

International cooperation leaves no place for corrupt fugitive officials to hide

One of China's most wanted graft fugitives Yang Xiuzhu, who had been on the run for 13 years, finally returned to China on Wednesday and turned herself in to authorities.

This was hailed as the latest example of the resolute determination and great effort of the Chinese government in its anti-corruption campaign in pursuing fugitives and recovering illicit assets, read a People's Daily editorial.

So far, 37 fugitives have been repatriated since the Chinese government released a "red notice" for the country's 100 most-wanted fugitives who used to be public servants or were involved in major corruption cases. Four of the five most-wanted fugitives have already been brought to justice.

What's more, "Operation Skynet," an anti-graft campaign launched by Chinese authorities in a bid to capture corrupt officials who have fled abroad, has captured 2,210 fugitives as of September, 363 of which used to be public servants.

Both the 5th and the 6th plenary sessions of the 18th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) listed the international manhunt as a top priority of their annual agenda, the editorial said, introducing China's efforts to bring fugitives to justice.

"All corruption cases and corrupt officials should be investigated and punished with great perseverance and zero tolerance. There should be no shelter for corrupt officials in the party!" Chinese President Xi Jinping said at the meeting commemorating the 95th anniversary of the founding of the CPC, declaring China's determination to crack down on corruption.

In order to bring these fugitives back and recover their illegal assets, Chinese authorities have carried out both international cooperation and domestic campaigns, the editorial said.

The editorial also pointed out that authorities have increased efforts in collecting information and evidence on fugitives. Diplomatic, police, judiciary and financial departments have worked well together and a coordination mechanism at the provincial level has also been established as well.

Bringing Yang to justice, according to the paper, can be attributed to effective cooperation among the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Public Security, the Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate, the Ministry of Justice, People's Bank of China and Zhejiang Province's fugitive repatriation and asset recovery office.

The editorial suggested that international fugitive repatriation and asset recovery should not only be a domestic affair, but also part of the diplomatic agenda in today's connected world.

President Xi and other Chinese leaders have made clear China's attitude towards corruption at multilateral or bilateral occasions by bringing up the importance of international cooperation when

it comes to the anti-corruption campaign, and discussing fugitive repatriation and asset recovery, the article elaborated.

Propelled by China's initiative, the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting held in 2014 in Beijing endorsed the Beijing Declaration on Fighting Corruption, the first anti-corruption declaration named after a capital city in APEC history.

The G20 High-Level Principles on Cooperation on Persons Sought for Corruption and Asset Recovery adopted at the G20 Hangzhou Summit held this September is also proof of China's anti-corruption commitment. The document put forward for the first time the principle of "zero tolerance, zero loopholes and zero barriers" when it comes to corruption.

Extensive international cooperation will leave fleeing corrupt officials no place to hide, the article said, citing as an example how cooperation between Chinese and US law enforcement teams contributed to Yang's extradition.

With help from Singapore, the Chinese authorities managed to bring Li Huabo, the second most-wanted suspect from China's "100 most-wanted economic fugitives" list, back for trial, the article added.

"These fugitives should never bet on having a safe heaven to hide themselves as the anti-corruption campaign will be a long-term fight. In addition to domestic anti-corruption efforts, international cooperation will enable it to reach every corner of the world," the paper stressed in conclusion.

(People's Daily)