

**'I won't be an accomplice to corrupt farm organizations,' AMLO tells farmers**  
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**President accuses them of keeping 'most of the money;' farmers' groups accuse him of lying**



President López Obrador declared today that he won't be an "accomplice" to the corruption of farmers' groups, which he claims have misappropriated government funding rather than distribute it to farmers.

"Little by little they have to understand that all the support for the countryside will be delivered directly to the beneficiaries, we're not going to take a backward step. I won't be an accomplice to the corrupt," López Obrador told reporters at his morning press conference, held today in Durango.

The president said that farmers' groups received 10 billion pesos (US \$515 million) in government funding during the past three years but "instead of handing over the complete support [to farmers], they bought groceries and divvied them up."

"They kept most of the resources," López Obrador charged.

Later this morning, the general secretary of the Coduc farmers' group accused the president of lying.

Marco Antonio Ortiz said in an interview that representatives of farmers' groups went to the federal Attorney General's Office (FGR) to ask what evidence there is to show that public money has been stolen.

If there is no evidence, he said, the president should offer an apology.

"The delivery of money to farmers is proven, we have a file for all the support that was delivered to colleagues in the entire country," Ortiz said.

Álvaro López Ríos, leader of the National Union of Agricultural Workers, conceded that some money had been stolen but said that it was unfair to label all farmers' groups as corrupt.

". . . We think that it's over the top for the president to treat us all as thieves . . . when both he and we know who did it, including people who are close to him today," he said without specifying who was responsible for stealing public resources.

The union leader rejected the president's claim that the purpose of [this week's protests](#) was to demand that agricultural sector funding go to farmers' groups rather than directly to farmers.



'We're not all thieves,' said López Ríos, who accused the president of lying.

"We're not asking for them to give us the money, he's lying. What we're asking for is for spaces for dialogue to be opened in order to build consensus in relation to public policies directed at the countryside," López said.

Four farmers groups affiliated with the Authentic Front of the Countryside staged nationwide protests Wednesday and Thursday, and are continuing to protest today in some parts of the country.

In addition to calling for dialogue, the groups are demanding more resources for the agricultural sector, greater transparency in the delivery of funding and the repeal of the so-called *ley garrote*, or club law, that was [passed by the Tabasco Congress last month](#) and which sets harsh punishments for protests that block access to businesses and highways or obstruct public works projects.

Farmers yesterday blocked highways across the country, although blockades in Tabasco, Morelos, Tamaulipas, Puebla and Guerrero were lifted in the mid-to-late afternoon.

However, protests are continuing today in Mexico City and on highways between the capital and both Querétaro and Cuernavaca.

A report in the newspaper *La Razón* said that farmers were protesting this morning outside the federal Senate and the Mexican Stock Exchange, both of which are located on Reforma avenue in Mexico City. Another protest was held outside the Interior Secretariat on Bucareli avenue. Traffic on both roads was affected.

Motorists using the Mexico City-Querétaro highway reported hours-long delays due to the presence of protesting farmers, while traffic on the Mexico City-Cuernavaca highway was affected by a protest at a dangerous curve known as La Pera.

Source: [El Financiero](#) (sp), [La Razón](#) (sp)