

Chilean teachers continue national strike



Santiago de Chile, July 3 (RHC)-- Thousands of members of the Chilean Teachers' Association have rejected a proposal from the Government in response to their demands and decided to continue with the national strike that is now entering its fifth week.

In an assembly held on Monday in all communes (municipalities) of the country, with the participation of about 50,000 teachers, 73.82 percent voted to reject the proposal of the Ministry of Education and continue the strike.

Meanwhile, 24.08 percent favored the option of partially accepting the proposal and delegating to the union leadership the need to continue the dialogue, and only 2.09 voted to return to the classrooms and accept the response given by the ministry.

When analyzing the results, the president of the union, Mario Aguilar, said that this vote is a clear signal for the authorities to give an effective response to the demands of the teachers, because several of them, which were very sensitive, were not taken into account by the Ministry of Education.

He pointed out that the mobilizations will continue, and that they will seek the support of their colleagues from private schools as well as other social sectors and unions, "because this is not a cause of the

teachers but of the entire Chilean society."

He also called on teachers not to be intimidated and to remain firm in pushing for their demands. The latter seems to be an allusion to the threats of Education Minister Marcela Cubillos, who said that salaries would not be paid to teachers who continued to strike, while President Sebastián Piñera called the strike illegal and demanded the teachers return to the classroom.

According to data from the Ministry of Education, the strike, which began on June 3, has since kept some 600,000 students without classes.

But with the passing of the weeks the teachers have been gaining more social support and a survey by pollster Cadem published today, reveals that more than 65 percent of the population supports the strike.

Among the important demands that the Government has not accepted include, among others, the recognition of a historical debt existing since the 1990s, and the elimination of the reform in secondary education that seeks to remove the compulsory curriculum to the subjects of History, Physical Education and Arts.

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