

Government reiterates duties of Returning Officers and condemns malicious acts against them

The spokesman for the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (CMAB) said today (July 27) that there are discussions in the community questioning some of the Returning Officers' requests for additional information from persons nominated for the Legislative Council General Election to verify their eligibility to be nominated as candidates in the Election.

With respect to this situation, the CMAB reiterated that in accordance with the existing electoral legislation, the Returning Officers have the power to determine whether individual candidates satisfy the relevant requirements on candidacy under the law. Prior to confirming the eligibility of the candidates, the Returning Officers may seek advice from relevant bureaux and departments, including the Department of Justice and the CMAB, etc. in light of the circumstances, and request the candidate concerned to provide additional information that he/she considers appropriate according to Electoral Affairs Commission (Electoral Procedure) (Legislative Council) Regulation so as to satisfy him/her that the person is eligible to be nominated or that nomination is valid.

Meanwhile, the CMAB noticed certain individuals in the community have been disseminating humiliating remarks on social media platforms against Returning Officers that have constituted personal attacks, and committed wanton acts of doxxing. The CMAB severely condemned these behaviours.

"The Returning Officers should not be attacked by any unreasonable and threatening remarks when executing their statutory duties in accordance with the laws. We will refer these malicious acts to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data and Police for follow-up, including proactively liaising with operators of doxxing-related platforms to request the removal of relevant web links and issuance of warnings on the platforms to netizens that doxxing may violate the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance," the spokesman said.

The spokesman reiterated that the CMAB will continue to fully support the Returning Officers to execute their duties in accordance with the laws.