

Brazilian Unions Vow More Protests Against Temer Labor Reforms



Brasilia, May 6 (RHC)-- Following one of Brazil's biggest-ever general strikes against neo-liberal reforms by President Michel Temer's government, trade unions in the country have vowed that more strikes will take place throughout May. The objective is to continue pressuring politicians on the controversial reforms which are seen as an attack on the country's working class.

Meeting in Sao Paulo this week, unions announced that the general strike that effectively shut down the country one week ago "was just the beginning" of the resistance movement against the reforms. Union leaders agreed that between May 8 to 12, mobilizations will be organized across all of the country's 27 states.

Unions have also thrown their support behind the so-called "Occupy Brasillia" movement aimed at the country's federal government by putting direct pressure on politicians by mobilizing in the capital between May 15 and 19 when they are due to vote on the measures.

"The march to Brasilia in a week of voting on the reforms is fundamental therefore that all out unions participate, like what happened in the general strike, which had the support of the majority of social

classes,” said Joao Carlos Gonzalves, secretary-general of trade union Forca Sindical.

Forca Sindical President Paulo Pereira da Silva warned that “if the government has not understood, there will be more demonstrations.” Unions estimated that last week’s strike mobilized more than 35 million people across the country and praised the event's success.

The deeply unpopular Temer government is proposing reforms that include allowing employers to reduce workers’ salaries while increasing their work hours and reducing compensation for employer abuse. The bill was approved by the Brazilian lower house and now must be passed by the senate. Other reforms include an overhaul of the country’s pension system and a 20-year freeze on public spending.

According to a poll by Datafolha, published by newspaper Folha de Sao Paulo, 71 percent of Brazilian oppose the new pensions system while 60 percent believe that the labor reform only serves businesses.

Temer, whose disapproval rating is around 87 percent, claims that the labor reforms will help create jobs amid the country’s worst ever economic recession.

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