

Ecuadorean retirees demand government pay pensions



Quito, May 24 (RHC)-- Hundreds of Ecuadorean pensioners from the public sector took to the streets of Quito to demand that Lenin Moreno's government pay their severance pensions that have been in default since 2008.

"It is preferable to die fighting than to go begging," the coordinator of the Federation of Retirees of Ecuador, Galo Bacca, told reporters.

The mobilization marched down the main streets of Quito toward the National Assembly (AN). Among the demands of the 30,000 retirees are the full payment of severance pensions, and to request the AN to impeach the Minister of Economy and Finance, Richard Martinez, for the violation of their rights. The debt currently amounts to \$350 million.

"We are in Quito to demand that the president of the Republic pay us in cash and not in state bonds," the representative of the Committee of Retirees of Santo Domingo, Vinicio Lara added.

The Ecuadorian Social Security Institute (IESS) Board of Directors chairman, Paul Granda, indicated that the 'National Agreement for Social Security' will discuss increases in the retirement age as well as payments for public health care to children under 18 years old.

"[Ecuador's] retirement age is 60. The average age in Latin America is 65 and [the average is] between 67 and 70 in Europe because life expectancy has risen there. In Ecuador, men's life expectancy is 80 and women's is 83," Granda said and added that evidently, we have to analyze this issue in such a way that allows us to increase the affiliate's compulsory payments time."

Meanwhile, the first set of labor reforms announced in Ecuador also caused indignation by workers and the protesters. These measures will include extending trial periods for hired workers resulting in instability, flexibilization of labor contracts, and extension of five days a week work period.

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