

Colombian Farmers to Strike Again



Bogotá, April 28 (PL-RHC) -- Colombian farmers from around 15 departments are taking to the streets in a new wave of protests about government failures that have dragged on since September last year.

"The neglect of decades, broken promises, anti-national governments and the imminent threat of extinction has led to thousands of farmers across Colombia going on strike," said members of Dignity Agropecuaria, who convened this national demonstration, on the social network, Facebook.

A representative of Dignity Agricultural, Cesar Pachon, said that during last Friday's meeting with the Executive, it was made clear that there are no agricultural or environment or transport policies. Since an agreement was reached in September 2013 to put an end to a national strike that shook the country, farmers claim that the negotiating table has not advanced very far.

Traditional miners, transporters, cocoa, rice and potato farmers confirmed their participation in this event that has been called "the poncho revolution."

The legal professional Association of drivers confirmed that traditional truckers from Antioquia decreed a work stoppage from dawn.

The previous day, President Juan Manuel Santos had called the strike unjustified and was said to have met

with the strikers.

But farmers say the coffee debt is 375 billion bolivars (about 193 million dollars), about 25,000 farmers of Boyacá are in the process of auctioning goods, and the debt with the farmers of Meta and Casanare amounts to 110 billion bolivars(\$56 million).

This Monday's protest is the first of other mobilizations agreed at the recent Agricultural, Ethnic and People's Summit for early May.

For months, farmers have demanded greater access to land ownership, a reduction in the high costs of consumables, and social investment in the urban and rural population in education, health, housing, public services and roads.

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