

Over 4,000 officials held accountable for lax environmental efforts

China has held 4,018 officials accountable for poor environmental protection efforts during the latest round of inspections, the Ministry of Environmental Protection said Tuesday.

The central government just wrapped up its month-long third round of inspections to review local government work on environmental protection, the ministry said.

The inspections covered the seven provincial regions of Tianjin, Shanxi, Liaoning, Anhui, Fujian, Hunan and Guizhou.

Inspectors looked into more than 23,000 cases and imposed fines totaling 336 million yuan (49 million U.S. dollars), while 355 people were detained, according to the ministry.

China is fighting pollution and environmental degradation after decades of growth triggered problems such as smog and contaminated soil.