificates of honor restoration to the families of the victims. Among them, two families' ancestors were originally listed as "potential victims," but the opening of archival historical materials has reconfirmed the facts of their suffering. This shows us that the government can do more in the pursuit of historical truth.

Therefore, the government also promoted the amendment of the "Political Archives Act" last year, which received bipartisan support and takes effect today. Political archives are an important piece of the puzzle of historical truth, and I ask the national security team to declassify and publicly release more political archives with an open attitude.

These transitional justice projects cover truth, justice, redress, remembrance, and, more importantly, the assurance of non-recurrence, which are also the five pillars of transitional justice recognized internationally.

We also see that all sectors of Taiwanese society contribute to transitional justice in their own ways, such as the documentary "Searching for Tang Te-chang (湯德章)" about the 228 victims, which will be released next month, and the annual Kiōng-Seng (共生) Music Festival, which has been held for 12 sessions.

I want to thank all the civil groups and young partners who have long worked for transitional justice. Your efforts are the kindling for Taiwan's democratic torch, making Taiwan's democratic development more and

more vibrant.

I also want to thank the Executive Yuan, the Transitional Justice Commission, the Ill-gotten Party Assets Settlement Committee, and various ministries and civil groups for working together to dust off the history of the 228 Incident and the White Terror. But I know that these efforts are insignificant compared to the oppression suffered by the victims and their families.

There are no shortcuts to transitional justice, and the scars of memory will not easily fade. Our generation must take concrete actions to find a way to coexist peacefully with history and build a more open society.

The three points raised by Mr. Jiang Rongsen (江榮森, of a victim family) have also been discussed with the Executive Yuan. In fact, these three points are currently being actively addressed by the Executive Yuan, and I believe that after the Executive Yuan has dealt with them, they will explain them to everyone. These matters are the government's work, and we will continue to work hard.

Facing the past, we must not forget, nor should we be afraid to remember; facing the future, we must continue to deepen dialogue and pursue a sustainable democratic community. Thank you, everyone.

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### **Vice President Lai's three points in Tainan are as follows (Excerpt):**

In the future, I will continue to promote three projects.

First, I will firmly unite the people of the nation and protect Taiwan's security, promoting democracy, peace, and prosperity, and never allow the tragic events of the 228 Incident to happen again. Let us ensure that all Taiwanese live safely, peacefully, and comfortably on this land.

Second, I will continuously reflect on and review the 228 Incident to let more people understand the nature of the event, avoid misunderstandings in society, and thereby carry out national reconstruction and social transformation projects. This will lead to societal reconciliation and coexistence, making society more harmonious, the country more united and powerful, more inclusive of diversity, and also making the country more normal and dignified.

Third, I will continue to redress the illegal acts committed by the state in the past, while also expanding care for the victims and their families. The government will disclose all the results of the truth investigations to society so that Taiwan can truly unite. I also hope that everyone will unite, to jointly strive for a better future for Taiwan.

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