

Panama Teachers Begin 72-Hour Strike over Wages and Underfunding



Panama City, July 21 (RHC)-- At least 17 teachers' unions in Panama are carrying out a 72-hour strike over the non-payment of salary increases approved by the government of former President Ricardo Martinelli.

The National Union of Educators of Panama said the decision was taken after talks failed with the government of current President Juan Carlos Varela. According to local press, most public schools in the Central American country are participating in the strike.

In addition to their wage demands, the teachers' unions reported that 90 percent of public schools are in precarious conditions with the state of classrooms, walls, bathrooms, chairs and laboratories, affecting teaching and learning.

In 2013, Martinelli -- who is currently in Miami and hiding from prosecution in Panama on corruption charges -- signed an executive order authorizing an increase in teachers' monthly salaries to \$900, but the government never provided the money for the raise.

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