

Mexican president demands newspaper reveal who leaked letter to Spanish King

AFP in Mexico City,

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Andrés Manuel López Obrador angered after Reforma leaked letter he wrote that triggered a minor diplomatic crisis



Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico City, Mexico on Tuesday. Photograph: Carlos Tischler/REX/Shutterstock

Press freedom advocates have criticized Mexico's president for calling on a newspaper to reveal the source that leaked a controversial letter he wrote to the king of Spain, [urging him to apologize for the conquest 500 years ago](#).

The letter prompted a furious reaction in [Spain](#) and triggered a minor diplomatic crisis with the Madrid government saying it “deeply regret[ed]” the publication of the letter.

Mexico's president, [Andrés Manuel López Obrador](#), has lashed out repeatedly at the Reforma newspaper since it published the letter, calling on it to reveal its source “in the name of transparency”.

He hinted in a press conference that he suspected the Spanish government may have leaked the document itself.

“It would be interesting to know if the Spanish government leaked the letter, because the connotation would be different,” he said.

“What moral authority can a government have that leaks documents?”

Spain has said that the matter should have been confined to diplomatic channels.

It [flatly rejected López Obrador's demand for an apology](#), saying the conquest “cannot be judged in the light of contemporary considerations”.

Lopez Obrador owned up to the letter after it was made public, saying that both King Felipe VI and Pope Francis should apologize for the “massacres and oppression” committed in the name of colonizing and evangelizing the indigenous peoples of what is now [Mexico](#).

Free-press advocates criticized Lopez Obrador, an anti-establishment leftist who took office in December, for insisting the newspaper reveal its source.

“Calling on (journalists) to reveal their sources is worrying, because it can inhibit people from giving information to the press,” said the head of media rights group Article 19 in Mexico, Ana Cristina Ruelas.

“It speaks to a lack of recognition for the importance of a free press in a democratic society,” she told Reforma.

Mexico City, where Reforma is based, has a law protecting the right of journalists not to reveal their sources.

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