

The Chinese armed forces, or rather the People's Liberation Army (PLA), continues its battle against corruption with recent reports of tough inspections against, among others, senior military officers and retirees and their families.

The action involved 18 inspection teams throughout the end of last year, and targeted clearing out illicit apartments and vehicles, overuse of office personnel, spending public funds on private travel and dining, private use of public vehicles and hosting extravagant ceremonies for weddings and funerals.

Though these achievements were commendable, official sources said, they are still far from the target of zero corruption. PLA units are continuously encouraged to conduct internal corrections and submit to regular strict inspections.

The PLA initiated the anti-graft campaign last year as a response to a call to action by President Xi Jinping to investigate and punish corrupt generals in the armed forces. Just last month, former Vice Chairman of Military Commission Xu Caihou was detained along with his wife, daughter and one of his former secretaries under suspicion of corruption, as reported by Business Standard. Xu, 70, was de facto in charge of the Armed Forces until 2012 but is now retired and suffering from pancreatic cancer. Another former high-ranking military official, Gu Junshan, former deputy logistics chief of the PLA, was also arrested for abuse of power, embezzlement, bribery and misuse of state funds. Gu was reportedly involved in arranging the sales of military land to high-end property developers in exchange for vast sums of money.

Xi Jinping rose to power in November 2012 when he was appointed to the top three posts in China – General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Chairman of the Central Military Commission and President of the People's Republic of China. Over the past year, Xi used the anti-graft campaign to strengthen his authority over the CCP and PLA and undermine his opponents in state-owned-enterprises and the petroleum industry in order to reform China's economy. Described as a veritable witch hunt for corruption, not even the members of the CCP have been spared – politburo member Bo Xilai was charged with corruption and Politburo Standing Committee member Zhou Yongkang under investigation, all under the watchful eyes of the Central Discipline Inspection Commission (CDIC), in charge of anti-graft investigation within the Party.

Actions which have reportedly led to senior officials attempting to smuggle their illegally attained wealth out of the country in effort to escape prosecution. Meanwhile, Xi Jinping continues to consolidate his power over the PLA and ensuring his popularity.