

Three Pemex officials who controlled pipelines arrested for petroleum theft

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Despite pressure drop in pipeline, they let the fuel continue flowing



Three Pemex officials who were allegedly complicit in the theft of petroleum have been dismissed and will face criminal charges, the acting attorney general said today.

“The federal Attorney General’s office (PGR) has initiated criminal proceedings against three individuals whose names we cannot release so as not to create a problem with due process,” Alejandro Gertz Manero said.

Speaking at President López Obrador’s morning press conference, Gertz explained that new Pemex management were aware that some company employees were complicit with criminals in pipeline petroleum theft and moved promptly to combat the problem.

“They immediately got to work in Pemex Logistics . . . and established that . . . those who managed the control of the pipelines were allowing the theft to take place,” he said.

New Pemex CEO Octavio Romero said the officials had been removed from their positions on December 20 and offered a graph that showed the quantity of stolen

fuel had subsequently decreased from 43,000 barrels on December 21 to 19,000 barrels on Christmas Day.

López Obrador offered further details about the means with which authorities detected the complicity of the officials.

“There is a system . . . [that provides information about] the pressure of the pipelines and during the whole day they didn’t shut off the valves, which is what they should have done . . . There was a great loss of fuel in one section of pipeline,” he said.

“In another incident, a carrier who went in and out of a refinery was arrested. There is other evidence we can’t announce because the investigations are under way,” López Obrador added.

The president called on Pemex employees to help stamp out corruption, charging that there is a “large-scale fuel theft and distribution scheme” operating within the state oil company.

“It’s fuel theft but from above . . . There is a theory that of all theft, only 20% is through the tapping of pipelines – which is a kind of front [for what’s really happening] – that most [fuel theft] is related to a plan that operates with the complicity of authorities and with a distribution network. So, there are *huachicoleros* [fuel thieves] at the bottom and *huachicoleros* at the top,” López Obrador said.

Pemex’s most recent report on fuel theft showed that illegal taps on pipelines [increased by 45% in the first 10 months](#) of 2018.

Former Pemex CEO Carlos Treviño said in October that the crime was expected to cost the state oil company 35 billion pesos (US \$1.75 billion) this year.

Source: [Milenio](#) (sp)