

# *Colombian national strike continues, no deal reached with government*

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Bogota, February 14 (RHC)-- The Colombian National Strike Committee (CNP) has convoked new protests for the next couple of months as they didn't reach an agreement with Ivan Duque's government.

"The government does not like the word negotiation," President of the Unitary Workers' Union (CUT) Diogenes Orjuela said. The Colombian executive considers that many of the requirements requested by the CNP are beyond its powers, so they have stressed that it will not discuss issues that have to do with fundamental issues of the State, such as security and national defense policy.

After 44 days without being able to sit down with the Duque administration, a meeting was possible but no agreement was reached. For this reason, the coordinating group behind the nationwide protests decided to convene its next march for February 21st, rejecting Duque's accusations of them being linked to violent armed groups.

"The CNP since its beginning, and to defend the strike and mobilizations, has stood for the defense of life and peace. In this context, we have defended the Havan peace agreements and have demanded their implementation and realization," an official statement reads.

In addition to the February 21st mobilization, other dates have been scheduled for March 8, April 9, May 1, and June 8 and 9; and a national strike on March 25. Protesters and organizations continue to strike against the policies implemented by Duque and the resurgence of violence in the country.

On November 21st, as millions of Colombians, took to the streets to hold the biggest protest against Duque since he came to power in August 2018. Besides being concerned about his government's little commitment to the Peace Agreements, people reject a neoliberal policy package which seeks to raise the compulsory retirement age, increase workers' contributions to the pension system, reduce the state's role in social security, lower the young people's minimum wage, among other things.

So far, however, the right-wing president has failed to consolidate a parliamentary majority willing to approve his proposals, which are often justified as if they were tools to "fight corruption."

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