

*Mexico's president says there's more democracy in his country than in the U.S.*

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'There's currently more democracy in Mexico than in the United States,' Andres Manuel Lopez

## Obrador says.

Mexico City, March 1 (RHC)-- Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has rebuked a statement from Washington that appeared to criticize an electoral reform law in his country, accusing the United States of meddling in the affairs of its neighbor.

Lopez Obrador said on Tuesday the U.S. always interferes “in matters that don’t concern” it. A day earlier, the U.S. State Department weighed in on a law that would cut the budget for Mexico’s independent electoral agency.

Washington did not explicitly criticize the measure, but said it supports “independent, well-resourced electoral institutions that strengthen democratic processes and the rule of law.” The U.S. remarks irked Lopez Obrador, who had defended the electoral reform law as a push to cut costs for taxpayers. After narrowly losing his first presidential bid in 2006, Lopez Obrador made allegations of voting fraud, and he has been critical of Mexico’s electoral agency since then.

“There’s currently more democracy in Mexico than in the United States,” he said on Tuesday.

Mexican presidents are constitutionally limited to one six-year term in office, so Lopez Obrador will not seek reelection in next year’s presidential vote, though his left-wing Morena party is considered among the front-runners.

The U.S. State Department had also stressed on Monday the importance of “respect for judicial independence” in a “healthy democracy.” Lopez Obrador has previously criticized Mexico’s judiciary, driving accusations by opposition members that he is threatening the country’s court system.

The Mexican president said on Tuesday that, instead of commenting on Mexico, Washington should “deal with what’s happening in Peru.” He denounced what he called U.S. support for “the coup plotters who trampled on freedoms and democracy in that country.”

Lopez Obrador has been a vocal supporter of Peru’s former left-wing President Pedro Castillo, who was removed from office by legislators late last year and replaced by his then-vice president, Dina Boluarte, after he attempted to dissolve Congress.

Boluarte — who faced deadly protests against her government in the past weeks — has accused Lopez Obrador of “unacceptable” interference in her country’s affairs after he questioned the legitimacy of her government.

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