

US returns Chinese fugitive, a suspected rapist



Police officers escort a fugitive who fled to the United States in April last year. The man, who is suspected of committing rape in China, was repatriated at Beijing Capital International Airport on Thursday. [Photo/China Daily]

A fugitive on China's most-wanted list who is suspected of rape was repatriated to China from the United States on Thursday afternoon, according to the Ministry of Public Security.

A United Airlines flight carrying the suspect – surnamed Zhu – and two U.S. law enforcement officers arrived at Beijing Capital International Airport, where the officers handed him over to Chinese police.

The successful repatriation was considered “the latest achievement of law enforcement and network security cooperation between the two countries”, said a senior official at the ministry's criminal investigation department, who asked that his name not be used.

According to the ministry, both countries have tried to put aside political and legal differences to enhance communication and mutual trust in the fight against transnational crimes.

Moreover, they will improve law enforcement and security dialogues, while strengthening intelligence sharing and conducting joint investigations in some cases.

In recent years, a number of Chinese suspects, including some suspected of major crimes, have fled China to the U.S. Lack of a bilateral extradition treaty, as well as legal obstacles, have helped them avoid prosecution.

In April 2016, the Fuyang police in Anhui Province received a report accusing Zhu of rape, and the suspect fled to the U.S.

The Ministry of Public Security attached great importance to the case and set up a special investigation team to go to the U.S. to hunt down the suspect. It asked Interpol to issue a red notice, which is close to an international arrest warrant.

In January, Zhu was captured by U.S. authorities for illegally overstaying his visa, and the U.S. immediately informed the ministry. Chinese officials then shared evidence of the rape with their U.S. counterparts and requested that Zhu be sent back to China.

In May, Zhu was convicted in a U.S. court of illegal immigration and was expelled from the country.

Huang Feng, a law professor from Beijing Normal University, said Chinese fugitives will pose a serious risk to local public security, and if U.S. law enforcement officers are aware of their crimes, they won't allow foreign suspects to stay in the country.

"They will offer judicial assistance to their Chinese counterparts according to the laws in the U.S.," he said.