

Riot victims continue City Hall demonstrations

Protesters hurt by latest attack

By Kay Hwangbo
Korea Times

First, harassment and tauntings greeted them. Then bottles and tacks were thrown at them from the upper level of City Hall.

Seven Korean American demonstrators—including women and children—suffered minor injuries in the latest incident on July 7, the 17th day they have marched at City Hall to draw officials' attention to their plight.

"Objects were allegedly thrown from City Hall onto demonstrators on the forecourt area" facing Spring Street, said City Hall security services director Hector Hernandez.

Five women, one man and a 3-year-old boy received scratches from the incident, Hernandez said a preliminary police report showed.

Hernandez said he had seen one woman with two half-inch scratches on her left cheek and a small boy with a scratch on top of his head.

Police classified the incident as an assault with a deadly weapon because a glass bottle thrown from a high elevation could cause death or serious injury, LAPD Sgt. Charles Mealey said.

One of the outraged demonstrators, Sang Ok Hong, whose appliance repair shop was looted during the riots, said, "This is very terrible."

Hong said the attack started at about 12:30 p.m., when a box of tacks hit the ground and burst, propelling tacks



Mayor Tom Bradley meets with post-riot demonstrators on the steps of City Hall on July 7.

everywhere. One struck the toddler, Hong said, and people began shouting. Cigarettes fell, then a non-glass bottle of black ink.

A glass bottle of red ink crashed on the ground, splattering several people's clothing. Shards of glass cut one woman's cheek and a man's hand, Hong said.

Other projectiles included bottles of erasing fluid and juice, and paper airplanes scrawled with derogatory messages, other demonstrators said.

"I feel racial tension," said Hwi Nam Yu about the incident.

Hong said she saw at least one of the persons responsible for the attack. She described a Black man of about 19 or 20,

with short hair and a "small, round face." Other people told Hong they saw a woman, leading Hong to believe that more than one person took part in the harassment.

Security guards searched the west side of all floors from the fourth to the 19th story, but did not find any suspects,

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Hernandez said. On the afternoon of July 7, Mayor Tom Bradley spoke to the crowd to express "apologies on behalf of all of us at City Hall," according to the Los Angeles Times.

The following day, according to Hernandez, Bradley sent a letter to all department and division heads entitled "Despicable Acts Against Demonstrators from Koreatown," requesting that all western windows from the fourth floor to the tower be closed during the lunchtime demonstrations.

"I locked those windows with a chain and a lock," Hernandez said. "We're concerned about the safety of the person or persons below. If someone throws something from 17 floors, it can be very serious."

The Los Angeles Times quoted some City Hall employees complaining about the noise created by the several hundred demonstrators, who often bang drums. If the noise disturbs the staffers, "they should tell the council people or the mayor," Yu said.

The victims were: Sylvia Park, 40; Andrew Yu, 3; Soon Mee Oh, 54; Chong Lee, 65; Son Jae Lvin, 55; and two women identified only by their last names, Do, 48, and Kwon, 43.

The harassment continued the day after the incident. A young "Middle Eastern" man taunted the demonstrators, and ended up in a fistfight with a Korean



American man, Hong said. Later that day, she said, a White man was arrested by police after he kicked an Asian American video cameraman in the back.

"The situation is deteriorating," said Marcia Choo, director of the Asian Pacific American Dispute Resolution Center. "The demonstrators are angry because they're frustrated, and there are people heckling them. People are going by yelling things at them."

Richard Fruto contributed to this story.