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Protests In Mexico Against Peña Nieto's Energy Sector Reforms

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Yesterday, thousands of Mexicans took to the streets to protest Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto's planned reforms to the energy sector. The protests took place peacefully despite the presence of heavily armed security forces.

The protests concern Peña Nieto's plan to open up Mexico's oil industry. Privatisation has not been permitted in Mexico's oil industry for 75 years. However, Peña Nieto plans to begin selling it off, including Pemex, the state oil monopoly. He claims it will provide a needed boost to Mexico's economy.

If passed, the bill will encourage foreign and domestic investment in the country's oil. It is part of a series of reforms being carried out by Peña Nieto, which have also included education reforms.

Defeated opposition leader Andrés López Obrador led the protest. He spoke to the crowd in Zócalo square, saying: "We will carry out the sieges we have agreed upon in the Senate, the Lower House and the local assemblies. I will be there for as long as it takes".

Yesterday marked the anniversary of Peña Nieto's rise to power. He took office on the 1st December of last year to general optimism, which has declined since then, culminating in large protests in Mexico City yesterday.

According to a poll published yesterday in the Mexican newspaper *Reforma*, Peña Nieto's disapproval rating has risen by more than 50% since April, having reached 48%, with only 44% approving of his performance.