

, Pemex, helped siphon away even more fuel from Pemex installations. Last year, Mexico lost an average of 60,000 barrels of fuel to theft per day, according to Etellekt, a risk consultancy that studies the phenomenon. The thieves earned their own nickname, born from Mexican slang: huachicoleros. # As L? pez Obrador began his crackdown on fuel theft

this week, he directed the government to shift the transportation of petroleum away from pipelines, an attempt to protect the many gallons stolen by men using hammers and buckets. Instead, the government began using trucks and rail cars to transport fuel, often escorted by soldiers and police. That distribution method has proved to be slower and less reliable. # " There is enough gasoline in the country, " L? pez Obrador said to reassure the country at a Wednesday news conference. " But we can not use the pipelines because there are networks that were created to steal gasoline, alternate networks. " # Hundreds of motorists queue at a gas station in Zapopan, Jalisco State, on Sunday. (Ulises Ruiz/AFP/Getty Images) # As the government tried to calm the nation, the fuel shortage appeared to be worsening. On television programs and in newspapers, it was a problem that easily eclipsed President Trump's demand for a wall on Mexico's northern border. # In the state of Guanajuato, the Associated Press reported 84 percent of gas stations were closed. In the state of Michoacan, some public buses have stopped running. Milenio, one of the country's biggest newspapers, ran a banner headline on its site on Wednesday: " Crisis caused by oil theft. " The private sector has begun to feel the impact. # "