

# [***Mexico's army takes over yet another civilian role — filling potholes***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BCN-D6C1-JC5B-G4JM-00000-00&context=1516831)

The Associated Press

February 21, 2024 Wednesday 2:20 AM GMT

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**Section:** BUSINESS NEWS; INTERNATIONAL NEWS

**Length:** 257 words

**Dateline:** MEXICO CITY

**Body**

MEXICO CITY — Mexico’s president acknowledged Tuesday that the armed forces have taken over yet another civilian role: fixing the nation’s highways.

Filling potholes has now been added to a long list of projects ranging from planes, trains and policing that [*the armed forces now control*](https://apnews.com/article/mexico-army-airline-mexicana-79e5113bdeecd083d9376ebf34155165).

President [*Andrés Manuel López Obrador*](https://apnews.com/hub/andres-manuel-lopez-obrador) said highway maintenance in southern Mexico had been transferred away from the government's Transportation Department.

The department usually gave private companies contracts for road maintenance but López Obrador claimed those contracts were too expensive and riddled with corruption.

“There are very few serious construction companies, because they were all rotten with corruption,” the president said.

López Obrador has given the armed forces the leading role in law enforcement, including the quasi-military National Guard, and entrusted them with far more duties than his predecessors.

Late last year, López Obrador [*put the army in charge of the government's new state-owned airline*](https://apnews.com/article/mexico-army-airline-mexicana-79e5113bdeecd083d9376ebf34155165). He also said the army would run a passenger train service, in addition to building everything from bank offices to airports.

López Obrador claims the military is more honest and efficient.

Unlike many militaries in Latin America, Mexico's armed forces have for almost a century kept out of ***politics*** and avoided taking a leading, public role.

Critics say López Obrador's measures threaten to break that tradition and militarize the country.

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