

Brazilian students and teachers protest education budget cuts



Brasilia, May 8 (RHC)-- Hundreds of students, parents and teachers of federal schools protested education budget cuts earlier this week in front of the Military College of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil where President Jair Bolsonaro participated in an event celebrating the institution's 130th anniversary.

Due to the Brazilian government's decision to cut 30 percent of education funding, students and teachers from schools and universities demonstrated in Rio de Janeiro and called for a general strike May 15th.

Protesters held up signs reading 'Education is not spending, it is investment' and 'If we save in education, we will remain rich in ignorance.' Many of the students who participated in the protest study in the federal school Pedro II, one of the most prestigious in the country and located in front of the military school that Bolsonaro visited, Pagina 12 reported.

"We are here to say no to censorship, no to cuts and no to this authoritarian government," said a masters student in sociology at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro.

"We want to study. We have the right to study. Our universities, schools and institutes are the heritage of the Brazilian people and above any government we will fight to defend that," added other demonstrators.

During the president's speech at the Military College of Rio de Janeiro, he said that the current government's goal is to construct one military school in each of the country's 26 state capitals. Vice President General Hamilton Mourao is an alumnus of the college.

"We want more children and young people studying in ... these schools (where) respect, discipline and love of the country are the foundations," the far-right president said. "Military schools are an example of excellence for Brazilian education."

On May 15th, students and university professors will go out on strike against the alterations to education and culture, which are suffering from what critics say is ideological warfare from Bolsonaro who openly celebrates the country's prior military dictatorship, has continually made trans-phobic and homophobic comments, and has called for an end to studies in philosophy and politics.

Brazil has South America's highest military budget, which the government increased by five percent from 2017 to 2018.

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