

## López Obrador: 'Call me messianic, but I'm going to purify the country'

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No more bandits, scoundrels and crooks



Combating corruption is indispensable to purifying public life in Mexico, President López Obrador said yesterday, implying that he was unperturbed by being labeled “messianic” as a result of his crusade against it.

Speaking at a press conference at the National Palace in Mexico City, López Obrador said the previous federal government and the state oil company Pemex were “hijacked” by “bandits, gangs of scoundrels [and] crooks.”

The president reiterated that under his government, there will be zero tolerance for corruption.

“I didn’t fight [to become president] nor did people support me to get here to become a panderer to the corrupt — zero corruption and zero impunity,” López Obrador said.

“To purify the public life of the country we have to root out this ill, even if you don’t like it and you call me messianic. We have to put an end to corruption, we have to put honesty first, as a way of life and a way of government,” he said.

López Obrador told reporters that he had been informed about a contract Pemex signed in 2013 for the purchase of 700 railroad tank cars for 1.4 billion pesos (US \$73 million at today’s exchange rate) from the United States company, Ethan Gas Oil.

Pemex paid Ethan Gas Oil 400 million pesos in advance. And despite the fact that the tank cars were never delivered, the latter allegedly didn’t return the deposit.

Ethan Gas Oil told the news magazine *Proceso* today that it had tried to deliver the first 15 tank cars but Pemex “never wanted to receive” them.

The company also said that its “intention is to collaborate with this government and deliver all the cars” and that 365 million pesos it was paid “is available.”

Yesterday, López Obrador suggested that Pemex had colluded with the U.S. company on the unfulfilled contract, stating that the complaint the state oil company filed against it was so amateurish that “not even a legal intern” would prepare something of such low quality.

The CEO of Pemex at the time of the purchase was Emilio Lozoya Austin, who has been [accused of receiving bribes](#) from the Brazilian company Odebrecht in exchange for the awarding of contracts.

López Obrador stressed that the case would continue to be investigated and that any other acts of corruption would also be subjected to criminal probes in accordance with the law.

“If an official says something to me in a meeting . . . about a crime, my response is: ‘act, proceed,’ because if I don’t say that I become an accomplice,” he said.

Historian Enrique Krauze used the word messiah to describe López Obrador in a magazine article in 2006. He referred to him as “the tropical messiah.”

Source: [El Universal](#) (sp), [El Sol de México](#) (sp), [Proceso](#) (sp)