

Corrupt Chinese fugitive repatriated from Zimbabwe

A retired Chinese tax official has been returned from Zimbabwe to China less than four months after he fled a corruption probe and hid in the southern African country.

It is Jiangsu Province's fastest repatriation of a corrupt fugitive, provincial anti-graft officials said.

Yang Xingfu, who retired as the deputy head of Local Taxation Bureau of Nantong City in 2015, fled to Zimbabwe last December, fearing a graft investigation.

Initial probes revealed evidence of Yang's abuse of power and acceptance of bribes in construction projects, corporate financing, and handling tax transfers since 2010 during his term of office.

The local procuratorate issued detention orders for Yang in January 2017. Learning he was in Zimbabwe, a law enforcement team was promptly assembled and dispatched, the officials said. Police in Zimbabwe held Yang and transferred him to the team in accordance with the law.

The case is still being investigated.

"The operation shows that there is no haven for corrupt officials abroad," said Yao Aishan, deputy head of the Jiangsu provincial procuratorate's anti-corruption bureau. "They won't escape punishment by the law, no matter where they flee."

Yao urged other fugitives on the run to turn themselves in to be considered for leniency.

China has stepped up efforts in international cooperation to hunt criminal fugitives. Operation "Sky Net," for example, repatriated 908 fugitives, including 122 officials, from over 70 countries or regions in 11 months last year.

Most fugitives have fled to developed countries, including Canada, the United States, and Australia, but a few have also taken refuge in Africa.