

《韩国家长希望破灭 现在只希望收尸》

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Twenty parents of missing high school students gathered behind a television truck Sunday afternoon and talked about a subject that, for days, they hadn't been willing to broach.

"Realistically," one parent told the group, "we need to acknowledge that we have no hope of finding our children alive."

Nobody disagreed.

Instead, they discussed the logistics of recovery, of finding a way to pull their teenage children from the water as quickly as possible. That, they agreed, should be the new focus of a government search unfolding about 10 miles off the coast.

The parents took turns talking. There were bags under their eyes. Their voices never rose. A few puffed cigarettes. They'd been asked by the South Korean coast guard to offer opinions about the next stage of the search, and here they discussed in detail ways to lift the submerged ferry out of the Yellow Sea, if only as a way to end an impossibly bleak wait.

"People have lost hope very quickly," Yoo Kyeong-geun, the father of an 11th-grader on the ferry, said after the meeting. "Until yesterday, nobody could even talk about dragging the ship out of the water" — a jarring step that would endanger any survivors—"but now a lot of people say it. It's just so we can see our kids' faces one last time before their bodies become more damaged underwater."

After the ferry with 476 people aboard capsized Wednesday, relatives who rushed to this rural port town — a staging area for the recovery effort — were frantic, so furious about the pace of the rescue operation that they doused the prime minister with water. By Sunday, those relatives had grown hushed, and at Jindo's port, bodies were brought to shore in twos and threes.

The Sewol had been sailing from Incheon to Jeju when it tilted and sank off the southwestern coast of the Korean Peninsula. So far, 174 passengers have been rescued — all in the first few hours of the disaster. South Korean officials on Sunday released an extended transcript of communication between the stricken vessel and maritime operators, shedding light on some of the confusion aboard before the ship lost contact.

Within 19 minutes of placing a distress call, a Sewol crew member said three times, when asked about passengers aboard, that it was difficult to move around the dramatically tilted vessel.

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