



Mexican president lashes out at EU 'lies' over his media-bashing rhetoric

Description

MEXICO: Mexico's government has lashed out at the "corruption, lies and hypocrisy" of the European parliament after its members urged its populist president, [Andrés Manuel López Obrador](#), to rein in his media-bashing rhetoric after the murders of at least six Mexican journalists.

Mexico's press corps has been plunged into mourning this year by [a succession of killings targeting media workers](#) in what was already one of the world's most dangerous countries for journalists.

On Thursday more than 600 MEPs overwhelmingly backed a [resolution](#) condemning the murders and voicing concern over López Obrador's use of populist rhetoric "to denigrate and intimidate independent journalists, media owners and activists".

Such behaviour was contributing to "an atmosphere of relentless unrest towards independent journalists", the MEPs claimed, calling for "concrete, prompt and effective" steps to halt violence against human rights defenders and journalists.

The resolution appears to have infuriated López Obrador who – like his fellow regional populists Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro – is notorious for hectoring journalists and bristles at questioning from the press.

In [a peculiar and cantankerous declaration](#), the Mexican government hit back, telling the European parliament: "Do not forget that we are no longer anyone's colony. Mexico is a free, independent, and sovereign country.

"If we were in the situation you describe in your pamphlet, our president would not be supported by 66% of citizens," added the statement, calling MEPs the "sheep" of the "reactionary coup-mongers" allegedly trying to derail López Obrador's government.

On Friday morning López Obrador, or Amlo as he is known, continued the offensive, blaming the "slanderous" European resolution on conservative politicians "with a colonialist mindset".

Mexico's president, who said he had helped compose the pronouncement, also appeared [to play down](#) the recent killings of Mexican journalists, two of whom were shot dead outside their homes.

"Regrettably, about 5,000 Mexicans have been murdered in the first two and a half months of this year – and of these 5,000, five were journalists," the 68-year-old nationalist told his daily morning press conference.

Amlo's posture sparked bewilderment and anger. "Scandalous, demented, shameful," [tweeted](#) Arturo Sarukhan, Mexico's former ambassador to the US, comparing the government statement to the kind of invective usually associated with diplomats from authoritarian regimes in Venezuela, Nicaragua or Cuba.

"What a pitiful statement," [wrote](#) Denise Dresser, a political analyst and writer. "It belittles the government. It belittles the country."

Amlo has repeatedly targeted journalists during the first half of his six-year term. Where Trump and Brazil's far-right president Bolsonaro rail against the "fake news" or "garbage" media, Mexico's leader calls critics "sell-out" members of the "*prensa fifi*" (snot-nosed press).

Last year Amlo began hosting a segment of his morning press briefing called "*Quién es quién en las mentiras*" ("The Who's Who of Lies"), to expose supposed "fake news" journalists.

However, in recent months Amlo has intensified his attacks in order, some suspect, to distract from [awkward allegations](#) that his son had lived in a luxury Houston mansion owned by a former employee at a US oil services company that had done tens of millions of dollars of business with Mexico's state oil giant, Pemex.

Amlo hit back, publicly revealing the alleged salary of Carlos Loret de Mola, one of the journalists behind the claims – private details many believe were illegally acquired from tax authorities.

The Mexican president's stance has drawn growing international criticism, with the Washington Post recently [slamming](#) Amlo's "brazen attempt to discredit and intimidate" Loret de Mola and denouncing the recent killings.

"The escalating violence is a stain on Mexico's democratic record," the newspaper's editorial board [said](#) last month, urging the Biden administration to stand up for the free press.

Asked about such criticism, [Amlo laughed](#).

by Tom Phillips

Category

1. Main
2. Politics-Geopolitics-Gov.-Events

Date Created
03/13/2022