

## **Further Explanation on Mainland China's Decision to Cancel Its Tribute Delegation's Visit to Taiwan for the "Fo Guang Shan Memorial Ceremony for Master Hsing Yun"**

MAC Press Release No. 006

The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) issued the following response to a statement made on February 11, 2023, by a spokesperson of mainland China's Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO), claiming that "due to the obstruction from the Democratic Progressive Party authorities, a mainland Chinese delegation meant to pay tribute to Master Hsing Yun cannot visit Taiwan." The MAC stated in response that on the evening of February 10, it received words from Fo Guang Shan about mainland China's decision. Previously, a mainland Chinese delegation with officials and members of mainland China's TAO, United Front Work Department, and Buddhist Association of China, planned to visit Taiwan for the "Memorial Ceremony for Master Hsing Yun" at Fo Guang Shan scheduled to be held on February 13. However, since some members of the delegation were denied entry for their serving status in the government, mainland China decided to cancel the trip to Taiwan for all delegation members under the principle that the delegation should "enter and exit as a group." The mainland Chinese authorities also claimed that "the responsibility for obstructing the visit to Taiwan lies entirely with the involvement of political factors by relevant parties in Taiwan" in an attempt to shift the blame to our government.

The MAC stressed that the government attaches great importance to the "Memorial Ceremony for Master Hsing Yun" that is to be held by Fo Guang Shan. It welcomes relevant mainland Chinese individuals to Taiwan to participate in the memorial ceremony. It has also actively assisted with the utmost goodwill in the issuance of entry permits for 120 mainland Chinese residents, including Master Hsing Yun's relatives and friends in mainland China and Hong Kong, delegations from Buddhist temples, followers, and religious figures. As for the 12 serving

officials from mainland China's TAO and United Front Work Department, given that their past visits to Taiwan had sparked targeted protests, the MAC hoped that the TAO would reach out in advance through the existing cross-Strait liaison mechanism so it can provide assistance to facilitate their smooth visit to Taiwan. This will be instrumental in avoiding related controversies or disruption and ensuring that the memorial ceremony for Master Hsing Yun can be conducted solemnly and successfully.

The MAC emphasized that when it received the application from Fo Guang Shan, there was no indication that the 38 applicants (including 12 officials) were going to visit Taiwan as a "tribute delegation" or to "enter and exit as a group." The MAC hopes that relevant mainland Chinese individuals can make it to Taiwan as scheduled for the ceremony and join the people of Taiwan in remembering the lifelong virtue and legacy of Master Hsing Yun.

The MAC emphasized that it is the government's established policy to promote healthy and orderly cross-Strait exchanges in the post-pandemic era. We call on mainland China to cease its political manipulation and treat the cross-Strait communication and liaison mechanism with a pragmatic and respectful mindset so the two sides can facilitate the building of goodwill and benign interaction across the Taiwan Strait.