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## Mexico's President Has Already Made Twice as Many False Claims as Trump

AMLO made over 61,000 misleading statements during his daily news conference in less than three years—double the amount of “untruths” attributed to former U.S. President Donald Trump during his entire term.



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Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Mexico and Donald Trump before a working dinner at the White House on July 8, 2020 in Washington, DC. (Photo: Anna Moneymaker-Pool/Getty Images)

MEXICO CITY — As Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador gave his [third annual presidential address](#) this week, he presented seven successes, calling each one a “historical record” set by his administration.

“Here, learn this!” he said, using a colloquial Mexican phrase to thumb his nose at his critics.

The [phrase in Spanish](#) quickly began trending on Twitter, with the president’s devoted supporters and fierce critics facing off over López Obrador's questionable use of facts.

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The day before, a Mexican [think tank called SPIN-TCP](#) released a new report that alleged [the president had made](#) over 61,000 misleading statements during his daily morning news conferences since taking office in December 2018. In just 771 days, that monumental figure doubled the amount of “untruths” attributed to former U.S. President Donald Trump tracked by [the Washington Post's fact-checking team](#) during his four-year term.

Both the Washington Post and SPIN-TCP included a range of bald-faced lies, misleading statements like exaggerating figures, speaking in hyperbole, and taking credit for accomplishments unrelated to their work.

After Wednesday's presidential address, SPIN-TCP tracked [88 new misleading statements](#) during López Obrador's speech, including four of his seven so-called historical records. They pinpoint how some of them [were not a result of his policies](#).

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Emily Green

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For example, the rise in remittances sent from Mexican workers in the United States to their families is a result of American policies, not those of López Obrador's government. Another claim of an increase in foreign investment used preliminary numbers, instead of the Central Bank's confirmed figures, which reported a contraction of over 20 percent.

If SPIN-TCP's data is correct, López Obrador continues to set a "historical record" in misinformation.

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While Trump was infamous for misleading the public during his presidency, López Obrador took it to a new level with his daily morning news conferences, often lasting nearly two hours, according to SPIN-TCP, which has tracked them since Day One.

“We found out from the very beginning that the president is not answering the questions. The president is dodging every tough question or every question that is associated with data that he cannot confirm or that he cannot or will not answer because it's not favorable for his government,” Luis Estrada, the general director of SPIN-TCP, told VICE World News.

“So if the president is talking that much and he's not presenting any evidence that supports every word he says or the claims that he makes—therefore, it's propaganda,” said Estrada.

López Obrador won the Mexican presidential election in a 2018 landslide on a campaign that promised to root out corruption and fight for the country's disenfranchised and marginalized populations. He's created an aura with his followers for his honesty and incorruptibility, despite the constant misinformation.

But not everything has gone according to plan.

Homicides have continued at [record-breaking levels](#) as his initiatives to combat the root causes of insecurity and drug cartel violence have had little effect.

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Nathaniel Janowitz

12.04.20

He promised to create a health system that would be comparable to Denmark's, a pledge that has dogged him as hospitals turned away COVID patients earlier this year and COVID deaths rose. The coronavirus pandemic hit Mexico hard with [a staggering death toll](#) that ranks as the fourth highest globally as López Obrador downplayed the use of masks and pushed to reopen the economy.

He said he would treat Central American [migrants with humanity](#) and instead placed his new militarized police at the southern border to push them back.

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López Obrador has become notorious for rebuffing questions by journalists that involve statistics with a common refrain—that he “has

other data.” This other data is hardly ever verified, produced, or seen.

For example, in August López Obrador denied the results of a government study that showed that [extreme poverty in Mexico](#) has risen to over 10 percent of the population, again, claiming he had “other data.”

To bolster his signature claim that his administration is focused on the poor, he said in his Wednesday address that 70 percent of households benefit from government programs. But the government statistics institute says that only 30 percent of households receive money from social programs.

To appeal to his base, López Obrador has taken to attacking the media and political detractors, claiming they are against his government.

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Jeff Ernst

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On June 30, his administration escalated the attacks, presenting [a weekly report](#) that names journalists and news sources who they say are spreading fake news about the government. López Obrador has [repeatedly argued](#) that his government does not practice censorship, but the fake news allegations work as an intimidation tactic against critics.

Estrada called López Obrador's political playbook “an old recipe.”

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He compared López Obrador not just to Trump but also to former leaders like Argentina's Cristina Fernández and Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, as well as populists in power like Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro and Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. The common characteristic among these leaders is that they choose to flood the public with

misleading messages that appeal to the public's emotions, rather than own up to their political failures.

A prime example is the failure of his security strategy. Instead of admitting the project isn't working, he's placed the blame on previous administrations and has [continued to claim](#) that his security strategy is working, with few results to show for it.

In the 21st century, this form of politics that appeals to emotions rather than facts began to be termed "post-truth", a phrase named as [the word of the year](#) by the Oxford Dictionaries in 2016 after Trump's presidential win.

"López Obrador has really jumped into the abyss of post-truth without a parachute. It's amazing how he's able to pretend that things are great when they aren't," Carlos Bravo, a Mexican political analyst with the CIDE research institute, told VICE World News.

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Emily Green

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Bravo said the López Obrador administration has had several successful policies, specifically mentioning his fiscal reform and crackdown on deals made between previous companies and big businesses that gave them competitive advantages.

The government should be “commended for that”, said Bravo, but it still doesn’t mean that López Obrador can be untruthful about other less-successful policies.

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He pointed to the country's poor coronavirus response and the continued drug war violence and insecurity. “There are certain things that you just can't hide. They're very evident, and the president denies them. He really doesn't acknowledge their existence and pretends they're doing great.”