

Uruguayan students and teachers strike against budget cuts



Citizens protesting in Montevideo, Uruguay, June 15, 2022. | Photo: Twitter/ @Opinion_Bolivia

Montevideo, June 17 (RHC)-- Thousands of Uruguayan students and teachers took to the streets to protest an \$80 U\$D million budget cut that has harmed the education system over the past two years.

President Luis Lacalle's "pedagogical adjustment will cut content to prioritize competencies," denounced the High School Teachers Association.

Jose Olivera, the president of the National High School Teachers Federation (FENAPES), explained that the main consequences of the cutback include a reduction in the number of teaching positions and the resulting "overpopulation" in classrooms, with up to 45 students per teacher, along with the elimination of individual courses and courses of study.

Student movement representative Valentina Rodriguez said the strike was staged to "defend quality education" and so that "dying of cold" would not become the norm inside classrooms.

The 24-hour strike comes as part of a number of actions by various unions during June, including strikes by construction and metallurgical workers to protest pared-down government budgets that must go to Parliament for debate before June 30.

The Settling of Accounts bill will allow the government to revise the budgetary allocations for last year and adjust them, if needed. In addition, Uruguay's powerful PIT-CNT union has called a general strike "to defend quality work and salaries" for July 7.

With the aim of guaranteeing that meals will still be provided for students at school during the strike, the teachers organized to deliver pre-planned menus to the children.

"The current situation in the schools really is causing families to discuss this because they see that there are fewer teachers, fewer materials, fewer assistant teachers," said Gabriela Dobal, one of the teachers who participated in that voluntary work at a Montevideo school.

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