

Narco-banner's message to AMLO: remove forces or innocent people will die

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Gangster demands federal forces leave Guanajuato



A gang of fuel thieves is believed responsible for threatening violence if federal security forces remain in the state of Guanajuato.

A narco-banner appeared in Salamanca this morning, warning President López Obrador to remove security forces from the state or innocent people will die.

The *narcomanta* was found hanging from a bridge a few kilometers from the Antonio M. Amor refinery and was allegedly signed by José Antonio “El Marro” Yopez, the suspected leader of the gang of fuel thieves known as the Santa Rosa de Lima Cartel.

“Andrés Manuel López Obrador, I demand that you remove the navy, army and federal forces from the state. If not, I’m going to start killing innocent people so that you see that this is not a game and that in Guanajuato we don’t need them,” the banner reportedly read.

“I’ve left you a little gift in my refinery so that you see how things are going to get if you don’t release my people who have been taken . . . Face up to the consequences. Yours sincerely, El Señor Marro.”

Shortly after the narco-banner was located, a pickup truck was found near the Salamanca refinery inside which was an object thought to be an explosive device.

Federal Police and the army cordoned off the area but presidential spokesman Jesús Ramírez Cuevas said later this morning that there was no explosive in the abandoned truck.

He acknowledged that the narco-banner was “directed at the president,” adding that “it’s a banner directed at he who is carrying out the fight against fuel theft.”

Ramírez said the Attorney General’s office has opened an investigation to determine who is responsible for both the banner and the pickup.

“[It’s] a matter that has to do with the [anti-fuel theft] operations . . . and also the dispute that there is between different cartels,” he said.

The federal government has deployed the military and Federal Police to protect petroleum infrastructure as part of the strategy to combat fuel theft, a crime that [costs the state oil company billions of pesos a year](#).

Two days ago, residents of Villagrán, a municipality just east of Salamanca, responded to an anti-fuel theft operation by [setting up fiery blockades](#) to repel security forces.

Authorities believe that Yopez’s Santa Rosa de Lima Cartel was behind the hostile response.

Guanajuato has one of the highest incidences of fuel theft in Mexico and last year was [the country’s most violent state](#), with 3,290 homicides.

Source: [El Universal](#) (sp), [El Economista](#) (sp), [Radio Fórmula](#) (sp)