Nations agree to deepen cooperation on fugitives

2017-11-09

By ZHANG YAN |   
 CHINA DAILY |  
 Updated: 2017-11-09 06:57

China and the United States will strengthen cooperation on joint investigations and simplify procedures to repatriate fugitives to their home countries to face justice, a senior official from the Ministry of Public Security said.  
Both countries will enhance the exchange of information and conduct joint investigations into a number of major and individual cases, Zhu Yuxiang, deputy director of the ministry's International Cooperation Department, told China Daily.  
Moreover, high-ranking officials from both sides will smooth communication channels and promote "the adoption of simplified means to repatriate suspects" to prevent "safe havens" for fugitives from both countries, he said.   
Last month, the first round of the China-US Law Enforcement and Cybersecurity Dialogue was held in Washington, during which the countries discussed their major concerns and reached some consensus.  
The countries agreed to establish a joint working group and focus on a number of major or individual cases. In addition, they will hold meetings every month or every three months, and share information about fugitives.  
"Such agreements offer more favorable conditions to conduct deeper cooperation to apprehend fugitives and regain ill-gotten assets," Zhu said, noting that since President Donald Trump took office, the US has offered China more judicial assistance to apprehend and repatriate fugitives.  
"This year, especially, the US has simplified procedures to facilitate repatriation," he said, adding that five people have been repatriated this year, four from the US to China and one from China to the US.  
Last month, a fugitive from the US who is suspected of sexually abusing children was repatriated. He is a US citizen who arrived in Shanghai in May on a tourist visa.  
In August, a Chinese fugitive suspected of fraud valued at 380 million yuan ($57 million) was repatriated to China with the assistance of US judicial authorities after three years on the run.  
However, Zhu acknowledged that there are still some practical difficulties in returning more Chinese suspects as a result of a number of legal obstacles and complex procedures. The two sides have yet to sign a bilateral extradition treaty and a treaty to allow them to share confiscated ill-gotten assets.  
The two sides also need to create a successful model for locating, capturing and repatriating fugitives to China, and set an example for future cases, he said.  
Huang Feng, a professor of international criminal law at Beijing Normal University, said that despite stronger efforts by law enforcement agencies in both countries, the US remains a major destination for Chinese fugitives.  
"Both countries should take the opportunity to put aside political differences and deepen judicial cooperation to seek common interests," he said.  
Since Interpol issued red notices for the 100 most-wanted Chinese fugitives in April 2015, 49 people have returned from 16 countries and regions, including six from the US, according to the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection.  
Last month, Yang Xiuzhu, a high-profile fugitive, pleaded guilty to charges of corruption and bribery, and was sentenced to eight years in prison and a fine of 800,000 yuan. The 70-year-old returned to China a year ago after 13 years on the run in the US.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201711/09/WS5a0d21bea31061a738408fc8.html