

Colombian workers denounce raids on organizations before strike



Bogota, November 20 (RHC)-- Colombia's Central Union of Workers (CUT) has announced that police and security forces raided the social organizations' facilities just hours before the general strike that will take place on Thursday.

"Police arrived at homes with search warrants for investigations related to terrorism and explosives manufacture," CUT said about what happened to the People's Congress militants in Bogota. "Raids were also carried out simultaneously on the homes of students and social leaders in Cali and Medellin."

In reaction to the events, CUT demanded President Ivan Duque to cease his fear and intimidation campaign, "which is obviously a clear attack against the next peaceful and massive strike."

In Bogota, the Urban Cartel Magazine's headquarters were also raided by policemen who verbally intimidated journalists during their surveillance operation. Journalists denounced that the police justified the raid by claiming that their media appeared on a list of sites where explosives and pamphlets calling for the protest would be being stored.

The general strike is a form of struggle that has become more relevant in Latin America and has been called for in Colombia on November 21st. The meme reads: "Latin America raises a general strike. Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti, Chile, Bolivia. Workers, farmers, all the people to power."

But this was not the only police operation registered in Bogota, a city where there were at least 27 raids backed by an order from the Prosecutor's Office. On Tuesday facilities of social organizations such as City in Movement, Pure Poisson, Pyrotechnics, Antioquia Teachers' Union, Anarchist Student Group, and Degenero were also raided.

During the November 21st nationwide strike, Colombian students, farmers and workers will reject initiatives such as the proposal to reduce the salary of young people up to 75 percent of the minimum wage, plans to eliminate public contributions to the pension system, attempts to privatize companies such as Ecopetrol, the murder of social leaders and the breach of the peace agreements.

"Instead of remaining as a protest that seeks satisfaction of specific demands, this will end up becoming a strike against the government," Los Andes University professor Sandra Borda told BBC.

"This could become something very similar to what happened in Chile, where the protest began for the price of the subway ticket but ended up adding a number of social sectors that, for various reasons, are not happy with the government's performance."

Given that possibility, Colombia's immigration authorities on Wednesday informed that all land and river international border crossings will remain closed until 5:00 a.m. on Friday, November 22nd.

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