

China sentences official to death for taking \$325m in bribes

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Kelly Ng



Yang Youlin exploited his roles to help others secure engineering contracts and financing, the court heard

A court in eastern China has sentenced a former city official to death for taking more than 2.2bn yuan (\$325m; £243m) in bribes over 30 years.

Yang Youlin, who served in various positions in Nanjing city from 1993 to 2023, was also convicted of embezzlement, abuse of power and money laundering, with his ill-gotten gains amounting to one of the highest in recent years.

The 69-year-old exploited his roles to help others secure engineering contracts, land transfers and financing, in exchange for money and valuables, said state media.

Yang was investigated as part of President Xi Jinping's anti-corruption crackdown which has cut through military ranks and high-level banking, among other sectors.

Yang, who spent much of his career working on economic and technological development in Nanjing, had committed offences "of an extremely serious nature" and "caused exceptionally heavy losses to the interests of the state and the people", a court in Changzhou city said on Monday.

Since coming to power, President Xi has launched waves of anti-corruption drives, which critics say have also been used as a tool to purge political rivals.

Death sentences for white collar crimes however remain rare, though they are meted out occasionally, typically if the cases involve large sums exceeding 1bn yuan.

For instance, former finance chief Lai Xiaomin was executed in 2021 for taking 1.8bn yuan in bribes over a 10-year period.

Li Jianping, a former Inner Mongolia official, was executed in 2024 for embezzling and taking bribes totaling more than 3bn yuan.

In many other cases, the courts handed out jail terms or suspended death sentences, which get commuted to life imprisonment after a specified duration.

The courts have also reduced sentences in some cases where the convicted individuals reported on other offenders.

But while Yang provided similar assistance to authorities, his offences were so "grave" that his assistance "was insufficient to warrant a more lenient punishment", the Changzhou court said.

Yang pleaded guilty and "expressed remorse in his final statement", according to state media.