

# *Over 700,000 Uruguayan workers strike to defend their jobs*

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Montevideo, June 26 (RHC)-- Uruguay's biggest union, the Workers' Intersindical Plenary & Workers' National Convention PIT-CNT, carried out a nationwide strike on Tuesday, in defense of employment, working conditions and collective bargaining.

"We are striking for a forceful platform which embraces the defense of jobs and collective bargaining after the business attack," the PIT-CNT spokeswoman Laura Alberti. She added that some business leaders said regarding their intention to change laws that regulate labor relations.

The trade union leader said: "Everything we have defended in the streets, we will defend in any place, even before the ILO, because we are not going back a single step." The general strike on Tuesday brought out 700,000 workers in a country where trade unions' rights were promoted and respected by the previous leftist governments.

"Employers have always been against collective bargaining... this election year several candidates who propose to change it or eliminate it, have received the applause and support of business chambers," said the PIT-CNT president, Fernando Pereira.

Transport, health, education, banking, commerce and public workers also went out on strike in support of the hunger strike that is being carried out by the workers of Montevideo Gas, a local branch of the

Brazilian company Petrobras.

The company, which owns a network of gas stations around the country, announced that it will leave Uruguay because its operations are failing to yield profits. ???????

"Work is defended by fighting. In defense of employment, working conditions and collective bargaining. In solidarity with the workers on strike, among which the gas union stands out." The meme reads, "Uruguay, PIT-CNT general strike... The 24-hour national general strike began yesterday at 20:30 with the last services of urban and suburban buses. "

In the process of closing its activities, the Montevideo Gas company dismissed its employees at the same time as the strike staged by workers who are also demanding President Tabare Vazquez to end the gas distribution concession.???????

The Association of Banking Employees of Uruguay (Aebu), the Uruguayan Federation of Commerce and Services Employees (Fuecys) and the Confederation of Organizations of State Officials (Cofe) also joined the nationwide strike. ????????

For its part, the Medical Union of Uruguay announced that it supports the workers actions but will not paralyze their medical services so as not to harm the population.

The Uruguayan Press Association (APU) decided to carry out special transmissions called Open Radio from a tent installed at the Independence Square in the capital.

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