



By: TA | AP Brief

Mexico has paused oil shipments to Cuba



Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said her government has at least temporarily stopped oil shipments to Cuba, but struck an ambiguous tone, saying the pause was part of general fluctuations in oil supplies and that it was a “sovereign decision” not made under pressure from the United States.

Sheinbaum was responding to inquiries on whether the state oil company Pemex had cut off oil shipments to Cuba in the wake of mounting pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump that Mexico distance itself from the Cuban government, though U.S. officials have not publicly requested that Mexico stop the oil.

“Pemex makes decisions in the contractual relationship it has with Cuba,” Sheinbaum said in her morning news briefing. “Suspending is a sovereign decision and is taken when necessary.”

Sheinbaum’s vague statements come as Trump has sought to isolate Cuba and further ramp up the pressure on the island, a longtime adversary under strict economic sanctions from Washington.

Trump has said the Cuban government is ready to fall, and that the island would receive no more oil shipments from Venezuela after a U.S. military operation deposed former Venezuelan President **Nicolás Maduro**.

In its deepening energy and economic crisis, Cuba has relied heavily on foreign assistance and oil shipments from allies like Mexico, Russia, and – previously – Venezuela.

Mexico has sought to balance its long-term support of Cuba’s government with pressure from Trump for Latin American leaders to fall in line with his vision for the region.

Sheinbaum said Tuesday that Mexico would continue to show solidarity with Havana, but didn’t clarify what kind of support Mexico would offer.

Pressure from Washington

Mexico has faced its own pressure from Washington, as Trump has threatened to take military action against **Mexican drug cartels**.

Mexico last week transferred dozens of suspected **cartel members** to the United States to face justice.

They were sought by the Trump administration, but Sheinbaum used similar language at the time as she did Tuesday, saying the transfers were made on a sovereign and autonomous basis.

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Mexican oil has long acted as a **key lifeline for Cuba**. In its most recent report, Pemex said it shipped nearly 20,000 barrels of oil per day to Cuba from January through Sept. 30, 2025.

That month, U.S. Secretary of State **Marco Rubio** visited Mexico City. Afterward, Jorge Piñon, an expert at the University of Texas Energy Institute who tracks shipments using satellite technology, said the figure had fallen to about 7,000 barrels.

Sheinbaum has spent weeks saying she would provide clear data on exports to Cuba, but has yet to do so. The Cuban government and Pemex did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Piñon said that while the future of shipments from Mexico remains uncertain, what was clear is that Sheinbaum is “walking a tightrope” between her political rhetoric supporting Cuba and upcoming trade agreement negotiations with the U.S.

Analysts now expect further pressure from Washington to halt those shipments more permanently, given Trump’s growing demands that Mexico deliver stronger results in the fight against drug cartels.

Meanwhile, dozens of drivers waited hours in long lines – common on the island – to fill up their cars with gasoline, saying they had heard

the news.

While some said they weren't particularly worried and said they would find a way forward, others expressed deep anxiety over what the future might hold.

Rolando Graña, 40, spent two hours of his day off in a gas line. For the airport employee, it was a hunt for fuel rather than a day of rest.

"That's going to affect us a lot more now," Graña said.