

More than 10,000 Argentinean public workers fired in just two months



Buenos Aires, September 18 (RHC)-- Argentina has released new numbers regarding public sector layoffs which shows that between May and June alone, the government laid off another 10,600 people making it the biggest drop in public employment since President Mauricio Macri took office in December 2015.

The information is based on statistics from the Secretary of Labor, downgraded last week from a ministry and folded into the Ministry of Production in an effort by Macri to reduce the fiscal deficit.

Since the Cambiemos administration took over, 33,744 state workers have been let go or taken voluntary retirement, according to La Nacion newspaper, more than the 25,787 reported by the Association of State Workers union, ATE.

The labor secretary says the number of public sector workers shrank from 240,600 in December 2015 to 206,856 in July of this year.

According to the ATE, the government departments that lost the most were the Ministry of Education

(3,940), the National Congress (2,035), the National Atomic Energy Commission (2000), the Ministry of Social Development (1,199), and the Ministry of Culture (1,194). Over the past several weeks, demonstrators have staged massive protests against the government announcement to cut public education by \$99 million over the next year.

The new numbers corroborate a July report from Argentina's Political Economy Center (CEPA) revealing that 76,359 people were let go, 46 percent of which were in the public sector, from November 2016 to June 2018. Industrial workers accounted for 38 percent of the CEPA reported layoffs.

Statistics also show that public employment actually rose from over 1.5 million to 2.284 million at the provincial level between 2005 and December 2015, according to the now downgraded Ministry of Modernization.

Argentinean Finance Minister Nicolas Dujovne presented the administration's 2019 budget to Congress, which the government is hoping will be quickly approved to signal to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that the government is complying with the promised austerity measures attached to the \$50 billion standby loan.

Also, the IMF said last week's Dujovne's meeting with its director, Christine Lagarde, in Washington was "productive" and the two parties made "significant progress" in discussing Argentina's request for an advance on its first major loan with the organization in over a decade.

"Significant progress is being made towards strengthening the economic development of Argentina, backed by the Stand-By agreement with the IMF. We are working hard to ... submit a proposal to the IMF's Board of Executive Directors."

The Macri administration is asking its lenders for an advance on the June loan after the government already raffled off more than two-thirds of the IMF disbursement in less than two months, according to September CELAG report.

The Center for Strategic Latin American Geopolitics (CELAG) the government lost over US\$91.8 billion between December 2015 and April 2018 and unemployment rose from 6.5 percent to 9.1 since Macri was inaugurated.

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