

2-Mexican ministry seeks audit of its OHL Mexico contracts

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MEXICO CITY, May 27 (Reuters) - Mexico's Communications and Transport Ministry has said it will ask the Public Administration Ministry (SFP) to audit its contracts with builder OHL Mexico, which has become embroiled in a corruption scandal.

Recordings were leaked online this month of individuals, alleged to be OHL Mexico officials, discussing overcharging for a public works project in the State of Mexico and a hotel payment for a minister in the state government.

The company, a unit of Spain's OHL, subsequently said that it did not commit any fraud against the State of Mexico, a populous region surrounding much of Mexico City, and that the voices in the tapes were edited and distorted.

An OHL Mexico official heard in the recordings and the state minister later resigned.

On Tuesday, a further recording of people alleged to be OHL Mexico executives apparently discussing bribing judges in Mexico was leaked by the same YouTube account that posted the earlier tapes.

OHL Mexico did not comment on that recording but in a statement on Wednesday said it would call an extraordinary board meeting to analyze the facts and take the decisions necessary to comply with corporate governance rules and the company's ethics code.

Shares in OHL Mexico closed down 6.4 percent on Wednesday at 22.42 pesos.

The Mexican transport ministry said it would request the SFP audit on Wednesday to "corroborate that the bidding procedures that led to the contracts were carried out in adherence with the law and in accordance with transparency".

OHL Chairman Juan Miguel Villar Mir rejected any suggestion of wrongdoing on behalf of the company's Mexican subsidiary and welcomed any government audit of the unit's contracts in comments to journalists in Madrid on Wednesday.

Last week OHL's headquarters in Spain said that its internal investigation did not find any irregularities with the Mexican unit. (Reporting by Joanna Zuckerman Bernstein; Additional reporting by Ana Isabel Martinez and Christine Murray in Mexico City and Robert Hetz in Madrid; editing by Dave Graham, Anand Basu, David Goodman and David Gregorio)