

Riot victims still suffering one year after the riots

Only three out of 10 businesses have reopened

By **Mindy Cho**
Korea Times

A recent survey shows that approximately 75 percent of the Korean American victims of last April's riots have not fully recovered from their losses. Many are showing signs of post-traumatic stress disorder and domestic violence is on the rise.

The survey, released by the Korean American Inter-Agency Council, was made public during a press conference last Monday at the Korean Youth and Community Center (KYCC) headquarters in Los Angeles.

According to the survey, only three out of 10 have re-opened their businesses.

The council, which was formed four months after the riots, is a coalition of nine community organizations - the Korean American Coalition (KAC), the Korean American Food and Shelter Service (KAFSS), the UCLA Korean American United Students for Service and Education (KAUSES), the Korean Family Counseling and Legal Advice Center, the Korean Health Education, Information and Referral (KHEIR), Korean Immigrant Workers' Advocates (KIWA), KYCC and the Koryo Health Foundation.

The American

institutions responsible for providing aid to the victims did not do an adequate job and this study is a reminder that the job cannot be forgotten, said Bong Hwan Kim, executive director of KYCC in reference to government-backed employment programs which could not benefit Korean Americans victims because of the language barrier.

"At this time, there is a fundamental problem of communication - we don't fully understand all the legal and social ramifications of our situation," said victim Yeoung S. Jyoo through his interpreter. "Our lives have fallen apart through no fault of our own and the government has not helped much in getting us back on our feet."

Jyoo, who had worked as an assistant manager at a Korean-

owned market near Pico and Crenshaw boulevards with 25 other workers, claim that making house payments poses the biggest problem for himself and his family.

In addition to finding adequate employment, the study also revealed that more than half of the small business owners were uninsured at the time of the riots. Many more were insured by unlicensed offshore companies which failed to pay for the losses.

When asked how he felt about the movie "Falling Down," which is currently number one on the nationwide box office hit list, Kim answered that he was very disappointed that all Koreans were being passed off as rude shop owners. However he also added

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From left: **Laura Jeon** of KHEIR, **Bong Hwan Kim** of KYCC, **Jonathan Kim** and **Yeoung S. Jyoo**, a riot victim at the KAIAC press conference.

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that since he himself had not watched the movie, he could not say more on the movie's portrayal of Korean Americans.

"Life has become cheap in the inner cities and it's very disturbing that any

movies would perpetuate racial tensions," he added.

As a remedy, the council recommended that the California Congress move quickly in making disaster provisions in the property tax law to prevent many victims from becoming homeless after the April 10 Property Tax deadline, as well as the development of disaster relief provisions by other governmental programs.