

China rescinds invite to patriotic children's choir

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Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen sings national song with the Puzangalan Children's Choir during the inauguration ceremonies in Taipei, Taiwan, on May 20, 2016.

Photo: AP

China has rescinded an invitation to the Puzangalan Children's Choir, in an apparent retaliation to its performance of the Republic of China (ROC) national anthem at President Tsai Ing-wen's (蔡英文) inaugural ceremony, sources said yesterday.

The Paiwan children's choir from Pingtung County's Majia Township (馬家), gained media attention when it sang the national anthem in traditional Paiwan vocals at Tsai's inauguration.

The choir's executive officer Tsai Yi-fang (蔡宜芳) said the group was scheduled to tour China next month and Hungary in August.

China's withdrawal of its invitation has compromised the group's plans to tour Hungary, because Beijing canceled payments for the children's airfares, resulting in an additional NT\$1.3 million (US\$40,072) in travel and related expenses, he said.

Tsai Yi-fang said the group was already short by NT\$70,000 prior to the cancelation, which was announced without notice, adding that the group is looking for ways to raise the funds.

Documentary director Chou Shih-lun (周詩倫), who is also raising funds to make a film about the group, said that although several businesses have expressed interest in buying costumes and equipment for the group, it has not found a sponsor for its travel expenses.

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"We thought the fame brought by the choir's national anthem performance would help with funding, but instead of finding us new sponsors, it made the Chinese aware of us," Tsai Yi-fang said.

He said the choir will continue rehearsing for planned performances in Hungary, in spite of not having the travel funds, adding: "I am doing everything in my power to keep the children singing."

The Presidential Office last night said that President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) was concerned about the issue, and would donate NT\$500,000 to the choir from the royalties of a book published in October last year.

Tsai hopes other donors follow suit, the office added.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2016/06/16](#)