

Mexico says Western firms involved in smuggling fuel into country

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Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador gestures during a news conference as he proposes electricity reforms to Congress seeking to boost the role of the state power utility, in Cuernavaca (Photo by Reuters)

Mexico City, October 13 (RHC)-- Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador says famous Western firms, including global energy trader Trafigura, have engaged in smuggling fuel into the country.

"We have found that some of these famous foreign companies were transporting contraband fuel and Trafigura's import permit has been suspended," Lopez Obrador said at a press conference on Monday in the Mexican capital.

His remarks marked a new development in a web of corruption investigations of some of the world's biggest energy traders in several Latin America countries. According to the Mexican president, the

attorney general's office was looking into the issue.

Dutch energy company Vitol could also face criminal charges for tax evasion as Mexico has launched an investigation into the world's largest independent energy trader over "irregularities" in the documenting of its refined oil products entering Mexico.

Lopez Obrador has previously criticized Western policies toward Latin America. Last month, he urged the United States to put an end to its decades-old trade embargo on Cuba. He described the US sanctions policy as "perverse," saying that nations should not take advantage of the "misfortune of other peoples" to further their own agenda.

The U.S. has maintained a harsh economic, financial, and commercial embargo against Cuba for more than 60 years. Numerous resolutions by the United Nations General Assembly have indicated that the blockade is against international law.

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