

Angry Puerto Rican public workers

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Puerto Rico's public employees came out in protest. Twitter @Carlostole_

By Roberto Morejón

The salary increase for firefighters and teachers, considered insufficient by the latter, introduced in Puerto Rico a tense waiting period, after protests by public workers.

Among authoritarian messages, Governor Pedro Pierluisi informed about the increases for teachers and firefighters, who were inflamed by the deterioration of their living and working conditions.

Teachers have proclaimed in the streets the constraints in his administration, such as the lack of school supplies and materials to stop the deterioration of schools.

Puerto Rico also suffers from the lack of professionals in the classrooms.

Union leaders denounced that 45,000 of the 60,000 enrolled in Special Education are missing some of the teachers who should cover their needs.

Angry educators are not the only ones suffering from the economic crisis in Puerto Rico, as nurses, policemen and other state workers are clamoring for attention to their problems, among them the end of uncertainty about their retirements.

The haughty governor sparked sparks when he said that "no one is obligated" to be a teacher, police officer or firefighter.

Judging by the authority, the demands are just whims.

This is not the vision of the participants in the popular demonstrations, who denounce the increase in public rates, indicating that inflation exceeded 4 percent.

It cannot be forgotten that Borinquen is also still suffering the effects of Hurricane Maria, which hit the island in 2017 and caused the death of three thousand people, the destruction of the electricity grid and 90 billion dollars in losses.

It is true that a Union bankruptcy court approved the restructuring of the Puerto Rican central government's gigantic debt, but it will be accompanied by an adjustment plan as of March 15.

Hence, it will be unavoidable for citizens to tighten their belts even more in the face of the serious fiscal deficit that is suffocating the territory.

That was the excuse for the dismissal of thousands of public employees, NOT a few of them enrolled then in the growing lists of emigrants to New York and other cities of the northern country.

So, together with the impact of the pandemic on private businesses, Puerto Rico presents an embarrassing situation, impossible to hide behind the tourist nickname of the Island of Enchantment.

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