

Fugitive's ex-business partner levels fraud, bribery charges

Qu Long, a former business partner of Guo Wengui – one of China's most-wanted fugitives who is still at large in the United States – accused Guo on Wednesday during a small news conference of committing fraud and bribery that he said amounted to more than 1 billion yuan (\$150 million).

Qu said he is preparing materials and working closely with his legal team to have Guo criminally prosecuted in a Chinese court. He said he will offer solid evidence to judicial authorities in the US.

"I will take the chance of exposing his crimes to the media and the public in case other innocent people might be cheated by him, and I hope US law enforcement officers will repatriate him back to China to face trial as soon as possible," Qu said during the news conference at a Beijing hotel, which was attended by domestic and foreign media.

Qu made the accusation 50 days after being declared innocent and set free after having served six years in prison. In 2012, he said, he was framed by Guo and convicted of fraud and embezzlement, and then sentenced to 15 years in prison. He said he was tortured by Guo's accomplices in judicial departments.

Guo and Qu became business partners after Guo asked Qu in 2006 to serve as executive director of Beijing Zhengquan, one of the companies Guo controlled in Beijing. Qu said Guo had also boasted about having close relationships with high-ranking government officials.

In 2010, Qu claimed that Guo had colluded with Ma Jian, vice-minister of the Ministry of State Security, to abuse power, persecute business owners and unlawfully plunder enterprises' assets, and that huge bribes were involved. He communicated his charge to the Ministry of State Security and the top anti-graft watchdog.

Qu also claimed that Ma had acted as the protective umbrella and helped Guo illegally acquire national securities and embezzle an enormous amount of State-owned assets.

Qu said he had sent a letter to anti-graft authorities but Ma managed to intercept it. To keep Qu quiet, Guo bribed Ma to ask the police in Hebei to criminally detain and investigate Qu on made-up charges.

Ma then contacted Zhang Yue, former head of the Political and Legal Affairs Committee of Hebei, to interfere in the case, Qu alleged.

In 2015, Ma was investigated on suspicion of graft.

An investigation into Zhang Yue was launched in 2016.

In April, Qu's wife appealed to the Hebei High People's Court for a retrial, and in September the court overturned the conviction because of lack of evidence. The court also said the Hebei police had no authority to investigate the case.