

General Strike Against Neo-liberal Reforms Brings Brazil to a Halt



Brasilia, April 28 (RHC)-- As daylight broke in Brazil on Friday, scores of labor unions and grassroots organizations began one of the biggest general strikes in the country's history against President Michel Temer's neo-liberal reforms, bringing the country to a standstill.

In Brazil's biggest city and economic hub, Sao Paulo, only one metro line was operating, 70 major routes were blocked off as was access to the city's major airport. Before daylight, a number of protesters clashed with police while trying to occupy a vacant building. Further south in Santos, police reportedly used gas bombs in an attempt to clear roads leading to the city's port.

Other cities across Latin America's largest country are seeing large numbers of protesters hitting the streets. People are setting up road blockades, burning tires in the streets, and protesting the unelected government and its neo-liberal labor reforms and austerity programs, with many holding signs of "Fora Temer!" (Temer Out!).

In preparation, authorities had already boarded up state buildings in the federal capital of Brasilia and local Brazilian media is reporting that taxis and rideshare applications are offering people discounted fares

to help keep cities running amid the strikes. In rural areas, residents were seen blocking off streets in protest using tractors.

The strike was largely organized by Unified Workers Central, the largest union federation in Latin America, and the Workers Party of Brazil, former President Dilma Rousseff's political party.

Dozens of other unions, grassroots organizations, teachers, and church leaders have also thrown their support behind the strike. As the strike got started, Paulo Pereira da Silva, president of trade union Forca Sindical, said: "This is going to be the biggest strikes in the history of Brazil."

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