

# *Argentinean transportation union to strike on Friday, July 12th*

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Buenos Aires, July 8 (RHC)-- Argentina's transportation sector has announced a major strike and mobilization for this coming Friday, July 12th, in order to demand a pay rise and better work conditions.

"Our salary loses a bit more value every day," said the head of the Auto Transportation Union (UTA) Roberto Fernandez to the radio station, FM Futurock, referring to the increasing inflation affecting all sectors of the economy. "We, workers, are in a bad situation, people are anxious."

He added that his union is demanding the same pay rise as workers for the Buenos Aires Urban Area (AMBA): a 20 percent increase plus a bonus of 15,000 pesos or about \$350 paid in three quotas. If approved, this would mean a minimum salary of about \$980 per month until August, becoming \$1,070 later.

The union leader also said that President Mauricio Macri was losing a lot of support among workers of the transport sector following his fiscal austerity program. "A lot of people believed in this government but nothing changed."

Among other problems is Argentina's out-of-control inflation rate, which hit 54.7 percent in March, its highest since 1991. Unemployment also reached a peak following the layoffs of over 73,000 jobs between December 2015, when Macri took office, and July 2018.

The value of the Argentinean peso also shrank by 50 percent last year due to the administration's selling off of pesos and dollar reserves. The administration tried to get the peso under control by taking out a US\$56.6 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that conditions its loans were further cuts to public spending and austerity.

As the president heads into the October presidential race, opinion polls shows he he has lost popularity over the economy and after he raised taxes and cut public utility subsidies. In contrast, Argentina's previous leader, Cristina Fernandez, who increased the government's role in the economy and who has been gaining popularity in her bid to run for vice president in the October elections.

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