

**The CCP Persistently Condones Illegal Fishing by the "Three-Noes" Vessels. Taiwan will Continue Responding with Strict, Firm, and Consistent Law Enforcement. The MAC Deeply Regrets the Baseless Accusations by the TAO in Disregard of the Efforts by All Parties to Investigate the Cause and Handle the Follow-up Matters of the Incident**

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The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) stated today (February 18, 2024) that neither side of the Taiwan Strait is subordinate to the other. Our government upholds a consistent policy in handling cross-Strait affairs in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of China, the Act Governing Relations between the People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area (hereinafter the "Cross-Strait Act"), and other relevant laws and regulations. The Cross-Strait Act stipulates that mainland Chinese vessels are not allowed to enter Taiwan's restricted and prohibited waters without permission. To protect the rights of fishermen, Taiwan's competent authorities expel or detain trespassing vessels in accordance with the law. This approach has been followed in the past, is the current practice, and will remain unchanged in the future.

The MAC explained that the restricted and prohibited waters in the area surrounding Kinmen were designated in accordance with the Cross-Strait Act by the Ministry of National Defense as early as October 7, 1992, with several revisions since then duly announced. This has served as a basis for relevant maritime law enforcement and rescue operations by authorities on both sides of the Taiwan Strait—a historical fact and the current situation that should not be denied. For a long time, Taiwan's competent authorities have responded to most cases of trespassing mainland Chinese vessels by expelling them. The authorities' law enforcement has been consistent and appropriate, and

accusations by the Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) of "violent expulsion" or "disregard for the safety of the lives and property of mainland Chinese fishermen" are unfounded. The unfortunate incident occurred due to continuous intrusions by "three noes" vessels (no vessel name, no ship certificate, and no registered home port) with crews refusing to cooperate and instead resorting to risky evasive maneuvers. No one wishes to see such incidents happen, and the MAC deeply regrets the TAO making groundless accusations, while ignoring the efforts of relevant units on both sides to actively investigate the causes and handle follow-up matters.

The MAC stated that the cause of this incident is under full investigation by prosecutors in line with the law and the principles of fairness and openness, and the results will be announced shortly. Regarding the families of the unfortunate victims, the government has entrusted the Straits Exchange Foundation to handle follow-up affairs based on their existing experience of providing services to people on both sides. The MAC urges cooperation between the two sides to help promptly clarify the truth in this matter and seek a way forward that benefits the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.