

Tzu Chi Helps Families of Those on Missing Malaysian Airline Flight

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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Within hours of the news that a Malaysian Airlines plane had disappeared, Tzu Chi volunteers in Kuala Lumpur and Beijing prepared to provide help and comfort to family members of those on board. They are giving a 24-hour service in the two capitals.

The Boeing 777 left the Malaysian capital in the early hours of Saturday morning (March 8), carrying 227 passengers and 12 crew, and vanished about an hour into a flight to Beijing. As of Tuesday morning Malaysian time, dozens of ships and aircraft from 10 countries were scouring the seas around Malaysia and south of Vietnam in an effort to find traces of the aircraft. Their families have since Saturday gathered near the airports of the two capitals, in an anxious wait for news. About two thirds of the passengers and crew were Chinese; the other nationalities included 38 Malaysians, seven Indonesians, six Australians, five Indians, four French and three Americans.

Thirty-nine volunteers are at the hotel in Kuala Lumpur close to the airport. Su Qi-feng, deputy executive director of the Malaysia branch, said: “we are standing together with the families, to enable them to obtain a new passport from the immigration hall. From yesterday, we started a 24-hour telephone service, which is available even at two and three in the morning, to answer questions from family members about the flight.”



On March 8, 15 volunteers from Kuala Lumpur flew with officials of Malaysian Airlines to join their colleagues in Beijing to help comfort the families. A total of 50 volunteers from the two capitals held a meeting at 8.00 a.m. on Sunday, March 9 at the Lido Hotel in Beijing to work out what they should do; they set up four teams to provide a 24-hour service to the families. They started work that morning at the two hotels close to the two airports where the families are staying. They are providing several services – psychological comfort during the agonizing wait for news of their loved ones: assistance with passports and other documents: interpretation into Chinese, English and Bahasa Malaysia: hot tea and snacks: a telephone service open 24 hours a day: and praying with the families to give them hope and strength.

A spokesman for Malaysian Airlines said that most of their staff in Beijing were Malays who did not speak Mandarin; so they had asked Tzu Chi to assist them in communicating and comforting the families. The Malaysian media soon praised the mobilization of the Tzu Chi volunteers and said that they hope they can provide more strength and prayers.

The volunteers have knelt on the ground and listened to the family members. They feel their sorrow and see the anxiety written on the faces of the family members. Volunteer Li Wen-jie said: “actually, many of them have heard of the Tzu Chi Foundation and understand what we do. Malaysian Airlines hoped that we would come and provide comfort.” Because the culture

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and language of Malaysia and China are different, some of the family members are very agitated. The volunteers hope to provide spiritual support and bring them more strength and blessings.

Report of Da Ai News by volunteers in Kuala Lumpur and Beijing March 9, 2014